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Address

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iasi, Romania
The Department of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences
Hermeneia
11, Carol I, Blvd., 700506, Iasi, Romania
email: hermeneiajournal@yahoo.com
<http://www.fssp.uaic.ro/hermeneia/>

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email: faxis@uaic.ro

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Summary

I. ARTISTICAL INTERPRETATION

Petru BEJAN	
What is art criticism (any longer)?	7
Rolland QUILLIOT	
L'ambiguïté de l'échec artistique: réflexions sur <i>Le chef d'œuvre inconnu</i> de Balzac	11
Antonela CORBAN	
<i>The Goldfish</i> and Other Klimtian Reactions to Viennese Art Criticism	26
Ramona ARDELEAN	
The Problem of Human Consciousness Fragmentation	38
Delia ANDRIEȘ	
The artistic comprehension. Interpretation and experience	46
Marius CUCU	
Critical Discourse on Art in H. G. Gadamer's Opinion	58

II. PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Ciprian JELER	
The critical role of time in the interpretation of multi-level natural selection	64
Mădălin ONU	
Le sujet herméneutique - instance dialectique. Une réévaluation critique	74
Ionuț BÂRLIBA	
St. Anselm of Canterbury on Sin and Will.Short Critical Overview	85
Alejandro Rojas JIMENEZ	
Die Idee des Potenzlosen in der Spätphilosophie Schellings und in der Spätphilosophie Heideggers	95

Connell VAUGHAN Mimesis and Diegesis: A Narratology of (Re-Mythologizing) Ireland	119
J. Edward HACKETT Scheler, Heidegger and Hermeneutics of Value	132
FayemiAdemola KAZEEM Sophie Oluwole’s Hermeneutic Trend in African Political Philosophy: Some Comments	151

III. BOOK REVIEWS

Antonela CORBAN Gustav Klimt's Lady in Gold	171
Florin CRÎȘMĂREANU Simple Notes of Reading Concerning an Event Book: The Parables of Jesus	175
Ciprian JELER Philosophy Struggles with Nature	183
Dana ȚABREA A Global Hermeneutics. The Cave and the Butterfly	192
Florin CRÎȘMĂREANU Sur la métaphysique de R.G. Collingwood	195
Dana ȚABREA Military ethics: issues of non-conventional battleship	199

Petru BEJAN¹

What is art criticism (any longer)?

Abstract: What is the 'place' of art criticism? Can it be attached to the 'sciences' considered to be exact? Or, is it rather, more related to the social sciences and humanities? What exactly particularizes and distinguishes a concern such as the one invoked?² Are the prejudices that assign a peripheral role, ancillary and even parasitic relative to visual arts justified? Are the prejudices that relate it to aesthetics and philosophy? Is art criticism an evasive, duplicitous and, thereby, 'suspicious' activity? Is there an 'ideal' condition of it? What are the competences of the critic? Can he be substituted by someone else? How should be an eminently critical discourse articulated?

Keywords: art criticism, critics of the critics, critical art

In principle, 'critical' is the endeavour in which someone - the critic, in this case - formulates judgements regarding the success or failure of a work, the artistic properties exhibited by it, but also the potential meanings contained. We can recognize numerous critical registers and typologies; we speak of descriptive, informative, celebrative (of protocol), interpretative, evaluative, reflective criticism, of the written and spoken criticism, of the journalistic criticism and the one with academic destination. Such diversity requires complementary skills and abilities: historical-artistic, aesthetic, hermeneutical, semiotic, stylistic and, of course, oratorical.

Endangered by trendiness and protocol, art criticism seems to be perceived today as an infamous, evasive and slippery genre; it evades the firm, predictable patterns, rarely being assumed as professional destiny or definitive vocation. Secondary to the current concerns of the protagonists, plastic criticism is being practiced occasionally, 'among others', depending on the caprices of the different events that condition it. In retrospect, we notice that few are the consecrated authors that did nothing but criticism. Such an occupation is learned 'on the go' or from experience, as long as there are no schools that would teach you how to practice it perfectly, 'by the book', or 'recipes' that would insure it a flawless functioning. Hence, perhaps, the slight cultural 'sub-bidding' compared to the similar applications from other fields. How could be explained the suspicions and precari-

¹ Prof. Dr. Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi, Romania, pbejan@yahoo.com

² Cf. René Berger, *Estetică și comunicare*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1976, pp. 66 sq.

ousness that evidently accompany the critical discourse in almost all public hypostases?

Equally esteemed and detested, the criticism specific to visual arts combines the literary talent and the loquacious performance, the epic abilities of the chronicler with the spontaneous eloquence of the orator. Such qualities are not always at hand, nor equitably distributed in one and the same person. It's not always enough to write good, as neither only to speak beautifully. The critic is asked to give judgement in situations that require both speculative mobilization and skiving or strategic retreat. A real language equilibristic is put in play, meant to reconcile the celebrative tonalities dictated by the moment with the severity of the 'judgements' of taste, the jubilations of the idea with the derisory of the daily fact. Regardless of the context, the untempered eulogistic pathos is just as ridiculous as the oversized evaluative sobrieties. In one and the same intervention the firmness and the prudence, the subtle observation and the cliché, the speculative density and the superficiality are met.

The critics of the critics are usually ruthless, punishing harshly any weakness or hesitation. It is precisely why the space occupied by art criticism is rather one of the inaugural solemnities, of the economic rhetoric and of the complicities that don't destroy, but encourage. Statistically speaking, the share of 'demolishing' criticism is derisory compared to the 'positive' or laudatory one. Isn't it that we find just here a sign of the mentioned precariousness?

Of course, there are more ways of doing criticism. The type familiar both to the public and the artists seems to be the greeting one, folded on the immediate expectations of the authors and, often, of the participants in exhibitions. Present to a significantly reduced extent, the speculative criticism (of ideas), as well as the interpretative one, minimize the references to authors, highlighting instead the problematic, stylistic or of message intake of the works exhibited. If it is convincingly articulated, the critical discourse identifies and discerns significances, proposes analogies, compares the elements, establishes correspondences and filiations, interprets and evaluates the works brought to the attention. As long as he chooses knowingly, the critic establishes hierarchies and legitimizes, offering clues regarding the value of the author of the work. Its authority, taste, flair and erudition, the weight of arguments, the comprehensive availability, and the oratorical and literary talent are his best recommendations.

What exactly is generally reproached to the critic? The complaisance, the dishonesty, the moderation, the lack of aggressiveness. As in other cases, the public would prefer treatments more 'sharp', blunt, similar to the cold and bloody executions from the time of the guillotine. Why is it not given satisfaction? Why doesn't the critic accept the role of the merciless headsman? Can he criticize without accusing, that is, without the 'victims'

being subject to some humiliating public 'deconstructions'? The first role of the critic is the one of exercising an option. He chooses who to write or speak about, knowing *ab initio* that he won't please everyone. Solidarization is built on a vector of the favourable, yet coherently argued discourse. The omissions - premeditated or not - are even more painful. Sometimes it is preferable to be criticized, even harshly, than disregarded.

How do the nowadays critics look like? Raymonde Moulin sketches the following portrait: 'The critics, who express themselves in the major daily newspapers describe, interpret and evaluate the events of the art scene. They have in general an academic formation, of art history or philosophy and practice a primary profession in the secondary or higher education, or in a school with artistic profile'³. Starting from the '80s, Moulin notices, the museum conservators have become the competitors of the critics. More recently, the critic is doubled by the curator - the one responsible for designing, organizing and promoting an event.

Almost everywhere, the great critics stood by the talented artists. People of reflection, they legitimized practices of the most radical types, decisively influencing the receiving of works. The last decades continue the transition started in the '70s, from art criticism to the 'critical art'. This means that the critical discourse tends to be ascribed to art, and the profession of the critic increasingly comes closer to the one of the artist. Such complicity proved to be protean in the USA, where the important critics (Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, and Joseph Kosuth) were formed right in the artistic environment.

The criticism applied to visual arts has - it's known - a distinct profile. Happening directly, in front of the public and the author, it avoids as much as possible the falsely-judicious severities and bluntness. The discursive diplomacy of the varnishing usually discourages the accusing pathos or the eminently hostile atmosphere, familiar to the public executions. The profile of the critic is different from the one of the police commissioner, invested with the mission of necessarily identifying flaws or crimes, but also from the one of the inflexible prosecutor, requiring *ex officio* punishments. The hermeneutical rule of 'charity' or 'favourable disposition' leads you to admit that in someone's offer you could find something good, worthy to notice and promote. The severities - if any - can and must be expressed; not necessarily abrupt and incriminating, as allusive and ironic. The role of the critic is no longer to judge and punish vulnerabilities, but to discern, evaluate and understand. Depending on these he exercises the *prerogative of option*; he chooses, thus, according to his own tastes, aims and expectations.

The status of art criticism must be sought not in the methodological frameworks of sciences, regardless of their nature, 'positive' or humanistic,

³ Raymonde Moulin, *L'artiste, l'institution et marché*, Flammarion, Paris, 2009, pp. 206-208

What is art criticism (any longer)?

'exact' or speculative. As in philosophy, there is an inherent 'scientificity', of historical and conceptual nature, around which are strengthened the data of the specific competence. The critical approach mobilizes both cognitive and discursive abilities, but is not only limited to these. In such a context, the library is only a starting point. Outside the gallery, the museum or the specialized publications, i.e. excluding the places where it is effectively practiced, the criticism contradicts itself. More than pure theory or applied rhetoric, it is *attitude*, commitment, axiologically and culturally centred action. Perhaps that is why the definitions and explanations satisfy only to a little extent...

Roland QUILLIOT¹

L'ambiguïté de l'échec artistique: réflexions sur *Le chef d'œuvre inconnu* de Balzac

Résumé Quelle signification peut-on attribuer à la célèbre nouvelle de Balzac, *Le chef d'œuvre inconnu*, dans laquelle l'écrivain tente de théoriser littérairement les grands problèmes de la création artistique, tels qu'il les vit quotidiennement? Le sens qu'il a voulu consciemment lui donner est assez clair: il veut parler à la fois de l'incertitude propre à l'artiste, qui ne sait jamais quand il améliore son œuvre et quand il la dégrade, du rapport entre la nature et l'art, qui n'atteint la vérité qu'en renonçant à l'exactitude, et de la difficulté de concilier une vie affective authentique avec une vocation artistique qui s'appuie sur l'observation froide et lucide. Mais *Le chef d'œuvre inconnu* prend aussi pour nous, qui avons connu l'aventure de l'art moderne, une signification involontaire et inattendue que Balzac ne pouvait pas soupçonner: avec le recul, nous pouvons nous demander si Frenhofer n'est pas au fond l'inventeur de l'art abstrait, et le promoteur d'une esthétique radicale et perfectionniste, qui tenterait d'atteindre l'absolu à travers la destruction de l'idée traditionnelle même de l'art. À bien des égards il peut être perçu en tout cas comme un précurseur de Mallarmé, de Malevitch, et de l'anti-art des années 1960.

Keywords: création artistique, l'art moderne, l'art abstrait

Partons de la question: qui est au fond le mieux placé pour parler de l'activité artistique? Le premier candidat auquel on pense est évidemment l'artiste lui-même. Mais, comme le fait déjà remarquer Socrate dans son *Apologie*, les artistes et les poètes sont rarement capables de dire comment et pourquoi ils créent, et leurs discours sur leurs œuvres sont souvent emphatiques et confus. Faut-il interroger alors le philosophe, comme c'est sans doute la conviction de Platon? Les pages que ce dernier consacre à Homère dans *La République* suggèrent pourtant qu'un fossé sépare peut-être le regard que le philosophe pose sur le monde du regard de l'artiste. Le premier valorise spontanément la recherche de la vérité (atteinte par la pensée conceptuelle au prix d'une répudiation du sensible) et celle de la vertu morale, et il ne peut donc vraiment comprendre une activité qui

¹ Professeur à l'Université de Bourgogne, roland.quilliot@u-bourgogne.fr

produit au contraire délibérément de beaux mensonges, qui choisit l'irréel contre le réel et tente de produire des formes sensibles visant à donner l'illusion de la vie et s'efforçant de séduire et d'émouvoir. Même quand, surmontant les préventions de Platon, le philosophe en vient à faire l'éloge de l'art, comme c'est devenu fréquemment le cas à partir du XIX^e siècle, il n'est pas sûr qu'il ne continue pas à le méconnaître, en lui attribuant une vocation qui n'est pas vraiment la sienne: que de philosophes romantiques de l'art, de Schopenhauer à Heidegger, cherchent à le penser encore en termes de vérité et lui demandent de dévoiler des aspects de la réalité auxquels la connaissance rationnelle ne peut avoir selon eux accès! Il est en tout cas douteux que le philosophe ait vraiment une idée précise des difficultés spécifiques de la création et des inquiétudes qu'elle fait naître - sauf lorsqu'il conçoit, ce qui arrive aujourd'hui plus souvent qu'on ne le croit, l'activité philosophique elle-même comme une forme particulière de l'activité artistique. Sans doute faut-il se tourner alors, pour tenir un discours valable sur l'art, vers d'autres prétendants: par exemple aujourd'hui, dans une culture qui fait volontiers de la connaissance scientifique une valeur majeure, vers l'historien d'art, qui se réclame effectivement d'une approche objective et documentée des œuvres et des styles, ou encore vers le critique, qui choisit lui de décrire l'effet produit par l'œuvre sur le spectateur, et assume la tâche de juger, de façon subjective et pourtant argumentée, de sa valeur. Ne peut-on pas aussi se demander si l'un des plus qualifiés de ces prétendants ne serait pas l'écrivain, qui a l'avantage de se situer des deux côtés à la fois: d'être en même temps un homme de discours et de pensée, et un artiste qui connaît directement de l'intérieur les incertitudes de la création? N'est-ce pas en particulier chez les romanciers et les dramaturges du XIX^e et du XX^e siècle qu'on trouvera souvent les réflexions les plus profondes sur les paradoxes et les vertiges de l'entreprise artistique - dont leur propre activité, qu'ils théorisent à cette occasion, constitue un cas particulier. Les exemples de textes littéraires majeurs sur l'art sont nombreux: du *Mozart et Salieri* de Pouchkine à *L'œuvre* de Zola, du *Docteur Faustus* de Thomas Mann à *Narcisse et Goldmund* de Hesse, de *L'Image dans le tapis* de James à *Contrepoint* d'Huxley, du *Jonas* de Camus à *La Tour d'ébène* de Fowles ou à *Arts* de Y. Reza, sans oublier bien sûr le plus achevé et le plus célèbre: celui de la *Recherche du temps perdu*, qui est d'une certaine façon l'histoire de sa propre élaboration - le récit des expériences qui ont amené le narrateur à comprendre qu'il pouvait récupérer sa vie en en faisant la matière d'un livre qui aurait pour thème central le temps. Infiniment plus bref mais non moins fameux est le récit de Balzac intitulé *Le chef d'œuvre inconnu*, à l'interprétation duquel on voudrait consacrer les quelques pages qui suivent.

Il est superflu de rappeler les détails de cette nouvelle que Balzac a publiée en 1832. Elle confronte, on le sait, le jeune Nicolas Poussin, à l'orée de sa carrière, à un vieux peintre au visage habité et inquiétant, Frenhofer, qui méprise les succès faciles que lui vaudrait un talent reconnu, et se consacre dans la solitude depuis des années à l'achèvement d'un chef d'œuvre absolu, *La belle noiseuse*, qu'il cache aux regards de tous au fond de son atelier. Quand, brûlant de curiosité, Poussin et son aîné Porbus parviennent au bout de plusieurs mois à fléchir le vieil artiste - le premier payant cette satisfaction au prix fort, en offrant en échange sa maîtresse comme modèle à Frenhofer -, ils ne découvrent à leur stupeur sur le tableau mille fois retravaillé, qu'un amas de "couleurs confusément amassées et contenues par une multitude de lignes bizarres": de ce chaos émerge seulement dans un coin un pied d'une admirable perfection qui est comme un "fragment échappé à une incroyable, une lente et progressive destruction" (Balzac 1960, 58). En voyant la déception de ses visiteurs, Frenhofer comprend qu'il s'est fourvoyé, qu'il a travaillé dix ans pur rien: dans la nuit qui suit il brûle tous ses tableaux, et le lendemain matin on le retrouve mort dans sa chambre.

Frenhofer, on le comprend, a bien atteint à un moment la perfection qu'il cherchait, mais il ne s'en est pas aperçu, et il a détruit son tableau en voulant sans cesse l'améliorer. Le premier thème de la nouvelle, c'est donc cette incertitude essentielle à l'activité artistique, qui tient à ce que le créateur ne dispose pas de critères lui permettant de savoir s'il progresse ou s'il s'éloigne de son but, si ce qu'il produit est vraiment chargé de signification et riche d'émotion, ou s'il s'agit simplement de formes vides de sens et d'une gesticulation absurde. Cette absence de critère distingue l'artiste du technicien qui, lui, peut vérifier par lui-même la solidité de ses constructions: c'est que l'œuvre produite par le premier est un objet étrange qui n'acquiert sa valeur et son sens que par le regard d'autrui, et qu'il n'est précisément pas possible à son auteur de la voir de l'extérieur. Comme l'a dit Sartre: "même s'il apparaît aux autres comme définitif, l'objet nous semble (à nous les artistes) toujours en sursis: nous pouvons toujours changer cette ligne, cette teinte, ce mot; ainsi ne s'impose-t-il jamais. Un peintre apprenti demandait à son maître: quand dois-je considérer que mon tableau est fini? Et le maître répondit: quand tu pourras le regarder avec surprise en te disant: c'est moi qui ai fait cela. Autant dire jamais: car cela reviendrait à considérer son œuvre avec les yeux d'un autre et à dévoiler ce qu'on a créé" (Sartre 1964, 90).

On dira que le plaisir du public est un signe infaillible de réussite. Et de fait il faut reconnaître que l'incertitude dont il est ici question est inconnue des esthétiques classiques pour qui la valeur d'une œuvre se détermine objectivement, à partir de la conjonction de ces deux critères que sont le respect des règles du beau et le plaisir des élites cultivées. A l'époque

où Frenhofer est supposé peindre, l'idée d'un chef d'œuvre incompris était elle-même inintelligible. Mais ce n'est plus vrai à celle de Balzac: on y a déjà trop le sens historique pour ignorer que les canons de la beauté varient et qu'il n'en est donc pas d'universellement valables; et on y perçoit en outre clairement que l'artiste n'est pas tant celui qui respecte des règles objectives que celui qui invente un monde qui ne ressemble à aucun autre - et dont il définit lui-même les règles de production. Surtout on a pris conscience que le seul jugement important est celui de la postérité: à court terme le public se trompe souvent, se laisse séduire par des œuvres superficielles et ne pénètre que lentement dans les œuvres les plus exigeantes. Il faut donc lui demander de faire effort pour comprendre, et attendre: "ça leur plaira plus tard" répond Beethoven à Schuppanzigh qui lui fait part de l'insuccès d'un de ses derniers quatuors, tandis que Stendhal affirme de son côté en 1835: "je mets un billet à la loterie dont le gros lot se réduit à ceci: être lu en 1935". En attendant que l'Histoire finisse par lui rendre justice, c'est souvent pour l'artiste novateur la solitude, et la nécessité de se raccrocher à son intime conviction. Pour se protéger de l'angoisse, certains cultivent un dogmatisme défensif, qui leur permet de progresser malgré le scepticisme environnant. Pierre Boulez, leader de l'avant-garde musicale française après 1950, le reconnaît: "Lorsqu'il est enfoncé dans l'œuvre en devenir, il n'y a aucun doute que le compositeur se forge lui-même une psychologie d'infaillibilité à court terme; sans cette boussole provisoire - j'ai absolument raison- il hésiterait à s'aventurer sur des terres vierges. Ce réflexe est un réflexe sain, il lui permettra de venir à bout du périple imprévu qu'il doit accomplir avant d'achever son travail" (Boulez 1963, 16). Mais si la réaction négative du public se prolonge, il est difficile à l'artiste incompris de ne pas être gagné par le doute, surtout s'il est moins doué pour le dogmatisme que l'auteur du *Marteau sans maître*: face à l'insuccès et à la misère matérielle, certains s'enfoncent dans la dépression, jusqu'à voir, comme le montre par exemple le cas de Van Gogh, leur équilibre psychique s'effondrer.

Analysé de façon plus précise, l'échec de Frenhofer semble dû à la fois à la surabondance de ses idées, qui se sont neutralisées les unes les autres sur sa toile, et à sa volonté démesurément ambitieuse de réaliser une œuvre absolument parfaite, qui l'a amené à mépriser la réussite qu'il pouvait atteindre, et à vouloir aller toujours plus loin. En dernier ressort son drame est bien, comme Balzac lui-même l'a écrit à Madame Hanska en 1837 celui "de l'œuvre tuée par la trop grande abondance du principe créateur". Frenhofer a d'ailleurs son symétrique dans l'ordre musical avec un autre personnage de Balzac, Gambaro, autre surdoué dont la pensée est trop riche pour parvenir à se réaliser sous une forme sensible: "ma musique est belle, reconnaît ce compositeur rejeté par le public, mais quand la musique passe de la sensation à l'idée, elle ne peut avoir que des gens de génie pour

auditeurs, car eux seuls ont la puissance de la développer. Mon malheur est d'avoir écouté les concerts des anges et d'avoir cru que les hommes pouvaient les comprendre ". Dans cette idée d'un échec provoqué par la surabondance des dons et l'excès d'ambition, on retrouve l'écho de deux thèmes essentiels de la pensée romantique. D'abord celui de la dénaturation de l'être humain, privé de régulation instinctive ou intuitive, et dont les forces créatrices peuvent dans certains cas se retourner contre elles-mêmes, engendrant du chaos et de la destruction au lieu de l'ordre et de la beauté. Nietzsche, qui est bien placé pour savoir combien est faible la distance qui sépare le génie de la folie, analysera longuement dans *La Généalogie de la morale* ce retournement vers l'intérieur de forces destinées initialement à s'exprimer à l'extérieur, qui fait de l'homme un animal malade et névrotique - mais qui même dans sa maladie reste plus intéressant et plus créatif qu'un organisme sain. L'autre grand thème romantique évoqué par *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu* est celui de la quête de l'absolu, dont la nécessité est inscrite dans le cœur d'un être que rien de fini ne peut satisfaire, mais qui le conduit inévitablement à un échec dramatique et grandiose. Balzac n'a cessé lui-même de le traiter de toutes les manières possibles: on pense bien sûr d'abord à Balthazar Claes, qui se lance à la poursuite du secret de la matière et y ruine sa famille - il finit par prononcer le mot eurêka, mais c'est sur son lit de mort, et il s'éteint l'instant d'après -, à Louis Lambert, ce jeune prodige qui rêve la synthèse philosophique totale, mais qui sombre dans la folie avant de pouvoir la livrer, et aussi à tous ceux qui illustrent ce motif essentiel de la *Comédie humaine* qu'est d'après Albert Béguin "la consommation de l'énergie vitale par tous les usages qui en sont faits et particulièrement par la vie de l'esprit". Bien entendu, l'obsession de l'absolu est particulièrement intense dans le domaine de l'art, où l'homme échappe à la pression de la réalité extérieure et tente de créer un monde imaginaire dont il soit le seul démiurge: le sens de la relativité de toute entreprise humaine disparaît chez ceux qui se mettent à rêver de beauté pure, ou qui demandent à l'art de nous dévoiler l'essence ultime des choses. Le contraste est malheureusement souvent immense entre l'ambition démesurée qui les habite et la médiocrité objective des œuvres qu'elle les amène à produire.

Il ne s'agit pourtant pas pour Balzac de dire trop vite qu'il y a un échec inévitable de l'art (en tout cas certainement pas un échec total). Bien au contraire: *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu*, qui est pour lui l'occasion de formuler son credo esthétique, suggère indirectement les moyens d'éviter les naufrages où se sont perdus tant de ses confrères. De ce credo, le premier principe, qui vaut non seulement dans le domaine de la peinture - Balzac, ami de Delacroix, adopte un point de vue très proche du sien- mais dans celui du roman réaliste, est, il est vrai, relativement banal: il pose que si la nature est pour l'artiste un point de départ indépassable, elle doit tout de même être transfigurée. "La mission du peintre, déclare Frenhofer, n'est pas

de copier la nature mais de l'exprimer. Tu n'es pas un copiste mais un poète (...) Autrement le moulage serait la meilleure des sculptures" (Balzac 1960, 30). "Ce ne sont pas les apparences des choses qu'il faut saisir, mais l'esprit, l'âme, la physionomie des choses et des êtres". En fait même, la nature n'est qu'un prétexte, et l'art qui en extrait la vérité est une activité spirituelle: "la forme est un truchement pour se communiquer des idées, des sensations, une vaste poésie". Ce qui est sûr, c'est que la réussite en ce domaine est liée à la cohérence et à l'unité des options adoptées: l'erreur et l'échec résultent du syncrétisme, de l'hésitation non dominée entre des options rivales, de l'incapacité à choisir, c'est-à-dire à sacrifier une possibilité pour en affirmer plus fortement une autre. Quand Frenhofer fait la critique du tableau de Porbus, son reproche fondamental est précisément: "tu as flotté indécis entre deux systèmes".

Frenhofer commet lui-même cependant aux yeux de Balzac une erreur encore plus grave que celle de Porbus: il oublie le second principe fondamental de l'art, qui est d'être une activité et non une rêverie sur l'œuvre idéale. Insatiable discoureur et commentateur des ses propres projets, il laisse un fossé se creuser toujours plus profondément entre ses intentions et les réalisations qui leur correspondent. Il méconnaît cette règle essentielle que Porbus ne se prive pas de rappeler à Poussin: "travaillez, le peintre ne doit méditer que les brosses à la main". Cette règle, Alain, grand lecteur de Balzac, la précise en termes vigoureux: "le grand secret des arts et aussi le plus caché, c'est que l'homme n'invente qu'autant qu'il fait et qu'autant qu'il perçoit ce qu'il fait. Par exemple, le potier invente quand il fait; et ce qui lui apparaît plaisant dans ce qu'il fait, il le continue. Le chanteur aussi. Et celui qui dessine aussi. Au contraire ceux qui portent un grand projet dans leur rêverie seulement et qui attendent qu'il s'achève dans la pensée seulement ne font jamais rien. L'écrivain aussi est soumis à cette loi de n'inventer que ce qu'il écrit" (Alain 1926, I.6).

En outre, à force de spéculer sur les principes de son art, Frenhofer a perdu l'innocence et la spontanéité qui sont indispensables à l'exercice de ce dernier. Le doute l'a peu à peu envahi: "il a profondément médité sur les couleurs sur la vérité absolue de la ligne; mais à force de recherches il en est arrivé à douter de l'objet même de ses recherches. Dans ses moments de désespoir il prétend que le dessin n'existe pas". Chez lui, "le raisonnement et la poésie se sont mis à se quereller avec les brosses", créant blocage et paralysie (Balzac 1960, 43). Peut-être aussi, selon Porbus, a-t-il le malheur d'être trop riche, et de n'avoir pas besoin de vendre ses toiles pour subvenir à ses besoins: moins aisé il n'eût pu se permettre le luxe de spéculer sans fin, et eut été contraint de produire, sans se laisser prendre au vertige de l'œuvre unique et parfaite. Balzac, qui a travaillé frénétiquement toute sa vie pour rembourser ses dettes, est ici bien placé pour témoigner du caractère

stimulant des contraintes matérielles, qui forcent à donner le meilleur de soi sans se poser de questions. C'est au point qu'on se demande parfois en lisant ses biographies s'il ne cherchait pas à se mettre délibérément dans les situations financières les plus inconfortables, jetant l'argent par les fenêtres dès qu'il parvenait à se renflouer, parce qu'il sentait inconsciemment qu'il ne pouvait créer que sous l'aiguillon du besoin.

Par-dessus tout, Frenhofer est un misanthrope, qui s'est enfermé dans sa solitude en se fermant aux autres, et qui a oublié qu'on ne crée que pour communiquer. Son rapport à son tableau - une d'œuvre qui est devenue comme la toile de Pénélope, et qu'il ne désire pas vraiment achever - est devenu à la fois autistique et idolâtre, et il se révolte à l'idée de le dévoiler à d'autres que lui. *La belle noiseuse* n'est plus pour lui "une toile, c'est une femme": "(lui) faire supporter le regard d'un homme, d'un jeune homme, d'un peintre? Non, non je tuerais le lendemain celui qui l'aurait souillée d'un regard". Comment s'étonner que ce tête à tête narcissique avec son tableau l'ait conduit au bord de la folie, et qu'il soit incapable de distinguer ce qu'il a rêvé et ce qu'il a réellement fait ? Son exemple permet en tout cas à Balzac de définir en creux les conditions d'une créativité authentique. Tout en refusant de se contenter d'un succès de facilité, l'artiste doit prendre garde à ne pas se laisser pour autant prendre au fantasme mortifère de l'œuvre parfaite. Il sait qu'il faut beaucoup essayer pour quelquefois réussir, et que celui qui ne prend pas le risque de l'échec ne peut jamais progresser; il est conscient que la beauté n'est pas une mais multiforme, et que chaque œuvre

doit avoir sa manière à elle de l'incarner; il produit donc beaucoup, et relativement vite, en faisant confiance à son inspiration en même temps qu'à son métier, sans trop multiplier les retouches (la facilité avec laquelle on écrit est souvent le signe qu'on sait ce qu'on veut dire, et en règle générale la création prend moins de temps que l'interprétation et l'exégèse). Et surtout, même s'il part de ses propres fantasmes pour tenter de les extérioriser, il est toujours prioritairement mû par le souci d'atteindre les autres: comme l'a dit Sartre, au principe de toute création authentique, il y a un don, un mouvement de générosité. Il est vrai qu'il ne suffit pas de produire beaucoup et avec métier pour dire quelque chose d'important: mais il n'y a pas d'incompatibilité. Au milieu d'un grand nombre d'artisans appliqués surgit parfois, parlant le même langage et avec les mêmes objectifs apparents, un génie véritable, qui transfigure les stéréotypes de son temps: un Mozart parmi des Salieri, un Balzac parmi des Ponson du Terrail. L'auteur du *Père Goriot* n'affecte en tout cas pas la fausse modestie sur la réussite de son œuvre, il sait ce qu'il a réussi à créer à force de travail forcené et en faisant confiance à ses fabuleuses capacités d'imagination: à mon époque, déclare-t-il, "quatre hommes auront eu une vie immense: Napoléon, Cuvier, O'Connell, et moi: moi j'aurai porté une société tout

entière dans ma tête". Autant dire qu'il n'y a pas à ses yeux sur l'entreprise artistique de fatalité de l'échec.

Ou plutôt s'il y en a une, elle se situe à un autre niveau, celui des rapports entre l'art et la vie. Après tout, c'est une des significations premières du *Chef d'œuvre inconnu*, qui en même temps que l'échec de Frenhofer, raconte celui du couple que formaient le jeune Poussin et sa charmante amie Gillette, qui ne lui pardonnera pas de l'avoir contrainte à se déshabiller devant le vieil illuminé - "je t'aime et je te hais déjà" lui dit-elle avant de le quitter. C'est que la passion artistique est une passion dévorante, qui tend à ne laisser qu'une place secondaire aux autres sentiments. Poussin a beau tenter de se répéter par moments "je ne suis pas peintre, je suis amoureux", il se laisse en fait vite convaincre par Porbus qui soutient que "les fruits de l'amour passent vite, mais ceux de l'art sont immortels". Surtout, dans le domaine des arts représentatifs, l'artiste n'atteint la vérité qu'en se refusant à l'émotion pour mieux observer, il se contraint à la froideur: quand tu me peins, disait déjà Gillette à son amant "tu me regardes et pourtant tu ne penses pas à moi". C'est que, explique encore Balzac dans *Massimila Doni*, "quand un artiste a le malheur d'être plein de la passion qu'il veut exprimer, il ne saurait la peindre, car il est la chose même au lieu d'en être l'image. L'art procède du cerveau et non du cœur", il implique donc une distanciation. Peut-être même y a-t-il en lui quelque chose de cannibale: l'artiste détruit ses proches en en faisant la matière de son œuvre - ce sera le thème du *Portrait ovale* d'Edgard Poe.

On comprend les reproches de narcissisme qui sont souvent adressés à l'artiste, et le décalage fréquent entre la perfection de ses œuvres et le caractère chaotique de sa vie personnelle. Balzac lui-même n'a en tout cas jamais caché que son investissement radical dans l'imaginaire l'handicapait lorsque il s'agissait de faire face à la vie "réelle", et faisait de lui une sorte d'inadapté: "quand nuit et jour, écrit-il dans une lettre, mes forces et mes facultés sont tendues à composer, à écrire, à peindre, à me souvenir, quand je suis à parcourir d'une aile lente et pénible, souvent blessée, les campagnes morales de la création littéraire comment puis-je être sur le terrain des matérialités? Pour ne pas être trompé dans la vie, dans les amitiés, dans les affaires, dans les relations de toute espèce, il faut ne faire que cela". Bien entendu, pour être écrivain il n'en est pas moins homme, et continue à désirer consciemment des biens dont il sait pourtant au fond de lui-même qu'ils ne sont pas pour lui. Il dépense beaucoup, parade avec des bijoux, se lance pour faire fortune dans des spéculations incertaines, tente régulièrement sa chance auprès des femmes: mais avec un côté décalé et inadapté qui saute aux yeux des contemporains, lesquels le perçoivent à la manière de Baudelaire, comme "l'homme aux faillites mythologiques, aux entreprises hyperboliques et fantasmagoriques, dont il oublie toujours

d'allumer la lanterne; le grand pourchasseur de rêves, sans cesse à la recherche de l'absolu, lui ce gros enfant bouffi de génie et de vanité, qui a tant de qualité et tant de travers qu'on hésite à retrancher les uns pour ne pas perdre les autres". En fait bien sûr, sa vraie vie est dans son travail - un travail forcené, comme on sait: "Travailler, c'est me lever tous les soirs à minuit, écrire jusqu'à huit heures, déjeuner en un quart d'heure, travailler jusqu'à cinq heures, dîner et recommencer le lendemain . De ce travail il sort cinq volumes en quarante jours". Et il sait qu'il va nécessairement payer ce rythme insensé: assez vite il sent qu'il a "gaspillé son capital" et qu'il mourra jeune.

Cette idée d'une incompatibilité entre la vocation artistique et le bonheur "terrestre" n'est pas seulement un stéréotype romantique. En fait, de nos jours encore, il est peu d'artistes qui ne la perçoivent pas, au moins certains jours, comme une sorte d'évidence. Quand par exemple un Woody Allen, l'un des plus célèbres représentants du cinéma d'auteur contemporain, fait dans *Deconstructing Harry* le portrait d'un grand écrivain (qui lui ressemble fort, bien que sensiblement noirci), il le décrit comme un égoïste et un obsédé sexuel, rongé de tics et dévoré par l'angoisse, incapable d'aimer vraiment, nuisible même pour son entourage, qui ne se prive pas de le lui reprocher ("tu transformes en or la misère d'autrui"): sa créativité, ancrée dans une névrose dont elle est à la fois l'expression et la thérapie, est incompatible aussi bien avec les exigences de l'action concrète qu'avec celles d'une vie émotionnelle équilibrée et d'un rapport harmonieux aux autres (dont il garde pourtant la nostalgie). Il est vrai pourtant qu'on peut parfois soupçonner Woody Allen de grossir ses névroses - qui ne l'empêchent manifestement pas d'être un créateur lucide et un travailleur acharné - , ou de sous estimer celles des autres: ses films auraient ils le succès qu'ils connaissent si les spectateurs ne se reconnaissent pas en eux ? Et peut-être est-il tout aussi légitime de nos jours de chercher à relativiser l'alternative "vivre ou créer" (et ses équivalents "vivre ou imaginer", ou même "vivre ou penser"), que la conjonction du romantisme et du freudisme a contribué à exacerber: il n'est pas sûr, tout compte fait, que l'artiste vive si mal, et que la tranquillité prétendue de l'homme que ne ronge pas le besoin de créer ne soit pas mythique. Il ne manquerait sans doute pas d'artistes et d'écrivains aujourd'hui pour prendre à leur compte le point de vue récent du romancier italien Antonio Tabucchi selon lequel le dilemme "vivre ou écrire", qui a longtemps imposé à tant d'intellectuels un si fort sentiment de culpabilité est en fait un faux dilemme: "la littérature n'est pas la vie, mais ce n'est pas non plus son contraire, affirme l'auteur de *Nocturne indien*. Elle fait simplement partie de la vie, comme tant d'autres choses. Personnellement j'aime les histoires. Les raconter et les écouter: cela signifie que les histoires elles aussi m'ont cherché, m'ont suivi, m'ont trouvé. Moi je les ai tout simplement

accueillies. Cela me paraît juste et naturel. Il faut accepter son destin" (*Conférence de Strasbourg*).

Il faut maintenant en venir à ce qui est sans doute le plus fascinant dans *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu*: l'ambiguïté (sans doute involontaire) de sa conclusion. Jusqu'ici nous avons pris le texte au premier degré, en acceptant comme une évidence que Frenhofer avait effectivement échoué dans son entreprise. Mais est-ce si sûr? On notera d'abord que Balzac lui-même a hésité sur la fin de son récit, et que dans une première version, en 1831, il lui avait donné une conclusion interrogative et "fantastique": personne ne parvenait finalement à voir le fameux tableau, dont on ne pouvait donc savoir ni s'il était génial ou raté ni même s'il existait, et qui restait, comme une image de la transcendance divine, inaccessible. Ce qui est certain, c'est que même dans la version définitive, le lecteur actuel ne peut pas ne pas être sensible au fait que Frenhofer commence par accuser Poussin et Porbus de ne rien comprendre à son œuvre: "vous êtes des jaloux... Moi je la vois, elle est merveilleusement belle". Leur aveuglement ne tient-il pas à ce qu'il a inventé un art qui est "en avance" sur ce qu'ils peuvent appréhender? Et plus précisément, puisque c'est cela qu'évoque la description de ce qu'est devenu *La Belle noiseuse*, un art abstrait, apparemment chaotique, proche peut-être selon Hubert Damisch des œuvres d'un Jackson Pollock. Frenhofer n'est-il pas en d'autres termes (même si Balzac évidemment ne l'a pas conçu comme tel) l'inventeur - bien trop tôt sans doute - de l'art moderne? Et sa démarche, qui l'a conduit dans un premier temps à réaliser une œuvre parfaite selon les canons classiques, pour dans un second temps, se mettre à la déformer, la déconstruire, transformer son ordre en chaos, avant d'en venir finalement à l'anéantir, n'est-elle pas l'anticipation exacte de la dynamique esthétique du 20^e siècle, qui partant d'un réalisme académique proche de la perfection n'a cessé de le "dépasser" et de le subvertir, pour en venir dans certaines formes de minimalisme, d'art conceptuel ou d'anti-art à une esthétique de l'autodestruction interrogative? Toute la question est alors, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, de savoir si dans un tel "dépassement" dialectique du passé, il y a bien, conformément à l'idée hégélienne et aux espoirs des artistes d'avant-garde, conservation implicite de ce qui est nié, ou s'il n'y a pas plus simplement perte brute, si le non-sens visé par les expérimentations de l'avant-garde est une forme supérieure de sens, ou un effondrement dans le vide pur de l'insignifiance.

On voit qu'on peut soutenir que le génie visionnaire de Balzac a involontairement anticipé sur les recherches et les tentations de l'art ultérieur. Dès la fin du 19^e siècle en tout cas, il est clair qu'une bonne partie des artistes choisissent Frenhofer, sa quête d'absolu et son perfectionnisme, contre Poussin. Certains se réclament même expressément de lui. On connaît la réaction de Cézanne, rapportée par Emile Bernard: "Un soir que

je lui parlais du *Chef d'œuvre inconnu* et de Frenhofer le héros du drame de Balzac, il se leva de table, se dressa devant moi, et frappant sa poitrine avec son index, il s'accusa, sans un mot, (se désignant) par ce geste multiplié comme le personnage du roman. Il était si ému que des larmes emplissaient ses yeux. Quelqu'un par qui il était devancé dans la vie mais dont l'âme était prophétique, l'avait deviné". Comment oublier en effet que la peinture de Cézanne est une quête sans fin, fondée sur un perfectionnisme obsessionnel (il lui fallait cent cinquante séances de pose pour un portrait !), et rongée par le doute, au point que un mois avant de mourir, en 1906, et alors que son œuvre était achevée, Cézanne écrivait encore ces mots incroyables: "Maintenant il me semble que je vais mieux et que je pense plus juste dans l'orientation de mes études. Arriverai-je au but tant cherché et si longtemps poursuivi? J'étudie toujours sur nature et il me semble que je fais de lents progrès". Faut-il rappeler également que le peintre aixois s'est heurté à une incompréhension complète du public (même Zola a fini par douter de lui, qui le prend comme modèle de Claude Lantier), et que comme Frenhofer, il s'est du coup isolé et renfermé sur lui-même: plein de manies et de phobies, alternant les accès de colère et les épisodes dépressifs, mais continuant pourtant obstinément sa recherche pour "faire de l'impressionnisme quelque chose de solide" et "créer un morceau de nature".

Encore Cézanne peignait-il beaucoup. Certains de ses contemporains, en particulier parmi les écrivains, se mettent au contraire à cultiver l'idéal frenhoferien d'une œuvre rare, difficile d'accès mais qualitativement parfaite, qui parviendrait à incarner, grâce à un travail acharné, la beauté absolue. Pendant des années, Mallarmé ne produit qu'une vingtaine de vers par an - mais des vers hyperdenses, à l'hermétisme délibéré-. Quant à Flaubert, il polit inlassablement chaque phrase de *Madame Bovary*, tout en gémissant et en maudissant son sort. Sa correspondance donne d'innombrables exemples de son acharnement et de ses souffrances, du type: "la tête me tourne et la gorge me brûle d'avoir cherché, bûché, creusé, retourné, farfouillé et hurlé de cent façons différentes, une phrase qui vient enfin de se finir. Elle est bonne, j'en répons; mais ça n'a pas été sans mal" (25 mars 54). Chez l'un comme chez l'autre ce perfectionnisme est associé à un profond pessimisme: la vie est décevante et le monde est laid, les bourgeois qui ont le pouvoir dans la société moderne sont vulgaires et bêtes, la science a désenchanté le monde et nous a révélé que le monde n'est que matière, l'art - c'est-à-dire la transmutation du désordre des choses en une forme harmonieuse dotée de sens et de beauté - est désormais le seul refuge de l'esprit dans l'univers qu'il a déserté, la seule justification authentique à l'existence. Jamais la mystique de la littérature en particulier n'atteindra une intensité comparable à celle qui est la sienne à la fin du XIX et au début du XX siècle, jamais elle ne sera vécue à ce point comme une vocation religieuse par des esprits qui se retirent du monde et tentent de

d'extraire de leur vie sa quintessence et de l'exprimer en mots. Flaubert, qui "aime son travail d'un amour frénétique et pervers", confesse qu'il y a des phrases qui le font "pâmer", et revendique son retrait dans "sa tour d'ivoire", à la recherche d'une beauté qu'il entrevoit "dans ses grands jours de soleil comme un état d'âme supérieur à la vie, pour qui la gloire ne serait rien et le bonheur même inutile" (*Lettre à Louise Colet*, 24 avril 1852). Mallarmé de son côté écrit que "le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre", Kafka que "l'écriture est une forme de prière", et Proust enfin que "la vraie vie, la vie enfin découverte et éclaircie, la seule vie par conséquent réellement vécue, c'est la littérature". La conviction que l'écriture est le moyen d'atteindre "le salut" sera encore dans les années 40 à l'origine de la vocation littéraire du jeune Sartre, qui tentera ensuite de la rejeter, en la dénonçant avec virulence dans *Les mots*, sans pourtant jamais atteindre la certitude de s'en être totalement débarrassée.

Concrètement les œuvres qu'engendre une telle mystique de l'art oscillent entre deux extrêmes: les uns rêvent d'une œuvre totalisante, sur le modèle de l'opéra wagnérien, qui parvienne à absorber et à exprimer la richesse infinie du monde. *La recherche du temps perdu* ou *Ulysses* sont des incarnations littéraires de cet idéal. Les autres font au contraire le choix inverse, refusent le gigantisme et la démesure, privilégient la concision la densité, la suggestion (en musique Mahler est d'un côté, Debussy et Webern de l'autre). Le cas limite de la seconde option est celui de Mallarmé, dont l'œuvre entière semble habitée par la fascination du silence et l'obsession de l'autodestruction. Non seulement elle donne pour thème fondamental à la poésie l'échec de l'entreprise poétique et la paralysie du poète, dans un monde vide de sens que hante pourtant encore le fantôme de l'idéal. Non seulement elle célèbre de façon provocatrice la stérilité, la frigidité, le refus de la vie. Mais elle se consacre à une célébration systématique du non-être, évoquant dans d'étranges sonnets négatifs l'absence d'objets qui pourraient être mais ne sont pas, comme la stèle de la tombe d'Edgar Poe ou comme le lit dans la chambre sur laquelle "une dentelle s'abolit": le pouvoir du langage poétique étant non de décrire le monde, mais d'évoquer ce qui lui manque, "l'absente de tout bouquet". Le plus étonnant est sans doute la démarche stupéfiante dans laquelle elle culmine, qui reproduit à certains égards celle de Frenhofer. Pendant des années, le maître laisse croire qu'il est en train de travailler inlassablement à un livre sublime. Il déclare dans une lettre célèbre de 1885 à Verlaine: "à part les morceaux de prose et les vers de ma jeunesse et la suite, j'ai toujours rêvé et tenté autre chose, avec une patience d'alchimiste, prêt à y sacrifier toute vanité et toute satisfaction, comme on brûlait jadis son mobilier et les poutres de son toit pour alimenter le fourneau du Grand œuvre. Quoi? Un livre tout bonnement, un livre qui soit un livre, architectural et prémédité, et non un recueil des inspirations de

hasard fussent-elles merveilleuses. J'irai plus loin, je dirai le livre, persuadé au fond qu'il n'y en a qu'un, tenté à son insu par quiconque a écrit, même les génies, l'explication orphique de la terre, qui est le seul devoir du poète, et le jeu littéraire par excellence". Ce livre des livres bien entendu ne peut réellement exister, et Mallarmé se contente d'avouer avant de mourir à ses disciples qui s'apprêtaient à fouiller ses papiers pour en chercher les traces: "Il n'y a pas là d'héritage littéraire, mes pauvres enfants. Croyez que cela devait être très beau". Au risque de frôler la mystification pure, la littérature s'abolit ici dans la suggestion de l'œuvre ultime, du mot qui résumerait l'univers, qui est son idéal obsédant et évidemment irréalisable: puisque toute création concrète est dérisoire par rapport à l'œuvre idéale à laquelle l'art aspire, elle préfère le silence - la célébration du rêve de l'œuvre qui "abolirait le hasard"-, plutôt que de se résigner à la médiocrité du relatif.

Mallarmé est l'un de ceux qui illustrent de la façon la plus spectaculaire cette dynamique qui pousse l'art moderne selon Blanchot à "vouloir sa propre mort comme l'extrême de son possible qui est la conscience de son impossibilité". D'autres artistes ont des démarches relativement comparables, et sont eux aussi à la recherche d'un absolu qu'ils espèrent atteindre en cultivant systématiquement la négation: ils veulent dépouiller radicalement leur art de tout ce qui en lui est inessentiel, rejeter toute référence à la réalité extérieure, ils n'acceptent à la limite qu'un art qui se conteste et se détruit lui-même. On pense aux premiers abstraits, Mondrian, Kandinsky et Malevitch, imprégnés d'un spiritualisme quasi mystique, qui donnent à leur entreprise la valeur d'une récusation du monde matériel objectif, et d'un dévoilement métaphysique de la réalité invisible qui lui est sous-jacente. Le dernier d'entre eux écrit notamment au moment de *Carré blanc sur fond blanc*, qui représente l'une des formes les plus radicales du nihilisme pictural: "Dans le vaste espace du repos cosmique j'ai atteint le monde blanc de l'absence d'objets qui est la manifestation du rien dévoilé". Chez certains de leurs successeurs minimalistes américains, c'est l'idée d'une purification de l'art par l'ascétisme esthétique qui passe au premier plan, comme l'atteste cette déclaration d'un de leurs principaux représentants, Ad. Reinhardt: "la seule préoccupation de cent ans d'art moderne est de prendre conscience de l'art en tant que tel (...) le seul objectif de cinquante ans d'art abstrait est de présenter l'art en tant que tel et comme rien d'autre, de le montrer dans sa singularité, de l'isoler et de le définir toujours davantage, de le rendre plus pur, plus vide, plus absolu, plus exclusif ". Et il faudrait encore évoquer les promoteurs de l'anti-art à la manière de Duchamp, les purs provocateurs dans le style de Ben, les nouveaux réalistes qui broient des violons ou des motos (Arman, César) ou les adeptes de l'art conceptuel à la Kosuth. Il est souvent tentant d'assimiler cette fascination du vide, qui aboutit à la limite aux toiles monochromes ou à de silence de Cage, à une forme de charlatanisme: ce serait oublier pourtant d'abord que

ceux qui la subissent sont d'une absolue sincérité, et jouent leur vie dans une aventure qui n'est pas sans ressembler à celle des anciens mystiques - nombreux sont d'ailleurs ceux qui, allant jusqu'au bout de leur fascination pour le néant, l'y ont perdue, comme Rothko, Yves Klein, et Nicolas de Staël-. Ce serait méconnaître aussi que ce qui peut se décrire sous un certain angle comme un vide ascétique peut l'être aussi sous un autre angle comme un plein: et que l'art moderne, au moins autant qu'un art "abstrait", est un art concret, qui nous met au contact des choses nues - les formes, les couleurs, les matières-, en cessant de les traiter comme des signes renvoyant à autre choses qu'elles. Sa force est précisément de nous apprendre à les regarder pour elles-mêmes, en s'ouvrant au mystère de leur présence brute, et de nous imposer de les sentir avec notre seule émotivité, sans chercher à les lire intellectuellement.

Il n'est évidemment pas question de réduire la modernité esthétique à l'obsession de la destruction et à la fascination de la pureté: bien d'autres traits la caractérisent, qui témoignent eux plus d'une vitalité exubérante que d'un désir de néant - par exemple le sens de l'inventivité formelle, le goût de la dissonance, le sens du rythme, le refus du pathos romantique. Mais la quête de la radicalité révolutionnaire et du dépouillement purificateur en est bien une composante importante, comme le reconnaît Umberto Eco, qui après avoir été, à l'époque de *L'Œuvre ouverte*, un des théoriciens de l'avant-garde, a fini par constater que le mouvement moderniste devait nécessairement rencontrer une limite: "L'avant-garde historique, écrit-il, essaie de régler ses comptes avec le passé (...) Après avoir détruit la figure, elle l'annule, elle en arrive à l'abstrait, à l'informel, à la toile blanche, à la toile lacérée, à la toile brûlée (...); en littérature, ce sera la destruction du flux du discours jusqu'au collage à la Burroughs, jusqu'au silence, jusqu'à la page blanche; en musique ce sera le passage de l'atonalité au bruit, au silence absolu. Mais vient un moment où l'avant-garde (le moderne) ne peut pas aller plus loin" (Eco 1987, 42). Eco ajoute qu'à ses yeux, "la réponse post-moderne au moderne consiste à reconnaître que le passé, étant donné qu'il ne peut être détruit parce que sa destruction conduit au silence doit être revisité: avec ironie, de façon non innocente". Le post-moderne (dont *Le Nom de la Rose* se veut une illustration) se définit donc par le second degré, le goût du clin d'œil, le mélange du pastiche et du sérieux. Encore s'agit-il là d'une position de repli en fait fragile: dans beaucoup de domaines, et en particulier dans le domaine littéraire, le recul des avant-gardes a surtout pour conséquence, plus que le développement de l'ironie et du second degré, le retour du pluralisme et de l'esprit de liberté, la relégitimation du plaisir et de l'émotion. De toute façon, dans la société de consommation, l'art perd peu à peu la position centrale qu'il a un moment occupée dans le devenir de la civilisation, à l'époque (en gros de 1800 à 1950) où il semblait être l'une des

incarnations du mouvement de l'Esprit vers la conscience de soi. Son importance se relativise, et il redevient une activité légèrement marginale, quand il n'est pas même considéré comme une simple forme du loisir. Ce n'est pas dans son champ en tout cas que l'on peut aujourd'hui chercher l'absolu, à supposer qu'il y ait encore du sens à mener une telle recherche dans notre culture. Les tentations et les vertiges du modernisme radical appartiennent à une époque fascinante mais révolue (même si l'on peut en avoir la nostalgie), et l'on revient presque à une conception préromantique, artisanale, de l'activité artistique: le talent surabonde, mais personne ne croit plus qu'un livre ou une toile puissent transformer spirituellement le monde, ni même assurer à leur auteur l'immortalité. Reste que de ces vertiges, on peut chercher à comprendre la logique: relire *Le chef d'œuvre inconnu* qui dès 1832 anticipe de façon visionnaire sur les tentations de l'art qui va venir, peut nous y aider. En dernière instance la signification ultime de l'œuvre consiste sans doute aussi à définir l'espace de l'activité artistique à partir des deux pôles opposés qui le structurent- celui de l'art consciencieux et sans génie de Porbus, celui de l'art romantique, perfectionniste et autodestructeur de Frenhofer-, entre lesquels il y a parfois place pour un équilibre presque miraculeux: atteint peut-être par exemple par Poussin, le héros du récit, et assurément, dans cette nouvelle comme dans bien d'autres moments de son œuvre, par Balzac lui-même.

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Antonela CORBAN*

The *Goldfish* and Other Klimtian Reactions to Viennese Art Criticism¹

Abstract: The paintings Gustav Klimt created for the University of Vienna, namely *Philosophy*, *Medicine*, and *Jurisprudence*, caused a scandal among the art critics and among the Viennese public at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The controversies held in the very auditoria of the university or the violent reactions in the newspapers regarding these paintings made the artist react in a most particular manner: he responded with a shocking piece, *Goldfish*, which treated each of the above mentioned groups with indifference, more precisely – and literally – by ignoring them, nay, by turning his back on them. This painting caused, in turn, an unending series of controversies, which ultimately lead to the rejection of Klimt's panels by the university and to their withdrawal by the artist.

Keywords: art criticism, tradition, modern art, beauty and ugliness

Viennese art criticism at the end of the 19th century

If we were to ask the question “What’s the use of criticism?” or “What is good criticism?”, as Baudelaire did in his review of *The Salon of 1846*, we would find that many of the answers that were acceptable then are equally acceptable now. Before it turned into an instrument of analysis, assessment and appreciation of the work of art, it was first a way of expressing the critic’s personal preferences. It is precisely those situations in which a critic tries to impose his own tastes or interests over the general public that the French poet has in mind when he writes: “How many artists today owe to the critics alone their sad little fame!” (Baudelaire 1992, 79). On the other hand, this is natural since, throughout the time, the art critic has not managed to present himself as neutral, detached, uninvolved: “to be just, that is to say, to justify its existence, criticism should be partisan, passionate, and political, that is to say, written from an exclusive point of view, but a point of view that opens up the widest horizons” (Baudelaire 1992, 80). The critic has always been in the position to choose: either to

* PhD “Al.I.Cuza” University of Iași, Romania & University of Burgundy, Dijon, France

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defend the old values and hierarchies or to embrace what was new at the expense of the values sanctioned by tradition. However, the most difficult step to make for a critic has always been going beyond the clichés about art created by others or even by himself and allowing himself to experience new possibilities.

What was instrumental in the dissemination of art criticism in the 19th century was the development of the press, which facilitated the publication of numerous articles, both on the imitative arts and on music, as well as on theatre and literature. By means of these publications, the art critic becomes an increasingly important figure in moulding the public taste. He is the defender of an artistic trend, be it modern, innovating, or conservative, as mentioned above. For this reason, the critics and the artists permanently interacted and influenced each other. It should be mentioned that starting with the 19th century, the discourse about art comes mainly from the critic (especially in the imitative arts and in music); it is a discourse that artists can no longer master.

Viennese art was several steps behind European art and was confined to the academic manner of representation. As no international exhibitions were organized in Vienna, modern European art was not known well. Therefore, art critics produced their discourse in outmoded fashion and terms. The situation was similar even in the German world of the arts in the first half of the 19th century. ("Berlin's Salons are irregular; there is no special exhibition hall. For some years, in fact, there has been no Salon at all. Admission is 50 centimes. It would be out of keeping to speak here of German art. With the exception of that extraordinary genius, Adolph Menzel, this art is inferior to that of France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Spain". Laforgue 1996, 199) The same can be said about the Viennese art and public of the time: "Regular art criticism was established in Vienna from the mid-1850s onwards as an important element in boosting the circulation of the expanding broadsheet press. In the earlier nineteenth century, only a narrow and mainly aristocratic section of the population had been interested in art. However, by the time the Künstlerhaus began organizing regular exhibitions of painting and sculpture in 1869, a growing, well-to-do middle class had become sensitive to the visual arts. This group needed information that would help them form their own taste and stimulate them to collect art". (Sarmany - Parsons 2008, 87)

In the European artistic circles, tradition had its say no later than 1850s; after this moment the new theories of art emerged and they influenced the artistic life, while the artists removed themselves from the influence of these traditional models which were ready to conform to the commissions of the state or church, which imposed the observance of certain ideological or stylistic requirements. However, this change happened in Vienna at a much later date than in Western Europe. It was the Viennese

Secession, founded in 1897, whose president was none other than Gustav Klimt, that achieved this artistic renewal.

The most efficient method the artists had in order to disseminate their ideas was to have their own publication, a magazine called *Ver Sacrum* and their own headquarters (Secession Building, designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich).

Here are some of the most important Viennese publications of the time, where the most heated debates regarding the new and older art and the relation between them were held: *Neue Freie Presse*, *Fremdenblatt*, *Salzburger Volksblatt*, *Montags Zeitung*, *Wiener Morgen Zeitung*, *Vossische Zeitung*.

Philosophy, the first Klimtian art piece that caused a scandal

In 1894, Gustav Klimt and Franz Matsch were commissioned to decorate the ceiling of the entrance hall of the new building of Vienna University. Klimt was to paint the ten lunettes and three out of the four panels of the faculties, with the themes *Philosophy*, *Medicine* and *Jurisprudence*. Franz Matsch was to paint *Theology* and the central panel, *The Victory of Light over Darkness*. These topics corresponded with the programme the university board had proposed, namely “the role of science and reason in society”.

Philosophy was initially presented in Paris, at the Universal Exhibition, where it was received quite enthusiastically. Its international success was also secured by the fact that on this occasion the painting was awarded the gold medal. On the contrary, in Vienna in 1900, when the panel representing *Philosophy* was displayed publicly, the university professors vigorously raised their voices against this painting, which they considered an attack on the academic art. Thus, 87 professors signed a protest against accepting the panel, as their expectations regarding it were entirely different. They would have wished a painting in the academic manner taking Rafael's *The School of Athens* as a model, where the thinkers should be represented as debating on philosophical topics or walking as the Athenian Peripatheticians. One of the professors even suggested a representation of the philosophers of all times, together with their disciples walking in a grove engrossed in conversation. (Schorske 1998, 219).

The Viennese artist considered such solutions anachronistic and unsuitable for the modern age and rejected them altogether. However, the representation of so complex a topic as “the human condition” which he finally chose and the manner he opted for – such a direct one – ended up in confusing and equally in aggrieving “the professors’ artistic ego; they did not interpret and rejected this humanity as a distortion and blasphemy of the role of science” (Hofmann 1970, 22).

As the artist himself believed, the representatives of the Faculty of Philosophy could not provide solid solutions to people, just as the progress of medicine does not alleviate people's pains and impotences, just as jurisprudence cannot protect them from the iniquities with which they are swallowed by "the goddess of revenge" (Hevesi 1984, 443).

Similar to Matsch's panel, the allegory of *Philosophy* should have represented "the victory of light over darkness", thus emphasizing the role of science; Klimt, however, produced a work that illustrates "the victory of darkness over everything else". In 1884, Hans Makart, the painter who had greatly influenced Klimt as a young artist, painted a piece with a similar topic (*Victory of Light over Darknes*) in the manner of the academistic art.

In his allegory of *Philosophy* and in the other two panels, Klimt's view of the universe appears related to that of Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation*: a world in which the will is a blind energy incessantly repeated as breeding, love and death, to which the Nietzschean will can be added, in the form the philosopher proposed it in his early writings.

Contemporary critics saw Klimt's *Philosophy* as "a dull, submissive, dreamlike mass, drifting indefinitely, for better and worse, in the service of eternal procreation from the first stirrings of existence to their feeble demise as they sink into the grave. This is briefly interrupted by an intoxicating moment of loving union followed by a painful process of drifting apart. Love has been a disappointment, bringing neither happiness nor knowledge. Fate, however, remains unchallenged. Far away from cold, clear knowledge and also from the eternally veiled cosmic mystery, the human species is forever struggling for happiness and knowledge, while remaining a tool in the hands of nature, a tool used for the unchangeable purpose of procreation" (*Die Kunst für alle*, München, 1900, cited in Strobl 1963, 152).

Peter Vergo considers that the Viennese artist owes his knowledge of Schopenhauer's ideas in Wagner from the composer's essay *Beethoven*. This was because Klimt frequented artistic, social and intellectual circles in which Schopenhauer's, Nietzsche's and Wagner's ideas were admired and often represented a topic for heated debates. Therefore, starting from their ideas, the painter attempted at a synthesis of their world view (*Weltanschauung*) and at solving the problem of the human condition in his own manner and with his own resources.

He provides minimal information on his personal view in the exhibition catalogue (it is common knowledge that he did not like to talk about his paintings); the entry in the catalogue, however, contains the compressed essential ideas: "On the left a group of figures: the beginning of life, fruition, decay. On the right, the globe as mystery. Emerging below, a figure of light: knowledge". (*Offizieller Katalog der 9 Ausstellung der Secession*, Wien, 1900)

Unlike other previous paintings, where idealizing and sublimating reality were meant to make it more attractive and desirable, in the allegories for the university he chose to present topics such as disease, despair, selfishness and their ugliness. The characters are positioned so as to indicate resignation and sadness at the world's distress and suffering. Thus, they seem caught in a swirl they cannot fight, but which they face together.

Since the paintings were destroyed in the fire at the Immendorf Palace in 1945, the only information available regarding the chromaticity in Klimt's paintings can be found in the texts of the critics of the time. Ludwig Hevesi's commentary, for instance, is extremely helpful. "Let the gaze move to the two lateral pieces, *Philosophy* and *Medicine*: a mystic symphony in green, a rousing overture in red, a purely decorative play of colours in both. In *Jurisprudence*, black and gold, not actual colours, prevail instead of colour, the line gain significance, and form becomes a characteristic that one must regard as monumental". (Nebehay 1979, 170)

The groups of art critics pro and anti - Klimt

The allegorical paintings that Klimt produced for the University, namely *Philosophy*, *Medicine*, *Jurisprudence*, gave rise to scandal among the more conservative academics.

The first issue raised by the critics was the clarity of the artistic expression. They supported classical art as opposed to modern art, as they considered that the latter tended to distort the human shape and present it as ugly. About a decade earlier, the same was said about Wagner in the article *The Unhealthy Art*, published in the issue of *Neue Freie Presse* of February 15th 1885, where it was claimed that his music would endanger the singers' mental health because of the "expression of the most diametrically opposed extremes of the emotional life" of the characters impersonated on the stage. (McGrath 1974, 238)

Beside the artistic complaints, there was also a different objection: philosophy was supposed to be an exact, logical, coherent discipline. The artist's image did not quite match this prerequisite imposed by Vienna's academics. On the contrary, they considered the painting as "formless, incomprehensible, a dream-painting, the exact opposite of genuine philosophy". Others hurried to express their viewpoint without even having seen the painting: I don't know Klimt. I haven't seen the picture. But I hate modern art so passionately that I avoid it whenever I can".

Whether accepted or loathed, *Philosophy*, when exhibited, gathered a crowd around it and became the source of debates, some for, some against it, some acceptable, some utterly aggressive. However, the final blow was struck by the group of 87 university professors who signed the petition to reject the painting.

One from the group was **Friedrich Jödl** who, in order to account for his attitude, said: “It’s not that I think the painting inappropriate for the university, it’s that I simply think it a bad painting... it’s not the nudity that offends, but the ugliness. Moreover, the dark, unclear symbolism, which no one can understand, contradicts the whole point of the work... We’re not opposed to nudity or artistic freedom, we’re against ugly art”.

Hermann Bahr is one of the main leaders of the modernist movement in Vienna and one of Gustav Klimt’s most important supporters. He is equally remembered for writing and publishing much to support the Secession movement. He was a person of great influence among the artistic élite. “He worked Vienna’s cultural networks shrewdly, he was a close friend with theater managers and editors, his reviews could make or break actors, and his own novels, essays, plays, flowed constantly” (Whalen 2007, 141).

Indignant at the academic protesters’ reaction, he sent a petition against them. He also strove to fight off the vehement attacks on Klimt and his paintings, which he published in a booklet entitled “Gegen Klimt/Against Klimt”, where he collected a number of slurs directed at the painter that had been published in the press of the time and refuted them, exposing them as ridiculous and groundless.

Hermann Bahr would remark that the whole argument around Klimt’s work was set against a more intricate contention between modern artists and the bunch of Philistines. This was a contention whose stake was “rather on the moral side than on the artistic” (Whitford 1991, 61). The idea that Bahr supported was that, generally speaking, at an initial stage, great artists are not understood by the throng and then their art becomes by necessity elitist. In other words, art has always set as its goal “to address the aesthetic sentiment of a minority of sensitive, elevated, noble and pure people; while the throng follows in at a slow pace, and slowly learn from them what the good and the beauty are”.

What was, then, Bahr’s main argument in Klimt’s favour? Firstly, he appreciated the earnestness with which the painter worked. He also claimed that the painter’s worldview may not be agreeable to everyone, but that does not preclude its grandeur. That is why the German critic would write: “That life is transitory is something every Austrian knows, (a profound truth within our misunderstood ”gaiety”), and no one has brought his truth before our eyes with more grace than Klimt. To him the tiniest things are the portals of heaven. Every truth fades into appearance. Whatever he touches eludes him, whatever he holds is transformed” (cited by Whalen 2007, 142).

Franz Wickhoff was a supporter of the idea that modern art requires and must practice a certain form of ambiguity. Viennese academism and its need for clarity in terms of expression would be faced

with precisely this type of ambiguity in Klimt's works for the university. As an art critic and historian, as well as a supporter of what was new, Wickhoff could, at the most, display a certain amount of leniency regarding the clear, easily decipherable pieces (which can be deemed as banale for modern taste). Jödl's reaction to Klimt's work elicited Wickhoff's strong discontent; on asking the question "What is ugly in art?", he offered an appropriate answer: "The layman is too easily inclined to find a work ugly if he cannot immediately dissect it as understandable". (Bahr 2009, 60-64) After all, he claimed, *The Sistine Chapel* and Phidias' *Athena* could be thought of as just as undecipherable.

It should be noted, though, that Wickhoff's speech "*Was ist häßlich?*", delivered in front of Philosophical Society of Vienna, was never published, that is why information on it can only be obtained from Hermann Bahr's text, who accessed it by means of the press. Wickhoff insisted on the mistake some of the art critics of the time were making, who equalled beauty to the art of the past, ignoring at the same time the "visionary progressivism" of contemporary art. "With no frame of reference by which to judge the merits of this avant-garde painting, popular opinion had condemned Klimt for exceeding common understanding, thus betraying the public's own parochial view of the world." (Bahr 2009, 64) The scandal raised by the conservative critics and the endless arguments around the painting *Philosophy* finally made Wickhoff to label them as ignorants.

In search for the answer to the question "What is ugly in art?", one should consider the frequent confusion between the beautiful or ugly subject of an art object and the beautiful or ugly work of art itself. Aesthetically, beauty has been opposed to ugliness along the time, and was considered its reversed image. One should equally consider the complex nature of this relation, since the opposition between them has been associated to other such pairs as *matter and form*, *life and death*, *good and evil*, for "ugliness may lie attached to life, to a different form of beauty, to a renewal of form" (Aubry, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 novembre 2007). For this reason, Raymond Polin considers that ugliness is the otherness (*alter*) of beauty.

E. Moutsopoulos even mentions a "lustful pleasure caused by ugliness, coming from the wish to break established idols and to institute an internal dialectic between the two categories" (Moutsopoulos 1976, 41-42). It is Klimt's very aim, who thus opposes the academics at the university and the type of art they promoted and encouraged. This would be explained by the fact that often artistic conscience opposes already established values; this opposition is associated with the pleasure derived from approaching what is forbidden and what is outside the realm of rules.

Umberto Eco remarked on the fact that tradition has set a considerable number of rules for beauty, and none for ugliness. This may be simply

because along the centuries ugliness has not been the choice topic for debate and there are few texts on it. On the other hand, it is a well known fact that ugliness has constantly raised the artists' interest: the satyr's masks in the ancient Greek comedies or tragedies, the monsters such as Medusa (representations through which ugliness is opposed to beauty). Through the very prerequisite condition of observing these rules, beauty is also bound to be confined to certain limitations, while for Eco ugliness is infinite, in other words, it is "more complex, more varied, more amusing." This remark supports Victor Hugo's statement that "the beautiful has but one type, the ugly has a thousand".

One of the most frequent confusing aspects is the association of ugliness of the represented object with the ugliness of the manner of representation, i.e. of the work of art. This association had been already remarked on and criticised when authors such as Aristotle claimed that "objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies" (Aristotle 2000, 7). We can, therefore, ask ourselves what precisely attracts us towards such works? What is usually emphasized is the perfection of the rendition or of the colouring, Aristotle poses as an answer.

The Romantics would say that distorted, horrible, even hideous things, when transferred in art, will become sublime, without, however, losing any of those aspects which define them as ugly. It is the virtue of the Romantics who ascertained that art cannot be reduced to the effect of beauty, that an attraction towards ugliness is parallel to an attraction towards beauty. In his volume *Aesthetik des Hässlichen*, Rosenkranz presents the way in which ugliness can be used purposefully, as ugliness and whatever causes horror can become objects for art. Thus, it can be said that ugliness and even repulsive objects receive an autonomous aesthetic status, as there is no further need for reference to beauty and its criteria. V. Hugo establishes the need to it as a modern man's feature to break constraining norms and rules and to lend ugliness and the horrible the quality of art.

Ludwig Hevesi is, in his turn, a supporter of Klimt and his art. He was equally a supporter of the Secession movement. A well-known art critic of his time, he wrote in the newspaper *Fremden-Blatt* between 1875 and 1910. Like Hermann Bahr, he played an important role in forming and educating the Viennese public's taste for art. He distinguished himself for his somewhat peculiar style and the critical method to approach topics. His greatest merit was that of happily combining the elements and features pertaining to historicism with those of modernism; his later studies indicate that "the evolutionary character of historicism and its changing interpretation during the period". (Sarmany-Parsons 2008, 87) This remark is important in that, as Ilona Sarmany-Parsons remarked, most of the books

published in the past three decades insist mainly on the opposition between the modernism of the 1890s and the conservative attitude and the antiquated element of the historicist art, while ignoring their continuity and complementarity. At any rate, his writings on art proved to be essential for certain authors who attempted at analysing the connection between the Viennese art of late 19th century and that of the beginning 20th century.

L. Hevesi considered *Philosophy* a masterful piece of art, a great vision that was misconceived. This is how the critic describes the painting: "We mediate at stardust, the swirl of atoms, the elemental forces in search for object that make all these tangible to us. Clouds of sparks fly around; each sparkle is a star, red, blue, green, yellow-orange or golden...The artist offers a colour harmony that sets the eye dreaming. At some point, from this chromatic display, a green cloud is gathering...An immovable stone face appears, as impenetrable as that of a Egyptian basalt sphynx ... It is the enigma, the image of the cosmic enigma, its approximation. Along this silent, covert face, a crowd brimming with life is moving. Charming children, youngsters with glowing bodies interlock, have the experience of desire and disaster, fight and struggle against human suffering, before rising again against the brevity of human life. Only the old man, head in hands, is sunk in these depths like a helpless clam [...] Klimt [...] commissioned to offer the allegory of the most mysterious branch of knowledge, found a genuinely pictorial solution to this problem.(author's translation)". (cited in Nebehay 1969, 212)

Klimt's answer to criticism: Goldfish

All these debates around the panels for the university, along with the repeated refusal to appoint him as Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, where he was elected in 1893 and 1901, aroused Klimt's discontent. Tired at what was going on, he created a piece entitled *To my critics*, whose name he later changed to *Goldfish* (1901-1902) at his friends' persistent request.

This painting would raise even greater discontent and bitter criticism at the artist. What, however, made Klimt's work such a topic for debate? The answer is in the fore-ground of the piece, where the gibbous buttocks of a red-haired naiad are represented, her head turned, looking over her shoulder, smiling at the audience; further to the back, the partially represented, less enticing back of the black haired naiad is painted. The other two female figures seen from the front have the same enticing smile. We immediately recognize in the posture of the naiad in the fore-ground the male equivalent in the allegory *Medicine*, where the figure on Hygeea's right stands with his back towards the viewer.

This was the answer the artist deemed appropriate to all criticism, attacks and denigrations to himself and his work. A rather slighting answer for those whom it was addressed to, hence their prompt reaction.

The goldfish in the title, although comparatively large in the painting, goes virtually unnoticed as a simple element of the background, while the diminutive fishes with their gilded heads are almost lost against the small decorative area placed between the female figures in the upper part of the painting. The manner in which they are represented is somewhat reminiscent of another painting, *Silverfish (Nymphs)*, 1899), where the fishes are the last element one would notice, as the eye of the viewer is caught by the two nymphs. Klimt had approached aquatic motifs before, in his paintings *Moving Water* (1898) or *Fish Blood* (1898); such manner of expression will be revisited later in *Water Serpents I, II* (1904-1907).

However, in all these painting the surprising element is the naiads' hair, a symbolic "weapon" with genuine seductive power. Several of the artists of the period (Beardsley, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Mucha, Toorop, Munch) had been fascinated by the female hair and placed much emphasis on the motif. It should be noted, though, that with Klimt, hair and the aquatic environment have strong sexual connotations: "At a time when respectable women kept their hair up and under careful control in public situation, the sight of such free-flowing hair held connotations of loss of inhibitions and unbridled sexuality" (Rogoyska, Bade 2011, 92). For this reason, the manner in which he presented sexuality and sensuousness in *Goldfish* (as well as in his other works) was seen as fascinating as well as threatening.

Finally, the artist decided to withdraw the paintings made for the university. In this context, he would explain to Bertha Zuckerkandl, a Viennese journalist: "The main reason for my deciding to ask for the paintings to be returned, do not lie in any annoyance that the various attacks might have aroused in me. All that had very little effect on me at the time, and would not have taken away the joy I felt in this work. I am in general very insensitive to attacks. But I am all the more sensitive if I come to feel that someone who has commissioned my work is not satisfied with it. And that is the case with the ceiling paintings".

At the same time, he makes the decision never to work on commission for a public institution again in order to spare himself any further ideological or stylistic restraints. "I've had enough of censorship. I'm going to help myself now. I want to break free. I want to get rid of all those unpleasant trivialities holding up my work and regain my freedom. I reject all state support, I don't want any of it... Above all, I want to take a stand against the way in which art is treated in the Austrian state and the Ministry of Education. Whenever there's an opportunity, genuine art and genuine artist are under attack. The only thing that's ever protected is feebleness and falsehood. [...] The state should not seek to exercise dictatorial control over

exhibitions and artistic statements; it should confine its role to that of mediator and commercial agent and should leave the artistic initiative entirely to the artist themselves...” (cited in Novotny/ Dobai 1967, 388).

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Klimt, *The Goldfish*, 1901-1902

Ramona ARDELEAN¹

The Problem of Human Consciousness Fragmentation

Abstract: The problem of human consciousness fragmentation is a critical approach of the fragmentary view over the world, whose main presumption refers to the fact that the Ego, the one who thinks is separate and independent towards the reality at which he thinks of. This way of thinking is the basis of the fragmentation of all our life aspects at psychological level as well as at the social one, the consequences being several psychological, social, political, economical, ecological and cultural crises. The revolution of the quantum theory revealed the impossibility to analyze the world in separate parts, showing that the universe is interconnected. The impacts of this non-fragmentary view are huge especially when referring to human consciousness which leads to the challenge if human being can suffer a psychological revolution equal to the one in physics which can bring fragmentation to an end.

Key words: consciousness, thought, fragmentation, conflict, ego, non-fragmentation

Introduction

An insufficient well-outlined and reflected issue in our contemporary society, but of crucial importance for the future of mankind, is the issue of human consciousness fragmentation and of her destructive consequences at social and individual-psychological level. In my opinion, this issue, highly important from philosophical point of view, is a very timely topic and presents a double interest and has double stake: 1. *theoretical*, interpretative, given by the “cognitive revolution” of the quantum mechanics, whose philosophical presumptions about the world go for a holistic, non-fragmentary logic, opposing to the vision of the contemporary society, tributary to the analytical and fragmentary way of thinking, conflict generator in the intra and inter-subjective space: 2. *practical*, psychological, offered by the implications of this non-fragmentary visions over the human consciousness, that leads to the following challenge: Is there the possibility that the human being suffer a profound “psychological revolution”,

¹ PHD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania, e-mail : ardelean.ramona@ichb.ro

analogue to the “cognitive revolution” in physics, which would bring to an end this fragmentation?

The most significant “cognitive revolution” of the XXth century belongs to the quantum mechanics, whose fundamental presumption states that the world is a coherent whole that cannot be analyzed in terms of separable reality – as the classical, atomist-newtonian physics states. Thus, „no system can be analyzed in parts whose properties do not depend of the state of the entire system – *quantum nonseparability*”². The world appears as a dynamic „cloth” of events interacting³ one with each other, in which properties are determined by the totality of the others, any of the parts suffering the influence of all the events that occur integrally.

This universal interconnectivity denies the existence of some fundamental constituents – „fundamentones” – unaccepting any fundamental existence, not at least principles or fundamental laws, which „represents a reply to the reductionism and fundamentalism of the modern analytical science ontology.”⁴ It is interesting to notice that through this holistic conception, the quantum mechanics comes closer to the Oriental philosophies vision – Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism - , whose plastic images about the world serve as intuitive support in understanding the fact that, in the universe, everything is interconnected and that nothing has essential character through itself, the properties of the part not being determined by any *fundamental, ultimate and separate law*, but by the properties of the parts of the whole. For instance, the metaphor of the canvas from Indra in Buddhism in which we are told about a braiding of pearls, thus displayed, so that if you watch one of them you can observe the others reflected in it. The same image appears in the mythology of Leibniz, here with each monad reflecting the whole universe.

Although the vision over the world outlined by the quantum mechanics implies huge meanings, the contemporary society functions still on the analytical way of thinking, mechanicist and fragmentary, generator of conflicts among humans. That’s why we need to be aware of the consequences highly destructive that this fragmentary vision implies at level of: Society – divided in separate nations, in economical, political, religious and racial groups; Individual – divided in distinct departments and conflictual of desires, goals, ambitions and beliefs. The natural environment – divided in separate parts that enter the exploitation of diverse groups of interests – the human activity divided in domains and specializations considered without any connection one with another. All this separation, all this fragmentation determines a certain degree of nevrosis, the base of

² Horia Roman Patapievici, Cuvânt înainte la *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, p.17

³ Global correlation is considered the essence of quantum reality

⁴ Ilie Pârvu, *Arhitectura Existenței*, p.231

numerous psychological, social, political, economical, cultural and ecological crisis.

The root of fragmentation is considered the structure of the Ego that I have approached from three different perspectives: 1. *The Ego as fragmentary thinking*, in which fragmentary is envisaged as separation of the thinking process by the thinking content – the vision of David Bohm physician⁵; 2. *The Ego as auto-separation between the observer and observed* – the vision of the Oriental mystic *Jiddu Krishnamurti*⁶; 3. *The Ego as Other, as imaginary and illusory structure* – the vision of the French analyst *Jacques Lacan*⁷. Implicitly or explicitly, all these three approaches have in common the fact that the structure of the Ego is the result of the identification process with something external, with a specific image, which constitutes a major source of fragmentation and conflict.

The current approach is an interdisciplinary tackling in which the talking points are brought from the area of quantum mechanics, of Oriental philosophy and psychoanalysis, to which personal arguments are added.

The Ego as fragmentary thinking – David Bohm

Regarding this aspect, David Bohm shows⁸ that as long as human finds himself as being *separate* by the rest of humankind, he will tend to defend the interests of his own „ego” against the interests of another „ego”. Also, as long as human *identifies* himself with a particular form – group, nation, race, religion, ideology etc. he will tend to protect the interests of such forms in a similar manner, which would lead to the perpetuation of fragmentation and conflict.

The main presumption implied in the fragmentary vision over the world is that the *Ego, the one who thinks, is separated and independent by the reality to which he thinks of*, presumption through which we separate the *process* of thinking by the *content* of it. As D. Bohm says, we are used to consider the

⁵ One of the most famous representatives of quantum mechanics to whom one of the most interesting and supported contemporary tentative is dedicated of remaking non-hierarchally the unit destroyed by the scientific thinking and by the other forms of knowledge–philosophical, artistic, religious etc.

⁶ J.Krishnamurti, originary from India, is considered one of the most authentic spiritual messengers of the contemporary world. His highly pertinent and transparent analysis over the human issues has gained an enormous consideration, being very well appreciated in the cultural and scientific, Western and Oriental environments. There couldn't be also ignored the huge dedication that physician D.Bohm gave to Krishnamurti's thinking. The dialogues between the two of them appear in two books: J.Krishnamurti, D.Bohm, *The Ending of Time* and *The Future of Humanity*, dialogues from 1980, respectively 1983.

⁷ J.Lacan is considered the most remarkable interpreter of Freud.

⁸ *Plenitudinea lumii și ordinea ei*, p. 38

content of thinking as „a description of the world as it is”⁹. Given the fact that our thinking operates with distinctions and separations, our addiction to use them, will make us see them as real.

Thus, the *confusion* between the *mental image* and *reality* ¹⁰will take place, which will lead human to the *illusion* that the world - the nature, the society, the individual – is in reality formed of fragments. For example, it is considered that the fragmentation of countries, cities, political, economical, religious groups, the war, the violence, represents the reality and that non-fragmentation is an ideal. Why so? Because the process of thinking itself is again ignored, and that human himself is the one who acting according to his pattern of thinking, led to fragmentation that seems to have now a separate existence, independent of his will or desire.

Thus, the dissolution of the relation between the thinking process and its content, needs to be made. I do believe that this dissolution has a crucial importance in the issue of consciousness fragmentation. The latter can be extremely difficult as our whole way of thinking is conditioned by the *analytical process*, which contains a subject who analyses, and an analyzed object, the subject or the analyzer being considered separate by the analyzed object.

The Ego as a Separation between the Observer and the Observed– Jiddu Krishnamurti

In this regard, J.Krishnamurti¹¹ shows that due to this separation we tend to ignore the process of thinking – the way our thinking works – and we concentrate our attention just over the *content of thinking*, *I mean only over the ideas, symbols, notions which replace thus the reality and tend to become more important than that.*

In other words, the subject projects over the reality a series of images – concentrating himself over their content – but what he ignores and does not see, being „blinded” by the own images, is the source of his look itself, of

⁹ Bohm considers that a theory is rather a way of looking at the world – and not a form of knowing the world as it is. As a way to see the world, this theory is the source of organising the experience and knowledge, getting closer to those categories a priori that Kant reminded.

¹⁰ This confusion resembles to the one about which Platon speaks in the Mith of the Cave, in which the ‘prisoners’ unable to watch the reality directly mistake the projected images on the wall with reality.

¹¹ Vision of Krishnamurti and the one of Bohm are essentially similar, both underlying the fact that the fragmentation resides in our ignorance regarding our way of thinking, ignorance through which we separate the content of our thinking by the thinking process that produces this content, the two aspects not being seen in the unity of their relation, but considered independent.

his own projection, I mean the process. That's why it's necessary we understand first the process of thinking, as it generates the separation.

Our thinking, as a process, has produced the content of our thinking – images, ideas, symbols to which the race, nation, religion, family, society, environment, culture conditions are added, but afterwards the thinking tends to separate¹² this content and conceive it as existing independently, which actually does not act so. The „trick” of thinking is that it separates, that it auto branches in observer and observed¹³, *analyzer and analyzed, thinker and thoughts*, all these distinctions being but an illusion because, as it can be observed from the new vision of the quantum mechanics, in reality, there is no entity separate by the series of thoughts, they being actually the one and the same thing, not two separate entities.

Consequently, I think that the relation between the process of thinking and the content of thinking needs to be clarified from the perspective of their unity, which means, as J. Krishnamurti indicated extremely clear, from the perspective of the „observer” and the „observed”. For this, the surpassing of the analytical and fragmentary thinking is necessary in order to make room for a non-fragmentary and non-accumulative vision, which is the total attention state and passive receptivity, non-discriminatory, which allows things to disclose from their within, without „the intervention of thinking, memory, desire, willingness or choice¹⁴” of the subject.

In this pure¹⁵ observation, there is no space or period of time and observed object, there is no attention not graft by time¹⁶. The profound consciousness of this fact, an extremely difficult thing, but highly intelligent, ends the fragmentation and produces a bounce, a psychological „revolution”.

The Ego as an Other, as imaginary and illusory structure - Jacques Lacan

Taking into consideration the fragmentation issue, I think that the *mirror state*¹⁷ – *stade du miroir* – of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan

¹² Maybe this separation is the result of the identification process of thinking with a series of images, ideas and symbols, seen as “real”. The fragmentation would be thus present not at level of content but at level of process, too.

¹³ J. Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, p.119.

¹⁴ W.Bion, *Gânduri secunde*, p.53.

¹⁵ This pure observation would be that non-discriminatory consciousness of thoughts without thinker, without the centre, the Ego, who judges, measures, condemns or censures etc.

¹⁶ At Krishnamurti, time represents the most profound conditioning of mind, in the sense that always thinking in terms of future and past, our mind eludes the present, the reality, what-it-is. This thing is excellently illustrated in *The Ending of Time*.

¹⁷ Considered the point of reference of the entire work of J. Lacan this one sends to the

is very useful in understanding the human consciousness fragmentation regarded from the subject *identification* process perspective, with the own image reflected – the primary image – which constitutes the cause of imaginary alienation, through which the *Ego* is originally speaking, *Other*. The *Ego* is formed through peer or reflected image identification – the ideal image – in which the *Ego* and the *Peer* form the prototypical dual relation, fundamentally narcissist, the narcissism being characterized by aggressivity as *rivalry with self*, in its trial to maintain the identification born in mirror stage.¹⁸ I do believe that on this *imaginary structure* of the *Ego* – as identification with the primary image, with *Other* – the temporal structure of the *Ego* is eventually built – basing on the secondary identifications with different images, ideas, symbols or personal experiences – this temporal structure being also our most profound *conditioning*, reason for which this constitutes a major source of fragmentation and conflict, as it studies divisions such as: „my country”, „my religion”, „my belief”, „my profession”, „I am American”, „I am Muslim”, „I am democrat”, „I am nationalist”, each „I am” confronting violently with the other.

Conclusions

As I have seen, the challenge of the quantum mechanics has shown the impossibility to analyze the world in separate parts. The world is seen like a coherent entity within every part is connected with all the others from the universe, each of them containing the totality, so thus an action created over another part is reflected over all the others – *nonseparability*. This fact led to a revolution of a way of reflecting and contemplating the reality, the latter having not been conceived in a static and rigid manner, in which the one who reflects would be separate from the reality he reflects to, but through a dynamic method, similar to a *process*¹⁹ in which the distinctions with which we were used to operate, those of the part-integral type, fellow-society, observer-observed, consciousness-material resorb and describe the unique process of an unfragmentated reality.

The implications of this non-fragmentary vision of the quantum mechanics enclose also huge meanings strongly related to the complete revalorification of all the reports: human-human, human-nature, human-

myth of Narcis, and to the identification with the own image as a source of alteration and alienation.

¹⁸ J. Lacan, *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience* in *Ecrits: A Selection*

¹⁹ The idea that reality needs to be understood as a process is old, the Oriental ontologies being significant in this sense, philosophy of Heraclit, and in modern times the ontology of Whitehead and D.Bohm.

society and human-universe. I think that the most profound and most revolutionary implication of this non-fragmentary vision over the world envisages the *human consciousness*, notably the awareness of the fact that the *Being-Me* – cannot be perceived any longer as *an individual consciousness, separate from the world consciousness*. Nonetheless, the human consciousness is perceived like a whole which does not include any longer „my consciousness” or „your consciousness”.

Understanding this fact, not intellectually, not as an idea, but as real as possible, understanding, that we, as individual consciousnesses actually struggle and suffer, and that the whole human consciousness struggles and suffers and lives within us – asking for her resolution – then the „unique tentative of the Ego to suffer would become something global and a totally different attitude would evince”¹⁹. We would then be aware of the spectacular „I am the World and the World is I” – *nonseparability*. From the profound perception of this fact, there is some compassion, love and this compassion affects the inner levels of human consciousness. This determines a profound inner revolution of the human being, a great psychological mutation in the human consciousness.

I do consequently believe that the philosophical presumptions of the quantum mechanics which led to the great „cognitive revolution” imply, given the *global intercorellation of the reality*, a „psychological revolution” which would put an end to the fragmentation of the human consciousness, given by the separatist-conflictual structure of the Ego.

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Delia ANDRIEȘ¹

The artistic comprehension. Interpretation and experience

Abstract: This paper aims at discussing some possible types of comprehending, i.e. interpreting and experiencing, the artworks. I'll separately approach different attitudes of interpretation, and also the particularities of the phenomenon of experience. The paper also categorizes the idea of succeeding, regarding the points of view of the author-artwork-lecturer as instances.

The study gives course to the idea that in the author-artwork-lecturer relationship, authorial assuming as a constitutive fact of the artwork is not sufficient, since the constitutive interpretation does not work in practice as it is intended to operate in terms of theory (which may be functional, following a rigorous argument). The artwork inevitably transmits, most of the time, more than the author intended to say, attention in the reception focusing on artwork's intentionality. This intentionality has a unitary meaning, independent, but based on the stake that the artist has started from (between intentional and spontaneous) wherein the creation process, depending on the functional way visual language elements are organized, and on the relationship between them in contact with the lecturer. This implies a coherence within the work (most often, but not always, due to the competence of the artist) that, once fulfilled, facilitates filling it with meaning in order to convey a specific significance (content).

Also, the paper claims that the artwork has its objectivity, meaning stability, consisting in the fact that it also holds certain intentionality. But subjectivity is manifested in the author's intentionality (in that it is indiscernible somewhere between autonomous consciousness and spontaneous consciousness), and at the level of the lecturer, that through individual steps, recovers surplus of meaning inherent to the artwork, on the assumption that this also means beyond authorial intent.

Finally, I emphasize once again that art addresses humans in a synergistically bivalent way, in conformity with its natural construction, both sensitive (empirical) and rational (cognitive), regardless to the artists priority stakes. These types of addressing can be discussed individually in the artistic discourse, but it never does manifest itself separately in the reception experience of the artwork.

Keywords: art interpretation, art experience, artworks reception, author-artwork-viewer relationship

¹ Ph.D student, National University of Arts, Bucharest

Today is often debated the situation of the gap between the aesthetic functions (between syntax and semantics), as well as the one of the divorce between art and public, caused by the limitation of the possibilities of the great public to receive with efficiency messages of art which has become too esoteric². It is a known fact that the current lecturer holds a code of perception, based on traditional values, and it is a matter-of-course that he should be outpaced from the attempts to promote new modalities of speech that however frustrates him from the inner enrichment that art provides. Such conflicts such as art and lecturer, on a reception level, appear every time when society exceeds a new stage of evolution and, along with it, the production of values³. The avant-garde reaction concerning the system becomes one of the main causes of alert and eclectic changes that comes from different art movements, which losses unavoidably communication with the public.

It is necessary to mention that in this study we consider to be important in the reception of the work of art its experience, not its understanding (more or less consistent with either the author's intention, declared or deciphered, or by any hermeneutical consensus regarding the work of art)⁴, understanding which, regarding this paper aims to discuss, does not condition the artistic experience, but it is an integral part of it, on different levels.

The discussions triggered by dividing the possibilities of reception (sensible and rational) of the artwork are known among art theory, but it need to be specified that the type of reception can't be reduced to just one of the relational possibilities between the artwork and lecturer, only at the level of the discourse of art, not in the case of the artistic experience.

Although from the perspective of receiving the work of art, nothing is exclusively conceptual or exclusively retinal, specific to a large chapter of contemporary art is conditioning the artistic experience at a comprehensive process, from where it results a kind of rational predominant relation between the artwork and lecturer (due to the expressive priority of the intentional text / discourse in the contemporary artwork)⁵. That is why it was necessary to dedicate this chapter to interpretation of the artwork, at the base of which lies in the most predominant way the rational type of work's addressing in the phenomenon of reception.

² Cornel Ailincăi, *Introducere în gramatica limbajului vizual*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2010, p. 15

³ Ibidem

⁴ C.C.E.C.A., *Arta și publicul nou*, Editura Artes, Iași, 2009 – Mihai Tarasi, *Arta și publicul*, p. 3

⁵ Ibidem

The rational reception. Interpretation

This framework of major changes in the art context involves a reorganization of the artistic vocabulary, which inevitably comes to sight to question the readings of the artwork.

If until the twentieth century, the reception of an artwork was fulfilled in terms of appreciative predicates of aesthetics, such as beautiful, sublime, magnificent, refined etc., depending so very much on the empirical reception of the content conveyed by message of the artwork, the artistic practice of the past century led to a forcing attitude of reviewing the aesthetic attitude and the reporting to the work of art, creating much confusion in terms of receiving it. This situation is due to the fact that the aesthetic relation of the lecturer with the artwork is connected to the traditional consensus regarding the artistic phenomenon, and the conceptual one crystallizes itself upon the contemporary art, after de 1970s (although a certain kind of conceptual relation is required to be recognized from the first movement of the avant-garde, initiated by Duchamp and the Dada movement, where the conceptual had to fill the void resulted from the lack of fulfilling the traditional aesthetic context). In this avant-garde ideological effect in which the discourse (text) is a priority, also the proletcultism from Russia (1918-1920) enrolls; and in the byzantine art a priority stake is placed on concept, but in a more complex way⁶.

This is where are known the discussions triggered by the sharing possibilities of receiving. Since the act of reception assumes that the perceived object is indisputable a work of art, the uncertainty of the hopefuls objects belonging to this title, has inevitably lead to a crisis in the field of reception, both in the case of the educated reader, and especially among profane public. In this case, we are talking about the act of reception in the context of a redefinition of art and of the modality to relate to it, based on reconsidering the parameters that delimitate the artwork. A fundamental theory of this is launched by Arthur Danto, through the thesis that to receive an artifact as work of art has to do with the way it is interpreted as such by a lecturer, in the context of the art world.

This type of constitutive interpretation argues that there is no artwork as such, but in relation with an interpretation, being transfigurative for the object which are turned into works of art - unlike the traditional interpretation that is explanatory and therefore dependent of the "is" of the artwork.

According to this new way of looking at things, the reception of the artwork is in an interdependent relationship with its interpretation. As a consequence of establishing this relationship, the philosophy of the

⁶ Ibidem

twentieth century has innovatively contributed to the interpretation of the artwork with an essential way of relating to a particular historical context. Following closely the development of artistic phenomenon in its postwar period, Umberto Eco published in 1962 "Open artwork", realizing, like Wittgenstein, that interpretation is relevant only in a certain context, thus its legitimacy to reformulate is practically limitless⁷. However, after almost thirty years, probably as a result of reflections that inspired all direct contact with the evolution of contemporary art, he expresses in his book from 1990, "Limits of Interpretations", a revised approach regarding indefinite opening to interpreting the artwork. Without explicitly withdrawing its thesis from "The open work", he particularly insists on "fidelity to the text", which automatically leads to imposing limits of demarche to the interpretation conducted by the receiving subject. He suggests that the interpreted text impose to its interpreters some restrictions, relying on the fact that "even the most radical deconstruction accepts that there are interpretations that are unacceptable and scandalous"⁸. Relating to Eco's theory of the three instances involved in the act of interpretation, author-artwork-lecturer, the aesthetic reception appears articulated in two opposite directions: one focused on the author's research intent, as it may be identified in the artwork, and the other, on highlighting those expressive elements of the artwork that were not expected at all by author (direction which, in turn, provides interpretation with other two variants: one, inspired by the analysis of the artwork reported to the context, another operated by the artwork approach from the perspective of a signifying system of the interpreter). In the practice of aesthetic interpretation we can distinguish three basic directions, one of which, according to Eco, always prevails, eclipsing all others:

1. The first modern theory of interpretation has phenomenological touches, being concerned with the genesis of the artwork and having as a main objective the disclosure of the "big secret" of the author on the path of intellectual intuition (Schleiermacher). Starting from the idea that the author is the authority in the genesis of the artwork, true interpretation becomes possible in this case to the extent in which the co-genius of the author and the performer is combined⁹.

2. The second stage of the modern theory of interpretation is characterized by nearly eliminating the intention of the author, asking the interpreter to regard only the artwork, reaching even total ignorance of the historical context in which the artwork was created. This alternative

⁷ D.N. Zaharia, *Estetica postmodernă I*, 2nd Edition, Iași, 2008, p. 206

⁸ Umberto Eco, *Limitele interpretării*, Editura Pontica, Constanța, 1996, p.15

⁹ D.N. Zaharia, op. cit., pp. 207-208

interpretation is rooted in the writings of Nietzsche, in which he considerably weakened the fundamentals on the thesis regarding the author autonomy¹⁰, as well as theories of semiotics inspiration, that of the structuralism and deconstructionism. This emphasis put on the intention of the artwork in the 60s-70s has made it possible for the interpreter to claim a previously unimaginable freedom, when it was strictly subjected to the author's intention. The evolution of pragmatic aesthetic theories of interpretation led to an uncontrolled explosion of interpretation and, in many cases, to interpretations in which the meaning either no longer keeps any connection with the artwork, or is completely absent. This strategy finds in part the structuralist method, which has the particularity of focusing the interpretation approach on the artwork, ignoring almost completely the author and his intentions. Following Derrida's thesis in Europe and Hills Miller's in America, it has been cultivated such a permissive attitude, so that no interpretation, no matter how fancy, is not considered illegal.

In extreme opposition lies R. Stecker's¹¹ rough and pure intentionalism, which allowed only one meaning for each artwork, namely that defined by the interpretation seen by the author himself. However, intentionality is not limited to the mentally project of the artist because, though what he is proposing to undertake is an important form of intentionality, both perception and belief can act as forms of intentionality. Intentionality also works as an indicator of well targeted relations from the spirit to the world. So we should not imagine the existence of mental representations that constitutes a kind of prototype of the artwork to be performed, as Benedetti Croce¹² thought, but rather a "intentional" genesis, in the sense of a "genetic-engineering"¹³ practice, that involves mastering inherent capacities in a creative way (in painting, for example, the author's intentionality approach involves the development of a project by the artist, adapting the means to a pursued purpose, capitalizing accidents that occur during its evolution, and so on).

3. A third type of interpretation which has gained ground currently requires a moderate version of intentionalism, called hypothetical intentionalism¹⁴, a term that suggests that one can not know for sure whether what is received coincides with the emotional intention of the author, but it although remains in an area where the author's intention

¹⁰ Ibidem;

¹¹ Ibidem;

¹² Benedetto Croce, *Breviar de estetică*, Editura Științifică, București, 1978, apud D.N. Zaharia, *Estetica postmoderna I*, 2nd Edition, Iași, 2008, p. 209

¹³ Schaeffer's verbal expression, took from D.N. Zaharia, *Estetica postmoderna I*, 2nd Edition, Iași, 2008, p. 209

¹⁴ Name given by Levison, took from D.N. Zaharia, *op. cit.*, p. 209

retains a decisive spot. The reason for which this attitude gained ground lies in the fact that it has the advantage of being in compliance with the decontextualization and recontextualization phenomena which play an important role in the artistic creation and the contemporary aesthetics of reception, as well as appropriationism procedures, quotation, disarticulation and recombining¹⁵ etc. The English aesthetician Michael Baxandall asserts with pertinence that “figuring out the intention is not telling what is going in the mind of the painter, but to build an analysis likely to shed light on the means available to him and his pursued goals”¹⁶. In painting, for example, the term of intentions does not apply to one that is painting the canvas, but to the canvas itself, assuming a causal analysis applied to the artwork considered as a product of an intentional act, analysis which consist with selecting a number of susceptible factors in which to explain why the artwork present itself in a way and not in another¹⁷. Provided that any conscious effort to identify factors stops, eventually, unable to distinguish between intentional and unintended, Baxadall leaves the last words to the “common visual experience” that each of the receiving subjects mobilizes it his own way. In this context has arisen the concept of unconscious intentionality, which covers intentional and voluntary behaviors with personal meaning, but which that does not base on a clear conscience of this sense. Maurice Merleau-Ponty performed in a similar manner the distinction between spontaneous conscience and reflexive conscience¹⁸, between whose poles extends and develops the homogeneous space of artistic intentionality.

This latter type of interpretation is the approach which we will use in this analysis, based on the idea that the meaning of the artwork (the intentionality of the artwork) is an impartial one, through the coherence which is implied to be inherent (in the case of a successful artwork), which precisely because it symbolizes, has potential for broader meanings than those intended by its author. Hence, the surplus of meaning is recovered by the lecturer, through the subjectivity of “mobilizing of common visual experience”¹⁹, either from the first contact with the artwork, or in time, but always keeping the impartial benchmark that does not exceed the intentionality of the artwork.

¹⁵ Watch the examples from D.N. Zaharia, op. cit., pp. 209-210

¹⁶ Michael Baxandall, *Formes de l'intention*, Editions Jacqueline, Nimes, 1991, p. 179

¹⁷ D.N. Zaharia, op. cit., p. 210

¹⁸ Spontaneous consciousness - self-consciousness that forms naturally in contact to another or to the object; Reflexive consciousness - consciousness through which we truly individualize as autonomous consciousness

¹⁹ Approached in the frame of the discussion mentioned above

We will discuss these concepts in more detail in the following, analyzing individual the instances of author-artwork-lecturer and the relationship between them.

1. Regarding the author, although the intention remains impossible to understand, as we previously saw, even when we have the opportunity to know it, it does not become a methodological norm of interpretation on the grounds that the artwork is from its principle more than just the author's intent. Moreover, its value is even higher, the significances it suggests are more numerous and far from the meaning intended by the author. In fact, a proposal can not be recognized as a work of art, as long as it doesn't tell us anything other than what the author claims, because in the later case we find ourselves in the plan of unequivocal message communication - of science or of everyday language²⁰.

2. The level of the artwork should be the focus of most our attention, as it provides much of what it is needed to be known in order to be interpreted. Eco denies the legitimacy of those interpretations that "say" more than the artwork permits, without postulating, however, that a work of art corresponds to one single variant of interpretation. Formulated in this way, the thesis appears to be one at least questionable, if we follow the specific phenomenon of contemporary art of involving the receiver in the act of creation till his indistinction of the author. In this case, the author remains steadfast in the discussion, because part of the artwork is allowing the lecturer to co-participate, this meaning being formed by the intersection of the artistic object itself and the involvement of the public upon it, as an artistically assumed fact of the author.

Although contemporary art does not have, at the level of the author's intention, the homogeneity that theoretical generalizations require, such as conceptual and stylistic consistency²¹, the artwork can always be identified by a specific intention, which functions independently from the author's will, intersecting or not with it, and which may be analyzed in terms of coherence. For example, the artistic specific of Duchamp's Fountain does not stand in the co-participation of the lecturer to the artwork's meaning, through the interpretation of the urinal as a work of art, but in the artist's intentionality to propose as art the combination of an object- the urinal- and the possible of reactions from the public. Therefore, Duchamp's artistic proposal resides not just in the urinal, but also in the reaction of the audience and the urinal, which together give rise to an artistic postmodern criterion: originality, in the sense of novelty. Regarding the intentionality of the artwork, it denotes possession of a certain kind of aesthetic coherence, based on the relational tension between the ensemble of the artwork (the

²⁰ D.N. Zaharia, *op.cit.*, p. 213

²¹ Umberto Eco, *Limitele interpretării*, Editura Pontica, Constanța, 1996, p. 19

object - not incidentally chosen by the artist, non-holder of aesthetic predicates, and the author's act of artistically assuming) and the traditional archive to which the artistic practice has been reported till then, received because of this coherence, which at a first sight is much harder to decipher. We can deduce that if the interpretation is inseparable from the artwork, it is no less inseparable from the artist, to the extent that the work is his creation. Therefore possible interpretations can not be infinite because they are limited to the situation of the artist in the world, hence the conclusion that there is indeed interpretative truth and a stability of the artwork²².

Explanatory interpretations (as opposed to the constitutive ones, discussed above) deal with works of art as signs, symbols or expressions of a hidden reality. Since the artwork is related to states of this reality, the interpreter must possess a certain code (psychological, semiotic, culturographic or otherwise). Rochlitz pertinently draws attention on the fact that the artist produces a system of signs which first point to one another, forming a whole coherent ensemble in which the artist admits the translation of the experience he wishes to symbolize²³. In other words, in the terminology of Mihai Tărăși²⁴, in a succeeded artwork, there is coherence between the structural elements among themselves, and between them and the relational ones, coherence which facilitates filling of the artwork with meaning. The artist can not foresee all potentialities, interpretations or possible applications of the scheme that it produced: "to know how to produce an aesthetic coherence and to know how to translate it in terms of theory or interpretation, these are two separate skills"²⁵. This partial discrepancy between the creator's intention and the interpretations that the artwork reveals, appears with maximum evidence regarding artistic symbols, whose semantics is sedentary in time, in close connection with the life experience of a particular human community. Even if the artist can demonstrate a well-defined purpose that makes use of the symbol, this symbol will work without any information about the author's intention. This is, in fact, what distinguishes the painted artwork of a simple pictorial illustration of a practical guide, or a literary of a newsletter²⁶. In another

²² D.N. Zaharia, op. cit., p. 218

²³ Reiner Rochlitz, *Subversion et subvention, Art contemporain et argumentation esthétique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, apud D.N. Zaharia, *Estetica postmodernă I*, 2nd Edition, Iași, 2008, pp. 218-219

²⁴ Mihai Tărăși, *Sens și expresie în arta contemporană*, Editura Artes, Iași, 2006, watch chapter I.2., p. 36 - regarding the directions of addressing structural and relational, as well as chapter I.3., p. 80 - About meaning

²⁵ Reiner Rochlitz, *Subversion et subvention, Art contemporain et argumentation esthétique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, p. 100

²⁶ D.N. Zaharia, op. cit., p. 219

chapter we will discuss these differences, the distinction between signalization and symbolization, as well as the distinction between communicational function of art and that of document.

The creator of the artistic symbol can not control its possible interpretations, because this doesn't signifies directly and unequivocally - otherwise its significance could be transmitted without resorting to this medium which is the artwork. What constitutes the work of art is not the signification as such, but that "significant aesthetic coherence" made by the artist and opened to main regenerative interpretations²⁷. Paul Ricoeur (1913-1998) said about symbols (applies to works of art in general) that "they say more than they say"²⁸, therefore successful artworks incites to interpretation even in borderline cases where authors (or artists like Warhol or minimal artists) have developed them as transparent and discouraging for a possible interpreter. This type of interpretation is known as constructive or reconstructive, focusing on elements involved in the work's aspiration to aesthetic success²⁹.

3. P. Francastel believes that "there is no fair vision, nor accurate reading or signification, independent of the existence of a group capable of interpreting the artwork"³⁰. Finally, the third instance constituted by the lecturer, which enables reception and the interpretation of the artwork, complementing its communication function, is the one which contemporary art imposes a high level of competence in the reception approach, understanding and interpreting the artwork, often on a higher level than that of the contemporary artist. When we talk about interpreting the artwork, we are dealing with a type of relational addressing³¹, due to the possible recovery by the lecturer of discursive meaning of the artwork (the message), terms usually used in rationalizing in a hermeneutical way the existing elements in the artwork. Because the aesthetics and concept are not attributes of art, but of men (as well as beauty and ugliness), and their operationalization is mainly present in the experience³², implicit in the reception, one of the reader's attributes is that he completes, most of the time, by his own experience, the lacking zones caused by the author's ideas' reductivity. In other words, he recovers, as we mentioned in the previous point, either the lack or the surplus of meaning of the work, without exceeding its interpretation parameters, if we find ourselves in the case of

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 220

²⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation*, Edition Le Seuil, Paris, 1965, p. 76

²⁹ D.N. Zaharia, op.cit., p. 222

³⁰ P. Francastel, *Figura și locul*, Editura Univers, București, 1971, p. 11

³¹ Watch Mihai Tarasi, *Sens și expresie în arta contemporană*, Editura Artes, Iasi, 2006, chapter I.2., p. 36 - regarding the directions of addressing structural and relational

³² Ibidem

successful reception. He constitutes a dialog partner able to project their personality more active and effective over the artwork, extracting its suggestive elements, but subjected to artistic initiation, his chances to receive the artwork more accurately increases significantly, because “who enjoys a more vivid conscience of the reasons, enjoys fuller and deeper”³³. Therefore, developing a method of study and of interpretation of expression visual forms should start from the knowledge of the principles, methods and procedures that make up the contemporary methodology of arts³⁴.

Adopting the view that knowing the laws of art is useful to receipting it in a more complex way, we deduce that the more alienated the lecturer is from the knowledge of art, the more skeptical and inflexible he becomes, always willing of mechanical decoded recipes, without any involvement, fact that would lead to the instauration of a new dogmatism about things. Therefore, the lecturer should contribute in the act of interpretation with his own judgment, based on a cultivated aesthetic sensibility that is not necessary unless he wants that the chances of success in interpretation become higher.

*The aesthetic perception (empirical/ retinal/ sensitive). Experience*³⁵

It is required to note that the act of reception is accomplished automatically at the contact between the lecturer and the artwork, regardless of its training and competence, but the quality and the complexity of the reception experience are often directly proportional to the visual education of the lecturer and with his art elevation degree.

In the framework of sensible perception, it is required to raise in discussion a fundamental human quality: visual perception, feature that influences to conditioning our way to relate to the surrounding reality. This means that the way in which man reports visually to the objective reality relies in determining relations caused by the direct action of objects and phenomena upon the sense organs (in the framework of discussion, sight). This causal relationship is enrolled into the mechanisms of human visual apparatus, also corresponding to the inherent structure of human construction that works automatically, regardless of reason or emotion, often causing their reaction. So, in terms of perception, there is a code situated in the common structures of all men, which functions as a

³³ Tudor Vianu, *Estetica*, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1978, p. 38

³⁴ Cornel Ailincăi, *Introducere în gramatica limbajului vizual*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2010, p. 25

³⁵ Result of human interaction with the objective world, reflected into consciousness, intentional infliction of a phenomenon in order to study its phases of development; www.dexonline.ro

perceptual predisposition that comes in contact with stimuli, certain emotional states and associative reactions³⁶.

If this faculty is not a native “gift”, collective unconscious, it certainly has become a “given” accumulated over time³⁷, as a mark of progress. To illustrate, we take the well-known case of simultaneous contrast, which Johannes Itten³⁸ (1888-1967) had theorized experimenting the phenomenon of colors for years with his students at the Bauhaus University of Zurich. Although physics gauges do not record any difference, the human eye perceives a certain quantity of neutral gray juxtaposed on yellow, as violet (its complementary)³⁹. This is due to the natural human need to achieve harmony inscribed in him, by equivalence on the outside. If human was created harmonic, his way of seeing is, in turn, harmonic, and therefore his perception availability tends to harmonize what it sees. Deciphering a visual form of the harmonic code was done for artistic representations, and assumed, from authorial perspective, the use of the communication acts in a retinal way, in highlighting the support of an ordering network line⁴⁰.

Rudolf Arnheim speaks about tensions and directions⁴¹ in a dynamic of a framework, which is triggered when an element is inserted in an attempt to regain equilibrium. In the receiving device of the lecturer, the perceptual phenomenon happens due to non-compliance of inherent harmonics needs, which causes imbalance, the sensation of restlessness. These events resulted in the author-artwork-lecturer relationship, in two types of incarnation of the conveyed content: a harmonic structure, corresponding to human immanent structure, and one extra-harmonic, or intentionally used by artists stakes to produce a particular type status, or accidentally, that state being as well received, no matter what the artist's stake. By virtue of this fact, we note that although a big part of contemporary art launches artistic productions with conceptual stake, the visual apparatus of humans receives automatically the visual organization of the artwork's framework, this being an important element in artistic perception at the experience level, even if the artist does not assume it as

³⁶ Mihai Tarasi, op. cit., p. 44

³⁷ Idem, p. 42

³⁸ The results were published in 1961, in the volume *The Art of Color: The Subjective Experience and Objective Rationale of Color*, (original title: *Kunst der Farbe: Studienausgabe* by Johannes Itten, Otto Maier Verlag, Ravensburg, 1961 and 1973)

³⁹ We can find other examples of the chromatic functioning of human visual perception in Liviu Lazarescu, *Culoarea in arta*, Editura Polirom, Iasi, 2009

⁴⁰ Watch Mihai Tarasi, *Sens si expresie in arta contemporana*, Editura Artes, Iasi, 2006, p. 49, the example from Charles Bouleaux, *Geometria secreta a pictorilor*, Editura Meridiane, Bucuresti, 1979

⁴¹ Rudolf Arnheim, *Arta si perceptia vizuala*, Editura Meridiane, Bucuresti, 1979, p. 19

expressive priority in his artistic approach. Therefore, what does the lecturer receives, at an experience level, is the coherent ensemble between visual elements and message layout of the artwork, whose succeeding facilitates the emergence of a sense/meaning of the artwork, able to properly target communicated content⁴².

The reception experience of an artwork, although it is firmly rooted in the way our visual apparatus makes us, does not exclusively imply that determination. In the act of reception, there is also a number of personal factors involved, highly subjective, pertain to each individual how to get connected to the world around, but also rational, by the human tendency to always explain what he sees, amounting to an important size to the reception act. At the level of phenomenon experiencing, the retinal reception, emotional and rational, happens in a synergetic way, their delineation being possible only in a theoretical discussion.

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- www.dexonline.ro

⁴² Not to confuse the communicational content with the message (discourse) of the artwork, which is, in its turn, a vehicle of the communicated content

Marius CUCU¹

Critical Discourse on Art in H. G. Gadamer's Opinion

Abstract: Understanding a work of art implies, in the hermeneutical vision of H. G. Gadamer, a spiritual consubstantiality with the artist, an emotional and meditative joining with the dimension of his individuality. To remain strictly objective in front of the creative aesthetic procedure means you fall outside its supreme meanings, it means the exile outside the profound message of an artistic creation. Thus, the critical discourse on art may not be well founded than inside it, gravitating round the act of empathizing with the artist's experience, an artist who is always a pilgrim on the roads leading him towards the ideal of the beauty.

Keywords: work of art, critical discourse, celebration, empathy, beauty, spatio-temporal suspension, aesthetic co-participation.

The harmonic ideal of beauty seems to represent, for all ages of human development, the fundamental bench whose touch was assumed as a primordial mission by the phenomenality and the creative dynamics of the artistic procedure. The work of art can be analysed in the complexity of its endless aesthetic and metaphysical valences not only from the artist's paradigm, but also from the point of view of the one who contemplates it, the latter being included in the open flow through the exposure and the aesthetic appeal of the work concerned. On this perspective and on the opportunities for such a positioning to become a *critical discourse about art* also concentrates the analytical procedure developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer in one of its works of reference, the study *The Actuality of the Beauty*. Gadamer's metaphysical perspective of the art phenomenon shows, during the development of researches in this study, the location of the aesthetics' fundaments in the dialectics of the human interrelations, dialectics that finds its most revealing manner of materialization in the reality of the celebration. Thus, the German thinker tries a thorough understanding of art from a prior research pointing the charismatic presence of the celebration procedure throughout the whole human history. The attempt to avoid the dreadful spectre of terrifying loneliness imposed to the human being the

¹ PhD Lecturer, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania; mariuscucu35@yahoo.com

development and the taking over of acts of communion over the simple social association. It would be possible that the feeling of loneliness may not have known the maximum reduction through the simple existence in common. Thus, the construction of the procedure of *celebration with the others* has established itself as a viable solution to the human loneliness crises, as a superior reply given to the anxiety generated by the isolation and by the idea of a possible abandonment of the human being in the infinity of a glacial cosmos. The common element that seems to characterize any experience of human celebration, regardless of time and location, seems to be, in Gadamer's opinion, the rejection of any type of closing and exile for an individual against the other individual. Therefore, the celebration can be understood as an overflow of the alterity's manifestations. No matter what is celebrated, what is evoked and always relived in the act of celebration, what is really important is the fact that the presence of the dynamism of the alterity, of the interrelation imposes itself as an unavoidable constant. The celebration carries with it an obligation to inter-connection with the others, and, unlike the cohabitation, it seeks for *a common empathy*, in order to commonly experience the most intense emotional and mental processes. Thus, those who are celebrating are not only living in a community, but they also assume an exuberance of a common moment of ecstatic uplift. The other participants in the celebration are more than just co-inhabitants of an amorphous *topos*. They are caught in a fraternity of spiritual ecstasy. Gadamer tells us that the celebration represents the communion in its full shape. It is calling on all persons, and addresses to all those who walk in the dimension of its spiritual attitudes. Anyone who does not take part in the celebration, anyone who refuses it, turning his face away from its call, becomes an excluded one, an uncomprehending one, an ignorant in relation to the experience given by the act of the celebration (Gadamer, 2000, 110). Of course, there are other human activities which cannot be realized otherwise than by gathering people. Thus, hunting, agriculture or industrial production would be impossible without the presence organized into crowds, groups of several people. But Gadamer senses that, in these examples, people are individualized, separated by their statute and their mission in the framework of such occupations. They work together but are spiritually separated, closed one in relation to each other, each one being concerned only of his way and of his mission, by the task that must be carried out in the work and in the effort in question which he has assumed as an individual task seated next to other individual tasks. The celebration act imposes, on the contrary, the stopping of day-to-day activities, the cutting-off of the mundane rhythmic effort. Together with this stopping for celebrating, the gathering of people acquires a superior valence, which means an internal opening of each one to the other and in particular of each other towards a common point, namely to what should be celebrated.

During the procedure of the celebration, we are not separated anymore from each other, but we are at the level of an emotional co-substantiality, becoming a common part of a single stream of spiritual ascendancy (ibidem, 114).

Inside a metaphysical and hermeneutical perspective, H. G. Gadamer will indicate that there is a connection between the procedure of the celebration and the artistic act. More precisely, we are talking about a vision of the two, for which it finds a common binder. Thus, the celebration can be regarded as an art, as an artistic manifestation and, in its turn, the art can be received as a high celebration of the spirit. For Gadamer, most forms of manifestation of celebration are artistic. They include habits, traditions and *festival orations* which are anchored in the sap of the art. The German thinker will evoke here that, often, these speeches may be exceeded in meaning and emotional impact by the *celebration silence*. The special silence is easily noticed, in particular, in the case of the impact of our perception of the artwork. When we are surprised, amazed by the magnificence, by the harmonic beauty which postulates in front of us, in the opening of the presence of consciousness which defines us in the form of the artwork, our spirit is celebrating, it is celebrating alongside with the others the meeting with the transcendence of the sublime. Such a meeting could induce the feeling of a spatio-temporal suspension, of an evasion from the paradigm of the daily life towards altitudes that are non-reachable in the absence of art. Here, *the silence* imposes itself as a unique status of response, of reply to the call and the location in the foreground of the artwork that is meeting and assimilating the admirer's consciousness. Gadamer will ask himself, however, if this silence is a common silence or if we are witnessing a particular type of discursive introspection, to an original critical discourse on aesthetics. Does such a silence not say more than any shouting? Does it not talk more intensely about the artwork that is exposed; does it not express ideas and analyses more deeply than the saying of oratorical guidance? If the celebration of the art constitutes a loss of consciousness in the mirage of beauty, the silence enveloping the contemplator's fascinated face does not render a critical message much more eloquent about that proper work of art than the simple vociferation of a presentation which wants to be relevant? If for the German thinker, many of the celebration forms may be perceived as artistic manifestations and certain creational artistic presences can be thought out and assumed as reasons of celebration, and more specifically, as sources of spiritual celebration, then each participant in communion at the celebration of art lives this experience like any important celebration and one of the primordial features of the real participation to a celebration is *the integration* in its time and space. The phenomenon on the integration in the spiritual harmony can get, at the level of the aesthetic experience, the connotation of

a *re-integration*. Thus, the contemplator of an artwork is often hit by an exuberant state of mind which brings him back to an Edenic area of the spirit, area which he forgot, as captivated by the everyday world. The escape through contemplation of an artwork from the profane field looks like the split with the anchorages in materiality evoked by the ancient mythology that saw in the earthly existence a damnation (Eliade, 1993, 43). *The time of art*, evoked by Gadamer, looks like, from this perspective, the sacred time often evoked by Mircea Eliade. Thus, the meeting with the artwork also represents the opportunity of a grandiose interior release, the acquisition of this ecstatic freedom being celebrated by the contemplator's consciousness. Also, this temporality attributed to the art may be also compared to the special time of the *Utopia* which Henri Bergson understood as an agglomeration, an intense mixing of the past, present and future (Bergson, 1998,136-137), in essence these three dimensions being exceeded and suspended by a fourth dimension, the special time of the artwork.

Therefore, in the aesthetic experience of assuming a work of art, the normal time and space are abandoned by the human conscience in the projection towards a new spatio-temporal framework, where every moment is lived much more intensely holding a degree, an increased level of energy and eidetic intensity. The admirers who station thoughtfully in front of a work of art become the witnesses of their own skip over the everyday banality towards the openings of the transcendence. This leap is a celebration of an aesthetic order which does not dissociate, does not disintegrate at different moments and does not differ from a contemplator to another. Although that work of art is perceived by each one in his/her own way, however all these members of the aesthetic celebration form a common body, a unit of immersion and assumption of the beauty displayed here. They are similar to the public of a concert who is also feeling the music as a whole, as an indivisible flow which calls up a consistent crowd, a homogeneous group, stimulated and released towards the ascendancy of the spirituality opened through art (Gadamer, 2000, 112).

In Gadamer's vision, *the art as celebration of the human spirit* is exposing itself through artistic works in front of the contemplator as a whole, a nucleus which shows itself as stable, imperturbable, without modulations and segmentations. Like an organic being, the artistic phenomenon touches and envelops unitary the human consciousness, brightening it and giving it high prospects on its own existential meaning. Through art, the human rediscovers the deepness of his soul, the forgotten abyss of his telluric inner self. The contact with the work of art is the meeting with a self-contained unit that gravitates round its own structure of metaphysical meanings and tensions. For Gadamer, the work of art is like *an organic unit*, in the sense of an elaboration bearing the signs of spiritual life of the creator artist (Ibidem, 114). By encountering the work of art, we encounter the spectrum of its

creator and we dialogize with his artistic vision, assuming not only the aesthetic message, but also the time of that artwork. Listening to a music part, we integrate to its tempo, reading a poem we anchor the aesthetic perception of its tone, of its tact, getting through a temple or another magnificent building we will relive that past time in which have been constructed these buildings. In essence, any genuine reception of a work of art requires, from the German thinker's point of view, an acceptance and a receipt in our sensitivity of the universe of that work as a spherical unmodifiable unit, always exposed to new interpretations (Ibidem, 116). Thus, for an authentic contemplator, a work of art must be in possession of his/her conscience, for being partially but actually understood. That *silence*, evoked by Gadamer, that needs to happen when in front of an important work of art is therefore an *internalized critical discourse*, an analytical discourse oriented towards the inner of the conscience in the research of the work of art. Such an internalized discourse implies, Gadamer says, a co-participation of the one who admires it to the demiurgical effort of the creator. Contemplating or listening to a work of art, the admirer experiences a sensation of meeting not only the other admirers but also the artist in the sense of experiencing of the edification of the respective work. He has a feeling that he himself has painted the canvas, that he writes the music part or the poem, that he builds the temple with the painter, composer, poet or architect and the manufacturer. His critical discourse on the work of art comes to accompany the creator thought of the artist, it occurs on the position of *co-participation* to the aesthetic demiurgical act. Outside of this attitude of co-work together with the artist, any analytics drafted, any discourse that is supposed to be critical on the aesthetic phenomena can be easily a surface structure, irrelevant to identify and highlight the deep meaning of a work of art. In H. G. Gadamer's vision, a critical discourse on the artistic phenomenon must appear from the soil of the *empathy* with the creator artist, from the tensions of a setting on the place and the ontic, affective and mental position of that artist. Without attempting re-living his emotional tension and re-meditating on the themes that have marked him, it is impossible to develop an actual analytical vision on the creation in which the artist has fully invested and expressed himself. Empathizing with that creator of the artwork essentially means recalibrating the rhythm of your own consciousness to the level of the spatio-temporal dimension indicated by that creation. That meta-time in which are agglomerated in a crepuscular uniformity the present, the past and the future, that meta-space in which are merging the real and the possible locations under the sign of a unitary and lonely place encircles and carries off the sensible and aesthetic internality of the contemplator (Gadamer, 2001, 102). It is only on the positions of the experience of this carrying off that the contemplator of art may establish a real critical discourse, a genuine analytics on the artistic creation that

exposes itself; it is placed in the foreground and in the inquiring opening. Gadamer will accentuate here the idea of the understanding of the phenomenon of art by the approach of the creator aesthetic procedure to the contemplator's subjectivity. It resumes, in a hermeneutical context, the Kantian thesis that interprets the presence of beauty as *finality without purpose* in the sense of a subjective investment of the beauty, in the sense to understand all the generations of beauty as reasonable appearances in our interior structure, in the aesthetic sensitivity of our inner self (Kant, 1995, 39).

At this point, we encounter dialectic, a circular flow in which the work of art is appealing the contemplator's consciousness only in so far as this one is mirrored, recovers its ideals of beauty and harmony in the dimension of that work. We can say, at the interpretative limit, that outside this telluric connexion which H. G. Gadamer sees in the act of co-working, meditative and emotional gathering between the contemplator and the creator, it is impossible to effectuate a profound aesthetic analytics, to develop a research that offers truths and that is not only searching for them. In this way, the discourse on the work of art can only be performed on the inside of the dimension opened by it, the subjective factor being invested, in this context, with more importance than the objective one, the latter only noting the presence of the artistic side, without really getting thoroughly into it. Only in such a situation the art will be perceived as the high celebration of the spirit.

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Ciprian JELER¹

The critical role of time in the interpretation of multi-level natural selection

Abstract. This paper attempts to show that considerations of time can play an important critical role in the way we interpret multi-level selection scenarios, i.e. scenarios involving evolutionary change in biological populations that is caused by selection processes operating at different levels of biological organization. The interpretation of multi-level selection scenarios that will be criticized here using considerations of time as a critical instrument is the one I will call ‘the double selection-for’ view of group selection, defended by Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson. The types of multi-level selection cases that are discussed here are known as cases of group selection with aggregate group characters, i.e. cases where the group character is defined as average individual character within the group (while the fitnesses of groups are defined as the average individual fitness of their members). The ‘double selection-for interpretation’ will be briefly contrasted with a different interpretation of this type of multi-level scenarios – namely, the contextual approach – through an analysis of the trait-group model for the evolution of altruism.

Keywords: group selection, causality, Sober, sorting, temporality.

This paper attempts to show that considerations of time can play an important role in the way we interpret multi-level selection scenarios, i.e. scenarios involving evolutionary change in biological populations that is caused by selection processes operating at different levels of biological organization. In particular, I will show that considerations of time can become critical instruments with respect to one way of interpreting multi-level selection scenarios that I will call here the ‘double selection-for interpretation’. The proponents of this interpretation that I will engage with here are David Sloan Wilson and Elliott Sober, and the type of evolutionary scenarios analyzed here is constituted by group selection in cases where the group character is aggregate, i.e. is defined as the average individual character of the individuals in the group. And, since probably the most famous case of this type is the trait-group model for the evolution of altruism, this critical examination of the role of time in assessing the validity

¹ Interdisciplinary Research Department – Human and Social Sciences “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, ciprianjeler@yahoo.com

of the ‘double selection-for interpretation’ of multi-level selection should most suitably begin with a brief outline of this particular case.

A brief outline of the trait-group model for the evolution of altruism

D. S. Wilson (1975, 1989/2006) and, later, Sober and Wilson (1998) use the notion of evolutionary altruism in their description of the trait-group model. A behavior is evolutionarily altruistic if it benefits other conspecific members of the group and decreases the fitness of the behavior. This description doesn’t take into account the motives for such a behavior, but only the behavior itself (taking the motive into account would force us into a different theoretical domain that is governed by the notion of psychological altruism).

The trait-group model for the evolution of altruism supposes a population of selfish and altruistic types. The selfish individuals are neutral with respect to the others (their behavior doesn’t influence the absolute fitness of others), whereas the altruistic individuals offer benefits to the others’ fitness while bearing themselves the costs of this offered benefice. Since selfish individuals only benefit from the presence of altruists, in any given undivided or well-mixed population the selfish types will be more fit than the altruistic ones. At the number of offspring they would have in a neutral situation (i.e. in a case without altruistic behaviors) we must add the number of offspring that result from the benefit received from the coexisting altruist members in their group. While, conversely, even though altruistic behaviors can benefit other altruistic individuals, the altruistic individuals will also bear the costs of their behavior, and therefore will be less fit than their selfish counterparts. Even more so if we assume, as Wilson and Sober do, that while an altruist can benefit from another altruist’s behavior, he can’t however benefit directly from his own behavior. Therefore, the altruist can only benefit from the behavior of all the other altruists (except himself), while the selfish can benefit from the behavior of all altruists in the group.

So, selfishness will certainly evolve in any given group. However, and this is the crucial point, altruism can evolve if we assume that the population is divided into more than one group, as long as we assume that there is a significant difference in the proportions of altruistic and selfish types within these sub-groups. So, to follow Wilson and Sober’s example, let’s take a global population of 200 individuals, containing an equal proportion (0.5) of selfish and individual types. If we divide the global population in two equal groups (of 100 individuals) containing different proportions of altruist and selfish individuals (e.g. 80% selfish individuals in

group A and 80% altruists in group B) and assign certain numerical values to the cost of altruistic behaviors ($c = 1$) and to the benefit this same behavior brings to another individual ($b = 5$), we will notice that, after one reproductive cycle, in the entire population (groups A and B put together) it is the altruists that increase in frequency and not the selfish types (the frequency of altruists grows from 0.5 to 0.516). And this is so even if, within each of the two groups, it is the selfish types' frequency that increases (from 0.8 to 0.816 in group A and from 0.2 to 0.213 in group B). This somewhat paradoxical result, consisting in the increase in frequency of altruism in the global population even if in each sub-group of the population the frequency of altruists decreases is, as Wilson and Sober note, an example of a statistical phenomenon known as Simpson's paradox. But, more importantly, for our two authors this indicates a more notable process than that of a simple statistical phenomenon, a process that has been hinted at, in various manners, styles and with more or less precision, ever since Darwin (1859) under the name of group selection. According to Sober and Wilson's interpretation of this scenario, it is because one group (group B in our above description, the group with a higher proportion of altruists) outgrows the other that the overall frequency of altruists increases, even though they decrease in frequency within each of the sub-groups of the population. As mentioned above, I will call Sober and Wilson's view of this scenario the 'double selection-for interpretation' of group selection. This is to say that there are two selection processes at work in this model: there is individual selection against altruists (and for selfishness) within each of the groups of the total population and, on the other side, there is group selection favoring the group with a higher proportion of altruists. There are two selective processes acting on biological 'individuals' at different levels: one acting on organisms within groups, while the other is acting on the groups themselves. Therefore, in the expression 'double selection-for', the term 'double' points towards the two levels that are subjected to selection, or on which selection is acting, rather than the levels at which it is acting. So, to get back to our example, if the latter of the two processes is stronger than the first, then the 'resultant' that combines the two 'forces' put together will end up favoring the altruistic type within the global population.

A temporality issue

With all its elegance, the double selection-for interpretation of group selection has several difficulties to face. Here, I will only discuss a general temporal difficulty, leaving aside some more technical issues that this model has to face and that have been treated elsewhere (see Nunney 1985, Heisler and Damuth 1987, Okasha 2006, and Jeler (forthcoming)).

In order to get to clarify this temporal difficulty, let's note that the individual selection process that takes place within each of the groups stems from direct interactions between the members of these groups (altruists offering benefits to the other members of the group, selfish individuals receiving, when the case may be, these benefits without themselves inducing any additional cost or any 'harm' to the altruists). The other selection process, the one that is taking place between groups is of a different type, since it is not the interaction between groups that causes or brings about the selection process: if one group outgrows the other, it is by virtue of its own constituent members, and not by virtue of a direct influence of one group on the other. This is a point that Sober has addressed elsewhere (Shapiro and Sober, 2007), where he draws a distinction between what we might call selection by direct competition and selection by indirect competition:

Our reply is that no biologist would treat two individuals as part of the same (token) selection process if they were at opposite ends of the universe (...). The fact that x and y differ in fitness does not entail that there is a selection process impinging on both. Sometimes x and y experience the same token selection process because they causally interact; at other times they participate in the same selection process because they are affected by a common token cause. (Shapiro and Sober 2007, 252)

Sober and Shapiro go on to exemplify by saying, following a passage from Darwin's *Origin*, that two dogs fighting for food are just as subject to selection as two plants that don't interact with each other, but are both experiencing – and having different degrees of success if there is to be selection – the effects of a common cause, e.g. drought. The distinction between selections by direct and by indirect competition places the environment as a crucial element: there is either competition for certain resources of the environment (as in the case of the two dogs) or competition within a common environmental frame (one plant fares better than the other in drought conditions). Obviously, since the two groups in the trait-group model don't interact, they could not be facing selection by direct competition as in the example of the two dogs. This leaves us with the only solution of trying to identify the environment in which the two groups with different altruistic and selfish type proportions compete. However, since, by definition, the two groups are isolated, they do not actually share such a common environment. If we are to say that they compete, we can only state this after the two groups have merged or have become reunited into the global population. In other words, for there to be group selection, we need to have the subsequent reunification of populations: if this were not the case, than we would not be dealing with selection, but only with what we might call sorting (Vrba and Gould 1986); or, in Sober's words cited above where he and Shapiro were criticizing

Walsh (2000), we would only have a situation where ‘x and y differ in fitness’ but without there being ‘a selection process impinging on both’.

In effect, we are able to see a growing emphasis being put by Wilson and Sober precisely on this element of group reunification. In an earlier description of the trait-group model (Wilson 1989/2006), only three conditions for group selection (and for the evolution of altruism) were named: a population of groups (the two groups in the case above), variation between these groups (in the proportions of altruistic and selfish types) and differential fitness of groups. Adding or reuniting the populations of the two groups in the end was a mere subsequent operation that didn’t need to be granted a condition status, but only a justification in an endnote (‘Adding the contents of both groups is justified biologically only if the occupants of the groups physically mix during a dispersal stage or compete for the colonization of new groups’ – Wilson 1989/2006, 73 n1). A few years later, in Sober and Wilson’s *Unto others*, the necessity of group reunification is given full condition status, along with the conditions of a population of individuals (or groups) that vary in heritable characteristics, with some variants more fit than the others. Here is the passage in question:

Fourth, although the groups are isolated from each other by definition (the S [selfish] types in group 1 do not benefit from the A [altruistic] types in group 2), there must also be a sense in which they are not isolated (the progeny of both groups must mix or otherwise compete in the formation of new groups). These are the necessary conditions for altruism to evolve in the multigroup model. (Sober and Wilson 1998, 26)

Furthermore, when the conditions for group selection are measured against the general (Darwinian) conditions for natural selection, the notion of competition is once again stressed: ‘The analogy extends to the fourth condition, since individuals are isolated units but nevertheless compete in the creation of new individuals. Thus, natural selection can operate at more than one level of the biological hierarchy’ (Sober and Wilson 1998, 26-27). The problem however is that this ‘competition’, invoked twice in the above citations, takes place only after the reunification of groups. This is a point that Sober and Wilson probably realize, given the slight awkwardness and imprecision of the expression ‘a sense in which they are not isolated’ that they use: as long as the groups are not reunited, even though one group outgrows the other, no actual group selection can be said to exist.

This shows us, in a distinct manner, how Sober and Wilson view their model, because it indicates that we need to distinguish here between:

a) an individual selection process that takes place within the isolated groups (selfish types are favored);

b) a process of differential growth of the two isolated groups (the group containing more altruists outgrows the other, i.e. produces more

offspring individuals than the other). But this process cannot yet be termed group selection.

c) Finally, group selection, that only comes about when the populations of the two groups are reunited.

It should be noted – and strongly emphasized – that group selection is not a different process than the differential growth of the two groups, but the two notions are not identical either. This is because the process of differential growth of the two groups only becomes a selective process after the reunification of their populations. In other words, the pre-existing process of differential growth of groups only receives a selective pertinence or a selective status after the reunification.

At first sight, this distinction between a process that is not yet a selective process and a properly selective process doesn't seem to be a problem per se, i.e. it doesn't seem to undermine Sober and Wilson's claim that natural selection should be viewed as a cause of evolutionary change. To see why, we should take a simple example. Imagine an organism that is subjected to a cold environment and, as a consequence, its immune system becomes weakened. This weakening of its immune system is a real process, and it affects the general physiology of the organism. But this process is not yet or not by itself a cause for sickness. It will become a cause for sickness only when other conditions will have been met (for example when and if the organism in question comes in contact with a certain virus). The weakening of the immune system process only becomes a cause for sickness in a subsequent context. The same thing seems to be happening with Sober and Wilson's group selection. The differential growth of the two groups is a real process, but it is not yet a selective process, i.e. it doesn't constitute a cause for the evolution of altruism yet. This process will only become selective – and will only act as a cause for the evolution of altruism – after the reunification of groups. So, at first glance, this distinction doesn't seem to directly undermine Sober's claim that natural selection is a cause.

The comparison made above might however not be entirely adequate to our purposes. There is an important difference between the trait-group model and the immune system's weakening scenario given above, and this difference might pose a significant problem for the double selection-for interpretation of the model. But before we get to that point, two remarks need to be made. First of all, we should note that some authors avoid the complication introduced by the distinction between a differential growth process and a properly selective group selection process. Samir Okasha, for example, offers a 'variation' of Wilson and Sober's model where this distinction is completely bypassed. Here's how he presents the case: 'Organisms assort in groups of size n for a period of their lives, during which fitness-affecting interactions take place; they then blend into the

global population, reproduce and die immediately' (Okasha 2005, 704). Since reproduction only takes place after the reunification of groups, a distinction between group selection and the differential growth of groups becomes completely unnecessary. But there is a deeper reason why the distinction between the differential growth of groups and the group selection process is bypassed here. To see it, we should start by noting that this sort of 'variation' of the trait-group model for the evolution of altruism stems from a completely different view of group selection. While Sober and Wilson's 'standard' view is based (see Sober 2011) on George Price's equations (Price 1972) that aim to offer a causal decomposition of evolutionary change in within-group and between-group selection, Okasha's way of putting things stems from a different statistical approach to quantifying group and individual selection, namely the contextual approach, which is an application of multiple regression analysis to multi-level selection scenarios (see Heisler and Damuth 1987, Goodnight et al. 1992, Okasha 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2011). The contextual approach partitions the individual fitnesses in two components, one that is determined by the individual character and another one that is determined by the group character (or the average individual character of the group to which the individual in question belongs, in this case). Without dwelling on the details of this issue here, let's just say that the contextual approach defines group selection as the differential effect that group membership has on the fitnesses of the individual types involved. Since the fitnesses of individual types are all that we should be concerned about according to the contextual approach, the notion of differential growth of groups becomes redundant. The reunification of the populations of the two groups will still be necessary for there to be group selection, but the differential effect of group membership on the fitnesses of individual types will be effective regardless of which part of the individuals' life-cycle had been affected by the fitness-affecting interactions that were brought about by group membership. This, then, motivates Okasha's 'version' of the trait-group model given as an example above, and this also explains why the contextual approach to group selection is not affected by the temporal problem that, as I will show below, tends to cast doubts over Sober and Wilson's double selection-for interpretation based on Price's equations.

The second remark that needs to be made here is that if Sober and Wilson hold on to their 'standard' version of the model, it is because they want to make a more clear-cut distinction between individual and group selection. Indeed, intuitively, their standard model offers a more direct view of two processes. Within each group, there is individual selection. In addition to this, there is a parallel differential growth of the two groups, but this process is not yet causally pertinent (i.e. while the groups remain

isolated, only individual selection is at work). Finally, group selection only comes into play when groups mix ‘or otherwise compete in the formation of new groups’, i.e. when the differential growth process receives a properly selective status. The main merit of this way of putting things – and the one that explains the fact that Sober and Wilson cling to this ‘standard’ version of their model – is therefore the fact that it places face to face, if I may say so, the two selective processes (individual and group selection) with regards to their outcomes: the outcome of the individual selection is there for anyone to see, it is already given within each group (selfish types are favored), but so is the total evolutionary outcome (the increase in frequency of altruists) that must come from an opposing process, which is that of group selection. In Sober and Wilson’s view, this way of putting things gives both a logical and a chronological ground for the distinction between individual and group selection, since we can clearly see what the outcome would have been had only individual selection been at work. To translate this way of presenting things in causal terms is pretty straightforward, according to Sober and Wilson: first, there is selection for selfishness within each of the two groups; secondly, there is selection of altruism in the global population; thirdly, if there is selection of altruism within the global population, this cannot be because of the individual selection within groups, but because there is a different process, i.e. selection for groups with higher proportions of altruistic types, that accounts for the divergence of the final outcome with respect to what would have happened had only the within-groups selection for selfishness been at work. And, since ‘selection-for is where the causal action is’ (Shapiro and Sober 2007, 254), we can, according to Sober, state that group selection is the causal process that accounts for the divergence of the outcome from what would have happened had only individual selection been in play. If Sober and Wilson keep using their ‘standard’ version of the trait-group model for the evolution of altruism, it is because this ‘standard’ version offers a clear-cut view of this double selection-for (i.e. selection for selfishness within groups, and selection for groups with higher proportion of altruists) that underlies, in their view, the causal dynamics of the trait-group model.

There might however, as I said before, be a more serious temporal problem that might undermine this double selection-for claim about the dynamics of the trait-group model. To see it, we need to return to the comparison between this ‘standard’ version of the model and the weakening of the immune system that acts as a condition for disease. In this latter example, as I said, the weakening of the immune system is a real process, but it only becomes a cause for disease when other conditions are met, for example when the organism in question comes into contact with a certain virus. In an apparently similar fashion, in the ‘standard’ version of the trait-

group model, the differential growth of the two separated groups is a real process, but it only becomes a selective one (i.e. a cause for the evolution of altruism) when another condition is met, i.e. when the populations of the two groups are reunited. There is however an important difference between the two cases. In the former, the weakened immune system has to be contemporary with the encountering of the hypothetical virus: the weakened state of the organism and the presence of the virus act together, at the same time, so to speak, and the result of this acting together is the disease. The simple fact that the organism comes into contact with the virus doesn't put an end to the weakened state of the organism in question, on the contrary, the two factors reinforce each other, and it is this reinforcement that the disease originates from.

Things are very different for the double selection-for interpretation of the trait-group model though. The reason is that the reunification of the two groups is not only a co-condition for the evolution of altruism, but is also an event that puts an end to the differential growth of the two groups. If the differential growth of groups is in itself a real process – and this can hardly be disputed –, it is however a process that is halted or brought to an end by the reunification of groups. But if it is this reunification that turns the differential growth process into a properly selective process that acts as a cause for the evolution of altruism, than we are faced with a process that only becomes effective after it has ended, after it was chronologically terminated by that very reunification. We would therefore have a cause that only becomes effective or efficient after it has been halted as a process, after it has ended as a process.

One could however object that the effects of the differential growth of groups on the fitnesses of the two individual types are already there, already determined by the effects of the group characters on the growth of the two groups. The reunification of the global population would therefore only make these effects visible. But, precisely, this is not the case. The differential growth of groups determined by the group character doesn't have anything to do with the individual fitnesses of the two types while the groups are separated, and indeed it couldn't have anything to do with them since it only concerns the difference in average fitness between the two groups. Individual fitnesses cannot be regarded as connected to the differential growth process, since the latter denotes a fitness difference that is at a different level than the first, namely the simple difference in average fitness between the two groups. And the average fitness of the two groups doesn't have, by itself, anything to do with the fitnesses of the individual types involved. It is only after the reunification of groups that the variation in group characters will have had an effect on the fitnesses of the two individual types, but by that time the differential growth process will have

been terminated. In other words, group selection only becomes a cause for the evolution of altruism after it will have ended as a process, and this is a conclusion that must be drawn as long as one accepts the double selection-for view of the trait-group model.

The question that needs to be posed is whether this type of causation – where a process only becomes a cause after it will have been chronologically terminated – is even possible. Obviously, this question is tightly related to the metaphysical problem regarding the nature of the relationship between cause and effect, and regarding their ontological separability. In other words, what we would need to know is whether it is possible for a cause to only have effects after it has stopped acting as a process.

I would certainly not dare offer here even the slightest hints towards a possible answer to these profound and almost abyssal questions. However, what is more important is that I don't even need to, since the burden of proof has to be on the proponents of this double selection-for interpretation of the trait-group model. If, as they claim, the double selection-for view underlies the causal dynamics of the trait-group model, than it would also be their task to show how a cause can have an effect after it has stopped acting as a process.

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Mădălin ONU¹

Le sujet herméneutique - instance dialectique Une réévaluation critique²

Abstract: We will focus, in this paper, on the critical perspective concerning the notion of subject. For this purpose, we will follow the effort made by the hermeneutic philosophy to redefine the comprehension of this instance after the confrontation with the phenomenology and the critical reevaluation of her influences coming from the German idealism. We will start from the development given by Kant and Hegel in order to define the notion of subject and his inherent relation with his object. Gadamer's and Heidegger's works will help us to define the subject's hermeneutic possibility; and that by making (when our problem demands) an inverse reconstruction. Our thesis, that we will try to argue, is that for understanding the subjectness of the subject, we must consider his particular type of temporality, his spiritual / intersubjective nature and his possibility to comprehend the truth not only as propriety of mind, but also as belonging to the object: in other words, his dialectic character.

Keywords: Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Gadamer, subject, object, hermeneutics, dialectic

I. Kant – Le sujet dans l'idéalisme transcendantal

La séparation entre les deux instances gnoséologiques – l'objet extérieur, indépendant et le sujet connaissant, réceptive – nourrit le corps idéologique du scientisme moderne. L'extension de la domination de la méthodique et de son annexe inhérente de vérification technique soumet le plus différents domaines, malgré les principes rigoureux qu'elle prétend, à un système composé des slogans pseudo-doctrinaux du sens commun. Dans l'espace du banal quotidien ne sont pas acceptés, conformément au viseur étroit promu, que ces phénomènes et ces explications sur lesquelles on peut coller l'étiquette "scientifiquement approuvé (par le spécialiste)". Sans doute, la commodité de cette limitation n'est, en fait, qu'un complément artificiel, mais accessible, de la science moderne. Le principe d'incertitude de Heisenberg, l'idéal (opposé) d'unité d'Albert Einstein sont acceptés, simultanément, dans la même rubrique de "merveilles de la

¹ Ph.D student at "AL.I.Cuza" University, Iași, Romania, madalin.onu@gmail.com

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science". Contrairement, l'éclectisme facile permet, avec plus de facilité et de passion, les explications causales "saines", telles que ceux qui concernent la constitution et le fonctionnement exclusivement physique et biologique de notre propre personne. Et ça - si on pense aux remarquables travaux de Michel Henry - au risque de couvrir la Vie, la condition de possibilité réelle et unique pour toutes nos actions. Le problème de la subjectivité est, d'ailleurs, plus complexe. Un philosophe si profond comme Kant n'aurait pas pu accepter la précarité de ces développements. La "révolution copernicienne" opérée dans la Critique de la raison pure montre le rôle du sujet dans la phénoménalisation de l'objet extérieur en concordance avec les facultés humaines de connaissance (la sensibilité et l'entendement). Il certifie, ainsi, à la connaissance, son côté subjectif, et ça, dans un système par excellence, objectif. L'utilisation de l'entendement est limitée, alors, seulement à la connaissance des phénomènes (qui sont médiés par les facultés de l'homme); le noumène reste inconnaissable. L'objectivité ne peut pas couvrir ce type d'entité, mais seulement l'apparition phénoménale dans l'expérience.

Plus encore, Kant a réussi à surprendre, en écrivant la Critique de la faculté de juger, un élément herméneutique déterminant. La séparation métaphysique sujet - objet, présente dans la Critique de la raison pure, n'est pas une exclusive. Elle doit être complétée (étant donnée la diversité des orientations de l'âme humaine) par la subjectivité qui est présente dans le domaine du jugement qui, sans prétendre la connaissance conceptuelle de l'objet, donne des résultats incontestablement rigoureux: la faculté réflexive de juger, explique Kant, renferme les phénomènes aux concepts empiriques "selon ses propres lois subjectives, selon son besoin mais cependant en accord avec les lois de la nature en général" (Kant 1975, 35).

Son mérite est, ainsi, double: Kant déduit, d'une part, la nécessité de la fonction subjective de la réflexion dans le processus de la dé-couverte de l'objet (processus qui n'implique pas seulement la connaissance, mais qui demande aussi le jugement). L'orientation méthodique spéculative en fonction de l'objet (dont la donation ne peut pas être entièrement thématifiée par la connaissance objectivante) est ainsi entrevue, mais, malheureusement, n'est pas explicitement développée. L'objet reste - malgré l'interaction active (et pas seulement réceptive) avec le sujet - immobile. D'autre part, en médiant la connaissance (intellectuelle) et le désir (forme de connaissance issue de la raison) par la faculté de juger, il réussit à promouvoir la subjectivité dans le domaine même de la nature - la nature comme art. Bien sûr, ceci est accompli en vertu du rapport permanent avec le sentiment de plaisir et de déplaisir, ce qui, pour l'herméneutique implique une limitation gnoséologique. Mais le rôle prééminent accordé au "moi" dans le domaine de l'esthétique et de la réflexion téléologique donne à la compréhension une orientation précieuse.

C'est pourquoi la critique hégélienne de l'idéalisme transcendantal ne s'arrête pas sur le sujet proprement dit mais sur la liaison qu'il en a avec l'objet. En accusant Kant de subjectivisme, Hegel n'essaie pas la réduction du sujet connaissant. Il dénonce, contrairement, la manière (erronée) de constitution du réel par l'entendement. Il est indiqué d'insister sur ce problème pour clarifier la signification dialectique de l'instance subjective.

La critique de Hegel sur la séparation kantienne sujet - objet

Dans *Foi et savoir*, ouvrage écrite en 1802 (cinq ans avant l'apparition de la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*) et publiée dans la revue fondée avec Schelling - *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* - il entreprend une critique substantielle de l'idéalisme kantien. En bref, Hegel accuse la philosophie de Kant de: subjectivisme, formalisme et du psychologisme. Sa critique vise: a) la séparation entre la sensibilité et l'entendement. En réalité, soutient-il, nous n'avons pas à faire avec une séparation définitive, mais avec une qui n'est qu'apparente et qui provient d'une unité fondamentale absolue (dont sa clarification sera la tâche de l'idéalisme absolu depuis que le dépassement des oppositions ne semble pas, encore, impossible, mais naturel et nécessaire). Cette séparation conduit, inévitablement, à la dichotomie phénomène – chose en soi, autrement dit au subjectivisme (même dans nos connaissances les plus sûres c'est le sujet qui est reflété en dépit de l'objet comme il est en lui-même). En ce qui concerne l'entendement, Hegel est d'accord que son utilisation ne peut pas fournir la connaissance du noumène. Sa critique, ainsi, ne provient pas de l'analyse du fonctionnement de l'entendement, mais de la vision globale sur lui. L'entendement non seulement qu'il est un moment irréconciliable dans le dualisme du processus de connaissance mais Kant l'avait surestimé en dépit de la raison. Autrement dit, l'antécédent (l'unité originare de laquelle il provient) aussi que le séquent (la faculté supérieure de connaissance - la raison) sont faux thématés. b) Le rapport sujet - objet. Dans la *Critique de la raison pure* c'est le sujet qui représente l'objet tandis que l'objet ne peut pas être décrit que comme étant représentée. Le parcours de la *Phénoménologie* montrera, pourtant, que, en pensant l'objet, le sujet est contraint et réussira à se comprendre soi-même comme sujet pensant unifié. D'où l'accusation de formalisme. Cela concerne, en particulier, la manière dans laquelle Kant a perdu de vue des aspects déterminants de la réalité: "[Kant] s'était limité à la question du savoir, il avait laissé de côté, du moins dans son œuvre principale, la question de l'existence historique de l'homme qui sait" (Hyppolite 1991, 106); et voici alors aussi la nécessité de passer du plan logique au plan réel (nécessite ressentie aussi, par exemple, par Heidegger dans la conférence "Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?"). c) La raison. Hegel croit qu'elle a été mal comprise par Kant (pour lui la raison

n'est pas une faculté de connaissance qui peut surprendre l'unité originaire). En outre, il critique également son usage dans la morale. En accusant Kant de psychologisme, Hegel se rapporte d) à la déduction des catégories et à la division des facultés de connaître .

Le sujet affecté, le sujet affectant; la temporalité du sujet

Sans minimiser l'importance de la philosophie kantienne (dans Foi et savoir le problème des jugements synthétiques a priori, les relations entre les catégories, leur arrangement triadique sont considérés comme des éléments qui pourraient offrir la base de l'entreprise scientifique absolue. Ainsi, par exemple, la théorie kantienne de l'aperception ou l'entendement intuitif) Hegel propose une solution radicale pour la double erreur concernant la subjectivité (sa surestimation en ce qui concerne la représentation de l'objet - le problème de la "chose en soi" - et son caractère statique dans sa relation avec l'objet - celui-ci n'étant que seulement représenté, pas transformé et transformant à son tour). La succession des expériences de la conscience (la Phénoménologie de l'esprit) indique la nature dialectique de l'interdépendance de ces deux entités ainsi que l'unité dans laquelle elles existent. La véritable connaissances ne peut pas être achevé, par conséquence, que si le sujet est compris comme affecté et également, affectant; déjà près de l'objet, dans le monde qu'il transforme. En vertu de cela, la compréhension (spéculative) dépasse la possibilité limitée de l'entendement - si on a en vue l'objet naturel - et fournit un chemin d'accès spécifique au phénomène humain complexe, historique .

La nature du sujet dérive de la relation d'affectation (réciproque) avec l'objet. Voilà d'où dérive la possibilité de l'herméneutique. La découverte de l'objet réside dans cette structure dialectique; par elle, en vertu de la transformation de la négativité (du monde) par le sujet, l'objet a son existence et, à son aide, il peut être compris (à l'intérieur de l'affectation temporelle à laquelle il est soumis).

Gadamer saisit et développe avec une finesse particulière ce fondement. La circularité herméneutique - la perfectibilité continue de la compréhension à l'aide de la médiation entre l'interprète et le texte - a à sa base l'interdépendance entre le sujet et l'objet et fonctionne grâce au lieu commun de ces deux entités dans le monde, dans l'espace continu de l'historicité . Mais plus encore, la possibilité de la circularité du processus de correction dépend d'un fond circulaire encore plus profond, de nature spéculative, qui relit la place (commune) du sujet et de l'objet - l'historicité - de l'achèvement de la connaissance historique. "C'est l'uniformité entre sujet et objet celle qui rend possible la connaissance historique" (Gadamer 1993, 226) , souligne Gadamer en parlant des écrits de Dilthey. Car c'est justement cette connaissance historique (par la dé-couverte critique de la

tradition) qui rend possible la connaissance de l'objet et, également, la connaissance du soi du sujet .

La conséquence substantielle de cette application de la dialectique sujet-objet dans le domaine de l'herméneutique philosophique est la concrétisation de la praxis herméneutique grâce au concept d'applicativité. Pour Gadamer, la compréhension n'en est pas véritable que quand elle affecte le sujet. L'accomplissement concret de cette exigence est, cependant, plus subtil qu'il paraît à un premier regard. Le problème de l'applicativité présente d'un bout à l'autre de l'interprétation marque, proprement parlant, son moment final, c'est-à-dire la transformation du sujet. Mais elle concerne une double motivation interprétative: la question que l'interprète met au texte mais aussi la question à laquelle le texte essaye de répondre. Un remarquable passage de l'étude du Gadamer de 1970 - L'histoire des concepts comme philosophie – offre des importantes clarifications à cet égard.

En analysant la manière dans laquelle l'herméneutique s'appuie sur les problèmes centraux de la pensée, l'auteur allemand nous offre, comme exemple, le difficile concept de la liberté . Il n'est pas rare qu'on a objecté à la philosophie qui y en a délivré une interminable série de définitions et de acceptions, presque toujours contradictoires. Cette critique, telle qu'elle est posée par le sens commun, est cependant, incorrecte. Lorsque Platon discute sur la choix de Lebenslos où quand les chrétiens parlent du lien entre la liberté et la volonté divine ou, de même, quand l'épistémologie moderne soulève le problème du déterminisme, on n'a pas, en fait, à faire avec le problème de la liberté, c'este à dire avec un même problème identique qui a traversé les siècles en recevrant des solutions contingentes. Chaque fois, explique Gadamer, la question à laquelle on cherche une réponse en est une autre. "Lorsque je demande: qu'est ce que c'est la liberté à l'intérieur d'une conception du monde qui est dominée par la science causale de la nature, alors la question, et, par là, tout ce qui est impliqué dans cette question, par exemple, dans le concept de la causalité, est déjà entré dans le sens de la question. Alors, il doit être posée la question: qu'est ce que c'est la causalité, et épuise-t-elle toute la dimension de ce qui est digne d'être demandé dans la question sur la liberté?" (Gadamer 1993, 83) .

La correctitude de la compréhension consiste dans l'accord entre ces deux interrogations (du sujet et de l'objet). L'applicabilité dans laquelle le sens s'articule (l'horizon temporel présent) et par l'intermède de laquelle le sujet se définit lui-même en reprojectant sa compréhension (l'horizon temporel futur) dépend, en d'autres termes, de la compréhension préalable de la question qui articule l'objet (horizon temporel passé) . Son but païdéique (pour le sujet) ne peut être accompli que lorsque l'objet est ramené en présent avec le mouvement même dans lequel il a été conçu. Nous appellerons cela la temporalité du sujet. En outre, dans cette manière

doit être comprise la métaphore, souvent utilisée par Gadamer, de la traduction: dans l'abandon de la présentification objectivante en faveur du maintien, au présent, du texte vivant - soutien actif de sa propre réponse.

La subjectivité du sujet

a) Heidegger et le sujet de la dialectique

Heidegger exprime le devenir du sujet dans Être et Temps §9, en disant: “L'«essence» de cet étant réside dans son (avoir-) à-être” (Heidegger 1967, 42) . C'est, en fait, la première indication du sens particulier du concept d'existence de la phrase bien connue Das <Wesen> des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz (“L'« essence » du Dasein réside dans son existence” (Heidegger 1967, 42)). Cette approche a, cependant, un inconvénient: l'unilatéralité de la projection. Pris dans le mouvement existentiel de sa redéfinition, on a oublié pour le Dasein l'influence constitutive qu'il supporte de la part de l'objet et, aussi la réflexion de son projet sur ce dernier. Le changement de perspective opérée après Kehre corrige - ou, plus exactement, complète - la compréhension de la subjectivité, en suivant la liaison qu'il entretient avec l'être, pas par une analytique de Dasein, mais à partir d'elle-même. L'essence du Dasein réside, maintenant, pas (seulement) dans l'existence (Existenz) mais dans l'ek-sistence (Ek-sistenz), ce qui signifie la possibilité ”d'entendre la voix de l'être” dans l'éclaircie de l'Être dans laquelle il est situé . Michel Haar explique clairement cet aspect dans la phrase suivante: “L'être n'est pas ce qui s'ouvre devant l'homme ou s'avance jusqu'à lui, car l'être ressaisit l'homme et l'englobe de fond en comble” (Haar 2002, 159). On surprend, ainsi, pour le devenir aussi le deuxième sens du mouvement; l'homme commence un projet inverse, en décidant de garder le silence afin de pouvoir écouter et recevoir la “voix” de Sein du Da-sein.

La réorientation heideggérienne et, par elle-même, la redéfinition de la subjectivité, semble confirmer son essence dialectique (et ça, en dépit des véhéments critiques de Heidegger contre la philosophie hégélienne, dont le fondement est constitué par l'oubli de la question du sens de l'être (Seinsfrage) et, par conséquence, par la manque du développement de la différence ontologique entre l'être et étant). Nous sommes mis, sans doute, devant un problème difficile. Abordé directement, il se montrerait ainsi: pourquoi Gadamer choisit de redéfinir le sujet herméneutique en suivant le modèle spéculative imposé par Hegel et pas l'orientation phénoménologique heideggérienne cristallisée dans ses derniers travaux? La réponse nous convaincrat de la validité de cette thèse.

Commençons, d'abord, par l'analyse faite par Heidegger en ce qui concerne le concept de conscience de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit. Trois propositions, extraites de l'Introduction du livre déjà mentionné, viennent

d'élucider sa nature: 1. "La conscience est pour soi-même son concept", 2. "La conscience donne son critère [de vérification] en elle-même" et 3. "La conscience s'examine elle-même". Toutes les trois indiquent la manière unitaire dans laquelle on doit comprendre le sujet et la façon particulière de son devenir. L'itinéraire de la formation (Bildung) n'en est pas scindé, il ne s'agit pas d'une conscience naturelle et d'une autre conscience véritable (en possession du savoir absolu), mais d'un tout. "La conscience naturelle et le savoir réel sont en fait le Même, dans la mesure où la première en tant que non-encore vraie, et le second, en tant que sa vérité, font nécessairement partie d'un même tout" (Heidegger, 1962, 158). L'achèvement de la connaissance comporte, en effet, un dialogue intérieur, guidé par ce que Heidegger appelle, en utilisant le sens originel du mot grec Skepsis (type de regard qui respecte l'étant en tant qu'étant en le suivant dans son être (Heidegger, 1962, 187)). C'est pourquoi la phénoménologie hégélienne doit être comprise non pas comme un travail arbitraire, mais comme une présentation (Darstellung) qui se présente elle-même ("la présentation du savoir apparaissant" (Heidegger, 1962, 200)). En corollaire, la subjectivité du sujet est circonscrite à l'aide de la notion d'ambiguïté. Cela concerne également les trois thèses sur la conscience en les redécouvrant dans leur vrai sens. En parcourant le texte de la conférence Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung on apprend que le sujet, la conscience, est et en même temps elle n'est pas son propre concept, qu'elle se donne et en même temps qu'elle ne se donne pas son propre critère, enfin, qu'elle s'examine et ne s'examine pas elle-même. Parce que la conscience, comme bien note le phénoménologue allemand, est "quelque chose qu'en même elle n'est pas encore" (Heidegger, 1962, 221). Ce type particulier d'(auto-) présentation - l'expérience (pensons que le titre original de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit a été Wissenschaft der Erfahrung des Bewußtseins – "Science de l'expérience de la conscience") – nous fournit, ainsi, la véritable essence du sujet: "L'expérience nomme la Subjectivité du sujet" (die Erfahrung nennt des Subjektivität Subjekts (Heidegger, 1962, 220), (Heidegger, 1970, 176)).

La signification de cette énoncé est, pourtant, très spécial. Si le sujet peut, et doit être compris à partir de l'expérience, ceci n'est rien d'autre, dans l'argumentation de Heidegger, que "la parole de l'être dans la mesure où celui-ci a été entendu à partir de l'étant en tant que tel" (Heidegger, 1962, 219-220). En bref, l'être de l'étant (Das Erfahrung ist das Sein des Seienden (Heidegger, 1970, 186), de l'étant devenu entre temps sujet (Heidegger, 1970, 176). On ne doit pas oublier, d'autre part, une chose très importante, à savoir que, pour Heidegger, toute l'histoire de la pensée occidentale a à sa base le maintien dans l'oubli du l'être. Voici l'élément critique dominant du remarquable commentaire heideggerien sur la Phénoménologie de l'esprit. Dans cette conférence, cependant, l'auteur choisit d'entreprendre une révalorification positive de la philosophie de Hegel et pas une

déconstruction de la dialectique. Mais cette révalorification est initiée dans la perspective de ce type d'historicité. Heidegger envisage le fondement ontologique dans lequel est suivie la formation de la conscience, mais cela dans la mesure où il institue un dialogue avec ce qui est (ou, du point de vue phénoménologique, reste) impensable. Voilà pourquoi il valorise l'expérience comme "l'apparaissant en tant qu'apparaissant ($\text{ov } \eta \text{ ov}$)" (Heidegger 1962, 219) en envoyant au sens ancien de "l'apparaître se montrant" ("L'être de la présence du présent, $\text{\rho\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha}$ de $\text{\rho\omicron\upsilon}$, est déjà pour les penseurs grecs, depuis que $\text{\rho\omicron\upsilon}$ s'épanouit comme $\text{\varphi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma}$, le $\text{\varphi\alpha\iota\upsilon\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota}$: l'apparaître se montrant" (Heidegger 1962, 237)). Et voilà pourquoi, en outre, il aperçoit, à la fin du chemin paidéique de la conscience, l'apparition de l'être comme fait d'être / "absoluité" de l'absolu. Et c'est pourquoi, encore, le parcours de cet itinéraire, le dialogue intérieur de la conscience, est vu comme un dialogue qui intègre dans l'unité la conscience ontique (naturelle et, alors, pré-ontologique) et la conscience ontologique (réelle) – entrevoyant, ainsi, la différence ontologique, dans le fait d'être conscient ($\text{Bewu\ss}t\text{-sein}$) de la conscience réelle (différence inhérente, mais encore cachée pour la conscience naturelle).

b) L'intersubjectivité / la spiritualité

Heidegger a fait de Hegel, "un partenaire de pensée dans une gigantomachie -toujours ouverte – autour de l'être" (Janicaud 1988, 146). Cette remarquable phrase du Dominique Janicaud souligne la direction centrale de l'herméneutique développée dans Hegels *Begriff der Erfahrung*. S'opposant au devenir de l'histoire (en revenant à la signification originelle, maintenant cachée, de l'être) on peut objecter, du point de vue hégélienne, à cette inédite interprétation qu'elle tombe, par exemple, dans l'abstraction et donc manque le spirituel de l'existence. En ce qui concerne exclusivement le problème de la subjectivité, on doit observer, que derrière l'analyse remarquable du devenir, Heidegger perd de vue le concret des étapes particulières par lesquelles la conscience s' (auto-) définit. Or, c'est justement cette chose que Gadamer avait poursuivie pour pouvoir justifier la possibilité du sujet de découvrir le sens du phénomène herméneutique. Et ça, malgré le rejet (guidée par la finité du *Dasein*) du sujet absolu, c'est-à-dire d'un sujet qui pourrait connaître "l'absolu sujet". En admettant la thèse heideggérienne de la finité et donc, excluant la fin de la Phénoménologie, Gadamer a réussi à observer plus attentivement le concret du chemin de la conscience. Plus exactement, non seulement la manière dont les triades sont dépassées, mais les formes particulières en et où elles sont dépassées.

Tournons notre regard vers la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit pour clarifier cette chose. Dans la première partie la conscience a en face l'objet extérieur et indépendant. Les trois chapitres (I. La certitude sensible, II. La perception, III. Force et entendement) expriment les efforts de la

conscience de l'en comprendre et de l'en connaître en utilisant la sensibilité et l'entendement (facultés à l'aide de lesquelles elle considère, en ce moment de départ, qu'elle peut obtenir la certitude), pour parvenir, finalement, à la notion de la force (le premier centre de la compréhension). Ce qu'elle obtient n'est pas, cependant, près la connaissance de l'objet mais seulement une série des contradictions frappantes (contradictions générées par la thématization en profondeur du concept présumé). Les présuppositions initiales se détruisaient elles mêmes une par autre sous l'impénétrabilité de l'objet (qui reste caché, si nous voulons, devant cette façon de compréhension). L'échec n'est, pourtant, pas total mais, au contraire, productif; l'acceptation (la conscientisation de cet échec) rend à la conscience un premier fondement: sa propre ipséité et, ainsi, par elle, sa nouvelle possibilité de continuer les recherches. Une nouvelle confrontation (mené, cette fois, avec elle-même, pour sa propre essence) amène la conscience de soi à l'esprit (puis, à la certitude explicite de ceci). Le sujet se construit lui-même progressivement dans sa confrontation avec la négativité qu'il a en face (l'objet physique, puis l'objet compris comme une autre conscience de soi – l'ennemi de la lutte maître - esclave - et ainsi de suite). Mais on doit être très prudent. Cette succession en est dialectique. Et la dialectique n'implique pas seulement le dépassement et (ou) la correction, mais aussi la préservation (Aufhebung) des triades qui ont été parcourues. Le perfectionnement de l'étude de la nature n'élimine pas l'identification de la force; aussi l'esprit n'y prend pas sa place, mais exige la conscience de soi. C'est pourquoi l'essence du sujet, sa subjectité, n'est pas seulement le processus de l'expérience (la présentation qui se présente elle-même, comme bien note Heidegger) tout comme il n'est pas seulement le résultat (le sujet absolu qui comprend l'"absolu sujet"), mais il englobe les étapes concrètes (en leur couverture, plus ou moins incomplète de l'objet – chaque fois un autre – avec qui ils ont à faire). Cherchant les structures du mouvement (qu'il y réussit d'en surprendre dans leur profondeur) et en découvrant dans la dialogue mené avec son partenaire "dans la lutte contre les géants autour de l'être" l'ontologie de la formation (Bildung), Heidegger met hors de la discussion au moins deux problèmes décisifs pour la théorie herménétique du sujet.

Le premier c'est celle de l'intersubjectivité ou, si on préfère, le fait d'être esprit de la conscience de soi. Ce mode d'existence du sujet est celui sur lequel s'appuie la résolution de l'aporie de l'altérité qui, comme nous l'avons vu déjà, avait frappé à la fois Schleiermacher, Dilthey et Husserl. Sans doute, en parlant de L'être-Là-avec (Mit Sein) - lui-même partie constitutive de l'être-au-monde - Heidegger nous offre une réponse importante, mais pour l'herméneutique, encore abstraite. Car il ne montre pas la manière dans laquelle un texte, un événement historique et, en général, un phénomène complexe herménétique peut être découvert en

s'appuyant sur sa nature particulière (œuvre du subjectivité), sur le façon dans lequel il est apporté dans le présent par la tradition et sur la possibilité de compréhension à partir de cette dernière . En fait, c'est normal ça car, nous avons vu, Heidegger a parlé du L'être-Là-avec en poursuivant un but bien défini. L'herméneutique, cependant, ne peut pas être satisfaite de si peu. La compréhension du phénomène ne peut pas être achevée sans révéler son actant. Gadamer observe cette chose dans ses études concernant la philosophie hégélienne: "La conscience de soi n'est pas le point individuel Je = Je mais « Je qui [est] nous, et nous qui est Je », c'est à dire, l'esprit" (Gadamer, 1987, 50).

Outre la nature spirituelle de la subjectivité (à l'aide de laquelle le sujet peut aborder le phénomène dont l'apparition est l'œuvre d'un sujet spirituel comme lui-même, et dont son arrivement en devient possible grâce à la spiritualité de la tradition) le seconde problème concerne la nature de l'objet sur lequel est dirigée la compréhension. Nous sommes arrivés ainsi à la plus importante conséquence de l'assumption et de la l'application de la dialectique sujet-objet dans l'herméneutique: la vérité de l'objet. C'est ici que nous sommes conduits par l'expérience (dans son développement hégélienne). À la découverte que la vérité ne doit pas être comprise seulement d'appartenir à l'objet, comme le résultat de la vérification objectuelle (la vérité correspondance), mais que l'objet même possède un type particulier de vérité.

Résumant ce qui a été dit on peut indiquer la subjectivité du sujet herméneutique en énumérant:

1. La temporalité du sujet dont le corollaire est la relation (circulaire) d'affectation réciproque sujet-objet: a) l'affectation de l'objet - la compréhension dans l'horizon de la motivation et de la spiritualité du présent; b) l'affectation du sujet - la réouverture du dialogue en corrigeant les expectations initiales selon la prétention de sens de l'objet (compris comme réponse à une question de l'auteur / de l'actant, lui-même sujet spirituel, et pas comme pièce "objective" du musée d'histoire). c. la re-affectation / ré-interprétation de l'objet, en vertu de la "nouvelle" connaissance, approfondie, résultant de l'expérience dialectique (menée dans son tout). Les deux dernières, d'ailleurs, éliminent l'erreur herméneutique de l'interprétation objective (le texte comme artefact périmé) et celle de l'interprétation subjective (la relativisation de l'interprétation).

2. L'intersubjectivité / la spiritualité. La possibilité de discerner la tradition dans laquelle le sujet (l'interprète, l'auteur / l'actant du phénomène herméneutique) existe et à partir de laquelle il peut comprendre et il peut se comprendre lui-même.

3. La possibilité, maintenant qu'anticipée, d'y acquérir la vérité de l'objet en vertu du fondement spéculatif de la lingualité.

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Ionuț BĂRLIBA¹

St. Anselm of Canterbury on Sin and Will. Short Critical Overview

Abstract: A discussion about free choice and its variants, about sinning and the implication of evil, about God and about creature's freedom is to be found in the following pages. A short view over Abelard's position regarding sin should also be useful for a better understanding of the concept as it was viewed in the 12th century through bringing together, in this respect, the thinking of two of the most important theologians of the time, namely Anselm of Canterbury and Abelard.

Key Words: Abelard, Anselm, sin, will, free choice, redemption

Every discussion around the 12th century thinker and theologian Anselm of Canterbury, even if it is about free choice, sin, will or redemption should consider his statement that the rational creature was created just and the purpose for its creation was its happiness through enjoying God, reaching in this respect, immortality.² Nevertheless, this rational creature (including here also the angels) sinned, losing this status and so facing death. But how could it be possible for a rational creature to sin, meaning choosing the bad in stead of the good? Especially when it didn't have only the rational power to discriminate between them but more it was made in order to know, to choose and to possess the goodness and the rightness which come from God. This union with God can only be reached by loving God in the right way which is, in fact, the main purpose of a rational creature.

St. Anselm's view on freedom of choice

It has been stated that there are important similarities between Anselm's concept of will and that of freedom. Both serve human being in order to achieve the ultimate end. Also, both require that rational creatures have the ability to evade the goals imposed to them by God; in other words they must have power of choice. If we were to speak about a difference

¹ "Al. I. Cuza" University, Iasi, Romania, ionutbarliba@gmail.com

² The idea is to be found three times, in different forms, in *Cur Deus Homo* in Anselm Of Canterbury, *Volume three*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Toronto and New York, 1976, p. 43, 61, 98.

between the two, we would say that unlike will, freedom is not identified with the already mentioned power of choice because it is essentially and only the power to keep justice.³ Still, St. Anselm seems to be more interested in the nature and function of freedom than in the nature of will. Nevertheless he tends to speak about free will (*voluntas libera*) and free choice (*arbitrium liberum*) interchangeably. But he makes it clear that the right order is *libertas arbitrii rationalis voluntatis*: freedom of choice of a rational will.⁴ As Jasper Hopkins claims, by including the word “rational”, St. Anselm wanted to make a distinction between deliberative choice and appetitive inclinations.⁵

In order to answer the question regarding which will is more free, the one that has both alternatives – of sinning and of not sinning – or the one that cannot be turned from the uprightness (*rectitudo*) of not sinning, St. Anselm shows that the latter one is more free. Even if it would seem more logical the other way around – the first one is more free because it has the possibility of *choosing* between the two, still, St. Anselm affirms that someone who possesses something that is right and cannot lose it is more free than someone who possesses the same thing but is able to lose it. God cannot choose evil, but still, He is conceived as being free and from this point of view St. Anselm’s refusal to see free will as the ability to choose between good and evil seems to be legitimate. Freedom is not neutral, but strongly connected to making the *right* decision.

According to St. Anselm, the will has two determinations. The first one is more a personal disposition of the human soul directed by what is advantageous for it (*commoditas*) whereas the second one is strongly related with the rightness, as a gift from God. While the former can be never lost because it is intrinsic to human soul, the second one is lost for the man after sinning and can be recovered only through God’s gift. And man lost it not by aiming at the evil itself but, as Jasper Hopkins underlines, “at the ephemeral good which he detects amidst the evil”⁶. As St. Anselm himself sustains, man essentially desires only what he supposes to be good.

Later on, linking will to sin, he states that the ability to sin is foreign to free choice. Consequently, the following question arises: How did man or the apostate angel sin: by free choice or by necessity? Anselm answers by saying that each sinned freely and of no necessity in spite of having free

³ G. Stanley Kane, *Anselm’s Doctrine of Freedom and the Will*, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1981, p. 156.

⁴ St Anselm of Canterbury, *De Libertate Arbitrii 13*, apud Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1972, p. 141.

⁵ Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1972, p. 141.

⁶ Jasper Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

choice. They sinned not by means of the ability according to which they were able not to sin, but by means of their ability to sin.

Still, before sinning, even if the man and the angel were able to serve sin, sin was not able to master them. In other words, both of them were not prevented by anything to be free or have free choice *before* they sinned. After that though they still kept their freedom of choice but, adds Anselm, were not able to use it anymore; for this they needed the help of grace which was different from the one originally possessed.

But what was the purpose of having freedom of choice? The end, in Anselm's view is uprightness-of-will which he defines as willing what one ought to will (will what God wills one to will). And "rational nature did not receive freedom except in order to keep uprightness-of-will for the sake of this uprightness itself"⁷. So, it was not in order to acquire uprightness-of-will without anyone's giving it (since they did not yet have it), not in order to receive this uprightness and also not in order to desert it after having received it and then trying to recover it by themselves.

What is interesting is that St. Anselm affirms that "no temptation compels one to sin against his will"⁸. And that is because uprightness can be deserted only when one is *willing* to do this. And man can, for example, be bound or killed against his will because he is unwilling to be bound/killed but he cannot will against his will. Unwilling to will cancels, in fact, the will. "For everyone-who-wills, wills that he will"⁹. The will cannot be overcome by any other power, but only by its own. It follows that no temptation is able to overcome an upright will.

At this point Anselm underlines the fact that there are two kinds of will: the one by which we will something for its own sake and the one by which we will a thing for the sake of something else. The examples that he uses are willing health for the sake of health and, respectively, willing to drink absinthe for the sake of health. For St. Anselm, will is a responsive faculty – it responds to the value judgments of reason or intellect. And as reason can make two main value judgments, related to goodness and rightness, will responds to these two¹⁰. As it is emphasized in *De Concordia III - 11*, the will "wills either for the sake of a benefit or for the sake of

⁷ Anselm of Canterbury, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 3, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury. Philosophical fragments*, vol. II, The Edwin Mellen Press, Toronto and New York, 1976, p. 110.

⁸Anselm of Canterbury, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 5, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Jeffrey E. Brower, *Anselm on Ethic*, in Brian Davis, Brian Leftow (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 243.

uprightness; and even if it is mistaken, it regards itself as referring what it wills to these two ends”¹¹

As for what is to be considered the powerlessness of will which the student in *De Libertate Arbitrii* defines as “the will’s inability to cling perseveringly to uprightness”¹², St. Anselm rejects it. He supports his opinion by stating that when we say that we cannot do something is not because of impossibility (powerlessness), but because it cannot be done without difficulty. And this difficulty does not destroy or lessen freedom of will.

But still how is it that the will is stronger than temptation even when it is overcome by it? To answer this, St. Anselm makes a distinction between the *instrument* of willing (like the eyes for the sight) and the *activity* of willing (the sight). The first never changes no matter what we will. The will as activity though is multiple. The strength of will is inalienable and resides in the will as instrument whereas in willing (the activity) it is used “now more, now less”¹³. Related to the instrument of willing (*instrumentum volendi*) St. Anselm also speaks about the affection of the instrument (*affectio instrumenti*) and the use of the instrument (*usus instrumenti*). The first one is defined as being “that by which the instrument is so disposed (*afficitur*) to will something even when the person is not thinking of it, that when this thing does come to mind he wills this thing either immediately or for its own proper time”¹⁴. For example, one always wants to be healthy without deliberating upon this matter. As for the third sense of will, that of use, it refers to the actual and specific acts or volitions which the instrument consciously and deliberately performs. So, one of the most important characteristics in this case is that a volition in every instance involves conscious thought.¹⁵ St. Anselm does not refer to occurrent volitions when he speaks about the upright will, about the just person having the will for justice/willing what is right for its own sake. For him will and its cognates have three possible meanings: a faculty or power of the soul (the will), a particular act of that power (choice, volition), and any disposition of that power (intention, attitude, desire).¹⁶

Returning to the uprightness, St. Anselm sustains that not even God can separate it from will because upright is only the will which wills what

¹¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *De Concordia* 11, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹² *Idem*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 6, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹³ *Idem*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 7, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹⁴ *Idem*, *De Concordia* 11, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹⁵ G. Stanley Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Jeffrey E. Brower, *op. cit.*, in Brian Davis, Brian Leftow (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 247.

God wills that it will. Consequently, the most free is an upright will because no force can remove its uprightness.

If man deserts this uprightness because of the difficulty of keeping it this means that he serves sin. To recover it is only possible with God's help. But still freedom of choice is not lost. A man can be servant (of sin) and free at the same time. He is always naturally free in order to keep uprightness whether or not he has any to keep. On the other hand when man has uprightness he does not have an inability to avoid sinning. St. Anselm makes a parallel with the ability of seeing the sun which would mean keeping the uprightness of will: "For even when the sun is absent we have in us sight, by which to see the sun when it is present; similarly, even when uprightness-of-will is lacking to us, we have in us the ability to understand and to will (...) only when we lack nothing for seeing the sun except the sun's presence do we lack the capability which its presence produces in us".¹⁷

Chapter 13 of *De Libertate Arbitrii* comes with a conclusive tone: "the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness itself is the complete definition of freedom of choice".¹⁸ Towards the end, St. Anselm makes a clear cut division between God's will and man's will. The first one is based on an unoriginated freedom of choice whereas the second one is given and created (by God). This last one belongs to men and angels and it is of two kinds: the will which does have uprightness to keep in two ways – so as to be able to lose it (the case of the angels before the fall and men before death) and so as not to be able to lose it (the case of the elect angels and men); the second kind of will does not have uprightness to keep and the one who has it can be able or not to recover it.

In *The Fall of the Devil (De Casu Diaboli)* St. Anselm stresses upon the important role of perseverance in keeping the good will. To the apostate angel God did not give perseverance because the former did not receive it (for he rejected it, he did not get it from God). The Devil had from God the ability and will to receive perseverance and the ability and will to persevere, but since he did not will it completely he did not receive it. He freely lost the will which he had. Still, the fact that the Devil did not want what he had to does not mean that there was a deficiency in God's work, in what He gave. By willing what and when he ought not to have willed, "he expelled the goodness from his will"¹⁹. Consequently God did not give perseverance because the devil deserted the upright will in the first place and not the

¹⁷ Anselm of Canterbury, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 12., in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁸ *Idem*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* 13, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁹ Anselm of Canterbury, *De Casu Diaboli* 3, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 138.

other way around. “If he had perseveringly kept justice, he would have never have sinned or have been unhappy”²⁰. His fatal mistake was to have willed what he did not already have and was also not supposed to have at that time. Thus he extended his will, as St. Anselm says “beyond justice by inordinately willing something more than he had received”²¹. He willed something by an autonomous will, (*propria voluntate*) which was not subjected to anyone else. This will is only the characteristic of God. The Devil placed his will higher than God’s will.

Sin as the consequence of rebellious will

Man also fell because of wanting what God did not will. How was this possible as it seems to be more logical to make the good for which one was created and not the evil that he was created to avoid. Is it, again, a failure of God’s creation? St. Anselm explains this by saying that no one can have a good will if God does not give it, but everyone can do the evil if God merely permits it in the name of free choice. And this entails unhappiness. St. Anselm establishes a strong connection between will and happiness: “not everyone wills justice and not everyone flees from injustice. But not only every rational nature but even everything which is able to sense, wills benefit and avoids disadvantage”²².

Also, each rational nature has the obligation to obey God’s will which is seen as a just debt to God. Consequently, in Anselm’s view, sin is the non-payment of this debt. As the whole personality – mind, will and affections, participate in the enjoyment of God, the same totality is involved in turning the back to God. Furthermore, this is made of man’s own free will and this makes the deed even more serious. This view supports the idea that there is not a sinless intellect betrayed by lustful flesh, but both mind and body express the rebellion of the will which refuses to pay the debt due to God. Man’s will does not subject itself to God’s will and thus man enters a state of guilt – the inability to do what God wants²³. Sin is a disturbance of the natural order of the universe, of the natural human behavior which has obedience to God as a basis. Death is the consequence of this disobedience. Still it is interesting to note that St. Anselm does not accept the definition according to which all men are mortal, or corruptible or incorruptible. The essence of man is not expressed by his mortality, corruptibility or

²⁰ *Idem*, *De Casu Diaboli*4, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 139.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 140.

²² Anselm of Canterbury, *De Casu Diaboli* 12, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 154.

²³ John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics. A Re-interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1954, p. 68.

incorruptibility. These can only bring misery or happiness to his existence but cannot affect his *essentia*²⁴. By sinning though man does not become the “property” of the Devil. The latter one is only allowed to harass but not possess him; man belongs to God in any circumstance. It follows that the Devil does not control man in his sinning.

As for God’s reaction to sin, He may choose to punish or to receive satisfaction – *aut poena aut satisfaction*. St. Anselm also brings something new regarding the mentioned concept of *satisfaction*. In his opinion, satisfaction is an additional gift that man must give to God. The best example to explain this is given by him from private life. If one affects the health of someone else, his debt is not only to wholly restore his health, but also make amends for the done harm by an additional action or gift. The gift is “proportionate to the injury done- *secundum exbonorationis factam molestiam*”²⁵. A clear discussion in this direction can be found in the eleventh chapter of *Cur Deus Homo I*, a chapter titled “What sinning and making satisfaction for sin are”. Sin is, as stated before, “not to render to God what is due”²⁶, that is not placing one’s will under God’s will (which is the justice or uprightness of will), dishonoring him and removing from him what belongs to Him. In order to reenter the natural order man has to pay for what he does but still this payment is not enough. One must give back more than one has stolen. Everyone who sins, says St. Anselm, has to repay the stolen honor and this “constitutes the satisfaction which every sinner is obliged to make to God”²⁷. Consequently, the punishment of the sinner honors God and shows man that he is, after all, wholly subjected to God. The punishment comes from God’s decision of taking back what belongs to Him when the sinner does not pay his debt – “as a man by sinning seizes what is God’s, so God by punishing takes what is man’s”²⁸. It is impossible for God to lose its honor. A certain dynamism can be noticed in this man-God relationship as portrayed by St. Anselm.

Abelard and St. Anselm on sin

Whereas St Anselm approaches the problem of sin mainly from the perspective of God’s reaction to it, another theologian of the 12th century, Peter Abelard, discusses sin emphasizing the human mechanism (if we can

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 69.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

²⁶ Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo I-11*, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury*, volume III, The Edwin Mellen Press, Toronto and New York, 1976, p. 68.

²⁷ *Idem*, *Cur Deus Homo I-12*, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 70.

²⁸ *Idem*, *Cur Deus Homo I-14*, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 72.

say so) in this direction. Still both St. Anselm and Abelard relate sin to will talking about it as an offence to God. As we have seen so far, sin is not willing what God wills. For Abelard who first tries to give definitions negatively (sin is not the bad deed in itself nor is it the will to perform this deed), sin is the fault of the soul by which it earns damnation or is made guilty before God. So, Abelard concludes, we offend God not through harm but through contempt. In Anselm's view man commits this offence by not subjecting his will to that of God and thus he enters the same state of guilt.

What is interesting to mention and what also shows the fact that Abelard mainly analyzes what happens inside the human mind when sinning is that he affirms that the actual deed, the doing of sin adds nothing to guilt or to damnation before God. The action of sin does not increase the sin. Neither the will which precedes the sin nor the doing of the deed which follows constitute sin. Sin consists in *the decision* to do some wrong act. Therefore the merit and the glory of the doer lie in the intention, not in the deed. For instance, Abelard says that often things that should not be done are done without sin but just under coercion or through ignorance. As an example, it is not a sin to lust after another's wife unless you consent to this lust or action²⁹.

Abelard also touches upon the stages that the human being passes through in the process of sinning. Sins or temptation occurs in three ways: in suggestion, pleasure and consent and we are often led through these three to the doing of sin. A suggestive example that he uses is that of the committing of the original sin. First was the persuasion which came from the devil. Secondly, pleasure was felt by the woman when realizing that the fruit was going to be sweet for the senses. Consequently and thirdly, there came the consent. Abelard concludes that deeds in themselves have no moral value. The proper subject of moral evaluation is the agent, via his or her intentions. In this sense, if we think of Abelard's threefold meaning of actions related to will, here we have the great importance of intention as a disposition or state of the power of the soul which is will. And St. Anselm also claimed that it was this meaning that was relevant for the understanding of the rightness of will. We could say that the issue of sin is somehow for both Abelard and St. Anselm, connected with intention. Also, they claim that ignorance is either an excuse for sin (Abelard) or that it lessens the gravity of a sin (St. Anselm). The example of those who crucified Jesus is suggestive in this respect and also underlines what is different between the two views. While Abelard sustains the innocence of the crucifiers, he being the only one to support this idea, St. Anselm, in *Cur Deus Homo* claims that because they did not know that Jesus was God, the ones who killed him are

²⁹ D.E. Luscombe (ed.), *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 15.

guilty only of a venial sin and not a deadly one: “For a sin done knowingly and a sin done in ignorance are so different from each other that the evil which these men could never have done knowingly, because of its enormity, is venial because it was done in ignorance”³⁰. For Abelard though sin is consent to what is known to be evil. In his view, because the crucifiers did not know that Christ was the Son of God and because they thought they were doing something right, they did not offend God through contempt and did not consent to evil.³¹

As St. Anselm, Abelard sees punishment as the natural consequence of sin when there is no repentance. The latter talks about two kinds of repentance: *fruitful repentance* of those belonging to the New Law and *unfruitful repentance* of those of the Old Law. The first one, which he considers more important relates to a God who is first of all good, whereas for the Old Law God was first of all just. In St. Anselm’s case as already mentioned the stress is on the concept of God’s satisfaction, on the additional gift that the sinner must give in order to restore God’s honor.

Another common point of the two theologians view on sin is the conviction that the Devil does not acquire any rights over the human being after the sin has been done. Both strongly oppose this view and stress the fact that the Devil only has the permission (from God) to torment people as punishment for their wrong deeds; he is only “a jailer or licensed tormentor”³²

What is of great importance is the fact that in St. Anselm’s view, a man always has the ability to keep uprightness of will. We never lose this ability, no matter if we choose the good or the evil. This could be seen as an optimistic perspective on the possibilities of human nature. When man chooses the evil the problem is not inability to make the good choice, but rather the unwillingness to do it – “he does not use his ability-for-choosing-the-good, but his ability-for-choosing-the-evil”³³. It seems that through the gift of freedom of choice, the human being is given the power of taking one way or another; he is not a marionette in the hands of God. That is why the issue regarding will is so important in St. Anselm’s writing. If, after all, everything depends on man’s will, that would mean in a way that, even if, as St. Anselm claims, we have to choose only the good that God gives us in order to be free, man somehow has absolute freedom; God does not impose anything, but only offers a way that man can choose or not. The

³⁰ Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo II-15*, in Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 118.

³¹ D.E. Luscombe (ed.), *Peter Abelard and Twelfth Century Ethics*, in Idem, *op. cit.*, p. XXXV.

³² Thomas Williams, *Sin, grace, and redemption*, in Jeffrey E. Brower, *The Cambridge Companion to Abelard*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 264.

³³ Jasper Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

personal, intimate work of man though should be that of placing himself in agreement with God's will in order to achieve happiness.

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Alejandro Rojas JIMENEZ¹

Die Idee des Potenzlosen in der Spätphilosophie Schellings und in der Spätphilosophie Heideggers

Abstract. This paper is divided into two main thematic blocks. First, it expounds the doctrine of the potencies of Schelling, trying to show how this doctrine is based in a *Potenzlose*. Secondly, I examine the influence of this *Potenzlose* to Heidegger's *Geviert*.

Keywords: *Das Potenzlose*, doctrine of the potencies, identity, *télos*

„La liberté souveraine du Créateur est sauvegardée par la même processus de recel et de retrait. Dieu reste inexorablement le Dieu caché, le *Potenzloser*. Il se dissimule derrière les puissances qu'Il a distendues et extraverties, sa divinité comme *actus purissimus* demeure intangible, Il n'entre pas dans le procès cosmique.“²

[Tilliette, X.]

I. Einleitung

Der Versuch Schellings, das Absolute aus inneren Ursachen zu verstehen, führt ihn zum Begriff der Potenz. Zum ersten Mal benutzt er den Begriff der Potenz im Jahre 1798 (*Von der Weltseele*); jenseits der Naturphilosophie entwickelt sich dieser Begriff bis 1801 (*Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*) nicht weiter. Seitdem stellt die Realität auf eine bestimmte Weise die absolute Identität vor: $A=A$;³ mit objektiver Vorherrschaft ($A=B+$) oder mit subjektiver Vorherrschaft ($+A=B$). Diese Konstruktion führt zu den Graden oder Potenzen des Absoluten. Und hier liegt der Ausgangspunkt der vorliegenden Untersuchung.

Dank der Methode des teilweisen Übergewichtes kann Schelling das Absolute denken. Sowie in der Philosophie von Anaximander oder Heraklit

¹ rojasj_a@yahoo.es

² Tilliette, X. (1987), 132.

³ „Ideales und Reales bilden zwar im endlichen Sein eine Einheit, aber so, dass immer eines von beiden überwiegt. In der Natur überwiegt das Objektive, in der Welt des Geistes das Subjektive, jeweils in verschiedenen Stufungen. Schelling hat diese ontologischen Grundverhältnisse in einem Liniengleichnis veranschaulicht (IV, 137; VII, 184).“ Hennigfeld, J. (2001), 21.

(oder Aristoteles⁴) sind Wandel und Widerspruch hier die Grundworte, weil die Einheit kein letztes Moment des dialektischen Prozesses nennt; denn das Absolute verbirgt sich immer hinter jeder Bestimmung. Ein Anfang ist aber der einer Bewegung, die auf ein *télos* zugeht. Dieser Zweck nennt aber hier kein Ende, denn obwohl der Zweck der Bestimmbarkeit (Produktivität) die Bestimmung (Produkt) ist, finden wir hier keine Identifizierung, sondern eine Kundgebung der Produktivität, die nicht unmittelbar offenbar ist. Daher bleibt diese Bestimmbarkeit frei „von aller Bestimmtheit und ebendarum auch zu aller Bestimmtheit.“⁵ Sie äußert sich im Produkt. Sich verwirklichen heißt sich verendlichen. Die Produktivität verbirgt sich in dem Reproduziertwerden der Produkte; bei Schelling heißt es: „das beständige Reproduziertwerden.“⁶ Dieses Reproduziertwerden hat kein Ende wegen der Unendlichkeit und Unbestimmbarkeit des absoluten Wesens. Daher heißt „sich verendlichen“ gleichzeitig die Be-freiung von den endlichen Formen der Verwirklichung und gerade deswegen die Freiheit zu aller Bestimmung. Auf diese Weise bemerken wir eine Bejahung der Zeit⁷ als *aevum*.

Mit anderen Worten: Die unbedingte Produktivität des absoluten Wesens „verbirgt sich hinter den *einzelnen Erscheinungen*, in denen sie offenbar wird.“⁸ Sie kann ohne Beziehung zum *péras* nicht gedacht werden; denn die „unbedingte Produktivität wird nicht unmittelbar offenbar.“⁹ Die Begriffe des Wesens bzw. des einen Absoluten (Bestimmbarkeit) und der Formen (Bestimmung), stehen so zueinander, dass keines ohne das andere gedacht werden kann. Im Platonischen *Philebos* war Schelling den Begriffen des Bestimmbaren und der Grenze begegnet,¹⁰ und er hat im *Philebos* diese Beziehung kennen gelernt.

Die Formen differenzieren das Wesen, d.h. sie bestimmen das Wesen und es erscheint in ihnen. Derart erscheint das absolute Wesen unter immer unterschiedlichen Gestalten in einem Nacheinander; obwohl dieses Erscheinen kein Ende findet, hat es aber ein deutliches Ziel (*télos*): die Offenbarung des absoluten Wesens in jeder Bestimmung. Das Ziel der Produktivität sind die Produkte, obgleich die Bestimmbarkeit frei von aller

⁴ Vgl., Phys., 260a ff.

⁵ Halfwassen, J. (2010), 76.

⁶ Einl., SW I/III, 315.

⁷ „Kontinuität ist jedoch der beste Name, um diesem Signifikanten der Zeit zu beschreiben, in den sich die Dinge einzuschreiben scheinen. Und außerdem begründet diese Kontinuität auch den Vorgang, um die Differenz transzendental/empirisch zu tilgen, die sich gerade ausgehend von dieser Kontinuität auflöst.“ Leyte, A. (2010), 152.

⁸ VW, SW I/II, 382.

⁹ Jacobs, W.G. (2004), 92.

¹⁰ Vgl., Jacobs, W. G. (2011), 89.

Bestimmtheit bleibt, und eine Be-freiung sich bezüglich der begrenzten Formen verewigt (*perpetuitas vitae*). So sehen wir, wie gesagt wurde, eine Bejahung der Zeit als Kontinuität bzw. Beständigkeit aufgrund von der Freiheit zu aller Bestimmtheit. Wie Heidegger im Jahr 1941 sagt, finden wir hier eine „vom Nacheinander unberührte Beständigkeit (als Bewegung), vom Wechsel des Verschwindens und Ankommens unbetreffene Anwesenung.“¹¹ Aber nicht weil das absolute Wesen ein Weiter-Sein sei, sondern weil die Indifferenz zwischen der Bestimmbarkeit und der Bestimmung bis in alle Ewigkeit bleibt. Diese „bis in alle Ewigkeit“ heißt *sempiternitas in agendo* bzw. *vita sempiterna* des Wesens, die Jacobs so erklärt: „Die Unterscheidung von Form und Wesen hebt das Wesen nicht auf, sie behauptet es vielmehr als jene Identität, welche die Formen als solche desselben Identischen zu verstehen erlaubt. Deshalb wendet Schelling diese Unterscheidung auf jeder Reflexionsstufe wieder an: z.B. das absolute Wesen erscheint in den Formen Natur und Geist, das Wesen der Natur in den Formen des Organischen und Unorganischen, das Wesen des Organischen in den Formen von Pflanze und Tier usw.“¹²

II. Die Potenzenlehre

Die Suche nach dem Absoluten,¹³ die Schelling an der Hand von Kant und Platon beginnt, führt ihn jenseits von Fichte. Seine *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801), gemeinsam mit *Bruno* (1802) und den *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studium* (1803) erschaffen eine deutliche eigene Philosophie: Die Identitätsphilosophie, bei der das Absolute mit Hilfe der Potenzenlehre betrachtet wird. Es geht um eine neue Darstellung des Absoluten, die an einer neuen Methode orientiert ist: der Methode des Potenzierens. Die Potenzen drücken die Momente aus, in denen die Beziehung Subjekt-Objekt sich auf die Erkenntnis selbst bezieht. Die Keimidee der Potenzenlehre hat Falgueras deutlich vorgestellt: „Es gibt keine Natur ohne Geist, auch keinen Geist ohne Natur. Es gibt keine Produktivität ohne Wissen, auch kein Wissen ohne Produktivität, obgleich die Natur und der Geist, die Produktivität und das Wissen Gegenteile sind. Sie können nicht gleichzeitig vorhanden sein, sie können aber auch nicht getrennt sein, und so ist die einzige Möglichkeit, dass sie gleichzeitig

¹¹ Heidegger M., (1971), 208.

¹² Jacobs, W.G. (2011), 89.

¹³ „La genèse historique se récapitule dans un système qui veut être déroulé comme un devenir. Les époques de la pensée se reproduisent en moments du système, l'évolution singulière se hausse à l'universel.“ Tilliette, X. (1992), 504.

einbezogen werden, das bedeutet: mit teilweisem Übergewicht in zwei parallelen, harmonischen Verfahren.“¹⁴

Ein entscheidender Moment in der Entwicklung verändert aber die Lehre von Grund auf. Als Schelling versucht, der Kritik an der Beziehung zwischen Notwendigkeit und Freiheit zu begegnen, stellt er einen Ungrund fest, der die Potenzenlehre mit Festigkeit und Konsistenz ausstattet: Als Schelling versucht auf die Frage zu antworten, warum sich die pantheistische Darstellung des Absoluten auf die höchste Freiheit und die höchste Notwendigkeit konzentriert,¹⁵ bemerkt Schelling, dass die Potenzenlehre sich in einem Potenzlosen halten muss, ohne welches sich jedes Werden und jedes Gleichgewicht des teilweisen Übergewichtes auflöst.

Das Potenzlose nennt das Wesen als ein Gehemmtsein, das insgeheim bleiben will. Das Gehemmtsein unterscheidet sich von der Möglichkeiten der Potenzen (Duplicität). Das Potenzlose muss aber noch tiefer erklären werden. Es steht in Zusammenhang mit dem Begriff des Ungrundes.

Wenn das Prinzip des Systems von 1801 die Einheit (Identität) des Absoluten war, nimmt der Urgrund der Freiheitsschrift jene Stelle ein. Der Urgrund ist nicht mehr diese Identität. Der Ungrund nennt aber kein Unvermögen, sondern einen neuen Sinn der Vorstellung der Offenbarung der Bestimmbarkeit, die mit der Hegelianischen absoluten Idee der Gesamtheit der Bestimmungen nichts zu tun hat.¹⁶ In Richtung auf diese Vorstellung erscheint eine Gleichgültigkeit bzw. *indifferentia* gegenüber einer absoluten Bestimmung, weil die freie unbedingte Produktivität frei zu aller Bestimmtheit gedacht werden muss, und auf diese Weise muss sie im Handeln als eine ‚ewige That der Selbstoffenbarung‘¹⁷ verstanden werden: die sich selbst wieder gebärende Zeit der Offenbarungsgeschichte. Daher geht es nicht mehr um die Potenzen, auch um kein Unvermögen, sondern um das Potenzlose: die Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber der höchsten bestimmten Einheit. Eine *indifferentia* der Gesamtheit der Bestimmungen, weswegen die Zeit im folgenden Sinne bezeichnet wird: „denjenigen

¹⁴ Falgueras, I. (1999), 253.

¹⁵ „Nothwendigkeit und Freiheit stehen ineinander, als Ein Wesen, das nur von verschiedenen Seiten betrachtet als das eine oder andere erscheint, an sich Freiheit, formell Nothwendigkeit ist.“ PhU, SW I/VII, 385.

¹⁶ „Hegels Gedanke, dass sich Gott im Menschen verwirklicht, ist die höchste Negativität, die höchste Unangemessenheit zum Wesen der Gottheit.“ Koslowski, P. (2001), 724.

¹⁷ „Nach der ewige Tat der Selbstoffenbarung ist nämlich in der Welt, wie wir jetzt erblicken, alles Regel, Ordnung und Form; aber immer liegt noch im Grunde das Regellose, als könnte es einmal wieder durchbrechen, und nirgends scheint es, als wäre ein anfängliches Regelloses zur Ordnung gebracht worden.“ PhU, SW I/VII, 359, 360.

Moment der Entscheidung, wo der Urwille aus der Ewigkeit seines lautereren SeinsKönnens heraustritt, um sein höchstes Selbst nach Zeiten zu offenbaren.“¹⁸

Schelling versucht jetzt, den absoluten Ungrund als In-differenz zu denken: real und ideal (Finsternis und Licht) werden als Nichtgegensätze vorgestellt, nämlich als eine Zweiheit, die noch kein Gegensatz ist; die absolute Unterschiedslosigkeit. Wäre das Wesen *ante omnem affirmationem et negationem* nicht, wäre es nur am Ende des Nacheinanders. Es ist aber nicht am Ende,¹⁹ sondern es ist in jedes Produkt, weil das Wesen die Wirklichkeit des möglichen Produkt ist: Die Indifferenz setzt und bestätigt die Unterscheidung der Prinzipien, anstatt diese Unterscheidung wieder aufzuheben, damit das Leben des Wesens, das Eins von Allem²⁰ ist, behauptet wird. Das Wesen kann Eins von Allem sein, weil es nicht am Ende ist, sondern als In-diferenz *ante* ist. Die Indifferenz ist nicht als absolute Identität zwischen der Bestimmbarkeit und der Bestimmung, die aus diesen beiden hervorgegangen wäre, zu denken. Die In-differenz der Prinzipien kann nicht so in einen Gedanken gefasst werden, dass sie ein Produkt wäre. Sie ist vielmehr das Unbegreifliche, das in jedem Produkt ist. Es geht um eine grundlegende Veränderung der Potenzenlehre, welche in zwei Schritten erklärt werden soll. Einerseits soll der spekulative Ursprung des Wechsels und andererseits der Sinn des Potenzlosen kommentieren werden.

II.1. Der spekulative Ursprung des Wechsels der Potenzenlehre: das Scheitern der vermittelten Identität

Der spekulative Ursprung des Wechsels der Potenzenlehre liegt im Scheitern der vermittelten Identität. Die vermittelte Identität ist hervorgebracht worden, um die Spontaneität zu verstehen. Die Spontaneität als Grundbegriff nennt ein *movens per se* als *causa sufficiens omnis actus sui*. Die weitere Frage nach dem Grunde noch des Willens ist sinnlos: „Hier ist ein schlechthin Letztes.“²¹ Die Spontaneität hat ihren Ursprung im mittelalterlichen Voluntarismus (Scotus und Ockham) und ist ein Grundbegriff der neuzeitlichen Philosophie geworden. Diese Idee des Grundes kann den Schritt von der Potenz zum Akt erklären, ohne über *eine*

¹⁸ Friedrich, H.-J. (2009), 192.

¹⁹ Vgl., WA, SW I/VIII, 232.

²⁰ Vgl., Buchheim, T., (1992).

²¹ „Vielmehr bestimmt der Wille selbst sich ganz allein und ist das *movens per se* in jeder Handlung, die einzige und totale Ursache seiner Volitionen, *causa sufficiens omnis actus sui*. Die weitere Frage nach dem Grunde noch des Willens ist sinnlos: hier ist ein schlechthin Letztes.“ Heimsoeth, H., (1958), 220.

causa finalis zu sprechen. Die Existenz der unendlichen, allmächtigen, auf keine Möglichkeiten und Unmöglichkeiten festgelegten Freiheit Gottes ist für den Nominalismus die ewige unter allen Wahrheiten aus ihr gehen erst die andern ewigen Wahrheiten, die unser Verstand erfasst, in freier Tat hervor.²² Das, was Gott will, ist eben deshalb gut und wahr.

Obwohl die Spontaneität und die Unendlichkeit aufgrund einer Diskussion nach Scotus ins Spiel kommen, und zwar in Bezug auf die Grundlage, behauptet Ockham, dass die *causa efficiens* nicht verstanden werden kann: Wenn der Grund keinen Grund hat, scheint es, dass dann nichts zu verstehen ist. Aber wir können denken, dass es möglich wäre, diesen Grund zu verstehen: Die Ursache kann erkannt werden, wenn man betrachtet, was sie verursacht hat. D.h., wenn man Cusanus folgt,²³ und wenn die Struktur *A efficit ut A sit totum* wieder aufgenommen wird. Falgueras behauptet, dass die gründliche Idee eines Entwurfes des deutschen Idealismus zur Vereinigung ist, dass „die absolute Realität mit dem Intellekt als spekulatives Verfahren zusammen bedacht werden kann, welches von *implicitus-efficiens* bis *explicitus-formalis* notwendig ist. Beide enthalten die Gesamtheit, aber anders.“²⁴

Implicitus-efficiens nennt die Gesamtheit synthetisch, während *explicitus-formalis* die Gesamtheit analytisch nennt. Wäre das richtig, könnten wir sagen, dass der deutsche Idealismus ‚Spinozismus‘ ist.²⁵ Diese Folgerung ist aber problematisch, weil der deutsche Idealismus weit mehr als Spinozismus ist; aber dieser Entwurf des deutschen Idealismus ermöglicht uns, die Besonderheit der Spätphilosophie Schellings und den spekulative Ursprung des Wechsels der Potenzenlehre deutlich zu erklären: Gegen diesen Anspruch der Identitätsphilosophie bringt die Spätphilosophie Schellings ein Absolutes hervor, welches nicht mehr mit Hilfe der nach dem Prozess der Selbstkonstitution vermittelten Identität vorgestellt wird.

Ab 1809 bemerkt Schelling, dass die vermittelte Identität nicht hinreichend ist, um die Spontaneität als Grund zu verstehen,²⁶ da das Wesen nicht

²² Vgl., ebd., 233 ff.

²³ „La implicación es una clase de unidad, aquella con que se puede pensar que se articulan sujeto y predicado en el juicio, principalmente si es analítico. Y Cusa traslada esa clase de unidad a la que liga Creador y criatura.“ García, J. A. (2007), 8.

²⁴ Vgl., Falgueras, I., (1976), 145.

²⁵ „Naturalmente, las diferencias entre el sistema de Espinosa y el de Schelling son grandes desde el punto de vista de los contenidos, pero no desde el punto de vista funcional del hallazgo especulativo, que es común a todas las filosofías del absoluto.“ ebd, 147.

²⁶ „Es ist Schellings Freiheitslehre der *philosophischen Untersuchungen*, mit der in der Geschichte des deutschen Idealismus dadurch ein Neuanfang gemacht wird, daß das Verhältnis von Spontaneität und Notwendigkeit einer Deutung unterzogen wird, die an deren Gegensatz festhält und ihn nicht zum Verschwinden bringt.“ Sturma, D. (1995), 154.

restlos in den Prozess eingeht. Schelling zeigt dann ein neues Moment an: Ein anfänglich unzugängliches Ur-Moment, das nicht in der absoluten Identität zu finden ist, sondern in der Dunkelheit des Abgrundes. Auf diese Dunkelheit des Abgrundes läuft eine Philosophie hinaus, welche als „eine freie Geistesstat“²⁷ verstanden wird. Schellings Philosophie zeigt sich immer mehr als der Anfang einer neuen Weise der Philosophie:²⁸ einer „post-idealistischen“²⁹ Philosophie. Diese Philosophie hat zur Folge, dass Schelling sich gezwungen sieht,³⁰ bei der Begründung der Philosophie von allem Endlichen abzusehen.

II.2. Das Potenzlose und die Philosophie, die von allem Endlichen absieht.

II.2.1 Die Indifferenz der Prinzipien

Die *philosophischen Untersuchungen* basieren auf einer für diese Abhandlung grundlegenden Unterscheidung zweier Prinzipien, nämlich zwischen dem Wesen, sofern es Grund ist, und inwiefern es existiert. Diese Prinzipien sind in Gott unauflöslich, im Menschen dagegen auflöslich. Natürlich schließt die Möglichkeit der Auflösung noch nicht die Wirklichkeit derselben ein. Die tatsächliche Auflösung ergibt eine Disharmonie oder Zwietracht. Die Wirklichkeit dieser Zwietracht ist der Anfang des Bösen.³¹ Wenn es die Möglichkeit des Bösen nicht geben würde, würde es auch keine Freiheit geben, weil die Freiheit eine Entscheidungsmöglichkeit impliziert und daher ein Vermögen des Guten und des Bösen ist.³²

Dagegen bildet die Harmonie der Unterschiedenen eine Einheit, deren jedes für sich sein kann und doch nicht ist, und nicht sein kann ohne

²⁷ EV, SW I/ IX, 229.

²⁸ „Hier muss alles Endliche, alles, was noch ein Seyendes ist, verlassen werden, die letzte Anhänglichkeit schwinden; hier gilt es alles zu lassen – nicht bloß, wie man zu reden pflegt, Weib und Kind, sondern was nur ist, selbst Gott, denn auch Gott ist auf diesem Standpunkt nun rein Seyendes“ EV, SW I/IX, p 217. Heidegger nimmt dieses Motto auf, um an die Gelassenheit zu appellieren; die einheitliche Grundstimmung, anhand derer wir uns erfolgreich die Einheit vorstellen können. Eine Einheit, die für viele Fachleute leer ist (*die Nacht (...) worin, wie man zu sagen pflegt, alle Kübe schwarz sind.* Hegel, G.W.F., (1952), 19), und uns zwingt, weiterzugehen, jenseits aller Vorstellung. (Vgl., Duque, F., (1998a), 263).

²⁹ „el último Schelling lleva a su culminación el Idealismo y, de este modo, lo hace naturalmente desembocar en el ancho piélago de la filosofía contemporánea.“ Duque, F. (1998a), 928.

³⁰ Vgl., Duque, F., (1998b), 54.

³¹ Vgl., PhU, SW I/VII, 390.

³² Vgl., ebd., 352.

das andere.³³ Die Unterschiedenen stehen ineinander, als Ein Wesen, das nur von verschiedenen Seiten betrachtet als das eine oder das andere erscheint. Dieses Wesen teilt sich aber nur, damit die zwei, die in ihm nicht zugleich sein konnten, durch Liebe (das ewige Band beider) eins werden. Schelling verwendet unterschiedliche Begriffe, mit denen er das erste Prinzip, den Grund der Existenz, benennt, z.B. die Natur in Gott. Er versteht ihn als vernunftlosen Drang, der sich naturhaft zu entfalten strebt oder als blinden Willen.³⁴

Der Grund wird hier als das irrationale oder finstere Prinzip gedacht. Dieser Wille des Grundes will, ohne bewusst oder vernünftig wählen zu können. Der Wille des Grundes kann sich daher niemals verwirklichen und Ruhe finden; er ist ein verzehrendes Feuer. Um vernünftiger Wille zu sein, muss er sich selbst bestimmen. Daher muss Schelling eine zweite Potenz ansetzen.

Der Drang alleine bringt nichts hervor. Daher steht diesem Prinzip nun aber von Ewigkeit ein anderes entgegen. Ist das erste Prinzip Selbstbezüglichkeit, so das zweite Universalisierung, Hervorgang aus sich selbst. Schellings Name dafür ist *Logos*.

Weil das zweite Prinzip Hervorgang ist, impliziert es eine freiwillige Selbstbestimmung.³⁵ Die beiden Prinzipien sind diejenigen, durch die Freiheit gedacht werden kann. Selbstbestimmung ist aber nicht ohne Ziel zu denken. Daher bedarf der Gedanke der Freiheit eines dritten und letzten Prinzips, welches sagt, was sein soll, nämlich die Harmonie der Prinzipien oder die Liebe. Die drei Prinzipien oder Potenzen sind als Einheit zu denken.

„Die Liebe, die der Zweiheit von Grund und Existenz vorhergeht, nennt Schelling Ungrund.“³⁶ Wenn der Ungrund ein Wesen nennt, das vor aller Dualität sein muss, ist hier zu schließen: Ein Wesen, das nur von verschiedenen Seiten betrachtet als das eine oder das andere erscheint. Die Unterscheidung nennt Gott als Absolutes (sofern es existiert) und die Natur in Gott (Grund von Existenz). Natur bedeutet hier Hervorbringen, d.h. das Hervorgebrachte als eine Selbstoffenbarung Gottes. Wir müssen sagen, wenn die Produkte Äußerung Gottes sind, müssen sie produktiv bzw. lebendig sein. Für Schelling ist ein Hervorgebrachtes ein Produkt. Er unterscheidet aber das mechanisch Produzierte vom organisch Hervorgebrachten. Das mechanisch Produzierte kann seiner Produktionsweise entsprechend nur ein Mechanisches, also ein totes

³³ Vgl., ebd., 408.

³⁴ Vgl., ebd., 376.

³⁵ Vgl., SPV, I/VII, 430.

³⁶ Hennigfeld, J (2001), 127.

Produkt sein. Das organisch Hervorgebrachte ist dagegen gemäß seiner Produktionsweise ein Organisches, also ein "Kind", das aus Freiheit Produzierte ist dann ein Freies für sich fortwirkend. Entscheidend dabei ist die Produktionsweise. Er unterscheidet zwischen dem Zeugen und dem bloßen Bewirken, wobei das Bewirkte nichts für sich selbst ist.³⁷ Wir sollen die unendliche Substanz in ihrer Folge betrachtet als eine eigene Substanz denken. D.h. auf eine ewige und unvergängliche Weise von sich selbst geschieden.

Die Begriffe des Wesens bzw. des einen Absoluten und des organischen Hervorgebrachten, stehen so zueinander, dass keines ohne das andere gedacht werden kann; denn die unbedingte Bestimmbarkeit des Wesens (die Wesenheit) wird nicht unmittelbar offenbar, so dass wir hier die Verbindung der Prinzipien im Gleichgewicht wegen des Geheimnisses der Liebe finden.³⁸ Diese Verbindung lässt aber die Unterscheidung der Prinzipien bestehen,³⁹ weil die unbedingte Produktivität niemals unmittelbar offenbar werden kann. Deshalb nennt dieser Zweck kein Ende des Prozesses. Es geht hier, traditionell gesprochen, um die Allmacht Gottes, für die keine Grenze gedacht werden kann. Diese Allmacht ist zu denken als ein Potenzloses, so dass die Produktivität sich erschöpfen würde, wäre sie nicht unendlich: „wenn man umgekehrt versuchte, ein Produkt zu denken, an dem überhaupt nichts Produktives mehr wäre, so wäre die Produktivität in ihm zu Ende gekommen.“⁴⁰ Das bedeutet aber nicht, dass die Produktivität mittels des Produktes nicht kundgegeben wird, sondern dass die Produktivität sich zugleich in ihm offenbart und verbirgt.

Weil nicht die Aufhebung der Prinzipien gesucht wird, sage ich das Potenzlose, wie auch Schelling in den *Weltaltern* anstelle von Unvermögen sagt. Denn es nicht geht darum, eine Bestimmung zu suchen. Nur weil das Wesen frei von aller Bestimmtheit ist, kann er frei zu aller Bestimmtheit sein, und immer wenn das absolute Wesen die begrenzte Form ablehnt, kann es seine Unendlichkeit in dieser Bewegung der Befreiung zeigen.

Die unendlichen Möglichkeiten des Sich-verwirklichen-Könnens unterscheiden sich von der Wirklichkeit des Urwesens. Wenn ‚sich verwirklichen‘ ‚sich verendlichen‘ bedeutet, kann diese Einschränkung des Wesens keine Ruhe finden, weil das lauterste Wesen sich nicht selbst verwirklichen kann. Dann können wir nicht über ein Ende sprechen, sehr wohl aber über ein *télos*: Das Urwollen äußert seine Freiheit und

³⁷ PhU, SW I/VII, 347ff.

³⁸ „(...) das Geheimnis der Liebe, dass sie solche verbindet, deren jedes für sich sein könnte und doch nicht ist, und nicht sein kann ohne das andre.“ ebd., 408.

³⁹ „anstatt also, daß dieser die Unterscheidung wieder aufhobe, wie gemeint wurde, setzt und bestätigt er sie vielmehr.“ ebd., 407

⁴⁰ Jacobs W.G. (1999), 48.

Produktivität (Wirklichkeit) mittels der Produkte (Möglichkeiten), aber nicht mittels Eines Produkts. Eine „*dialectique de la révélation et du recel*“⁴¹ kann diese Freiheit bewahren. Die Identität der Prinzipien würde diese Offenbarung der Bestimmbarkeit verhindern.

II.2.2. Die Dialektik der Offenbarung und der Verborgenheit

Ein unbestimmter Zweck ist nicht denkbar, aber das bedeutet nicht, dass wir ein Ende denken müssen. Schelling wusste, das „*apeiron* steht hier ganz gleich mit *péras*.“⁴² Man redet vom *apeiron*, als solchem, insofern es vom *péras* getrennt ist. *Apeiron* (Bestimmbarkeit) und *péras* (Bestimmung) stehen so zueinander, dass keines ohne das andere gedacht werden kann.

Das, was wir hier finden, ist die Entdeckung der Notwendigkeit, eine Begrenzung aufzustellen: Nur wenn der Wille sich selbst begrenzt,⁴³ kann er erscheinen. Er bestimmt sich, damit er erscheinen kann. Der Wille des Grundes kann niemals Ruhe findet, weil er ein verzehrendes Feuer ist. Um vernünftiger Wille zu sein, muss er sich selbst bestimmen. Der freie Wille will seine Bestimmung, nicht aber sein Ende bzw. seine Grenze. Deshalb können wir diese Bestimmung nicht als ein Ende denken,⁴⁴ sondern als eine Dimension von *télos*.

Im Gegensatz zum Ende, welches die Folge der Prinzipien abschließt, sehen wir hier eine Bewegung in der das unbestimmbare Wesen in der Bestimmung, die das Wesen bestimmt (Selbstbestimmung), erscheint, und dass ferner die Bestimmung gleichzeitig das unbestimmbare Wesen differenziert. Immer bleibt die Beständigkeit der Produktivität unter stets neuen Gestalten.⁴⁵ Das Wesen erscheint unter unterschiedlichen Gestalten in einem Nacheinander; obwohl es kein Ende findet, findet es aber ein deutliches Ziel (*télos*): die Erscheinung des absoluten Wesens in den Produkten, wovon es frei ist, damit es frei zu aller Bestimmungen ist. Daher kann man über eine Befreiung⁴⁶ von den jeweils begrenzten Formen sprechen.

⁴¹ Tilliete, X. (1987), 132.

⁴² Timaeus (1794), 70.

⁴³ Vgl., SPV, SW I/II, 430.

⁴⁴ Vgl., GPPh, 95.

⁴⁵ „El curso del tiempo, en su incesante seguir, es inflexible, siempre lo mismo, constante. La continuidad del tiempo acaba con toda la soberbia de lo estable, de lo que aspira a ser de un modo fijo; y ella misma es ahora lo único realmente existente y permanente, lo redondo e igual a sí mismo, lo que eternamente retorna y se mantiene.“ García J.A. (1999), 123.

⁴⁶ „Die Wirklichkeit der Freiheit muss als das Geschehen der Befreiung gedacht werden.“ Hutter, A. (1996), 182.

Wir beobachten hier eine Dialektik der Offenbarung und der Verborgenheit. Die Bewegung ist kein grenzenloser Prozess: Sie ist eine Befreiung. Das worin sich die Freiheit findet. In der Freiheit ist Ziel. Selbstbestimmung ist nicht ohne Ziel zu denken. Zum *télos* gehört aber das *péras* als begriffliche Bestimmung, nicht aber als Grenze des Wollens. Was bedeutet dann hier Ziel, obwohl mit diesem kein Ende verbunden ist? Antwort: Freiheit. Wenn man nicht begreift, dass das wahre Ziel Freiheit ist, wird man in grenzenlose Prozesse kommen. Aber nicht dort, sondern in der Freiheit ist das Ziel.⁴⁷

Das Ende ist kein Objekt des Wollens, sowie der Laut kein Objekt des Lichtes ist. Und sowie ein leuchtendes Gerät nicht den Laut beleuchten kann, kann der Wille auch nicht sein Ende wollen. Der Wille will seine Freiheit. Er will wollen bzw. produzieren. Deshalb geht es um keine Unmögen der Identität hier, sondern um ein Potenzloses⁴⁸ bzw. eine *indifferentia* (kein Wollen)⁴⁹ gegenüber der höchsten Identität der Prinzipien. Daher spricht Schelling von einem „Gehemmtsein“.⁵⁰ Das Potenzlose bedeutet, dass das Absolute nicht die höchste Identität sucht. Das Potenzlose legt eine Dialektik der Offenbarung und der Verborgenheit fest, die kein Ende sucht. Das, was das absolute Wesen sucht, ist zu produzieren, und deshalb seiner Unendlichkeit sowohl mittels des Produktes als auch mittels der Befreiung hinsichtlich der Endlichkeit zu offenbaren.

Tilliete stellt dar, dass wir in Schellings Philosophie *une philosophie en devenir* finden können. Er zeigt uns die Schwierigkeit, beständige Begriffe festzusetzen. Jedoch kann man ab 1809 einen Begriff nennen, der andauert. Obwohl es im Jahr 1809 noch nicht das Wort Potenzloses gibt, glaube ich sagen zu können, dass wir in der Lehre vom Ungrund der *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* diese Idee finden können, die im Laufe der Zeit bestehen bleibt. Obgleich die Rede im Jahr 1809 nicht vom Potenzlosen handelt,

⁴⁷ Vgl. Jacobs Vortrag in der *Universidad de Málaga* (Spanien) im Monat November im Jahr 2010. Der Vortrag wird im Jahr 2011 veröffentlicht. Wir können diese Idee, die wir in Málaga hören konnten, auch lesen: „Wenn man oder nicht begreift, dass das wahre Ende Freiheit ist, wird man kein Ende wollen und in grenzenlose, ziellose Prozesse kommen. Aber nicht dort, sondern im Ende, im *Télos* ist Freiheit.“ Jacobs, W.G. (2011b), 351f.

⁴⁸ „vielmehr es ist außer und über aller Potenz, das an sich Potenzlose.“ WA, SW I/VIII, 234.

⁴⁹ „Das Geheimnis nicht nur nicht wissen zu können, sondern es nicht wissen zu wollen, darin konkretisiert sich die Freiheit der Selbstständigkeit, welche zuletzt die Freiheit der Selbstbescheidung ist (...) Die Liebe wissen zu wollen, bedeutete daher ein Wissen ohne Liebe, welches Wissen, im Schellingschen Sinne, kein philosophisches Wissen wäre.“ Jürgensen, S. (1997), 152.

⁵⁰ „ein ursprüngliches Gehemmtsein der Produktivität.“ Einl., SW I/III, 287.

können wir ab 1809 diesen Prozess finden: die Bestimmbarkeit des Wesens des Absoluten und die Bestimmung des Absoluten zu erscheinen, nennt eine Beziehung der Prinzipien, die wir als *aevum* auszeichnen können. *Aevum* als *modus durationum*, worin etwas bis in alle Ewigkeit als Ungrund des Prozesses verborgen bleibt. Deshalb ist das Endliche herrschend, „aber in ihm als der gemeinschaftlichen Hülle liegt der Keim des Absoluten, der ganze Einheit des Unendlichen und Endlichen.“⁵¹

III. Das absolute Einzelwesen und das Verborgene. Zum Abschluss des ersten Teils dieser Ausarbeitung

Die spätere Potenzenlehre besteht in der Dreiheit „Sein-können“⁵², „Sein-müssen“⁵³ und „Sein-sollen“. Die erste Potenz ist das Subjekt ohne Sein: reines können⁵⁴ bzw. reine Produktivität.⁵⁵ Die Zweite Potenz als Objekt ist das Produkt. In dieser Dreiheit ist das Sein-sollen ein Aufruf, der das Sein dorthin zieht, wohin es das gibt, was sein soll: das Gleichgewicht zwischen der Produktivität und dem Produkt. Jacobs interpretiert mit Recht: „dem Produkt als Objekt entspricht die Produktivität als Subjekt, wobei hier nicht an ein bewusstes Subjekt zu denken ist, sondern an das, was darunter liegt, wie das lateinische *subjectum* sagt.“⁵⁶ Die Produktivität drückt sich im Produkt aus: sie offenbart und verbirgt sich zugleich in ihm. Die unbedingte Produktivität verbirgt sich hinter den Erscheinungen bzw. Produkten, in denen sie offenbart wird.⁵⁷ Sie kann sich nur in den Produkten zeigen, obgleich sie sich verbirgt, weil sie als Produkt gar nicht in Erscheinung treten kann. Jacobs sagt: „die unbedingte Produktivität wird nicht unmittelbar offenbart.“⁵⁸ Aber sie ist, hier ist der Punkt, mittels des Produktes offenbart, obwohl „mittels“ wohlgermerkt hier keine Identifizierung nennt, sondern eine Indifferenz der Prinzipien. Sowie das Denken immer im Gedachten ist, obwohl es selbst kein Gedachtes ist, ist das Leben Gottes in diesem Sinne Eins von Allem, und die Welt die

⁵¹ PhK, SW I/V, 430.

⁵² Vgl., GPPH, 133.

⁵³ Vgl., GNPh, SW I/X, 18-19.

⁵⁴ „Die Freiheit des Anfangs ist reines Können und ist reiner, d.h. gleichgültiger Wille.“ Jantzen, J. (1999), 60.

⁵⁵ Krings, H. (1985), 123.

⁵⁶ Jacobs, W.G. (2004), 75.

⁵⁷ Vgl., VW, SW II, 382.

⁵⁸ Jacobs, W.G. (2004), 92.

Offenbarung des Lebensprozesses der Personalisierung Gottes (Bewusstwerdung) in der Natur und in der Geschichte.⁵⁹

Immer wenn das absolute Wesen sich in eine bestimmte Form projiziert, geschieht eine Unangemessenheit zwischen dem Wesen (unbedingte Produktivität) und der Endlichkeit der Form (Produkte). Es geht aber hier um kein Unvermögen, weil nur wegen dieses Potenzlosen das Wesen sich seine Unendlichkeit und Bestimmbarkeit äußern kann. Daher nennt die Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber der Identität kein Nicht-Können, sondern ein Potenzloses bzw. eine Abwesenheit der Potenzen, damit die Äußerung der Bestimmbarkeit ermöglicht wird. Diese Äußerung hat ihren Grund nicht in den Potenzen, sondern mit dem *absoluten Einzelwesen*, das unter diesen liegt. Daher kann man sagen, dass das Potenzlose die Überlegenheit des Einzelwesens nennt.

Im Grunde liegt die Unterscheidung zwischen Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit. Schelling hat das, was das Seiende Ist, vom Seienden frei denken wollen und daher das Seiende nicht mehr als reine Möglichkeit, sondern als verwirklichte Möglichkeit gedacht. Einesteils realisiert sich die Möglichkeit selbst, andererseits ist das, was das Seiende Ist, die Ursache der Ursachen. Die Möglichkeiten werden realisiert, indem das, was das Seiende Ist, die Ursache der Ursachen ist.

Ursache der Ursachen heißt, das *Daß* geht aus sich heraus. Das ist deshalb möglich, weil das *Daß* das Sein nicht hat, sondern ist. Die drei Potenzen existieren nur, wenn das *absolute Einzelwesen* (anders: das, was das Seiende Ist) es ist. Es existiert überhaupt nichts Allgemeines (kein Was), sondern nur Einzelnes (nur Daß). Das Einzelne ist wirklich, das Allgemeine nur möglich. Das Einzelwesen ist folglich als Bedingung der Möglichkeit des allgemeinen Wesens gedacht, und das Einzelwesen bzw. das Absolute muss außerhalb des Zusammenspiels der Potenzen bleiben.

Schelling schließt: Die „Idee selbst fordert Etwas oder Eines, von *dem* es zu sagen, das *ihm* Ursache des Seyns (*aition tou einai*) und in diesem Sinne es ist, und das *nur* wirklich, nur das Gegentheil alles Allgemeinen, also ein Einzelwesen, – das allerdings durch die Idee bestimmt ist, aber nicht durch diese, sondern unabhängig von ihr wirklich Ding ist, von dem Kant spricht, das er aber nicht erreichen konnte.“⁶⁰ Das Einzelwesen⁶¹ wird der

⁵⁹ „Wir können nun zum voraus sagen, dass eigentlich der ganze Prozess der Welterschöpfung, der noch immerfort der Lebensprozess in der Natur und in der Geschichte - das dieser eigentlich nichts anderes als der Prozess der vollendeten Bewusstwerdung, der vollendeten Personalisierung Gottes ist.“ SPV VII, 433

⁶⁰ DRPh, SW II/I, 292.

⁶¹ „Schelling deja de lado el concepto de Dios y parte del puro existente (bloß Existierenden), en el que no es pensado nada más que el mero existir.“ Cruz, J., (1993), 117.

Zentralpunkt der Spätphilosophie Schellings. Es wird immer wichtiger in der Philosophie von Schelling, bis es sich schließlich als Mittelpunkt der Potenzenlehre festigt.

Das Wesen ist nur so erfahrbar, nämlich durch die Tat des Prozesses. Dabei bleibt das Potenzlose als Bedingung der Möglichkeit des Prozesses im dunklen Grunde. Daher geht es hier um die Möglichkeit des Prozesses der Offenbarung durch die Äußerung der Bestimmbarkeit, die sich gleichzeitig hinter den Erscheinungen bzw. Produkten verbirgt. Auf Grund von dieser Verbergung kann eine Befreiung des Wesens von der Endlichkeit stattfinden. So denkt Schelling einen wirklichen und lebendigen Prozess.

Von den Möglichkeiten, den ersten drei Potenzen, kann nur auf ein Wirkliches zurückgeschlossen werden, das ihre *aitia* ist.⁶² Diese vierte Ursache bzw. „Ursache der Ursachen“⁶³ wird nicht mehr mittels der Potenzen gedacht, sondern als *le Dieu caché* außer *le procès cosmique*.⁶⁴ Gott bleibt unerbittlich verborgen. Die drei Potenzen (Attribute Gottes) sind in ihrer Ursache gegründet. Das vierte Moment kommt nur zum Vorschein, wenn man wahrnimmt, dass es keine Potenz ohne diese vierte Dimension geben kann. Einerseits bringt dieses vierte Moment eine Grenze der Macht der Erkenntnis zum Ausdruck,⁶⁵ andererseits nennt es ein „*originales Daß*“⁶⁶ Nicht das, was das Seyende ist,⁶⁷ sondern das Sein des Seyenden.⁶⁸

IV. Der Eindruck von Schelling auf Heidegger

IV.1. Das Geviert

Ich werde nicht vorschlagen, den Einfluss von Schelling auf Heidegger zu suchen, wo wir im Prinzip hätten glauben können, suchen zu müssen. Das heißt, nicht in der Schrift von 1936, sondern in der GA 54 (1942-43), die nach dem Seminar im Jahr 1941 geschrieben war. In der GA 54 können wir eine Dialektik der Unverborgenheit und der Verborgenheit finden, die

⁶² „Es scheint also, daß wir zu einer vierten Ursache fortgehen müssen.“ DRPh, SW II/I, 399.

⁶³ Vgl., ebd., 400.

⁶⁴ „La liberté souveraine du Créateur est sauvegardée par la même processus de recel et de retrait. Dieu reste inexorablement le Dieu caché, le *Potenzloser*. Il se dissimule derrière les puissances qu’Il a distendues et extraverties, sa divinité comme *actus purissimus* demeure intangible, Il n’entre pas dans le procès cosmique.“ Tilliette, X. (1987), 132.

⁶⁵ DRP, SW II/I, 413.

⁶⁶ „God’s original *Daß*.“ Beach E.A. (1948), 141.

⁶⁷ Vgl., DRPh, SW II/I, 412 und 385.

⁶⁸ „It will be recalled that Schellings distinguishes between the was, or essential „*wahtness*“ of things, and the Daß, or actualizing „*thahtness*“ of them.“ ebd., 136.

Heidegger auf das Geviert anwendet. Diese Dialektik staltet die Philosophie des Geviertes mit einer neuen Festigkeit aus.

Das Geviert wird erstmals schriftlich niedergelegt in *Der Rhein*⁶⁹ (1935). Später können wir das Geviert mit neuen Formulierungen finden: *Die Beiträge*⁷⁰ (1936), *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (1938), *Besinnung* (1938/39), usw. Der Prozess der Entwicklung muss besprochen werden, welcher bis 1949 (*Das Ding*) andauert.⁷¹ Noch später hat die Formulierung des Gevierts einige Schwankungen aufzuweisen, aber jene sind nicht von Bedeutung. In diesem Prozess ist der Text von 1942/43, den wir genannt haben, sehr wichtig, weil Heidegger dort das zum Ausdruck bringt, was bis hierher nur ein Aufruf zu einem neuen Geschick war.

Heidegger hat im Jahr 1939 gesagt, dass die Ankunft der neuen Götter dem ganzen geschichtlichen, irdischen Dasein der Deutschen eine neue Bahn gewiesen und eine Bestimmtheit geschaffen werden soll.⁷² Dieser Anruf ist ein Anruf zu einer neuen historischen Möglichkeit, zu einem neuen Anfang. Es geht ihm um eine neue Zeit, worin die Menschen nicht mehr an den Willen glauben, um die Geschichte zu beherrschen. Es geht um das Thema des Geviertes im Jahr 1939 in einem Anfangspunkt. Auf die folgende Kernstruktur läuft die Philosophie des Geviertes hinaus: immer wenn eine gegenwärtige Erscheinung (Ergebnis) erscheint, hindern andere Erscheinungen uns daran, die an ihrem Verborgensstand (Erde) auf den Moment der Möglichkeit der *Entbergung* (Götter) warten. Der Mensch sucht dann das, was verborgen war, und er kommt im Bereich des *Unverborgenen* an (Himmel).⁷³

Diese Kernstruktur ruht auf *une dialectique de la révélation et du recel*, die Heidegger uns im GA 54 (1942/43) vorstellte: „Vielmehr ist das *Entbergen* zugleich ein *Ent-bergen*.“⁷⁴ Wir sind bei dem Wort *Unverborgenheit* auf einen Bereich der *Verborgenen-Unverborgenheit* gewiesen, wo wir eine *Verborgenheit* und eine *Verbergung*, und ein *Unverborgenes* und eine *Unverbergung* unterscheiden können. Das Geviert nennt ein Vierfaches, das ich im Kürze vorstelle: Die *Verborgenheit* bedeutet *Verhüllung*, *Verschleierung*, *Verdeckung*, *Aufbewahrung*, *Behütung*.⁷⁵ Das *Verbergen*

⁶⁹ *Geburt y Lichtstrahl, Noth und Zucht*.

⁷⁰ „Im selben Jahr, in dem Heidegger seine erste Vorlesung über die Freiheitsabhandlung hielt, also 1936, hatte er mit der Abfassung der *Beiträge zur Philosophie* begonnen.“ Friedrich, H.-J., (2009), 127.

⁷¹ Vgl., Mattei J-F., (2004). Und Vgl., Stumpe M. (2002).

⁷² Vgl., *Germanien*, GA 39, 93.

⁷³ Vgl., Rojas A., (2008).

⁷⁴ *Parmenides*, GA 54, 198.

⁷⁵ Vgl., ebd, 19.

bedeutet eine Handlung, obwohl es unbestimmt bleibt, wer verbirgt.⁷⁶ „Unverborgenheit kann heißen, dass Verborgenheit weggenommen, beseitigt, überwunden, gebannt ist.“⁷⁷ Deshalb können wir über eine Unverborgung sprechen. Aber „Unverborgenheit kann auch heißen, dass Verborgenheit gar nicht zugelassen ist.“⁷⁸ Wir können in diesem Sinne auch über das Unverborgene sprechen. Und obwohl Heidegger etwas Neues schafft, könnte er aus Schellings Philosophie lernen (besonders 1941)⁷⁹, dass die Verborgenheit grundlegend ist, um die Bestimmbarkeit des Seins (die Wesenheit) zu schützen. Heidegger sagt im Jahr 1942/43: Die Wesenheit der Wahrheit ist im jeden Wahren, so dass ohne das Wahre keine Wesenheit wäre, und keine Wahrheit.⁸⁰ Die Vielzahl der Bedeutungen der Wahrheit nennt die bestimmten Gestalten des Wesens in der Geschichte: *certitudo*, *adaequatio*, usw.⁸¹ D.h., das Wahre ist die Form, die die Wahrheit vor ihrer bloßen Wesenheit bewahrt. Die Wahrheit west sich im Wahren, und sie verbirgt ihre Wesenheit.

In der Vorlesung von 1942/43 ist am bedeutendsten die Wichtigkeit eines Verbergens zu zeigen, ohne dass an keine neue Erscheinung des Wahren gedacht werden könnte. Ohne eine Verborgenheit, die offenbar als abwesend gelten kann, kann es keine Bewegung in Richtung auf der Unverborgenheit geben. Die Verborgenheit nennt keine mögliche Anwesenheit, sondern den Grund der Möglichkeit, die nur unter anderen Möglichkeiten sein kann. Diese Pluralität, bzw. der Horizont der Möglichkeiten ist das, was die Abwesenheit gründet. Diese Abwesenheit verbirgt sich immer. Sie kann keine Anwesenheit sein, sondern sie ist das dunkel Sein der Möglichkeiten, das vor allem Existierenden und vor allen Gegensätzen vorhergehen muss.

Heidegger sagt nicht, dass er diese Idee von Schelling übernommen hat. Heidegger spricht von Anaximander und Heraklit statt von Schelling. Aber Heidegger spricht über Anaximander im Jahr 1946. So

⁷⁶ Vgl., ebd, 19.

⁷⁷ ebd, 20.

⁷⁸ ebd, 20.

⁷⁹ „(...) und das ist in der zweiten groß Vorlesung zu Schelling von 1941 wohl noch deutlicher -,dass Heidegger vor allem dem Blick auf Schellings Fundamentalunterscheidung von „dem Wesen, sofern es existiert und dem Wesen, sofern es bloß Grund von Existenz ist“ richtet.“ Swenzfeuer, S. (2010), 243.

⁸⁰ „Dia *Aletheia* ist das Wesen des Wahren: die Wahrheit. Diese west in allem Wesenden und ist das Wesen alles Wesens: die Wesenheit.“ GA 54, 242.

⁸¹ „Im Wandel des Wesens der Wahrheit von der *alétheia* über die römische *veritas* zur mittelalterlichen *adaequatio*, *rectitudo* und *iustitia* und von hier zur neuzeitlichen *certitudo*, der Wahrheit als Gewissheit, Gültigkeit und Sicherheit wandelt sich mit das Wesen und die Art des Gegensatzes zwischen Wahrheit und Unwahrheit.“ ebd, 84.

denke ich, dass *Der Spruch des Anaximander* im Jahre 1946 eine weitere Entwicklung der Vorlesung von 1942/43 ist. Im Jahr 1942/43 spricht er auch nicht über Schelling. Das Seminar über Schelling hat aber 1941 stattgefunden, daher können wir denken, dass er in der Idee von Anaximander das gefunden hat, was er aus Schelling gelernt haben könnte: ein Sich-Zurückziehen des absoluten Wesens,⁸² das sich hinter der Erscheinung, in denen es offenbar wird, verbirgt. Heidegger spricht natürlich über keinen Gott, sondern über das Seinsgeschick, aber es gibt hier die Schellengianische Unterscheidung zwischen der Produktivität und dem Produkt.

Es ist so schwer, den Eindruck, den Schelling auf Heidegger gemacht hat, festzulegen; wir können einerseits sagen, dass Heidegger sich für Anaximander interessiert, weil Heidegger das sucht, was nicht in der Anwesenheit ankommt, sondern das, was sich verbirgt. Andererseits können wir sagen, dass wir dieses Spiel von „Geben und Entziehen“ in Schelling finden können, und dass die Vorlesung im Jahr 1942/43 nur ein Jahr später als das Seminar über Schelling im Jahr 1941 stattfindet; und fünf Jahre vor *Dem Spruch des Anaximander*.

IV.2. Das Verbergen. Gevierts als Bereich der Verbergen-Unverborgenheit

Die Philosophie der Neuzeit entsprang aus der Behauptung, dass man nur das denkt, was Anwesen ist; und dass die Dunkelheit der metaphysischen und transzendentalen Themen nicht wahre Themen der Erkenntnis sind. An Hand des Paares Anwesen-Abwesen kommt die folgende leitende Frage: Wie kommt das, was anwesend ruht, in der Anwesenheit an? Woher kommt diese Anwesenheit ihren gegenwärtigen Antrieb?⁸³ Was treibt sie an, aus der Abwesenheit herauszukommen? Husserl und Heidegger sprechen über *Vergegenwärtigung und Gegenwärtigen*, womit sie dieses Erscheinen der Erscheinung nennen, ohne das es nichts gegeben würde, um zu erkennen; kein Ergebnis.

Phänomenologie bedeutete bei Husserl nicht und niemals bloße Beschreibung oder eidetische Beschreibung überhaupt, sondern die Aufklärung gegenständlicher Themen durch Rückgang auf die Erlebnisse, in denen sie zur Gegebenheit kommen.⁸⁴

⁸² „bei Schelling, innerhalb der deutschen Metaphysik, erhält das Begriffswort Existenz eine besondere Betonung, und zwar innerhalb der Unterscheidung: Grund und Existenz.“ *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus*, GA 49, 196.

⁸³ “im Unterschied vom Augenblick als eigentlicher Gegenwart nennen wir je uneigentliche das Gegenwärtigen.” *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, p 338.

⁸⁴ „Selbstverständlich ist, daß diese Lebenswelt uns ständig wahrnehmungsmäßig gegeben

Man kann nur das denken, was anwesend ist. Daher spricht man von einer Gegebenheit, weil diese Anwesenheit gegeben werden muss. Und dann tritt die Frage nach dem Nichts auf. Warum ist das Nichts nicht? Warum gibt es überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts? Schelling und Heidegger denken daran, dass nicht nur das Gegeben wichtig ist, sondern auch das nicht-Gegeben, das Verbergen. Wenn das Verbergen nicht wäre, müssten wir über eine letzte Anwesenheit sprechen. Aber wir müssen weiter gehen: Heidegger und Schelling sprechen nicht nur über dieses Verborgene, sondern sie sagen uns, dass wenn dieses Verbergen nicht wäre, es auch keine Anwesenheit gäbe.⁸⁵ Nicht nur keine letzte Anwesenheit, sondern überhaupt keine Anwesenheit.

Was Heidegger aus Schelling im Jahr 1941 gelernt haben könnte, obwohl er auf Anaximander verweist, ist die Wichtigkeit des Verbergens. Vor dem Jahr 1946 (*Der Spruch des Anaximander*), im Jahr 1942/3 (nach dem Seminar über Schelling), spricht Heidegger zum ersten Mal darüber, was das Herz des Gevierts von nun an ist: Die Offenbarung der Bestimmbarkeit mittels der begrenzten Formen. Heidegger will nicht die Philosophie der Freiheit von Schelling wiederholen, sondern er will seinen Grundgedanken wiedererlangen. Ab der Seite 195 spricht Heidegger in der GA 54 von dem Freien und dem Offenen „in die Breite des Unbegrenzten und Grenzenlosen.“⁸⁶ Das Offene nennt einerseits eine Bestimmbarkeit bzw. *apeiron*: „Das Offene und seine Ausbreitung in die Breite des Unbegrenzten und Grenzenlosen ist eher die Zone, in der die Anhalte fehlen und in der jeder Aufenthalt sich ins Haltlose verliert.“⁸⁷ Andererseits nennt das Offene aber eine Bestimmung bzw. *péras*: die Bergung als ein Entbergen bedeutet gleichzeitig ein Anwesen und ein Aufgehen.⁸⁸ Der Sinn der Vorlesung besteht darin, dass er zeigt, wie das Offene bzw. das Sein⁸⁹ das Entbergen der unterschiedlichen Bestimmungen entbergen kann. Das Offene nennt eine vierfache Dimension der Anwesenheit und der Abwesenheit. Das ist

ist, aber so, daß von ihr jeweils nur sozusagen ein Ausschnitt in Wahrnehmung gegen ist, ständg nur ein Wahrnehmungsfeld in eigentümlicher Beweglichkeit: Wahrgenommene Objekte hören auf, wahrgenommen zu sein (ohne darum ihre Seinsgeltung zu verlieren), neue Objekte treten ins Feld, sie werden nun wahrgenommen.“ *Husserliana* 29, 193.

⁸⁵ „Der Ort aber, *worin* die Kräfte (Potenzen) zur Scheidung kommen, ist das Nichts als Abgrund des in ihm zu erzeugenden und zu gebärenden Seins. Und das ist die Freiheit!“ Friedrich, H-J., (2009), 77f.

⁸⁶ *Parmenides*, GA 54, 214.

⁸⁷ ebd, 214.

⁸⁸ Vgl., ebd, 197.

⁸⁹ „Das Offene ist das Sein selbst“ GA 54, 224.

kein *da*, sondern eine Breite, die die Bestimmbarkeit der Zuweisung des Seins ist.

Es geht hier wirklich um die Idee von *apeiron* und die Beziehung zu der Bestimmung. Heidegger könnte diese Lehre durch sein Interessen an Schelling gelernt haben: Das *apeiron* kann nur in Bezug auf das *péras* gelernt werden, weil das *apeiron* ohne das *péras* nicht sein kann. Das *péras* ist natürlich nicht das *apeiron*, und daher ist die Ersetzung und der Wechsel das Gesetz, das die polemische notwendige Verbindung⁹⁰ zwischen dem *apeiron* und dem *péras* erklärt. Es geht hier aber um keine ewige Wiederkehr *in sensu* Nietzsche, weil Nietzsche gegen den Zweck spricht.⁹¹ Heidegger spricht über kein sinnloses Passieren bzw. Geschehen. Er denkt den Zweck bzw. *télos*.

Heidegger spricht, sowie Schelling, über keine Unmöglichkeit eines Ziels (*meta*). Die Unmöglichkeit eines Endes bedeutet keine Unmöglichkeit des Zieles, weil das Ziel die Offenbarung der freien Bestimmbarkeit des unendlichen Wesens mittels der Produkte möglich ist. Ich finde hier die Ähnlichkeit zwischen der Unterscheidung von Form und Wesen in Schellings Philosophie⁹² und der Unterscheidung zwischen der Wahrheit und dem Wahren im 1942, die später die Unterscheidung von Seinsgeschick und Gestalt des Grundes⁹³ in der Spätphilosophie Heideggers ist. Hier ist die Eingeständnis im 1941: „trotzdem doch wieder das Seyn als dasjenige west, was allein ist.“⁹⁴ Das bedeutet, die beider Denker denken Ein Sein, das allein ist, und das west. Natürlich das Sein Heideggers ist weder Absolutes noch eine unbedingte Subjektivität, aber bleibt das Verständnis Schellings des Gesetzes der Identität meiner Meinung nach, d.h. ein Sein als dasjenige west, was allein ist.

IV. Zum Abschluss des zweiten Teils dieser Ausarbeitung

⁹⁰ „Krieg ist von allem der Vater, von allem König.“ DK 22 B53.

⁹¹ „Ich erlöste sie von der Knechtschaft unter dem Zwecke.“ *Vor Sonnenaufgang*, in: ASZ, 431.

⁹² Vgl., Jacobs, W. G. (2011), 89.

⁹³ Vgl. *Der Satz von Grund*, GA 10, dreizehnte Stunde.

⁹⁴ „Die Sache selbst (was diese Metaphysik zu denken hat) ist das Absolute. Weil dieses als unbedingte Subjektivität (d.h. Subjekt-Objekt), als Identität der Identität und Nichtidentität gedacht ist und die Subjektivität wesentlich als willentliche Vernunft und damit als Bewegung, sieht es so aus, als decke sich das Absolute und seine Bewegtheit mit dem, was das seynsgeschichtliche Denken als das Ereignis erdenkt. Aber das Ereignis ist weder dasselbe wie das Absolute, noch ist es gar seine Entgegensetzung, etwa die Endlichkeit gegenüber der Unendlichkeit. Vielmehr ist im Ereignis das Seyn selbst als Seyn erfahren und nicht als ein Seiendes und schon gar nicht als das unbedingte Seiende und höchste Seiende gesetzt, trotzdem doch wieder das Seyn als dasjenige west, was allein ist“ Heidegger, M. (1971), 231.

Heidegger und Schelling sind zwei Momente einer Philosophie der Freiheit, die an der Basis ein grundlegendes Potenzloses als Grund eines Prozesses haben, worin die Bestimmbarkeit des Wesens offenbar wird, und worin sie sich gleichzeitig hinter den Erscheinungen verbirgt. In alle Kürze lesen wir in dieser Philosophie eine Verteidigung einer neuen Idee der Freiheit, die gegen die herrschende Erscheinung gedacht ist. Freiheit bedeutet eine Öffnung der neuen Möglichkeiten, die unter den herrschenden Erscheinungen verborgen wurden. Wäre sie nicht, wäre die herrschende Erscheinung nötig und die einzige Möglichkeit. Und auf diese

Weise würde auch das Ende der Bestimmbarkeit eintreten.

Im Gegensatz zu der absoluten Einheit, welche die Folge der Prinzipien abschließt, nennt das Potenzlose in der Philosophie Schellings, wie gesagt wurde, die *indifferentia* hinsichtlich der Identität der Prinzipien. Auf Grund von dieser Indifferenz geschieht eine „Bejahung der Zeit“,⁹⁵ in der die Verbindung der Prinzipien im Gleichgewicht wegen des Geheimnisses der Liebe kein Ende nennt. Es geht hier um kein Unvermögen, sondern um die Befreiung bezüglich der begrenzten Form, und deshalb die Möglichkeit der Offenbarung des absoluten Wesens nach Zeiten. Diese Offenbarung ist nur möglich, immer wenn die Bestimmbarkeit ihre Identität in einer Bestimmung nicht gesucht wird. Sie nimmt von der Identität Abstand, damit sie den Prozess und das Leben liebt.

Diese Verbindung schafft keine Unterscheidung der Prinzipien ab, weil obwohl ein unbestimmter Zweck nicht denkbar ist, bedeutet das nicht, dass wir ein Ende denken dürfen: Der freie Wille ist frei aufgrund einer Abwesenheit, die einen neuen Horizont der Bestimmungen begründet, die uns ermöglicht, über Befreiung der begrenzten Formen zu sprechen. Die Produktivität kann natürlich nicht produziert werden.

Heidegger interessiert sich auch für das Verborgene des Wesens hinter den Bestimmungen. Er denkt, das Verborgene schafft die Möglichkeit neuer Arten und Weisen, im Licht der Lichtung zu sehen, indem sich diese als abwesend offenbaren. Heidegger will nicht die Freiheitsphilosophie Schellings wiederholen, er erlangt aber den Grundgedanken des Potenzloses Schellings wieder. Schelling und Heidegger finden im Grunde ein Potenzloses, ohne das keine weitere Bestimmung mehr möglich wäre, und in diesem Sinne das Ende der Bestimmbarkeit. Dieses Potenzlose nennt den „Grund“ als *indifferentia* (nicht wissen zu wollen) hinsichtlich der Identität zwischen der Bestimmbarkeit und der Bestimmung: Wäre das Potenzlose nicht, wäre von Bewegung und Wandel bzw. Leben nicht zu reden. Heideggers Seinsgeschick, in Beziehung zur Gestalt der Bestimmung bzw.

⁹⁵ „Daher schließlich Freiheit als Entschluß zum Unausweichlichen (Bejahung der Zeit).“
Heidegger, M. (1971), 232.

Schickung, setzt die Lehre des Potenzlosen Schellings in diesem Sinne fort, wie gesagt wurde, und deshalb kann ich sagen, dass Heidegger das Bindeglied ist, das die Philosophie von Schelling an die Geschichte der Philosophie anhängt, die den Anschein hatte, Schelling nach dem Jahr 1804 vergessen zu haben, und einen anderen Kurs einzuschlagen.⁹⁶

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1. Siglen

- ASZ Also sprach Zarathustra
DRPh Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie = Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie
Einl. Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie
EV Erlanger Vorträge
GA Gesamtausgabe
GNPh Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie
GPPh Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie. Münchner Vorlesung
PhK Philosophie der Kunst
PhU Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände
SPV Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen
SW Sämtliche Werke
WA Die Welttaler
VW Von der Weltseele

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⁹⁶ „Es muy posible que el camino definido por la filosofía de Schelling siga una dirección por la que no continuó la propia historia de la filosofía y que en consecuencia señalaría un trayecto personal de Schelling, único transeúnte, perdido en un laberinto producido por los sueños de una razón visionaria, metafísica, especulativa y mística.“ Leyte, A. (1999), 13.

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Connell VAUGHAN¹

Mimesis and *Diegesis*: A Narratology of (Re-Mythologizing) Ireland

Abstract: Inherent in the narrative of Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* is the challenge of story telling itself. Moriarty's invokes the reader to sing into being a new Ireland. This is a space that is not fully articulated by Ricoeur's "threefold *mimesis*" account of narrative. This is the space of the diegetic (the telling of narrative) and provides us with supplementary insights that, although not ruled out, are at best relegated in Ricoeur's hermeneutics. In an attempt to account for the role of the diegetic as seen in Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* I focus on Kearney's "diacritical hermeneutics". While indebted to Ricoeur, Kearney's approach can be seen to incorporate the key features of the diegetic. Furthermore, *Invoking Ireland* can be seen to realise (in relation to Ireland) the normative goals of Kearney's proposed "diacritical hermeneutics".

Keywords: Hermeneutics, *Mimesis*, *Diegesis*, Narratology, Ireland, Plato, Moriarty, Ricoeur, Kearney.

Introduction

If one were to compare the following two accounts of Ireland, Moriarty's *Invoking Ireland* and Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*, where would one start? It seems likely that one would first say that the first is an epic myth; or rather the fragment of an epic myth and the second is an anthology of sorts. In fact it would appear that Kiberd's text is an anthology of the narrative treatment of Ireland (be it mythic or not). What is clear is that the narrative of each is different to the other in a vital way; one is a recreation and telling of Ireland (Moriarty) and the other is an imitative demonstration of the narratives of Ireland (Kiberd). These two different hermeneutical approaches (to Ireland) present us with a challenge; what narratology are we to provide that will not only account for this difference but also maintain vitality in both anthology (fact) and myth (fiction) allowing for the narrative of Ireland to continue to flourish?

The distinction between narrative telling and narrative showing can be seen as early as Plato's contrasting of the diegetic (telling) with the mimetic (showing). Narrative retelling (*mimesis*) holds little value for Plato as

¹ Phd, Senior Tutor in Philosophy, University College Dublin, Connellvaughan@gmail.com

he regards it as distant from truth. *Mimesis* is characterised as imitative. For Plato this imitation is a narrative mirroring of nature. It is from this point that we find the Platonic distinction between the philosopher and the poet/playwright. Plato regards the philosopher as solely engaged in mimetic narration and thus truth while the poet is “by nature at a third remove from the throne of truth” (1995, 579e). Instead the (mythic) poet is seen to occupy a different seat; the seat of *diegesis*. This follows Plato’s position that imitation (as opposed to creative imagination) is the superior form of creation. Ricoeur, for example, has advanced this concept of the mimetic. Ricoeur develops the idea that a threefold mimetic emplotment is central to narrative. Likewise Kearney extends the concept of the mimetic in his “diacritical hermeneutics” as a base for bearing witness to evil.

I shall argue, however, that a hermeneutics of narrative will better operate when it promotes the diegetic throne in addition to the mimetic one. This need not in anyway entail a discarding of these writings. As such Ricoeur’s account of the necessary ontology of narrative time is not being attacked but rather supplemented. Equally Kearney’s focus on the ethical import of what is to be done (in the face of the problem of evil) is not dismissed but developed. In short, where the mimetic is made explicit the aim is to also acknowledge the role of the diegetic to enable a fuller narratology.

Prince identifies the two common features of the diegetic; *diégèse* and *diégésis*. *Diégèse* is “the (fictional) world in which the situations and events narrated occur[s]” (1987, s.v. *diegetic*). *Diégésis* however is the act of “telling, recounting, as opposed to showing, enacting” etc. Given the hierarchy between *mimesis* and *diegesis* in Plato it is interesting that narrative telling/showing (*diégésis*) plays a central role in Platonic social and political theory. For example both senses of the diegetic can be seen in Plato’s “magnificent myth”. In his proposal for the idea state Plato proposes the following:

Socrates: *Now, I wonder if we could contrive one of those convenient stories...some magnificent myth that would carry conviction to our whole community...*

Glaucon: *What sort of story?*

Socrates: *Nothing new- a fairy story like those the poets tell and have persuaded people to believe...* (1995, 414c)

Likewise *Invoking Ireland* constitutes a diegetic myth. However Moriarty traces a different myth than Plato:

To Plato I say:

An Énflaith not a republic, a thing too unentomologically and exclusively human to bring out the best in us. It doesn't suit us. Worse, it doesn't suit the Earth. And that, in the end, must mean Hell-upon-Earth. (2005, 62)

The significance of this response to Plato cannot be underestimated. The Platonic “magnificent myth” although diegetic (in both senses; *diégèse* and *diégésis*) easily can be described as pathological. Moriarty’s invocation avoids Plato’s determinism and aim of mass deception. Perhaps Plato’s argument for a blatant enforcing of pathology explains what can be seen as the contemporary wariness regarding the diegetic; hence the appeal of mimesis. The advantage of the mimetic approach, *quod vide* Kiberd’s *Inventing Ireland*, is the reduced possibility of pathology. There is of course a possibility of an historical narrative becoming pathological, for example when such a narrative claims to imitate or retell history exactly “as” it occurred. When this occurs no longer is the narrative operating in the realm of the mimetic, the realm of “as if”/imitation. However a work such as Kiberd’s avoids this problem for the most part as by its very nature it is pointing to the fictive elements of narratives. In short Kiberd’s awareness of the creative construction of Ireland ensures an awareness of mimetic nature of his work. The benefit of Moriarty’s *Invoking Ireland* lies in its combination of the diegetic and the mimetic making it devoid of the pathological tendencies seen in Plato.

Diegesis

What we notice about both Moriarty’s and Kiberd’s texts, and this is made explicit in the titles of each, is that for both writers Ireland is, in the terms of Benedict Anderson, essentially an “imagined community”. This is in keeping with the concept of the “fifth province” which acts as a gateway to narrating about Ireland. Kearney describes the concept like so: “The fifth province can be imagined and re-imagined; but it cannot be occupied. In the fifth province it is always a question of thinking *otherwise*.” (1997, 100) The disposition to refigure Ireland in a sense is the essence of “fifth province” thinking. As such it is “where attachments to the local and the global find reciprocal articulation.” (1997, 99) While themes of island, migration, language, religion etc. all play significant roles in the narrative of Ireland the concept of the “fifth province” is central to the narratology of Ireland. This is because these dialectics can only be accessed through an active engagement and understanding of the “fifth province”. Kiberd approaches the “fifth province” as something to be understood, whereas Moriarty takes a more creative and reformative view. “The Fifth Province more a deed than a place.” (2005, 116)

In keeping with this tradition Moriarty regards Ireland not as a “final destination” but rather as a song (*diégèse*) to be invoked (*diégésis*). Working from within Irish storytelling and mythic tradition Moriarty seeks to “reconstitute ourselves as a people.” (2005, 7) This is done via an active regeneration of the “Fifth Province”. Here it is maintained that Ireland, as a

story, has to be engaged with. The logic follows that by engaging with the fifth province we invoke a new Ireland (“Énflaith”). In fact the idea of an invocation seems particularly suited to the Irish tradition where the experience has been that creative movements tend to precede political movements. Kiberd, for example, points to the Irish case of autonomy where cultural and literary independence preceded political autonomy. This is unlike France and the U.S. yet, akin to the experiences of developing world. *Invoking Ireland* is best seen as an imaginative approach to mythology employed as the first step to a better Ireland.

Invoking Ireland offers a choice of “two different ways of being in the world” (2005, 7) (or visions of the “fifth province”). Specifically the Fomorian way, exemplified by “Balor’s evil eye”, seeks to shape the nature to suit itself (an extreme *mimesis* perhaps). The Tuatha Dé Danann however let nature suit them. Moriarty characterises this way as the way of the “silver branch of perception”, that is the ability to re-figure myth with an “Ever-new Tounge” (2005, 10). It is not accidental that the exemplifications of each way are vision based, for it is a movement from blindness to praxis-based vision that Moriarty is attempting to invoke.

Regarding Ireland as engulfed by the Formorian way Moriarty invokes us, whoever is engaged with the narrative of Ireland, to travel the nine waves (*diégèse*) toward the way of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Significantly this journey is described in terms of an Orphic engagement (*diégésis*) with border areas (not just in the political sense). For Moriarty this metanoesis will herald an “Énflaith” (bird reign), not a restricted republic but a borderless myth where all live ecumenically with all.

The truth is this: those nine waves that surround Ireland and its islands are nine initiations into nine wholly unexpected dimensions of reality. To properly come ashore into Ireland therefore we need to sail, not over them, but into them, and through them. (2005, 37)

Thus, for Moriarty we can already see that Ireland is no mere physical island but rather a way of being that is part fantasy/part reality (*diégèse*). As such failing to poetically (*diégésis*) come ashore in Ireland entails a failure to engage with the fictional element (both mimetic and diegetic) of the narrative that is Ireland. To come ashore as the Formorians did (by the sword) is to succumb to pathologies of violence and disaster. Whereas to come ashore as the Tuatha Dé Danann have done, and as Moriarty is invoking us to do, is to come ashore in song (Orphically).

Mimesis

Ricoeurian reciprocity between time and narrative introduces a somewhat counter-intuitive dependency. That narrative would require an

account of time is clear, but that simultaneously time (and by extension human life, notions of being etc.) would be only intelligible insofar as it is narrated seems to be an insight limited for the most part to those who study hermeneutics. Here the Ricoeurian position is that time or for that matter a space, say Ireland, only becomes comprehensible (in fact only exists) through narration or as a song that one may sing. This insight elevates what is called the threefold mimetic emplotment of a story above an account of time based on a threefold present. Accordingly this threefold *mimesis* Ricoeur outlines like so:

*Mimesis*1 is the prefiguring descriptive and poetic composition of the story. In effect it is an anticipatory understanding of the action involved.

*Mimesis*2 develops this understanding by grafting the action of *mimesis*1 onto an account of fiction. Here the followability/plausibility of the action is measured. For example Kiberd speaks of Yeats before he speaks of Joyce, and in turn speaks of Joyce before he speaks of Beckett.

*Mimesis*3 explicitly *invokes* the reader to situate the narrative in time—in effect to render the story meaningful, for example by locating the narrative in the past, present, future, eternal etc.

The invocation required in *mimesis*3 and the central role of the concept of emplotment in this approach position Ricoeur closer to the diegetic than one might first assume. *Diègèse* certainly resonates with the creative emplotting of *mimesis*3 and here can be seen an openness to an account of narrative beyond the mimetic.

While the time setting invoked by Moriarty is not quite of the past, present, future variety the action here is similar. That is to say that the time of the fifth province (mythic time) as employed by Moriarty is resultant from a comparable choice to that found in *mimesis*3. The difference that we find here is that the diegetic is more likely to invoke mythic time, whereas the mimetic will invoke a more standard form of time. Likewise the role of emplotment, in a mitigated form, carries over to mythic work. For example, we notice that Moriarty even employs headings such as “Ireland: A Prophecy” and “Ireland: Ultimately”. Finally it might be mentioned that the normative nature of *Invoking Ireland* ensures a certain future orientation in Moriarty that might not be present in all mythic writings but will be central to those engaged with the fifth province.

It will be useful to consider what might count as a mimetic example of Ireland *à la* Ricoeur. Here *Inventing Ireland* is informative. Kiberd focuses on the tracing of “the links between high art and popular expression...and [looks] to situate revered masterpieces in the wider social context out of which they came.” (1996, 3) In short this is to *show* us Ireland by explaining it as having an invented origin and perhaps more importantly to identify the origin of the concept of Ireland. Moriarty we noted *tells* us about Ireland, his invocation no doubt building on Kiberd’s analysis. (After realising Ireland

to be an invention, we progress to the issue of recreating it. We may say that highlighting the construction to be so is Kiberd's *forte* whereas Moriarty excels in the imaginative act of reconstruction.) In terms of our initial understanding of *mimesis* as simply imitative it is clear that Kiberd excels in the mimetic execution of the thesis that Ireland is an invention. For example Kiberd avoids mediation of his subject in his narrative by primarily focusing on the retelling of the invention of Ireland as opposed to reinventing Ireland. Kiberd outlines the narrative of the invention of Ireland as something to be shown and this is achieved through imitation. Hence the narrative traces the role of Ireland as a figure of imagination from "Anglo-Ireland" through "Revolution and War", Protestant Revivals" to current reinventions of Ireland. It is as such that the difference between the Kiberd and Moriarty texts is clearest. Here we find Kiberd chronicling various reinventions of Ireland, Moriarty on the other hand performs his own reinvention.

If we apply the advanced (Ricoeurian) understanding of threefold mimesis as imitative as a result of emplotment we too find that *Inventing Ireland* provides a good example. As we have seen Kiberd employs his own historical time structure on his narrative. This imposition on the text, although necessary, is in keeping with the Ricoeurian claim regarding emplotment and is also visible in Moriarty. Despite the similarity of *diégèse* to *mimesis*³ there is a diegetic shaped lacuna in Ricoeur's hermeneutics.

Here Ricoeur's approach to the diegetic is revealing. Ricoeur rightly regards the diegetic as operating at a level of "presentification" where "the fact of 'narrating' and the thing 'narrated' are distinguished" (1984-8, Vol.2, 78). This awareness however is just that; an awareness. When it comes to the problem of pathological narratives Ricoeur's concern regarding the time of narrative takes precedence. For example, when approaching the work of Gérard Genette, among others, Ricoeur asks; "What is the time of narrative, if it is neither that of the utterance nor that of the *diegesis*?" (1984-8, Vol. 2, 83). While the connection between the Ricoeurian idea of emplotment and the creative form of *diegesis* (*diégèse*) is evident this question highlights the limit of Ricoeur's narratology. Specifically *diégésis* is overlooked and by extension the social and normative role of the diegetic is missed.

Nonetheless Ricoeurian hermeneutics offers us a useful means to understand mimetic narratives and other narratives insofar as they are mimetic. However beyond mimetic writings there remains the need to bare witness to narrative, be it narratives of Ireland or not. It is interesting to note that this need is identified in the example of mimetic narrative I have been using; Kiberd

The need now is to understand the inner experience of those caught up in the process [of an ever and rapidly changing Ireland]; and my belief is that

literature...can help us to recover many voices drowned out by official regimes or by their appointed chroniclers. (1996, 646)

Kiberd is here pointing to the need to account for the telling, that is the new and perhaps minority account of Ireland. For a hermeneutics of narrative the mimetic account of representation is useful but still somewhat incomplete, a missing feature in this account is the role played by *diegesis*. This does not mean that *diegesis* contradicts emplotment. Kearney's "diacritical hermeneutics" helps furnish us with the supplementary theory required to bridge the diegetic gap². Hitherto Ricoeurian threefold *mimesis* provides us with a narratology for understanding works such as *Inventing Ireland*, but what of *Invoking Ireland*?

"Diacritical Hermeneutics"

In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* Kearney advances the threefold *mimesis* of Ricoeur, outlining what he calls a "diacritical hermeneutics". "Hermeneutics addresses the need for critical practical judgements" (2003, 100) for example, how to deal with the problem of evil. The logic here being that if that human time (or space, say Ireland) is so through narration one can best institute (invoke being the first step) social improvement through narration. Kearney's approach is also threefold:

In the first stage practical understanding entails a movement from wisdom/*phronesis* to praxis. Evil here is grasped in a singular event (best in narrative understanding) thus enabling us to confront the ethical issues involved. Basically this entails making hermeneutic sense of evil.

The second critical stage is a working through of that narrative. In a sense these three stages can be regarded as analogous to the threefold *mimesis* of Ricoeur. This is in essence the necessity for mourning and cathartic regeneration. In this stage it can be said that we are working through the narrative of evil to get to a possible future. What then would that future look like?

In the final stage the confession of the second stage is met with forgiveness and pardon. This will be the only way of moving beyond a narrative of evil where there is the risk that we may succumb to pathologies of evil whereby we fail to accord the appropriate degree of care to the evil

² In relation to this diegetic gap it is worthwhile considering Plato. While the "magnificent myth" certainly is subject to this gap the text of the Republic is not. The reason for this is that to the reader of the Republic it is clear that myth outlined is a fabrication and thus not imitative of reality. This point I do not believe to be redeeming of the Platonic position as for most (of society) the "magnificent myth" is to be considered realistic. In terms of Plato's position this point is best understood as a reinforcing of the strict hierarchical society advocated in the Republic and revealing of that structure as pathological.

experienced. For example, where an event like the holocaust is explained in terms of “some kind of Master Narrative which explains it all away” (2002, 67) or in terms of “a medley of relativistic micro-narratives” etc. only narrative forgiveness ensures that we avoid pathologies of evil. The temporal shift is to ensure that we can give a future to the past.

Both authors display a similar reformative attitude. Moriarty; “If we, the Irish, are to become a great people there are some last things that we must undergo,” (2005, 79) namely a narrative invocation. Likewise for Kearney “hermeneutics addresses the need for critical practical judgements” (2003, 100). The difference here is that for Moriarty the ethical import of what is to be done is addressed by a diegetic narrative. That is to say that creatively through myth it is to be told.

Moriarty identifies those things that we must undergo as “the big questions”. It is clear what the big question is for Kearney: the question of evil, specifically how to deal with the alterity and humanity of evil. Taking the example of the holocaust Kearney advocates an ethical response to evil in terms of narrative. This case can be equated with Moriarty’s narrative response to the killing of Ireland’s last wolf.

Here, for example, is a big question: the shot that rang out one night in the Maam Valley in Connemara? What, compared to it, is the sailing of away of the Irish chieftains from Ireland? (2005, 97)

To which comes the explanation that:

*Lights gone out in Ireland’s last wolf are lights coming on
in a not inconsiderably larger wolf,
are lights coming on
in*

The Wolf of Vacancy. (2005, 110)

The Wolf of Vacancy is Moriarty’s term for the evil that “apocalyptic” that he seeks to tackle. It is fed by such horrible actions as the killing of Ireland’s last wolf and it is manifest by our blindness to this. Like the evil of the holocaust the Wolf of Vacancy has to be challenged by narrative otherwise we may fall in to pathologies of scapegoating. The forgiveness spoken of by Kearney in the final stage of his “diacritical hermeneutics” finds a voice here in the work of Moriarty. Interestingly it does so in not in wolf terms but in goat terms.

We can see *Invoking Ireland* mature through these three stages. In the first stage narrative understanding is required. The context for Moriarty’s singular event of praxis is provided by Kearney. Kearney points to the history of otherness where that which is evil is dealt with by scapegoating. This tendency can be seen in the identification of evil (for example the devil) with goat. “...[M]any myths seek to account for [evil] in terms of the sacrifice of some scapegoat.”(2003, 84) However as other, as scapegoat, evil

can never be overcome. This is because as such evil is avoided in the sense that the narrative of evil is not worked through to attain a possible future. Instead evil requires as “diacritical hermeneutics” claims that we avoid such alienating practices. Moriarty achieves this diacritical goal at the Puck Fair:

As I came out of a shop [...] the sun came out from behind a thunder cloud and the shadow of the goat fell full upon me, so that for a dreadful instant his beard was my beard, his horns my horns, his hoofs my hoofs. (2005, 112)

In this single “dreadful instant” Moriarty parachutes into the diacritical hermeneutic process. Here we get ethical response to evil in terms of diegetic narrative. Moriarty has become one with the Wolf of Vacancy, with the evil eye of Balor, the Formorians. And it is only after doing so that silver branch perception will be possible. Only by expanding these tales does Moriarty find the practical understanding described by Kearney. While such myths will at first appear anything but practical Moriarty is directly engaged with the contemporary role of these tales. The evil eye of Balor, for example, “is the modern economic eye.” (2005, 229) Amidst the dreamlike or mythic narrative such a concise realisation is startling. Here Moriarty is wholly engaged with what is required in the narrative of Ireland, of the Ireland that he is seeking to invoke. It would seem that (certainly in terms of the Fifth Province) that the benefit of myth is that it makes such realisations possible.

Here we can see that the type of myth that Moriarty produces does not correspond to the alterity forms of myth described in Kearney’s “genealogy of evil”. *Invoking Ireland* does not enable us to alienate ourselves from the problem of evil. As such *Invoking Ireland* fits better with the anthropological accounts described by Kearney. Anthropological accounts regard evil as something that ought to be fought against. For Moriarty this is the deed of the fifth province.

The Puck Fair is not an insignificant example for Moriarty to find inspiration from. Occurring as it does in his native Kerry it holds particular personal resonance for Moriarty, however, in it we too can find an interesting threefold format. This annual event takes place over a three-day period each August. The first day is known as the “gathering” day, the second the “middling” day and the third the “scattering” day. This structure in itself suggests a resonance with Ricoeur and Kearney. For the problem of evil to be faced, for Ireland to be improved such cathartic employment is required.

In the second stage “diacritical hermeneutics” further strives to push narrative beyond pathologies of violence. Similarly we find that the mythic narrative of *Invoking Ireland* strives to push Ireland beyond the Formorian way of being. In doing so the pathologies of martyrdom, motherland, and blood sacrifice are no longer available. Such myth is not redeeming but is progressive. This certainly is the case for Moriarty; instead

of offering a justification for Ireland he is daring all that we know and take to be true of Ireland. And as such Invoking Ireland offers us a perfect example of “myth [that] can serve as an ideological strategy for inventing symbolic solutions...”³ (Kearney, 1997, 109) For Kearney it is only the working through of the narrative that makes a future possible. The same imperative exists for Moriarty, only when we work through the narrative of Irish mythology will a new narrative be possible, one in effect has to understand (or at very least narrate) the Formorian way before reaching *Ind Énflaith*.

In short “by transforming the discourse of sublime disorientation, alienation and victimization into practices of just struggle and forgiveness, might not a hermeneutics of action offer some kind of (if by no means a solution) to the challenge of evil?” (1997, 106) asks Kearney. This could equally be put in Moriarty’s terms; would not an Orphic invoking of Silverbranch perception be the best remedy to Balor’s evil eye?

...[W]e will do well if...we Orphically sing...*Am Énflaith* (2005, 129)

What we learn is that a mimetic approach to a problem like evil will certainly help but a hermeneutics of narrative will also call for a diegetic approach. The benefit of a work like Moriarty’s is that it makes explicit the necessity of the diegetic for diacritical narratives. By invoking Ireland he is not only performing the mimetic acts of showing and enacting, he is also engaging in a process of telling us about, prophesying and daring us to create a better Ireland. It is useful to note that this better Ireland is not only in the narrative sense, hence the political, social, religious and cultural import of the work. For Moriarty these spheres are normatively approached in the fifth province. After all the question of “Ogma”, that is the question of existence and how one is to be is “the first and the only philosophical question that bothered and intrigued the Tutha Dé Danann.”(2005, 28)

Kearney’s “diacritical hermeneutic” further provides us with the tools to comprehend the operation of Moriarty’s text. For example, silver branch perception sees Moriarty achieve the final stage of practical understanding. In myth grounded in practice Moriarty avoids presenting a form of pathological narrative. This borderland position between fiction and reality places Moriarty firmly within the classic description of Irish philosophers (as argued by Kearney in *Postmodern Ireland*) as “transgressors

³ This quote from Kearney continues “...to problems of sovereignty which remain irresolvable at a socio-political level.” Here an interesting comparison can be made with the joint proposal of Kearney and Cullen presented to the New Ireland Fourm, Dublin Castle, 5th December, 1983 (available in chapter 5 of PNI pp 70-74). Kearney and Cullen offer a political rethinking of Ireland focused on the issue of national identity whereas Moriarty offers a mythic rethinking of Ireland likewise founded on national identity.

of boundaries". Where Berkeley contravened the distinction between appearance and reality, Toland transgressed the distinction between Irish and not Irish and Tyndall mixed science and philosophy we now find Moriarty.

Like these writers Moriarty proposes a borderless place. As we have seen in Moriarty's response to Plato *Ind Énflaith* is a narrative that is "universally ecumenical". (2005, 63) The pathology of the Platonic "magnificent myth" is clearly at odds with the goal of "diacritical hermeneutics". Plato's "magnificent myth" is unsurprisingly close to the classical conception of myth (*mythos*) whereby the task of the narrative is to present events "as" they occurred. *Invoking Ireland* avoids this aim and outcome for as we have seen Moriarty's *Énflaith* invokes the animal and the human, the contemporary and the ancient. This is best seen in Moriarty use of myth where both the real and the fictional are invoked. Kearney realises that it is only via such compounds that the scope for social progression can be provided, hence the third stage of "diacritical hermeneutics". Specifically it can be said that avoidance of pathological sentiment in Moriarty, as opposed to Plato, is resultant from the diegetic nature of *Invoking Ireland*. The reason for this is that with the diegetic there is no ambiguity between the story and the subject, but rather a complex of diegetic levels as we have seen. *Mimesis* on the other hand presents the story "as if" it were real.

"In the face of resurgent nationalism fired by rhetoric's of purity and purification, we must cling to the recognition that we are all happily mongrelised, interdependent, impure, mixed up." (Kearney, 1997, 188) The merit of *Invoking Ireland* is that it *tells* us about; it *creates* such a narrative compound- *Ind Énflaith*. In effect Silver Branch perception is the recognition that Kearney speaks of. In the words of Moriarty "the Silver Branch is a universal ontology" (2005, 152) but crucially this ontology is not pathological as "its singing [is] the singing of everything" (2005, 152): fact and fiction, "as" and "as if". In the words of Paul Durcan:

Invoking Ireland is a book to be read in silence on street corners wherever people gather on Easter Monday, 2006. For, what lies behind the almost hysterical anxiety to mark the 90th anniversary of 1916? The 90th anniversary is the grandmother of all identity crises. (2006)

At this stage it is clear that "diacritical hermeneutics" does permit the diegetic as it is fighting the "teratology of the sublime" that Kearney identifies in certain postmodern writings. It is after all a guide to what is to be done; it does not simply rest in showing us what has occurred. Diacritical hermeneutics calls us to actively engage with the narrative. It is, in short, an ethical challenge. Likewise, in not just showing us Ireland invoked, Moriarty is invoking us to not just see it he is daring us to invoke it. *Diegesis* is that which tells us "if only we had eyes to see, we would see that the silver

branch being itself is no more wonderful than any ordinary ash branch or oak branch being itself.”(2005, 137)

For our purposes the following line is one of the most significant in Moriarty’s work. “The Fifth Province more a deed than a place.”(2005, 116) The significance is twofold. In addition to emphasising the normative role of his work it is the most diegetically challenging. This line is delivered not by Moriarty but by the figure of Yeats. Yeats, that great inventor of Ireland, is here employed, in the words of Genette, on a metadiegetic, intradiegetic and homodiegetic level. This point is metadiegetic in the sense that it is made within a greater diegetic-namely Moriarty’s *Invoking Ireland*, intradiegetic insofar as this point is part of Moriarty’s greater diegetic narrative yet is not made by Moriarty, and finally is homodiegetic as Yeats is a character, and a significant one at that, in the narrative recounted-namely the fifth province. This complexity of diegetic levels emphasises the diacritical importance of *Invoking Ireland*. Here we find that when a figure such as Yeats achieves such praxis cathartic regeneration is possible. Genette claims that this complex diegetic “narrative is a form that goes back to the very origins of epic narrating...” (1980, 231) Here Genette points to “the narrative Ulysses makes to the assembled Phaeacians.”(1980, 231) That Homeric myth displays these diegetic levels only serves to emphasise the value of mythic narrative for diacritical hermeneutics.

In being a deed as opposed to a final place the Ireland invoked by Moriarty is devoid of pathological sentiment. It is this fresh understanding of Ireland that Kiberd too understands. If the notion of “Ireland” seemed to some to have become problematic, that was only because the seamless garment once wrapped like a green flag around Cathleen ní Houlihan had given way to a quilt of many patches and colours, all beautiful, all distinct, yet all connected too. (1996, 651)

Conclusion

Thinking back to the earlier comparison between Kiberd and Moriarty we now find that each present a different approach to what is called the Fifth Province. Both writers launch from the same premise that Ireland is an “imagined community”. However from here Kiberd and Moriarty diverge. Kiberd shows the history of the imagining of Ireland, Moriarty re-imagines Ireland. While normativity is central to Kearney’s “diacritical hermeneutics” it is not clear that *diegesis* is Kearney’s vision for its achievement. Given this point what can be said is that *diegesis* as found in mythic works such as *Invoking Ireland* provides a worthy example, if not exclusive, of “diacritical hermeneutics”. Such mythic writing achieves much of the aims of Kearney. In short *Invoking Ireland* is not a myth *vis-à-vis* Plato’s

pathological “magnificent myth”, rather it is infused with diacritical significance revealed diegetically.

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J. Edward HACKETT¹

Scheler, Heidegger and Hermeneutics of Value

Abstract. A responsive moral phenomenology must take note of value's givenness. While I do not argue for this claim here, I want to explore the possibility of how value can be *given* in both Heidegger and Scheler. The "how of givenness" is the manner in which some thing can be given, or accessed phenomenologically. Thus, if we take a look at both Scheler and Heidegger, we can address their conceptions of phenomenology as limiting and enabling the givenness of value. On a whole, phenomenology's development issues more from Heidegger's influence than Scheler. Heidegger interprets value as *present-at-hand* and I argue this follows from the limits imposed by his hermeneutic phenomenology. Values are ontic for Heidegger. In Scheler's magnum opus the *Formalismus*, he is silent on what values are exactly, but describes them as given. Scholars familiar with Scheler's work will note that many times in the *Formalismus*, Scheler will assert the ideality of value and refer to the rank of values as an eternal order. However, he will never spell out the ontological nature of value nor how it is that they are eternal. Thus, if we can establish the givenness of value itself and what that requires, then we can recommend one phenomenological approach over the other. Thus, this paper is not an analysis of the historical relation between Scheler and Heidegger. Rather, this paper works out value's givenness itself in relation by putting two phenomenological frameworks together.

Keywords: Scheler, Heidegger, Ethics, Value, Givenness

Introduction to the Problem

Scheler offers tiny clues as to what he thinks phenomenology can do for him in the *Formalismus*. These insights are given in the introduction between the central preoccupations of method. For Heidegger, phenomenology is the way into working out the problem of Being in his fundamental ontology in *Being and Time*, yet the problem presents itself when Heidegger construes phenomenology as a hermeneutic turn. Like Scheler, Heidegger is preoccupied with method, but Heidegger's "method" comes across indirectly as a consequence of interrogating Dasein about the question of the meaning of Being and the history of ontology.

¹ PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, jhackett@siu.edu

In what follows, I want to ask the question: What is the givenness of value? How is value experienced in its givenness? If I can answer this question, then it is the phenomenological criterion of value itself that can answer which phenomenological framework better suits value's givenness. I will first discuss Scheler and then move to Heidegger later.

I. Scheler's Intuition of Essences

Scheler's conception of phenomenology is given in Chapter 2 of the *Formalismus*. In the *Formalismus*, he outlines his concepts of the a priori and phenomenological intuition, or what he calls "essential intuiting" (*Wesensschau*). Scheler designates "as 'a priori' all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of an immediate intuitive content in the absence of any kind of positing." (Scheler 1973a, 48) Like Husserl, phenomenology is opposed to the natural attitude and is therefore a special type of experience. (Frings 1996, 18) In the natural attitude, we regard phenomena as a natural fact described by the sciences, and in this standpoint, phenomena are described from a third-personal perspective. The natural attitude seeks only to describe from an objective or impartial perspective. It does not pay attention to how phenomena are disclosed to us in the first-personal perspective, and the natural attitude takes for granted the sense-constituting role of subjectivity in experience. The natural attitude reveals phenomena in its non-experienced features, and has, therefore, a skewed interpretation. Phenomenological description is the attempt to render experiential elements clear that undergird and constitute experience itself *as we truly live through them* by remaining true to both the subjectivity of the experiencer and the enjoined constituted object. If I told my wife that *love* is merely the evolutionary adaptive strategy to facilitate human pair-bonding and that we need not concern ourselves with the actual content of love (as it is lived), I would seriously disregard what it means to be in love in the first place. Moreover, the third-personal perspective does not and cannot address *what it is like to be in love*.² Thus, Scheler opposes the propensity of the natural attitude to posit and take for granted the origins of how acts constitute the meaning of phenomena. Instead, meaning-constitution of an act can only be apprehended in absolute immanence and we must pay specific attention to what is *given* in experience. What is given in experience is how a phenomenon is lived through *within* experience. For Scheler, attempting a description is more in line with an attitudinal approach than a well-established method. This also marks a considerable difference between him and Husserl.

² The priority of this type of act is central to the entire sphere of moral experience in Scheler.

...phenomenology is neither the name of a new science nor a substitute for the word philosophy; it is the name of an attitude of spiritual seeing in which one can see or experience something which otherwise remains hidden, namely, a realm of facts of a particular kind. I say attitude, not method. A method is a goal-directed procedure for *thinking about* facts...before they have been fixed by logic, and second, of a procedure of *seeing*... That which is seen and experienced is given only in the seeing and experiencing of the act itself, in its being acted out; it appears in that act and only in it. (Scheler 1973b, 137-138)

For Scheler, phenomenological description is about describing the sphere of acts in which we experience the world. As products of “spiritual seeing,” these descriptions aim at the primordial acts prior to all other cognition and experience. In such a way, the phenomenologist attempts to retrieve the “most intensely vital and most immediate contact with the world itself, that is with those things in the world with which it is concerned and these things as they are immediately given to experience.” (Scheler 1973b, 138) Experience, according to Scheler, means the immediately given nature of phenomena and these phenomena “are ‘in themselves there’ only in this act.” (Scheler 1973b, 138) It is only within the sphere of acts in which we have a living contact with the world, and it is only as a unity of these acts we experience each other as persons.

For Scheler, the immediate apprehension of whatness/essence cannot be disclosed by scientific thinking at all. Instead, the content of that immediate apprehension is what enables our efforts to understand science. Essences reveal the intelligibility and meaning of the world given in experience. Then, science is an abstraction of phenomenological experience. In Scheler’s terms “we can also say that essences and their interconnections are a priori “given” “prior” to all experience.” (Scheler 1973a, 49) Scheler equates phenomenological intuition with phenomenological experience. (Scheler 1973b, 48)

In phenomenology, this connection between act-center and the world is collapsed in how experience is undergone, and this is called “intentionality.” The act-center is consciousness of something. Anytime I am fearful, I am fearful of the spider. When I perceive, I am perceiving the tree. There is no moment in which consciousness is not taking an object. Thus, we are constantly undergoing moments of intentional relation with the world, and it is phenomenology that attempts to retrieve how it is that experience is undergone by careful attention to what we intuit as given within this intentional structure. Scheler’s term for intentionality that

emphasizes the constant unfolding linkage of acts and the world is *interconnection*.

An essence is not mysterious for the phenomenologist. Instead, essence refers only to ‘what-ness’ of a thing (*Was-sein*). For Scheler, it does not refer to a universal or particular *concept* of a thing. For example, if I have a blue thing in front of me, the essence “blue” is given in the universal concept of the thing as well as the particular experience of the thing in question. Therefore, the essence is the whatness that carries over into both the universal and particular conception of a thing. In this way, the phenomenological essence is neither a particular thing, or a universal abstraction or ideality. Instead, the phenomenological essence is the mode of givenness exhibited within experience and these modes of givenness constitute experience of the phenomenon as such. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the phenomenological content can be reified to support any particular ontology, and this is the reason why Philip Blosser articulates the weakness of Scheler’s thought and relationship it has acquired in relation to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. On this, Blosser writes

...the chief defect of Scheler’s phenomenology, like all philosophies of value, was the weakness of his treatment of the *ontology* of values. The insufficient development of this fundamental aspect of Value Theory has left it especially vulnerable in a philosophical climate that has been distinguished, since the 1930s, by the major “growth industry” of Heideggerian ontology, making this appear probably the most critical defect of Scheler’s *Formalismus*. (Blosser 1995, 16)

Blosser is not alone in his assessment. In addition, Stephen Schneck says “In accepting phenomenology, Scheler was already steeped in the life philosophies and was committed to an *unrefined metaphysical position* to an as yet undefined metaphysical position.” (Schneck 1987, 31) Scheler’s sense of ontology remains tenuous and is not fully developed in the *Formalismus* in a complete sense. Support for this interpretation can also be seen in what little Scheler says about essences.

Essences fill out both sides of the interconnection in terms of acts and propositions. Let us describe the latter. Scheler writes,

Whenever we have such essences and such interconnections among them, the *truth* of propositions that find their fulfillment in such essences is totally independent of the entire sphere of observation and description, as well as of what is established in inductive experience. This truth is also independent, quite obviously of all that enters into causal

explanation. It can neither be verified nor refuted by this kind of “experience.” (Scheler 1973a, 49)

In other words, essences pinpoint the interconnections between what is given originally prior to experience to such an extent that this originally prior sense is *independent* of the empirical determinations about experience. However, he does not develop what it means for phenomenology to be *independent*. The term “independent” follows from Scheler’s description of “immanent experience.” By immanent, he means “only *what* is *intuitively* in an act of experiencing” and by contrast, “non-phenomenological experience is in principle an experience through or by means of symbols and, hence *mediated* experience that never gives things “themselves’.” (Scheler 1973a, 51) Thus, phenomenological descriptions are independent from *mediation* of any symbols, or representations. In other words, they are not conditioned in any way, and immanence can only be disclosed to acts of experience, the being-in-an-act of experience.

Phenomenological facts are disclosed in acts but without any mediation. In this way, Scheler describes the essential interconnections that are possible to address phenomenologically.

- (1) the essences (and their interconnections) of the *qualities* and other thing-contents (*Sachgehalte*) given in acts (things-phenomenology) (*Sächphanomenologie*);
- (2) the essences of *acts themselves* and their relations of foundation (phenomenology of acts or foundational orders);
- (3) their interconnections *between the essence of acts and those of things* [*zwischen Akt- und Sachwesenheiten*] (e.g. values are given in feeling, colors in seeing, sounds in hearing etc.) (Scheler 1973a, 71-72)

Scheler’s ontological commitments are inadequately developed, and this makes them unclear. Does Scheler want to secure an ontological underpinning for his personalism from the brief treatment he gives it in the *Formalismus*? A passage in the *Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition* provides support to such a reading linking his phenomenological efforts to future efforts of ontology. “Essential connections and essences have an ontological meeting from the start...the *ontology of the spirit and world* precedes any theory of cognition.” (Scheler 1973b, 158) Here, Scheler emphasizes the independence of phenomenological description from the causal sciences, in particular various epistemic theories of cognition, *must first presuppose the phenomenological priority of how spirit and world are first encountered in conscious acts*. Those very same acts are accessed through the essential intuiting of the phenomenological attitude to render it clear how being-in-an-act relates to the world.

In concluding this section, I explained some of the problematic features that accompany Scheler's thought about experience and how phenomena are *given*. I find Scheler's *Formalismus* wanting because by itself the language of phenomenology cannot get us very far when it concerns the ontology of value unless phenomenology becomes ontology. Clearly, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology provides an example of phenomenology breaks into ontology, and it is where I turn to next.

II. Heidegger's Hermeneutical Phenomenology

Heidegger operates with a more skeptical, but equally complex conception of phenomenology. For Scheler, phenomenology accesses the foundations of meaning that later become concealed and taken for granted in the empirical sciences, or what he called "mediated" through signs and symbols. Heidegger denies a conception of phenomenological experience can access immediately pure phenomena. For him, the hermeneutic conception of phenomenology that arises in *Being and Time* conceives of the possibility of givenness as that which is always mediated, but brought into the clear. This difference will become apparent as I explain it from §31 and §32.

In what follows, I pay special attention to how this conception of phenomenology arises within the project of fundamental ontology and *Being and Time* as a whole. An entire work could trace out the consequences of hermeneutic phenomenology. Such an effort is certainly beyond the task of this work, but it is important also to keep in mind the methodological differences between Scheler and Heidegger before any exposition of Scheler's concepts and subsequent remedy can be introduced to the problem of dearth of value in Heidegger's fundamental ontology.

A central feature of Heidegger's fundamental ontology *qua* phenomenology involves the analysis of human beings not as epistemic agents, but as "Dasein." Dasein is being-in-the-world (*Sein-in-der-Welt*) and his name for "us." Heidegger seeks a solution to the meaning of Being in the very being that can pose the question before itself. It is therefore within Dasein (what Heidegger uses as a phenomenological term to stand for any being that can pose the question of its own existence to itself) that this concern arises. Dasein is described as Being-in-the-world. By understanding Dasein as being-in-the-world, Heidegger explicates the question of being in terms of the practical orientation we exhibit towards the world and others.

At the same time, Being-in-the-world is a collapse between Dasein and world. We come to understand ourselves only in light of the everyday contexts we find ourselves already in. We do not know a hammer from the detached perspective as just another epistemic object. Rather, we know the hammer from the contextual significance it possesses in a nexus of

instrumental relationships in which it is used. Thus, phenomenology attempts to bring to light that which is concealed over or taken for granted. Phenomenological description brings into explicit relief the hidden contexts and purposes that underscore practical interaction with the world. This point can only further be clarified if we explain understanding.

Under a hermeneutic conception, Dasein is centrally characterized as understanding, but as I have already emphasized this conception of understanding does not mean understanding only as knowledge. Understanding is not primarily a formal conception of knowledge that epistemologists analyze and consider primitively-basic to human experience. Rather, understanding is the implicit intelligibility that characterizes human activities as meaningful and already familiar in practice. When we understand objects, we understand them as neither objects with external properties, nor an explanation that attempts to stand over a phenomenon in a transhistorical sense either. (Heidegger 2008, 182/143) Instead, understanding is a primordial disclosure of possibilities of the world as a whole or the possibilities that pertain to my self-understanding as a historically mediated being thrown into the world.

Ontically, we often claim “to understand something” but for Heidegger we have to be clear. The ontic interpretations are those concealed over in the public cliché attitudes and natural attitude in Husserl and Scheler. Ontic explanations are unexamined and offer no primordial investigation of a fundamental ontology that hermeneutic phenomenology can. Heidegger offers a fundamental ontology through a hermeneutic phenomenology. He describes the ontological facticity of Dasein as the structure of care (*Sorge*). The structure of care Heidegger describes understanding as an *existentiale*—an ontologically constitutive characteristic of Dasein at pre-cognitive the layer of experience. Through the *existentiales*, one experiences the world. Accordingly, understanding is not a competence, but Being as existing, or what we might call a Being-possible. It is a *way of existing*. A candidate passage might help clarify:

In understanding, as an *existentiale*, that which we have such competence over is not a “what”, but Being as existing. The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-being, lies existentially in understanding. Dasein is not something present-at-hand which possesses its competence for something by way of an extra; it is primarily Being-possible. (Heidegger 2008, 183/143)

As seen above, Dasein is its “possibilities”, and those possibilities pertain not only to itself but how it understands Being as existing, as it already is thrown into the world. These possibilities are never *independent* of the world in the way we described in Scheler. In other words, Heidegger

does not think that possibilities are “free-floating potentiality-for-being in the sense of the liberty of indifference.” (Heidegger 2008, 183/144) In this way, possibilities are not like the “propositionalized” maxims of Kantian moral philosophy that have their source in something else other than being-in-the-world. Instead, Dasein is ontologically understood as its possibilities.

However, possibilities come already furnished in a world not of our own making. As he puts it,

As the potentiality-for-being which is *is*, it has let such possibilities pass by; it is constantly waiving the possibilities of its Being, or else it seizes upon them and makes mistakes. But this means that Dasein is Being-possible which has been delivered over to itself—*thrown possibility* through and through. Dasein is the possibility of Being-free *for* its ownmost potentiality-for-being. Its Being-possible is transparent to itself in different possible ways and degrees. (Heidegger 2008, 183/144)

In other words, Dasein is an undetermined potentiality full of possibilities it may choose for itself. Sometimes, it will make mistakes in that choosing, but it seizes upon those possibilities nonetheless. Accordingly, Dasein must be handed over to itself as a field of potential possibilities it may choose, and the formation of these possibilities is not completely within human control. There is a world already underway we are born into. We are *thrown* into the world. There are legacies shaping the direction and field of history I must and cannot help but respond to in my vocation. When I teach philosophy, I have come to expect that students from poorer areas have less developed writing skills on average than those that come from more well-to-do areas. While this is not always the case, part of this problem places undue burdens on me as a teacher of philosophy in a public American university. I have to work harder at getting clear what a text says to my students due in large measure by their lack of preparation for university life. I have to develop cultural references that might be analogous to the life of students far removed from philosophical texts. These legacies of under-preparation, failing high schools and open admissions subsist even if I had never chosen to be a philosopher teaching at a public university. In another sense, however, these possibilities are mine and mine alone. I am the one who assigned such and such a course with enrolling first-year students. All of these factors shape my situation. As Heidegger insists, it is a matter of “degree.”

Dasein is thrown, and thus understanding takes into account the whole of a situation, and has a basic idea of its capabilities already. But possession of this self-knowledge is not guaranteed. Dasein can fail to recognize that it is essentially its ownmost possibility. Understanding can go

astray. Heidegger summarizes his complete definition of understanding: *Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of.* (Heidegger 2008, 184/144) To unpack this conception, Dasein is that which has its own being as it issue for it. We are in possession of our own possibility. This possession is not mysterious, but it is a structure exhibited in our everyday daily experience. In this way, the possibilities are concrete. In an intimate way, we know what we are capable of since an intimate familiarity with our own being is disclosed in a very practical orientation towards the world.

Let me take stock of what has been established thus far. For Heidegger, possibilities are not a deliberated choice, or a detached belief that will inform action later on. These possibilities are concretized in a particular context of significance. These possibilities are already present in a world we are thrown into, and the possession of these possibilities occur in matters of degree. These possibilities are always relative to a worldly situation. Understanding is always practically-oriented in a context—this is what Heidegger means by calling the projected understanding a “for-the-sake-of-which.” (Heidegger 2008, 182/ 143) By being constantly affixed to the worldly concrete possibilities and situational character, Heidegger introduces a distinction between factuality and facticity. Let me explain the distinction.

Many past thinkers have argued what is possible by connecting those inferences about possibility to what someone is “factually.” For example, Aristotle’s doctrine of natural slavery in the *Politics* (1254a28-32) largely depends on metaphysical assumptions. For Aristotle, a thing possesses its nature inherent within it, and as such, the distinction between those that rule and those that are ruled inheres in the nature of individuals. In another way, the pseudoscience of phrenology in the 19th century “secured” the truth of racist attitudes. In addition, understanding “agency” in moral philosophy has gravitated towards attempting to construct moral theories by first examining how humans operate socially through social psychology.³ This is an attempt at establishing what we are factually rather than looking at how it is we exist as being-in-the-world. The latter emphasizes the facticity of human life over what Aristotle, pseudoscience or the use of moral psychology can do for us in ethics. The point in raising

3 The turning point of this in the most recent literature and attraction to social psychology would probably be Gilbert Harman’s “Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1998-1999): pp. 315-333. It is fair to say that this probably goes as far back Hume. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume’s attempt at describing the moral sciences attempts to discern limited to normative theory by appeals to Hume’s psychology about sympathetic identification.

these examples is to open up Dasein's worldly structure but at the same time being aware of what Heidegger is not claiming. Dasein could never be discerned from what it is factually. Instead, "Dasein is 'more' than it factually is, supposing that one might want to make an inventory of it as something-at-hand and list the contents of its Being..." (Heidegger 2008, 185/ 145) Therefore, again, Dasein cannot be known by simply listing off the properties of its being as a scientific perspective might insist. Instead, Heidegger's analysis is an existential-ontological account of how the projection of self-understanding can become "what it is by becoming what is possible for it to be." (Hoy 1993, 181) In order to understand what one may become, interpretation is required since we must be able to interpret the already possessed conception of who we want to become. For my purposes here, the possibilities can thus be interpreted as "modes of givenness" and interpretation imposes the limit of how those modes of givenness can be understood.

By interpretation (*Auslegung*), Heidegger means a practically-oriented capacity of understanding to bring into view the parts and wholes of an entire possibility and context. Put another way, interpretation is the development of the understanding's projection upon what is inherently possible. In Heidegger's words, an interpretation is "the working out of possibilities projected in understanding." (Heidegger 2008, 189/ 148) Thus, we must already have a worked out understanding of possibilities prior to interpretation since interpretation is grounded in the understanding. Understanding is never generated out of interpretation. Instead, understanding is the pre-reflective, pre-linguistic and pre-cognitive practical orientation that makes it possible to interpret the world at all. We understand aspects of the world already; we understand *something-as-something*. When I engage in reading a book, I understand the book as something to be read. The book occurs in the in-order-to relationships that constitute the whole world and the possible interpretations of it:

That which is disclosed in understanding—that which is understood—is already accessible I such a way that its 'as which' can be made to stand out explicitly. The 'as' makes up the structure of explicitness of something that is understood. It constitutes the interpretation. (Heidegger 2008, 189/ 149)

In other words, there is an implicit background to the world, a nexus of practical relationships behind understanding and interpreting the world that Heidegger calls the "totality of involvements." I possess an intimate familiarity with many of these practical relationships already. For Heidegger, we are born into a world already underway within its own historicity and

likewise all interpretations are a working out of projective understanding in that historicity and totality of involvements.

The totality of involvements is always understood not as a grasping of facts independently of that historicity and already understood contexts of significance. Instead, the totality of involvements is what Heidegger calls “ready-to-hand” (*Zuhanden*). We do not apprehend properties about objects outside of the interpretively-laden contexts we inhabit. Such an apprehension would exemplify what Heidegger calls “present-at-hand” (*Vorhanden*). Moreover, this holds for value too. As Heidegger puts it, “In interpreting we do not throw a signification over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it...” (Heidegger 2008, 190/150) In other words, interpretations cannot get outside of the contextual significance. Instead, this hermeneutic threshold holds for value. For instance, values are not disclosed as a mind-independent property through a type of moral intuition.⁴ In the totality of involvements, there are three pre-linguistic/pre-cognitive features that condition interpretation and further the hermeneutic threshold already described. As Heidegger put it, “an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending.” (Heidegger 2008, 191/150)

First, there is fore-having (*Vorbabe*). We have a prior understanding that does not stand out clearly from the background. We understand the bridge is something to cross prior the practical involvement of driving. Secondly, there is fore-sight (*Vorsicht*). This is the act of appropriation in which the interpreter brings into relief an already understood but veiled aspect of a thing, and this is what is responsible for conceptualization of a thing for interpretation. Finally, Heidegger describes fore-conception (*Vorgriff*). This is the already decided and definite way of conceiving the thing to be interpreted “either with finality or with reservations; it is grounded in *something we grasp in advance*—in a fore-conception.” (ibidem) All three factors describe the fore-structure. These three features constitute the hermeneutic threshold that interpretation imposes upon what is possible for us.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is not simply a description about the limits of understanding and interpretations. Those are certainly part of it,

⁴ This holds really for any conception of philosophy that apprehends or discovers mind-independent truths. Such examples in some moral philosophy disobey this hermeneutic threshold that Heidegger sees as constraining all inquiry. R. Schafer-Landau is the most recent defense of moral intuitionism in his *Moral Realism: A Defense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Similarly, this hermeneutic limit has consequences for any realism about science, art, ethics or wherever such efforts attempt at grasping the structure itself without seeing such efforts as operative in a context already. These conditions also elicit Heidegger’s suspicion about metaphysics and why it is that we must call for the de-structuring of metaphysics.

yet it is more. I see hermeneutic phenomenology as the fusion of the as-structure and fore-structure in Heidegger. The fore-structure is the particular way in which the whole “must already have understood what is to be interpreted.” (Heidegger 2008, 194/152) Hermeneutic phenomenology is the descriptive attempt to bring the as-structures and fore-structures *together* in which together they form an articulation⁵. The as-structure is the thing “as its own” but such a thing is given as part of a contextual whole. Their togetherness delimits how projective understanding actually works. In projective understanding,

...entities are disclosed in their possibility. The character of the possibility corresponds, on each occasion, with the kind of the entity which is understood. Entities within-the-world generally are projected upon the world—that is, upon the whole of significance, to whose reference-relations concern, as Being-in-the-world, has been tied up in advance. (Heidegger 2008, 192/ 151)

In other words, projective understanding is limited by the part-whole relation disclosed in the as-structure and fore-structure.

To say that understanding works out possibilities for interpretation within the part-whole relationship is not to commit oneself to circular reasoning. It is not a “vicious circle” as Heidegger insists. Instead, interpretation is an effort to see more than simply an ideal of knowledge operating as pure philosophizing but rather “a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing.” (Heidegger 2008, 195/ 153) Heidegger’s phenomenological description of understanding limits the very possibility of phenomenological ontology itself. More generally, many philosophers have imposed the standards of deductive rigor upon discourses in philosophy. These rigorous discourses attempt to get at the truth of a discourse. Yet, such an imposition of an ideal of knowledge is still a species of projective understanding. In the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, Husserl phenomenologically retrieves how the sedimentation of historical meaning in Galileo had “mathematized” nature to the point that nature itself could only be understood scientifically as an event within space-time⁶. Such events could not be *given* any other way. Quite similarly, Heidegger’s insistence on the priority of practical engagement with the world is a similar insight. Heidegger’s efforts return to *what is given*, and at the same time, the return

5 It is no surprise that so much time is spent on *logos* as a gathering together (*legein*) and letting-be in Heidegger’s essay *Early Greek Thinking*.

6 It is fair to say that beyond a transcendental idealistic phenomenology, Husserl’s draw to sedimentation is an influence of Heidegger’s hermeneutic turn.

establishes a limit that neither understanding nor interpretation can surpass. This would include how values could be given, if at all.

III. Phenomenological Tensions

The differences in these respective philosophies illustrate two ways values are interpreted though phenomenological evidence itself can discern how values are given. First, Scheler's silence on the ontology of value follows from his phenomenological attitude. From the earlier passage, Scheler regards the "given only in the seeing and experiencing of the act itself." In the sphere of acts, we could discern the essences of things, but this essential insight cannot glean any ontological insight. Scheler is a thoroughly committed pure phenomenologist at that point, and the ontological neutrality of the attitude of "spiritual seeing" does not seek to delimit that which can be given. Scheler's insistence on the immediate givenness of value through emotional intuition expresses that spirit may discern the what-ness of a phenomenon, yet we are never told anything about what essences are anymore than how it is that values are given as an eternal a priori order of ranks. On the other hand, Dasein cannot immediately intuitively apprehend a phenomenon. According to Heidegger, all understanding is – to put it in Scheler's words – "mediated" through "signs and symbols." Therefore, it is clear that insofar as the analysis regards the *Formalismus* and *Being and Time*, there are clear contradictory commitments to either a phenomenology that can discern essences immediately through intuition or a hermeneutic phenomenology in which the understanding works out its interpretive possibilities mediated through the as-and-fore-structures of experience. So if given the choice between the two, which allows for a better understanding of value's givenness?

In the *Nature of Sympathy*, Scheler argues that existence is pervasively already mooded—that is to say, Scheler's insistence that affectivity pervades human life is that such affectivity is being-in-the-world. I offer the following passage as evidence of this interpretation:

...the *value*-qualities of objects are already given in *advance* at a level where their imaged and conceptual features are not yet vouchsafed to us, and hence that the apprehension of values is the basis of our subsequent apprehension of objects. (Scheler 2008, 57-58)

We are actively borne into a world engrossed in an emotional tonality. Human life is thoroughly "mooded" in Scheler. Consequently, there is agreement with the Heideggerian insistence on Dasein as Being-in-the-world, and how the care structure unfolds emphasizing "moodedness." Scheler's analysis takes affectivity farther than *Being and Time*. He gives full

phenomenological independence to affective intentionality whereas moods are just one *existentiale* in the care structure.

For it is our whole spiritual life—and not simply objective thinking in the sense of cognition of being—that possesses “pure” acts and laws of acts which are, according to their nature and contents, independent of the human organization. The emotive elements of spirit, such as feeling, preferring, loving, hating and willing, also possess original a priori contents which are not borrowed from “thinking”, and which ethics must show to be independent of logic. There is an a priori *ordre du Coeur*, or *logique du Coeur* as Blaise Pascal aptly calls it. (Scheler 1973a, 63)

Scheler considers the experience of affectivity is the basis for all other experiences. In Heidegger, the moods are experienced in much the same way as Scheler. They are a co-penetrating part of the structure of care. Moods come from behind us, without our control, and we are constantly delivered over to them. Every situation is mooded, and therefore given as already mooded as such. In this way, both Scheler and Heidegger emphasize the same primordial level of affectivity in which all situations and the world itself is disclosed. Yet, there is a striking difference between both phenomenological approaches. In Scheler, the emotions form an *independent* autonomous logic disclosed in the structure of intentional acts. In Heidegger, the moods work alongside the other *existentiales*. This is the reason why Schelerian phenomenology is capable of grasping the values intended in emotions more fully than Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology, and explains why Heidegger could not adequately see values in the everydayness of Dasein.

The givenness of value-qualities in experience, when successfully bracketed phenomenologically, perdure. That is, values are given as a form of intransient permanence as evidenced in acts of love. These acts are of spirit, and they disclose values as objectively valid in their own way. Consider the experience of love. Love is an attitude I take on in relation to possible others. These others could be other persons, an anonymous other – such as other Americans, or maybe an idea like justice. Either way, the structure of love is the same and offers us phenomenological insight into the experience of values itself. In love, I will adopt a permanent intransient orientation to sacrifice all my effort to bring the other to proper fruition. I will not attempt to control, manipulate or dominate this other. Control, domination or manipulation would only attempt to bring about an imposed conception of what the other should be rather than allowing the unique other to be. Hence, love is the movement or ascendancy of Scheler’s value-rankings that allows the valued good to become more than what it is.

It could be proposed that Heidegger picked up on the givenness of value as a form of permanence, but Heidegger held value to be an ontic phenomenon that naively regards values as present-at-hand. As Heidegger first mentions ethics in *Being and Time*,

Dasein's ways of behavior, its capacities, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes, have been studied with varying extent in philosophical psychology, in anthropology, *ethics*, and 'political science', in poetry, biography and in the writing of history each in a different fashion...Only when the basic structures of Dasein have been adequately worked out with explicit orientation towards the problem of Being itself, will what we have hitherto gained in interpreting Dasein gets its existential justification. (Heidegger 2008, 37, italics mine)

For Heidegger, ethics is but one example of an ontic interpretation that doesn't go far enough in elucidating the Being of Dasein. Heidegger thinks that various ontic interpretations of Dasein's possibilities have been overlooked and concealed over. In a sense, Heidegger was correct, yet had Heidegger explored the ground of values as "felt in experience" he would have gleaned Scheler's insight. I hope the reader understands I am not simply "playing up" Scheler, but offering the givenness of value as a reason to regard Scheler's phenomenology more sophisticated on this point. Phenomenologically speaking and independent of Scheler, values are given as enduring beyond contexts of significance. If I face a similar situation later on in life, then *ceteris paribus* the same value will apply to the same context of significance. Hence, we can understand it when Scheler claims the determinate order of values "is independent of the form of being into which values enter—no matter, for instance, if they are present to us as purely objective qualities, as members of value-complexes (e.g., the being-agreeable or being-beautiful of something), or as values that 'a thing has.'" (Scheler 1973a, 17) Heidegger had only picked up on the givenness of value partly. Indeed, values are given as a presence perduring throughout time because the act-center of persons realizes them into time as goods⁷. The act-

⁷ This is a point of contention in Parvis Emad's brilliantly argued *Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Value* Torey Press: Glen Ellyn, IL, 1984. In that work, Emad thinks the difference between Heidegger and Scheler turns on Scheler's acceptance of traditional concepts of the person that presuppose a temporality of presence. Heidegger, Emad insists, works out a completely different account of temporality that questions Scheler's acceptance of a traditional metaphysics concealed in his commitment to intentional acts as products of spirit (and likewise the whole of Western metaphysics for that matter). "The a-temporal nature of spirit is clearly manifest in its sole representative, the act. The nature of act is such that it does not exist *in time*. To use Scheler's terminology, acts exercise their influence

center of persons in realizing values exceeds representation, and so too do the values realized by persons.

An example might prove helpful. Scheler states that values only matter in relation to the dignity of a person, and this is the highest value (which for Scheler is the *value of the holy*). Therefore, if I enslave another person, I disregard how he is given to me in experience as a person. This insight is gleaned in the emotional apprehension I have in relation to a person. The dignity of a person does not come to us through the *a priori* form of the moral law as a Kantian would argue. Instead, the inviolable sense of the person is given in her inexhaustible richness as a wholly unique individuated being. The person emanates outward phenomenologically as absolute and unique. It does not matter if we are talking about the slaves of Ancient Egypt, or slaves in the American South of the 19th century. In all instances, the value of the person is felt in experience. There is no principled mediation for the value attached to the holy sense afforded to persons, nor would it be proper to think that given the phenomenon of person or value itself. In much the same way, Levinas insists on the transhistorical absolute value of the other. It is therefore no mistake that Levinas and Scheler insist on the trans-historical and therefore trans-mediated sense that the other or person has. No ethics can get off the ground if there was not a phenomenological givenness of the person and value itself.

A Heideggerian might counter we have simply paid too much attention to the as-structure, the immediate immanence of a person without paying attention to what context or fore-structure that allows us to make such claims as when Scheler opens in the *Second Preface* to the *Formalismus* with “The spirit behind my ethics is one of rigid ethical absolutism and objectivism.” (Scheler 1973a, xxiii) Consequently, it is no accident that the next sentence follows as “My position may in another respect be called emotional intuitionism.” (ibidem) By contrast, one could agree with Gadamer’s sentiments surrounding Scheler’s thought. Scheler’s major ethics merely “fused the tradition of Catholic moral philosophy for the first time with the most advanced positions in modern philosophy” (Gadamer 2008, 135) which by “modern philosophy” Gadamer indicates phenomenology and its supplementary role to a metaphysics informed by philosophical

into time without being extended in it...like the tradition criticized by Heidegger, Scheler is unaware of the subtle, hidden and elusive role of time” (p. 47) While I do not have the space here to revisit the entire presentation of Emad’s argument, Emad’s book only takes up the Heideggerian confidence in that line without asking first what the givenness of value is itself. The alternative explanation for Scheler’s lack of awareness about time is simple. Values are given in such excess that, like persons, they exhibit a type of givenness that cannot be captured in time. The givenness is a vertical dimension, given in height and only partially understood in the horizon of time articulated in hermeneutic phenomenology.

anthropology. Scheler's contribution is downplayed if a hermeneutic phenomenology in either Gadamer or Heidegger's formation succeeds. Yet, hermeneutic phenomenology is limited by its inability to capture the absolute immanence of an experience. There is no mediation in Scheler's thought. This follows from Scheler's commitment to a phenomenology of essences expressed in the interconnections between emotional acts and value-correlates.

Interconnections are, like essences, "given". They are not a "product" of "understanding." They are original thing-interconnections [*Sachzusammenhänge*], not laws of objects just because they are laws of acts apprehending objects⁸. They are "a priori" because they are grounded in essences [*Wesenheit*], not in objects and goods. They are a priori, but not because of "understanding" or "reason" "produces" them. The *logos* permeating the universe can be grasped only through them. (Scheler 1963a, 68)

The givenness of value shares in a completely different mode of givenness – more than Heidegger could anticipate in *Being and Time* – and this is why it is unfair to insist upon the hermeneutic threshold without fully paying attention to the how-of-givenness and what that how-of-givenness entails for value in particular. The givenness of value could only be articulated in a phenomenology of emotional life where they are experienced directly. For instance, if I find myself likely to eat fish from Lake Erie, I will refrain. Lake Erie is very polluted, and the game wardens in Pennsylvania near Presque Isle warn of the dangers to those fishing in Lake Erie. The fish are *given* as threatening my health. Moreover, I come to value my health over the pleasurable desire to eat fish. I choose the vital value of health over the lower pleasurable value. To experience value is to be thrust in situations in which values are given in relation to each other, and the phenomenological evidence of preferring acts indicates the higher values are chosen at the expense of those experienced as lower.

Some might be dissatisfied with thinking that Heidegger missed out on the givenness of value. It is not enough to elicit the motivations for why a philosopher has defended a particular conclusion. The givenness of value is its own evidence and this is why if a moral phenomenology is to take shape, the phenomenology in question cannot adopt a Heideggerian frame. Instead, a moral phenomenology can only be founded on a phenomenology open to value in the first place, and unlike Heidegger, Scheler

8 On its own laws apprehending objects would be a form of naïve realism or version of either epistemic or moral intuitionism.

accommodates value's givenness. However, there are some limitations to Scheler's approach.

Scheler provided an account of moral phenomenology that disclosed the how-of-givenness of values. However, in his ethics, he never provides a clear account as to what the content of values are, nor how that content is experienced. Instead, we know what value might be operative in a particular value-complex or situation and the phenomenological form of moral experience more generally. Therefore, Scheler's moral phenomenology cannot take the form of a particular moral theory, and nor do I think that phenomenology can provide a normative theory. At best, Scheler might endorse some type of virtue ethics in which *phronesis* is involved in apprehending what values are salient to a particular value-complex, duty or person, but this is a topic for another time.

In conclusion, this paper has urged two conclusions regarding the differences spelled out between Scheler's intuition of essences and Heidegger's hermeneutic turn. First, I have argued that the experience of value could not help but be given in terms of its presence-at-hand nature. Persons and values when viewed within time resemble presence in the Heideggerian sense because of the excess of givenness overtakes the phenomenal appearance. Heidegger's insistence that values are ontic follows from Heidegger's incomplete grasp of how values are given in experience. The intrinsence of value is simply *the manner in which it is given in experience*.

Scheler's silence about the ontology of value in the *Formalismus* is a product of seeking a phenomenological basis for ethics. Put simply, when we engage in phenomenological description, we are not to assume anything prior about the phenomenon, but let the phenomenon show itself from itself. From this phenomenological neutrality, Scheler cannot settle anything about the question of values ontologically, but unlike Heidegger, Scheler's phenomenology can capture the givenness of value. Scheler can only say how values are experienced in emotional intuition in preferring, loving and hating, and that there may be lessons to learn from Heidegger. Heidegger's efforts to "ontologize" phenomenological inquiry about factual life is a model for how Scheler's efforts may be better developed—though my audience must wait for another time to address the Heideggerian suggestions for Scheler's metaphysics yet to come. At present, Scheler's approach is more amiable to the givenness of persons and values.

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Fayemi Ademola KAZEEM¹

Sophie Oluwole's Hermeneutic Trend in African Political Philosophy: Some Comments

Abstract: The intent of this paper is to discuss hermeneutics as one of the current trends in African political philosophy using the works of the erudite female African philosopher, Sophie A. Oluwole, as an exemplar. This paper explores the nitty-gritty of the political thoughts of Oluwole on the riveted issues of democracy and human rights in contemporary African socio-political discourse. It identifies the limit of Oluwole's hermeneutic approach and critically exposes some of the shortcomings of hermeneutic thoughts on the subject-matter. Concerned about the dearth of literatures by female African professional philosophers in the area of African political philosophy, the paper concludes that Oluwole's scholarly erudition should inspire more female African professional philosophers in working within any identified emerging trend(s) in African political philosophy, in so far they are moved by it.

Keywords: political philosophy, human rights as hermeneutically given

Introduction

In his paper, "Four Trends in Current African Philosophy," Odera Oruka (1979) identified ethno-philosophy, philosophic sagacity, professional philosophy and nationalistic ideological philosophy as the defining trends that have contoured the discourses on African philosophy². The earlier political reflections, thoughts and juggling of African nationalists and scholars in the mid-1950s to the 90s have been described by Odera Oruka as the 'African nationalist ideological philosophy.' This trend is an attempt in the area of African political philosophy; it consists of works with focus on evolving new and unique political theories that are pro-independence and anti-colonial in nature; traditional and authentic in identity; as well as first-order reflections on how best to arrange African collective life, political institutions and social practices.

¹Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria, kcaristotle@yahoo.com

² In his *Sage Philosophy* (1990), Oruka added two more trends to the list of four making the number to six trends in African philosophy. The addenda are African literary/Artistic philosophy and African hermeneutic philosophy.

Much as the political and discursive moods of the time when Oruka wrote his piece on trends in African philosophy seems supportive of his categorizations, some questions are left hanging as to the appropriateness or otherwise of such delineation today. Theorizing in African socio-political philosophy has come of age. Beyond the corpus of political thoughts of African nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, L.S. Senghor, Sekou Toure, Kenneth Kaunda, Obafemi Awolowo, and Nnamdi Azikiwe amongst others, today, there is growing avalanche of scholastic interests in African political philosophy with diverse trends and focuses. This development necessarily raises doubts as whether or not Oruka's identification of nationalistic ideological philosophy as a (and the only) trend in African political philosophy still subsists.

We may ask: What are the general directions of discourse in African political philosophy today? Are they in anyway fundamentally different from the anti-colonial and post-colonial structuring of African states, which defined the trend of nationalistic ideological discourse? Are there views that can be authentically called 'philosophical' as well as 'African' in the works of scholars that are brandished 'nationalistic ideologists' in Oruka's typology? Who can be termed an African political philosopher? Are there female African philosophers who have made significant contributions within and outside Oruka's nationalist-ideological trend? What are the new (emerging or well established) issues and orientations in contemporary African political philosophy?

This paper is an attempt to respond to the above posers by locating and bringing to the fore, an emerging trend in current African political philosophy. This is the hermeneutic trend. Foremost representative of this trend in contemporary African political philosophy are Tsenay Serequeberhan, Theophilus Okere, Bruce B. Janz and Sophie A. Oluwole. In de-gendering the African politico-philosophical space as a purely male-dominated affair, this paper seeks to critically discuss the political philosophy of a prominent African female philosopher, Sophie Abosedo Oluwole³. Our aim in this regard is to expose and establish her thoughts

³ Sophie Abosedo Olayemi Oluwole is a leading figure in Yoruba philosophy. Born (and bred) in 1935, Igbara-Oke, Ondo State, Oluwole's parents were from Edo State, Nigeria. Though by virtue of ancestral lineage, she is an Edo woman, but her deep grounding in Yoruba culture makes her more of a Yoruba person. She had her primary education at St. Paul's Anglican Primary School, Igbara-Oke; from there she proceeded to Anglican Girls modern school, at Ile-Ife in 1951. In 1953, she enrolled at the Women Training College, Ilesha, where she finished with a class IV certificate in 1954. She had her first degree in Philosophy in 1970; her Master of Arts degree in philosophy in 1974 and completed her Ph.D thesis on Meta-ethics and the Golden Rule in 1984. With the successful defence of her thesis, Oluwole broke the ice by being the first Ph.D in Philosophy awarded by a Nigerian university, the University of Ibadan. Upon completion of her Ph.D with specialization in metaphysics and ethics in Western philosophy, Oluwole started

within the hermeneutic trend in a motley array of other new trends beyond Oruka's 'nationalist ideological philosophy' in contemporary African political philosophy.

The rest of our discussion in this paper is organized in four sections. In the first section, a discussion of the hermeneutic tradition in African philosophy in which Oluwole's political ideas find expression is attempted. The second section takes us through her political thoughts and how they subsume within the hermeneutic trend. In furtherance of our discourse, the third section is a critical appraisal of Oluwole's hermeneutical predilection and some concluding remarks features in the last section.

Sophie Oluwole and the hermeneutic tradition in African philosophical discourse

Oluwole accepts the study of African oral tradition as a precondition for the discovery of cogent philosophical principles. And central to such a study is the hermeneutic method. The method of hermeneutics does not guarantee truth, nor does it merely focus on the analysis of propositions, rather, it makes different forms of life and thought accessible to reflection through interpretation of life-world. Oluwole's interest is in the interpretation of the rich oral tradition using the Yoruba exemplar of proverbs and *Ifa* corpus. In this hermeneutic study, as Kolawole Owolabi (Kolawole A. Owolabi 2001, 158) rightly noted, Oluwole attempts a deeper analysis and hermeneutic interpretation of the various positions taken in the oral narratives, insisting that the philosopher's priority is to identify the primary concern of the *Ifa* verses in an attempt to characterize the goal the thinkers wish to attain through thought. In Oluwole's words:

researching and writing on African philosophy, which is her area of interest. Oluwole has enviable contributions to the enterprise of philosophizing in Africa. An incredible scholar by all standards, Oluwole is one of the most prominent Nigerian philosophers in the world today. The breadth and the depth of her scholarship are not only impressive but also widely acknowledged through many awards and honours from institutions in African and beyond. Being a philosopher is her profession; writing, publishing and speaking at public gatherings are her passions; and living up to what she preaches is a habit. Oluwole's consummate passion for the teaching and critical promotion of African culture both in her philosophical writings and outward advocacy is unflinchingly second to none. Given her linguistic training in German and English languages together with cultural grounding in Yoruba language, and her analytical philosophical background, Oluwole is theoretically rigorous, methodologically nuanced and sophisticated in the art of criticism. Oluwole has written on a wide variety of philosophical issues and her works cut across different areas of Yoruba philosophy: metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, science, religion, jurisprudence, gender studies and political philosophy. Our interest in this paper is to discuss her ideas on African political philosophy, with emphasis on democracy and human rights. Her thoughts on these issues necessarily partake in the hermeneutic tradition to which Oluwole belongs.

My approach is to stay within the disciplinary orientation of philosophy. Contrary to the focus of history and the social sciences, philosophy's primary endeavour is not with what people do but what they say, that is, verbal expressions by human beings. That is why we find that one of the most commonly used phrases in philosophy is "X said" Hardly do we hear "Plato did" or "Russell did." Our references are always to what some people said.... Given the undeniable fact that we have little or no written documents in which the actual sayings of our progenitors are passed down to us..., the words of our sages will be used as the common referential phrase, the Yoruba people say. (Oluwole 2003, 423)

What drew Oluwole's attention to studying African thought in the authenticity of the languages in which they are expressed is the centrality of the concern with what people say in the intellectual endeavour known as philosophy. Employing therefore, the hermeneutic approach for the reinterpretation of the deep reflection underlying the proverbial narratives of what the Yoruba say, Oluwole discusses some philosophical themes: justice, time, human rights, democracy, development, sexism, knowledge and reality.

In what follows, we shall present selectively, some specific expositions of how Oluwole partakes in the hermeneutic trend in African political philosophy. In this regard, we will focus our discussion on the issues of democracy and rights in Oluwole's thoughts. We are aware that her political thought is not simply encapsulated in these themes; we only focused on these twin issues in this paper because they lurk beneath current discourse in African political philosophy, and have indeed gained ample attentions of scholars working in the field.

For Oluwole, Western philosophical study of law, legal and democratic systems and human rights is not the only possible jurisprudence. This is because oral tradition offers a veritable literature and database from

which traditional African thoughts and notions of law, democracy justice and human rights can be hermeneutically understood. Her thoughts on these issues can be found in her works: “Democracy and Indigenous Governance: The Nigerian Experience” and *Democratic Patterns and Paradigms: Nigerian Women’s Experience*. Her other essays in African socio-political philosophy include: “The Legislative Ought” (1988), “Democracy or Mediocrity” (1989), “Culture, Nationalism and Philosophy” (1997), “The Cultural Enslavement of the African Mind” (2001), “The Centrality of Culture to Economic and Social Development” (2008) amongst others.

Sophie Oluwole’s political thoughts on democracy and rights

Two basic popular but erroneous views on democracy, in Oluwole’s submission, are discussed in these works. One, contrary to the popular conception of democracy as the “government of the people, by the people and for the people,” which has led to the common view that democracy itself is a form of government; Oluwole does not conceive democracy as such. She faults this popular definition not just on the basis of the ambivalent construal of the term “people” but essentially on the ground that “the definition gives no inkling about the specific structure of the political organization in a particular society” (ibidem, 419). The second erroneous view of modern times, which Oluwole observes and discusses through the hermeneutic method, is that a monarchy cannot be democratic.

With respect to the first issue, democracy, in her view, adequately understood, is a theory that sets some basic [socio political] principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run. (ibidem, 420) Such principles, which as she notes, exist in all African traditional societies include those of justice, freedom, equity, accountability, rule of law and liberty. These social principles are universal criteria for distinguishing between good and bad governments. In other words, they are features of democracy that are not culturally specific, and whose abrogation inevitably produces tyranny.

To give a few examples; accountable government, the citizens’ rights to decide, speak and organize are essential to free political expression. The universality of these principles notwithstanding, Oluwole notes that African conception of her own interest, hopes, aspirations, etc. may determine her own peculiar pattern of democracy without violating any of the principles of freedom, liberty, rights and justice as these are embedded in democracy generally.

It is against this background that Oluwole attempts to study *in situ* the principles underlying the cultural, political, economic, social and justice institutions in an African culture, with a view to showing explicitly, the understanding of existing axioms within the historical African culture.

Concentrating on the Yoruba, Oluwole hermeneutically explores a quantum number of the principles of democracy and human rights in the peoples' oral tradition.

Her conviction is that such approach will allow us to discover the democratic nature of political organization in pre-colonial Yoruba culture; it will also open our lenses to the principles that guided social relationship in the people's cultural milieu. She believes also that through a hermeneutic understanding of such principles, and the adherence to them, we can arrive at an authentic socio-political African theory that can be used as basis for the entrenchment and development of democratic norms in contemporary Africa. She is against the culture of swallowing hook and sinker some foreign democratic patterns and paradigms and equally opposed to the idea of going back to everything traditional.

According to her, "a total dependence on the paradigms and patterns of democracy as practiced in many countries of Europe may not be the only ideal way to progress" (Oluwole 1996, 28) because several traditional socio-political systems in pre-colonial Africa hold some lessons for contemporary Africa. Her urge is the need to critically examine and re-evaluate different democratic systems in Africa pre-colonial times. (ibidem, 21) In this critical exercise, "there is the need to identify, analyse and formulate specific paradigms which respect the positive values in our different cultures and at the same, are not blind to new experiences" (ibidem, 31). This is important because it will allow us to see better what wrongs need righting and which rights have been wronged by the contemporary system. Not until we have established this, we may be unable to develop cogent new democratic structures and social habits that will satisfy our cultural aspirations as well as development.

In Oluwole's analysis, a distinction can be made between "governance" and "rulership." Among the Yoruba, the act of organizing society is *ijoba*, which literally means "rulership." The act of state management by a group of (s)elected people is referred to as *iselu*. The fundamental difference between *ijoba* and *iselu* is that while the *Oba* (king) rules, and not expected to be involved in politics, that is, *iselu*, but to exercise political power and authority, the political management of society lies with the selected group of people, that is the *oselu*. This group, which the *Oba* traditionally chairs, actually manages the political affairs of the state (Oluwole, 2003, 421). But in contemporary times there is this distortion in the usage of the word *ijobato* mean governance/government, especially democratic type.

Given the traditional political roles and responsibilities attached to distinction between *ijoba* (rulership) and *oselu* (state management), there is the temptation to think that a monarchical system, which is typified of the

Yoruba political society, cannot be democratic. Oluwole shows this temptation as false by her analysis of the processes involved in the appointment of an *Oba* in Yoruba societies. She describes the traditional Yoruba political as constitutional monarchy though with some negative aristocratic elements (Oluwole 1996, 23).

Pre-colonial Yoruba societies were kingdom based. Each of kingdoms comprised a central town and several villages. The ruler of the whole kingdom is called the *Oba* (king). A subordinate ruler, called *Baale* (village head), ruled each of the subordinate towns and villages, and acknowledged the suzerainty of the king. Every town was divided into quarters, and each quarter is under the control of a quarter chief. Each quarter was made up of many large family compounds each of which housed many nuclear families (a nuclear family being a man and his wife or wives and their children) all of whom claimed descent from one ancestor (Akintoye, www.YorubaNation.org. Par. 1). The leader or head of a family compound is called *Oloriobi* (family head). Each of these stratifications is interconnected with the other with respective internal governments. The choice of who governs at these various levels is done through democratic means. The choice of the *Baale* and the *Oloriobi* is mostly based on age and prominence in the ancestral tree of the village or compound, and each has a number of royal families among which the *Oba* is chosen (Salami 2006, 69).

Contrary to popular belief, an *Oba*, in most Yoruba societies, is neither arbitrarily appointed nor regarded solely as a divine representative on earth. Ruling houses are traditionally established along the lines of the number of wives a founding *Obahad* (Oluwole 1996, 23). So the title of king was hereditary in the royal family group. So too were the titles of village heads and quarter chiefs in their own particular family groups (Akintoye, par. 3). Nevertheless, in the appointment of a king, the Yoruba political system was decidedly democratic. When a king died, he was not automatically succeeded by his son as in many other monarchical systems. Candidates for Obaship would emerge from the royal families, involving all male members of the royal family group. Thus, sons (and even grandsons) of former kings, were eligible for selection as king. When they emerged, they are all treated as equal candidates to the stool, hence subject to the same rules and treatment. The power to carry out the selection on behalf of the people was vested in a standing committee of chiefs now known as the Council of Kingmakers in consultation with the *Ifa* oracle. The *Ifa* oracle guides and authenticates the Council of kingmakers in their selection process.

The Council of Kingmakers was all-powerful in this matter of selecting a king. Their decisions were not arbitrary as there were laid down principles and norms that stringently guided their final decision on who became the

Oba (king). First, they investigated the historical family background of each of the candidates and their respective characters as well as moral disposition to the members of the society. They allowed the general populace to lobby individually and collectively and to express opinions on the princes, whether for good or bad. The kingmakers were obliged to listen to the people and due considerations were given to the peoples' complaints, opinions and wishes.

To be successful at these tedious processes of screening by the Council of Kingmakers, a candidate's choice must have been supported by the majority of the Council of Kingmakers upon overwhelming merit in the historical, moral, and good personality yardsticks used. It was not until these mundane requirements had been fulfilled by the candidate, that the spiritual guidance of the *Ifa* oracle would be sought. When supported by the *Ifa* oracle, other ritual processes would then commence for the ascension of the king to throne of his forefathers.

The *Oba* as the head of the political organization of traditional Yoruba society had political, juridical, and executive power, which he did not exercise alone. While the King occupied the highest seat of the kingdom, there existed an elaborate organization of palace officials and council of chiefs with whom the King directed the affairs of kingdom with. This council of chiefs included civil chiefs, the military chiefs, the ward chiefs and heads of compounds and extended families. The councils of chiefs met with the king daily in the palace to take all decisions and to function as the highest court of appeal. After its decisions were taken, they were announced as the king's decisions. The functions of the King as the head of the council of society include the protection of the general interests of members of the society, which called for overseeing the general health of the society and her citizens, including the internal security of members, issues of peace and war, and the administration of justice, with the King as the last court of appeal for the whole Kingdom, and also concerned with the conduct of the relationship with other regional Kingdoms and societies (Fadipe 1970, 206).

The power arrangement in traditional Yoruba political setting was such that it provided checks and balance mechanisms. For instance, the powerful institution of the *Iya Oba* (mother of the *Oba*) in conjunction with some chiefs constituted a team of advisers. It often functions as an opposition, and not as sworn enemies, which must always disagree with the *Oba*. The *Iya Oba* institution supports good policies but had the power to check the *Oba* excesses (Oluwole 2003, 422).

If a king became over-ambitious and tried to establish personal power beyond the limited monarchy system, or if he became tyrannical, greedy, or otherwise seriously unpopular, some chiefs bore the constitutional duty of

cautioning, counselling, rebuking him in private. If he would not mend his ways, the chiefs might take his matter before a special council of spiritual elders called *Ogboni*, where he would be seriously warned. If he still would not change, the quarter chiefs might alert the family heads, and the latter might inform their compound meetings. The final action would then be that certain chiefs, whose traditional duty it was to do it, would approach the king and symbolically present him with an empty calabash or parrot's eggs. The meaning of this sign is that he must compulsorily evacuate the throne and commit suicide usually by poisoning (Oluwole 1996, 29). This final action against a king was very rarely taken, but every king was informed at the time of his installation that it was in the power of his subjects. According to Oluwole, an ancient Yoruba oral text expresses this:

- (i) *Ajuma, Ajuma,
Apo eran o juko
O un lo d'ifa Alakoleju,
Ti o ko won je n ife Oodaye.
Won niki o so gboitad'ode;
Won niki o ma so igboigbalede'oje,
Won niki o ma f' igbo Osun se de.
Nje Alakoleju o gbo
Nje Alaakoleju o gba.
A o feon'ileyimo, ma a lo.*

I am greater than everyone; I am more important than all.
In me, public mismanagement is not easily discoverable
These were the principles of public management which the greedy operated upon when s/he cheated in the primordial society.
S/he was told to be careful in handling political affairs, and not to act as if s/he is hunting in a game forest.
S/he was warned not to turn political associations into fraudulent organizations
S/he was cautioned against converting public funds into personal use.
The greedy did not listen, the greedy did not yield.
“We do not want you in this society anymore” (the people say) go away!
(ibidem)

In the above quote from *Ifa* oral literature as translated and interpreted by Oluwole, politicians who cheated in pristine Ife society believed they were so powerful and clever such that the people would not easily detect their atrocities. However they received signals and warnings not to treat citizens the way they hunt animal in the forest. They were advised not turn to political associations into cheating organizations. In fact, they were cautioned against embezzling public funds and converting public

property to personal use. The cheating politicians did not listen. They refused to play the game according to the set rules. In the end, the people were left with no option other than to chase them out of office. Evidently illustrated in the above excerpt from *Ifa* corpus is the democratic principle of responsibility, accountability and sovereignty of the people in democracy. These are inter-related with the issue of human rights, rule of law and justice between the governed and the machineries of the state.

The democratic import of the traditional Yoruba mode of social organization and governance is discernible from the fact that there were rules set for a choice of leaders, and governance was based on the rules and laws of the community. It was democratic to the extent that the rules were strictly followed, which made it impossible for anyone to impose himself on the society as it ensured that to become an *Oba*, both the spiritual and material criteria were observed (Salami 2006, 74). It is believed among the Yoruba that for there to be social order, law must not only be clearly stated and enforced, but also all the constituent organs of the state must work harmoniously to the progress of the society. For this reason, the Yorubas will say:

(ii) *Ilu ti o siofin, eseosi*

(A society with no law, has no punishment)

There was the recognition of peoples' rights and freedom. The people had the freedom to express their opinion to the *Oba* and the rulers either directly or through songs and other forms of symbolism during various festivals. Other host of rights recognized by the Yoruba democratic monarchical system is the right to property ownership, right to life, right to labour, right to fair hearing, rights of women, rights of children, rights of slaves, among others.

The traditional political society accommodated the participation of both the rulers and the ruled; although the *Oba* was the supreme commander, every cadre of the society was in various ways included in operating the Kingdom to the point that the activities of the *Oba*-in-council at the societal level were replicated at the ward and compound levels to indeed establish a participatory democratic process in traditional Yoruba society (Salami 2006, 75). A proverbial evidence in support of this is:

(iii) *Agbamerinl'oonse' lu: Agbaokunrin, agbaobinrin, agbaomode, agbaalejo*

(Four experienced groups of people manage the affairs of state: experienced men, experienced women, experienced youths and experienced sojourners) (Oluwole 2003, 426).

Proverb (iii) encapsulates traditional Yoruba theory of political leadership, which is quadrant in dimension: wise men, experienced women, intelligent youths and veteran foreigners. Much as traditional Yoruba society was guided by this leadership principle, it must however be stated at this

point, that the continuum of the Yoruba indigenous system of governance, was historically truncated by the advent of colonialism.

Though, peradventure it was not disrupted by the contact of the Yoruba with the Western powers, the sustainability of the traditional democratic system was uncertain in view of the serious tensions and conflicts that resulted from the synthesis of monarchism and democracy in traditional Yoruba culture. The Yoruba social history is replete with cases of power tussles between the executive power of the *Oba* and some other democratic institutions meant to check the absoluteness and excesses of the *Oba*. These institutions were sometimes weak in the face of the powerful and immensely influential *Oba* superstructure within the Yoruba traditional society (Salami 2006, 76).

Besides these shortcomings, Oluwole (Oluwole 1996, 26) noted that different operators of the modern democratic system at the formal level have done a lot to destabilize and corrupt this traditional system by supporting candidates not recommended by members of their societies to become rulers. The justification is too often rested on some ill-founded claims of democracy: the right of the government to be involved in the selection of an *Oba*. In this situation, political leaders now hand over staff of office to traditional rulers and by extension; many rulers are nothing more than glorified warrant chiefs (Ibidem).

In view of the above shortcomings of the notion and institution of monarchical democracy in traditional Yoruba culture, some brief note on human rights as hermeneutically given by Oluwole is apposite.

Human Dignity (Fundamental Human Rights):

- (iv) *Erukuni' le won lo sin s'oko*
Omokul'oko, won lo sin s'ile
Beenibi o juibi,
Bi a se b'eru
L'a se b'omo
Eruni baba,
Onal'ojin
Ma fiya je mi
Nitorimo je alejo,
biinonaaba de ibomiran,
Alejol'o o je.

When a slave dies at home, s/he is buried at the farmstead.
 When the true born dies in the farm, the corpse is brought home for burial.
 Yet one birth is not greater than the other.
 The way the slave's child is born,
 So also the master's child is born.
 The slave has a father.

Only he is far away.
Do not oppress me
Because I am a stranger.
If you get to another land,
You too will be a stranger. (Oluwole 1997,105-106)

The philosophical import in the above *Ifa* verse is according to Oluwole, the respect for human dignity, which is the core of human rights. The verse shows the critical expression of a thinker against the Yoruba conventional view and attitude to slaves. Construing philosophy as the criticism of the ideas we live, what this anonymous Yoruba thinker (who is most likely to be a slave) has done is to offer critic with evidence of reason against the maltreatment of slaves, and in defence of human dignity and equality. This *Ifa* verse, in Oluwole's view, is nothing short of philosophy. Though, one major criticism that has been customarily levelled against the possibility of human rights in traditional Africa is that of the prevalence of the practice of slavery, which even predated African contact with an experience of the Western trans-Atlantic slave trade. This criticism can easily be disposed on the basis of the distinction between trans-Atlantic trade and the slavery of the traditional Africa. The former was a total dehumanization of man by man. In the case of the later, C. Williams rightly noted that "the African slaves were considered as members of the community, they learnt crafts, had rights to farm, held important offices of state, and had virtually all the rights and privileges of a freeborn" (Williams 1976, 129). This truism of this position is well illustrated in the above verse of *Ifa* corpus cited by Oluwole.

But one can probe further the superior veracity of the *Ifa* verse over and above other contrasting views on slaves, discrimination and unequal treatment of humans as latent in the people's proverbial repertoire. There are some Yoruba proverbs that argue against equal treatment of slaves and the freeborn as well as against allowing equal doors of opportunities to them:

(v) *Imado 'obaj'obaabaluje; bi eruba je oba, ijoyekobakuikan.*

Peradventure a wild boar is made a king, the community would have been ruined; if a slave had been crowned, the rank of chiefs would have been depleted.

(vi) *Kosibi a se ma se ebolo, tikoninruigbe.*

Irrespective of how sumptuous the spices in cooking the 'ebolo' vegetable are, its aroma will remain offensive.

The surface interpretation popularly given to the immediately cited proverbs is that slaves are of no intrinsic worth, and that any attempt to elevate them to the status of a freeborn will bring about fatal consequences. Proverb (v) is an analogical indication that by nature, slaves are unfit to pilot the affairs of the society because they will desecrate existing institutions of political leadership. Extenuating the unequal treatment of slaves and the freeborn in being opened to windows of opportunity in social/political network, proverb (vi) is a figurative expression that knocks out any attempt to polish the personality of the slaves as a futile endeavour because the dispositional nature of a slave is irredeemable. In effect, proverbs (v) and (vi) are contraries to Oluwole's thesis of recognition of human dignity and equal opportunities of the slave and the freeborn in traditional Yoruba culture.

Gender Equality:

The idea of predominance of gender imbalance and inequality in traditional African culture as widely held in Western social anthropological findings is a deluge. While there was male chauvinistic proverbial oppression of women, such did not translate into suppressed gender role of women in Yoruba African society. Women are neither inferior nor superior to their male counterpart. While women in traditional African society were given the unrestrained opportunities to develop to their greatest capacities, the emphasis was on complementarity of gender relations and roles (Balogun 1999, 42). This is demonstrated in an *Ifa* verse, *Ose Itura* that reads:

(vii) *Da gike, da gike*
Aakekanko le e da gike
Da' gi la, Da' gi la
Eelekan o le ledagi la;
B' o s'ere lu
Osugbo o le e da anwo se

Cutting alone, cutting alone,
 The axe cannot cut alone,
 Splitting alone, splitting alone;
 The wedge cannot split alone;
 Without the *Erelu* (the female member), the cult of *Osugbo* cannot operate (Oluwole 1997, 110).

The above *Ifa* verse is an argument about the complementary roles of the male and female in society. The *Osugbo*, generally operated as a secret society, is the legal arm of government among the Ijebu people of Yoruba land. And there is always a woman representative. The argument here is that no one section of society can rule alone just as the axe or the wedge cannot function alone. True democracy, in the thinking of the author

of this proverb, does not justify the proscription of women participation in decision making processes.

(viii)

Atodunmodunl'erinti n rin. Erino fara k'asa. Atosumosul'efonti n rin, be eni o t'esebopoolo. Eeyanti o onil'eni, ti o m'eeyanl'eeyan, eeyanti o koede de 'le, niipet'obinrin o sil'aye

(Leaders and self-respecting personalities who recognize the importance of women go through life without a hitch. Those who refuse to respect the rights of women and/or despise them do so because they are shallow in knowledge) (Oluwole 2003, 426).

Oluwole interpreted from the above oral texts that the Yoruba believe that wise people who recognize the importance of women go through life with minimum difficulties. Only those who have a poor sense of human values would fail to appreciate the centrality of women's role in creating a peaceful and harmonious society.

Children's Rights:

The Yoruba, according to Oluwole, give pivotal interest to children's rights. She cited such proverbs as:

(ix) *Omode o j'obi, agba o j'oye*

Adults who deny children their rights do not earn social respect

The Right to Fair Hearing:

In the *Ifa* verse of IworiMeji, it is stated that:

(x)

Owoomode o to pepe, t' agbalagba o woakeregbe, ise ewe be agbaki o masekomo, gbogbowani a nise a jo n be 'rawa. A dia fun Orunmilaeyitiakapoo re o pelejol'odoOlodumare,

OlodumarewaaransesiOrunmilapeki o wa so idinaatiko le fi be akapoo re. NigbatiOrunmila de iwajuOlodumare Oniounsagbogboagbaraoun fun akapoo, o niipinakapoonikogbo. Nigbanaanioronaa to waa ye Olodumareyeyekeye. Inuureesi dun wipe ounko da ejoeekunkan. Ni Eledaabanilatijonaa lo omoedakankogbodo da ejoeekunkan. Anikandajo, o oseun:anikandajo, o oseeyan, nigbati o ogbot'enuenikeji, emil'odajo se?

A child's hand does not reach up to the mantelpiece that of an adult cannot enter into a gourd. When a child appeals to an adult for help, s/he should not refuse; we all live to complement each other. This is the oracular message for *Orunmila* whose priest sued him before *Olodumare*. And *Olodumare* sent for *Orunmila* to come to explain why he refused assistance to his priest. When *Orunmila* came before *Olodumare*, he said he tried his best for

his priest; but that it was the priest's "nature" that is his problem. Then *Olodumare* was completely enlightened and he was happy that he did not give judgment after listening to the complainant alone. That is why the Creator made it a law from that day; no human being should give judgment after listening to only one side. He, who judges without hearing the other side, does wrong; he who judges without listening to the other side is inhuman. When you have not heard the other side why did you give your judgment? (Oluwole 2001, 94)

There are two ideas of jurisprudential relevance that could be discovered from this *Ifa* verse. One is that which expresses the complementary qualities and responsibilities that adult and the young have to each other. Both have rights and obligations that must be respected and observed. Second is the legal principle of *Audi alteram partem*. This principle states that parties involved in litigation must always be heard before a verdict is given.

The Right to Property Ownership:

(xi) *A ki i gbaokitilowoakiti, a ki i gbaile baba eni'owoeni*

(Just as you do not deny a wrestler the right to summersault, you do not deprive a person of his/her father's property) (Oluwole 2003, 424).

Environmental right:

(xii)

Bi a ba be 'gini 'gbo, ki a fi ro' raenivo; lo d'ifa fun alasokannioye. Won niki ofasokan a ru 'bo. O n "bi o bi se iwona n ko, fi orororaarewo

(Put yourself in the shoe when dealing with all things that have life. If you do, you will understand what it means to give up an only dress during the harmattan) (Oluwole 2008, 8).

The aim of Oluwole in proverbs (xi) and (xii) is to show that traditional Yoruba-Africans were not oblivious of the right to own property as well as the right to protect bios and the environment at large.

Sophie Oluwole and the Hermeneutic Trend in African Philosophy: Some Comments

Before appraising Oluwole's hermeneutical thought on the issues of human rights and democracy in Yoruba context, it is apt to first question the hermeneutic method itself, which she employed in the course of her

analysis. If the method is perhaps marred, the outcome may be more suspicious. Given the history of hermeneutics as it were in the West, as it is rooted and developed in the works of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur amongst others, one may begin to ask whether or not the hermeneutic approach is not too alien to the African tradition. Though it is not enough that a method must be indigenously rooted before being philosophical, even where it risks being tagged as 'derivative'; it can be adapted with modifications, if need be. What is more important is to interrogate if the factors that necessitated the emergence and development of Western hermeneutics are the same for the adoption of hermeneutics in the African context.

Hermeneutics has its root in German thought and evolved as a response to the pervasive reduction of reason to technique, rise in positivistic social science among others. But from all indications, there are no elements in Oluwole's works pointing either to the exigency of warranting factors for the hermeneutic method in African philosophy or recognizing that the challenges that dictated the emergence of the method in the West are the same in the African context. But in no way should Oluwole's silence on this query suggest that African hermeneutic approach is inherently flawed. It may just be that she is trying to weave the identity of African philosophy around the kind of method it adopts in its investigation, without some further justification. Problematic as this may be, our task in the main is not to probe this further; we are more concerned with the concatenation of her political views in relation to human rights and democratic principles.

Two basic points can be made on Oluwole's hermeneutic interpretation of oral texts on human rights and democratic principles in Yoruba thought. One is that each of these texts is the result of deep reflections and historical experiences. Many of them are critical reactions to some existing ideas, beliefs and practices of the traditional people in their cultural milieu. With the understanding of philosophy as the criticism of the ideas we live by, and given the critical stance of the oral text as reactionary to certain norms of belief, behaviour, ideas and assumptions of the people at a given time, the philosophical composition of each text is not in doubt. The various texts analyzed and discussed aptly reveal that Yoruba-African intellectual heritage is neither mythical nor unscientific.

Oluwole does not even seem to claim that the ideas are unique; only that the ideas and principles expressed in them are rational in the conventional sense and cogent within a conceptual structure that is in no way inferior to Western tradition of thought. Thus the temptation of regarding her presentation on the themes as ethno-philosophical rather than philosophical may be resisted. Her hermeneutic engagement in African

political philosophy does not necessarily depict the no-philosophy, especially since it suggests that members of a particular school of thought in traditional Yoruba culture held some beliefs and principles in common, and not holistic attribution to a whole people.

Be that as it may, concomitantly, one major problem, which has a paralyzing effect on the outcome of the hermeneutic approach adopted by Oluwole, is the foreign language in which the interpretation has been done. Had the issues discussed been presented, analyzed, explained and interpreted within their own warranted intellectual culture and language in which they originally exist, the cogency of the discussions would have been more discernible.

Another critical problem in the hermeneutic approach of Oluwole in her discussion of democracy and human rights is that she made no effort to justify any of the democratic and human rights principles she presented. Explanatory justification is essential to any philosophical discussion, but we find this in its limited form in Oluwole's hermeneutic discourse on the themes. This is where Serequeberhan's horizon of hermeneutics differs from that of Oluwole. Serequeberhan is of the view that African hermeneutics must engage itself with praxis and emancipation of the Africans out of the "politico-existential crisis interior to the horizon of post-colonial Africa." (Serequeberhan 1994, 18)

It is on the above basis that we think hermeneutics of ancient thought is not enough without being complemented with reconstruction of the thought in question for contemporary use.

Re-constructionism involves first an extrication of anachronistic idea or practices from a whole lot of traditional thought and beliefs. Secondly it entails an identification of relevant ideas in traditional corpus of thought and practices that can still be rehabilitated and improved upon for immediate or future use. Thirdly re-constructionism involves a juxtaposition of identified relevant idea in traditional thought with contemporary perceptions and practices with a view to integrating and evolving anew, cogent idea for solving basic problems confronting our world today. Re-constructionism dwells on a concern for human interest; for practical relevance in order to mitigate fundamental problems of existence, be it political, social, cultural, economical, and technological amongst others. On this showing, Oluwole's hermeneutic discussion of democracy and human rights in African political philosophy could have been more cogent, if the traditional political ideas so interpreted have been reconstructed for contemporary African use.

Conclusion

The thrust of trends in African philosophy today is simply not wholly definable in terms of the challenges of anti-colonial violence, identity and self-definition, nor in terms of liberation struggles and national reconstruction, which strictly informed the early post-independence works of scholars and nationalists in African political philosophy. The then trends provided a basis for today's discourse. This is unassailable in the sense that one can still find such issues like African socialism, communalism, Pan-Africanism, development among others as recurring decimals in today's discourse in African political philosophy; though with re-invigorative perspectives and dimensions.

While it is arguable that many of the works of the nationalist scholars are not 'philosophical' in the strict sense of the word (with the exception of Nkrumah's classics), I think the pioneering intellectual legacies of these nationalist scholars are worthy of further philosophical study. This is imperative bearing in mind that many of them (such as Senghor, Azikiwe, and Kenyatta) owed much of their inspiration both at the levels of philosophy and ideology, to figures of the Diaspora, such as Aime Cesaire, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, and others (Wiredu 2002, 23). For contemporary African political philosophy to therefore be holistically robust, the insightful contributions of all these scholars cannot be carpeted.

Though it is true that some of the issues that instigated the interests of the first generation of scholars in African political philosophy are now partially settled and won (such as the formal liberation struggle from colonialism), no doubt, we are still left with an array of many others, which have constituted the focus of the second generation of scholars working in African political philosophy today. These issues include among others: the problem of violence, conflicts and terrorism, nationalism and social order, democracy, human rights, reparation, justice, Africa and globalization, etc. All these socio problems seem to indicate the necessity for fresh ruminations in African political philosophy beyond the wall of the nationalist-ideological trend identified by Oruka.

While the contributions of second generation of scholars (such as: K. Wiredu, T. Serequeberhan, O. Taiwo, P. Boele van Hensbroek, M. P. More, K. M. Kalumba, O. Oladipo, J. A. I. Bewaji, D. A. Masolo, A. K. Appiah, E. Eze, I. A. Menkiti, S. Gbadegesin, T. Kiros, E. Wamala, K. Ogundowole, K. Owolabi, M. Falaiye, O.A. Balogun, S. O. Opafola, etc., who are predominantly male) working on these and other related issues in

current African political philosophy are laudable, it remains to be seen, the complementary insights of female African philosophers on the themes.

It is on the above lacuna that this paper has attempted bringing to fore, the thoughts and views of a prominent African female philosopher, Sophie Oluwole, on the issues of democracy and human rights. This should not suggest that the themes of democracy and human rights exhaust the political ideas that occupied the thought of Oluwole. We only focused on these twin issues in this paper because they lurk beneath current discourse in African political philosophy, and have indeed riveted a lot of attention.

The point is made clear in the paper that rather than being motivated by the concerns of the nationalist ideological trend, Oluwole opts for the hermeneutic trend in her discussion of democracy and human rights. Insightful as her views are on the themes under reference, they are not without possible objections. Such objections notwithstanding, in our submission, we think Oluwole's attempt should inspire more female African professional philosophers in dispensing socio-political ideas not necessarily by following the paths of the nationalist ideological trend, nor the hermeneutic orientation; but by working within any other identified emerging trend(s) in African political philosophy, in so far they are moved by it.

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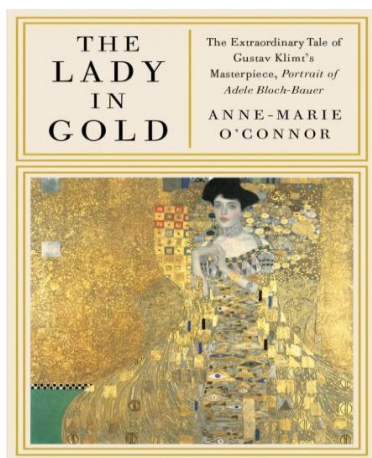
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Antonela CORBAN¹

Gustav Klimt's Lady in Gold²

(Anne- Marie O'Connor, *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012)



Abstract In 2012, 150 years from the birth of the Austrian painter Gustav Klimt were celebrated. It is the year when several volumes dedicated to the painter were published, some of them providing a general view of his life and work, others presenting certain periods in his life or his less known creations. The volume *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, falls under the latter category: the book, written by Anne-Marie O'Connor, presents the history of the appearance of the famous portrait and the complex events it has gone through up to the present.

Keywords: Golden style, nazism, degenerated art, "Austrian Mona Lisa"

In 1903, Klimt visited Ravenna, where he was deeply impressed by the mosaics in the Christian churches of the city. Back in Austria, he started

¹ PhD "Al.I.Cuza" University of Iași, Romania & University of Burgundy, Dijon, France

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combining his own methods of representation with various golden details reminiscent of these mosaics. For this reason, his paintings of this period are said to be created in the “golden style” or “Byzantine style”; these paintings impress through a successful combination of naturalistically represented details with decorative and symbolic elements. One of these paintings is *Adele Bloch-Bauer's Portrait*, which is the central topic of the book reviewed here.

The painting was confiscated by the Nazis, then remained in Austria for many years. Maria Altmann, Adele Bauer's niece, sued the Austrian government asking to have five paintings by Klimt returned, one of which was Adele's portrait. Once the painting was retrieved in 2006, it was soon sold. It was purchased by the cosmetics magnate Ronald Lauder, whose overt intention was to put together a collection consisting of the paintings retrieved from the Nazis and to exhibit it at Neue Galerie in New York. “This is our Mona Lisa”, he would say about the portrait bought for 135 million dollars, the highest price ever paid for a painting up to that moment. (Since then things have changed and the highest price paid for a painting is more than 250 million dollars for *The Card Players* by Cezanne).

The time from the completion of this work in 1907 until its retrieval in 2006 is presented in detail in Anne-Marie O'Connor's book *The Lady in Gold*, which she organized in three parts, each corresponding to a period in the history of the painting.

The first part, entitled *Emancipation*, analyses the social, cultural, political and economic context in which the main characters of the book live: Klimt and Adele. A detailed image is created about the people and their age (for instance, Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler); the author extends the analysis, bringing details even about Emperor Franz Josef and his lover, actress Katharina Schratt, as well as about Empress Elisabeth, beloved in Austria as “Sisi”. The economic and banking activity of numerous Jewish families is described, too: they were recognized as possessing significant financial resources in Austria. At the same time, the cultural and entertainment activity on Ringstraße is presented. (“It was 1898, and the devil himself seemed to dance in Vienna”.)

The author first presents Adela's Bloch-Bauer's biography, followed by that of Klimt. Adele was the daughter of a rich Jew, who was the head of an important Habsburg bank and the head of the Oriental Railway. She was married to Ferdinand Bloch, a Czech sugar-beet baron, who, on account of

their financial possibilities, succeeded in organizing an impressive salon, frequented by important Viennese intellectual figures and artists of the time. One of them was Gustav Klimt, whose friends used to call him *der König* – the King. “At thirty-five, Klimt was a king of Vienna art world” (p.8). The book introduces several periods of the artist’s life: his childhood in the family of a humble gold engraver (an important detail considering the use of gold in many of Gustav’s works); the studying years in *Kunstgewerbeschule* (School of Applied Arts), the creation of *Künstlercompagnie* (Artists’ Company) together with his brother Ernst and with Franz Matsch, and several important artistic commissions he got in this period; the formation of Secession in 1897 and Klimt’s appointment as its president.

In 1903, Ferdinand Bloch commissioned Klimt to paint a portrait which was apparently not the first for which Adele sat. In 1901, Judith in the painting *Judith* bears a striking resemblance with Adele. There were even rumours about a possible affair between the two.

O’Connor provides many details related to the creation of the famous portrait. For instance, she mentions that the painter produced around a hundred sketches in pencil on manila paper before he reached the final version completed in 1907. To emphasize Klimt’s painting manner specific of the golden period, the author even provides details related to Empress Theodora represented on one of the Ravenna mosaics.

A very important aspect should also be noted here: 1907 is the year when Hitler was rejected by the Viennese Art Academy, where he had applied for a scholarship. This was subsequently obtained by Oscar Kokoschka, who would say later: “If it had been the other way around, I would have run the world quite differently”. However, Hitler was not successful in 1908 either, the reason for his rejection being that his drawings showed a lack of talent for artistic painting. What the board meant was that the representations of the human body were absent from his work and that he had, however, a good eye for architectural representations.

In the second part of the book, *Love and Betrayal*, another important character features, namely Maria, nee Bloch-Bauer, Adele’s niece. In 1937, she was married to a Polish opera singer, Fritz Altmann. Not much later, in 1938, Austria is annexed (*der Anschluss*) and their fascinating life turns into a nightmare. One of those who had to leave Vienna was Adele’s husband (she had died in 1925, and Klimt in 1918); Fritz was incarcerated in Dachau. Their property is confiscated, their palace and the objects in it are disposed

of by the occupants. Due to Goebbels's order that the "degenerate" Jewish art should be destroyed, Adele's Jewish name was removed from the painting, so that all reference to the character should be obliterated. As Klimt himself was not despised by the Nazis, they exhibited the portrait in the Belvedere Palace under the title *The Lady in Gold*. The art the Nazis considered "degenerate" was in effect the art of the expressionists, one of them being Oskar Kokoschka.

After the war, a part of the pieces confiscated were returned to the state, but not to private persons. This was because the Austrian officials considered that all these paintings were "as symbols of their country", to quote O'Connor.

In the third part of the book, *Atonement*, Maria Altmann's legal action is presented; she was then living in America and was 82 in 1998; she sued the state to retrieve her property rights over Klimt's paintings that had been once confiscated. She was supported in her action by several relatives; the starting point had been the new law passed in Austria regarding the works of art looted by the Nazis. This section goes on to present the steps taken by Randol Schönberg, composer Arnold Schönberg's grandson, an ambitious young lawyer who acted on Maria's behalf. Through his incessant efforts, he managed to obtain Adele's famous portrait and four other paintings in June 2006, as mentioned in the beginning of this review.

It should be said that the topic of Adele Bloch-Bauer's portrait and its long and adventurous story had also been tackled in *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present* (2012) by Eric Kandel or the film *The Rape of Europa* (2008), made by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham.

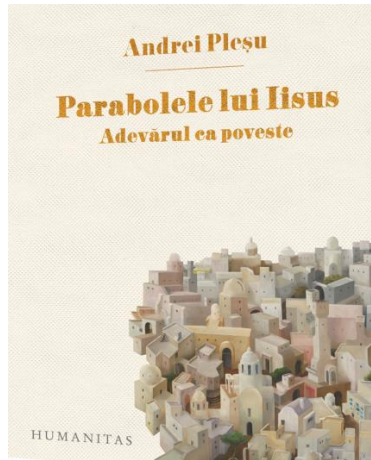
In the end, we return to the relation between Klimt and Adele, of whose nature we cannot, however, tell anything precisely except that she had sat for the painter for another portrait in 1912. However, from Anne-Marie O'Connor's conversations with Maria Altmann (in order to collect data for the book reviewed here) it can be seen that the latter implied that they were linked by more than just a friendly relationship. "People always asked me, did your aunt have a mad affair with Klimt? My sister thought so. My mother – she was very Victorian – said 'How dare you say that? It was an intellectual friendship.' [...] "My darling, she said finally, Adele was a modern woman, living in the world of yesterday." (*Prologue*)

Florin CRÎȘMĂREANU*

**Simple Notes of Reading Concerning an
Event Book:
*The Parables of Jesus*³**

[Andrei Pleșu, *Parabolele lui Iisus. Adevărul ca poveste* (*The Parables of Jesus. Truth as Story*), Bucharest, Humanitas, 2012, 314 p.]

“No prophecy of the Scripture came about by
The prophet’s own interpretation of things”
[2 Peter 1, 20]



Abstract In his most recent volume, *The Parables of Jesus*, Andrei Pleșu intends to offer different interpretations of an important number of parables assigned to Jesus Christ. In parallel with the living exegesis of the fragments from Scripture encountered in this remarkable volume, I have tried to make an inventory in the lines below and a few small inconsistencies, errors of typing and quotation, that have slipped into the pages of the mentioned book.

* Researcher, „Al. I.Cuza” University, Iași, Romania, fcristmareanu@gmail.com

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Keywords: The Scripture, The Parables of Jesus, interpretation, tradition, Andrei Pleșu.

A few days ago I was passing through a square when I saw from a distance a group of restless persons in a building with big windows. I went towards that store, which I have identified by the stairs as being a bookstore. In Romania of the year 2012, in a provincial city, could it be agitation in a bookstore? Bizarre situation... I opened the door with some difficulty and I shyly approached the group inside. Hard to guess their profession, but, considering the clothing and language, they seemed to be intellectuals. Not even a single moment did I waste and I started looking at the books arranged on shelves, and I eavesdropped, in an impolite manner, at their conversations. Shortly, as far as I understood, a book recently published at a prestigious publishing house was about to be launched, and the people gathered there, apparently, intended to buy it at any cost. The young lady at the cash-register did not take into account their carefully chosen words and requested the exact price posted on the fourth cover of the book.

Until those persons have passed the cash-register, paying for the purchased volume, I had already found two books with a discount, thrown in a basket at entrance. After the group left the bookstore, I went to the cash-register to pay for the two volumes. Curious by nature, while the young lady scanned the barcodes and prepared my bill, I took a look at the book from which a few copies have just been sold. It looked very good: it was a hardcover, wrapped in a bright colored jacket, with a very nice drawing, in qualitative paper, that makes one think of the Occidental luxury editions. In brief, it was a volume absolutely successful from an aesthetical point of view, which I would have liked to buy just for this reason. I was already imagining where I could have placed it in my modest library.

The conversation with the young lady at the cash-register gives me the opportunity to further skim over the volume. The title seemed familiar, I had encountered it somewhere for sure; the subject somehow familiar to any Christian, even to the Sunday one, seemed to be very well analyzed; and the author's name is known to almost any living from these lands; and precisely then, as something belonging to destiny, the young lady recommends another valuable book: *Minima moralia*, written by a certain Adorno. Out of courtesy, I would have appreciated her intention, if I had not been so thrilled already thrilled by the volume in bright colored jacket. Briefly, that particular volume gave me at that moment all the reasons to acquire it.

I bought the book. While walking out of the bookstore I also remembered the name of the famous author who happened to write a book

with the same title: the Lutheran Joachim Jeremias. Now, what difference did it make anyway? I was happy with my new acquisition. On my way home, I was thinking about this volume's subject. What can the parables of Jesus tell us today? After two millennia of their enunciation, are they still valid? Without any hesitation, I believe in the validity of these "true stories", in their timeless message. Without this minimal faith, one would not dare to read them, to tell them, to interpret them. A reading of Jesus' parables is what Mister Andrei Pleșu also suggests in his latest published book: *The Parables of Jesus*⁴.

The volume *The Parables of Jesus* has the following structure: after "Foreword" [pp. 7-8], follows an "Introduction" [pp. 11-22], then the first part of the book, which is also the most consistent from a quantitative point of view, "«Why do you speak to them in parables?»" [pp. 25-207] and the second one: "The parable as undermining of the ideological" [pp. 212-277]. Parts that are divided in turn in chapters and subchapters. Instead of "Conclusion" [pp. 281-312], it includes the text "Critics of exegetical reasoning" [281-300], "Bibliographical suggestions" [pp. 301-307] and "Index of Jesus' parables" [pp. 309-312].

Briefly, from the reading of these parables, and not only, it shows that "Jesus does not seem to be preoccupied with building a *doctrine*" [p. 211], and the core of the entire volume *The Parables of Jesus* seems to be summarized in the words: "What conclusion can we reach? None that can be enclosed in a recipe. The truth is always the same, but its colors, its «sides» are ineffably changing depending on the concrete case, the situation, the moment, the discourse's target. Truth is consubstantial with the *wealth* of the world and the *freedom* of the person. Nothing is taken as *standing to reason* [...] We are invited to a continuously *imitatio Christi*, but not to limp pastiche, to sterile good conduct" [p. 235].

An aspect that might seem strange to some is encountered right from the "Foreword" where the request of a publishing house to "order" the writing of the book is mentioned. For a normal reader, the request of such an "order" sounds strange. Anyhow, it is clear that such an "order" is not made to a person that is at the beginning of his career as an author, but to a person that has certain skills as a writer, who confirmed it in time, with a rich CV to support him. For those who do not get me yet, I will recall the fact that in the course of history great works, both texts and especially paintings and sculptures, were made at order. Someone ordered them, and someone else made them.

From the beginning, I have to confess the fact that I do not feel

⁴ Cf. Andrei Pleșu, *Parabolele lui Iisus. Adevărul ca poveste (The Parables of Jesus. Truth as Story)*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2012, 314 p. In our text, the references between parentheses without any other kind of mention, are for the pages of this volume.

worthy to evaluate in any way the novelty, the correctness and not even the usefulness of the interpretations suggested by Mr. A. Pleșu in the pages of his most recently published volume. Of course, there are going to be persons much more competent than myself that will state about these things, if they haven't already done it. In those bellow, I shall stop only at some minor issues, insignificant in the volume's economy, such as the little inconsistencies, incomplete bibliographical references, mistakes in typing, which, if someone finds them useful, can be taken into account in a very possible second edition of the volume *The Parables of Jesus*.

Towards the end of the volume, when a justification is presented, I have felt the absence of bibliographical references to the Patristic writings and even to the scholastic ones where Christ's parables are approached. From the pages of the book that we are taking into account, I understood that the Patristic authors, indiscriminately, belong to "entire centuries of scholastic seriousness and vapid homiletics" [p. 217; see also the final part of the volume, "Critics of exegetical reasoning"]. It is hard for me to accept such generalization. Moreover, I do not think we encounter in the writings of the Church Fathers just a moralizing reading – frequently found in the texts of Latin scholars – of the Christly message, but rather an anagogical reading, an actual feeling of this message. It is true, it is always started from the first meaning, literal, without which the reading would not be possible, but it is aimed at the final meaning, anagogical, that implies the appropriation and feeling of this message. Anagogic lecture is more than just a reading. We sometimes encounter texts even on the road to Damascus.

Can the Scriptures be read without asking help from tradition, neglecting, avoiding, deliberately or not, the writings of Church Fathers? Definitely, yes. An entire Christian confession struggles to do this. Reading the volume *The Parables of Jesus*, is it justified to ask yourself which is the tradition from which the interpreter of these parables claims himself? According to the used sources, it is hard to establish a unique tradition, the catholic and protestant authors are by far the most frequently used. On the other hand, one can say that the volume's author is eastern in spirit, whereas the "Tradition, as *paradosis*, is the continuous taking over and multiplied transmission of the gift: *tradition*, custom" [p. 180].

However, the direct or the indirect references to the writings of the Church Fathers do not lack completely from the pages of the volume *The Parables of Jesus*. Frequently, when it happens for a fragment to be quoted from the text of an ecclesiastical writer, the reference is made indirectly, after other sources, by means of several "apud". An example in this respect is given in a note [p. 153, n. 1], where Saint Irenaeus and Tertullian is quoted; his writings, *Adversus Haereses*, book IV, 26, 5 and, respectively,

Adversus Marcionem, book IV, 29, 9, are taken over after the writing of a certain Christine Gerber. Personally, I cannot argue even a simple thesis by calling on to the readings of others, without checking them first. One can call on fellows for many services, but not also for reading for you. Fortunately, in the mentioned case, Irinaeus' writing, *Adversus Haereses*, has received critical editions, I mention here the appearance of this text in the collection *Sources Chrétiennes*, no. 100-1 and 100-2, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, livre IV, Édition critique d'après les versions arménienne et latine sous la direction de Adelin Rousseau, moine de l'abbaye d'Orval, avec la collaboration de Bertrand Hemmerdinger, Louis Doutreleau et Charles Mercier, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, Tome I: introduction, notes justificatives et tables, Tome II: texte et traduction, 1965 [2006²]. The same happy faith also had Tertullian's writing, which appears in the same prestigious collection: Tertullien, *Contre Marcion*, IV, tome IV [Livre IV], Texte critique par Claudio Moreschini, Introduction, traduction et commentaire par René Braun, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001.

The line of several "apud" continues. At p. 168, n. 3, it is quoted a work of Saint Basil the Great, "*On Renunciation of the World*, 31.648.21 apud K. Snodgrass, Stories...". Hard to identify Basil's writing according to this reference. Finally, after some time dedicated to this search, I believe it is about *Sermo XI* [*Sermo asceticus et exhortatio de renuntiatione mundi*], PG 31, coll. 625-648 [Clavis Patrum Graecorum (CPG) 2889].

At the same page 168, n. 4, Saint John Chrysostom is quoted with the text "De Caeco et Zaechaeo, 59.601.42-46", probably after the same reliable source, K. Snodgrass, who does not appear this time in that note. Knowing now how to decipher this kind of *apud*, I have identified faster the text of Chrysostom in PG 59, col. 601, lines 42-46, the writing being mentioned at „Spuria”: „Ad homiliam de Caeco et Zacchaeo” [coll. 599-610]; [CPG 4592].

At a certain point, we encounter the following quotation: "We must act – says Maximus the Confessor – as some contemplative persons and to practice contemplation as active people" [p. 230]. At this quotation, Mr. A. Pleșu does not make any reference, as it would be normal, to a Maximian writing, but to an article signed by André Scrima, „The Hesychastic Tradition. An Orthodox-Christian Way of Contemplation”, in Yūsuf Ībish, Ileana Mărculescu (eds), *Contemplation and Action...*, ed. cit., pp. 136-150 [p. 230, n. 2]. In order to find the Maximian writing from where the quotation is, I went to the "source", i.e. to the article of A. Scrima. I cannot find it in the mentioned version, but I have found a translation in Romanian of that article: André Scrima, „Tradiția isihastă: o cale contemplativă creștin-ortodoxă” [translator Sorana Corneanu], in *Despre isihasm (On Hesychasm)*, edition cured by Anca Manolescu, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2003, pp. 205-224 [the translation quoted however by A. Pleșu a few pages further, at p. 243,

n. 1], where at p. 218 we read a fragment similar to the one invoked by A. Pleșu: “to act as a contemplative person and to contemplate as an active person” (Maximus the Confessor). A first question: why wasn’t the translation into Romanian of that article quoted, since the author knew about it, as he informs us a few pages below. Quoting this translation would have solved also the distinction singular-plural that differentiates the two translations [A. Pleșu and S. Corneanu]. I come back to A. Scrima’s article. To my disappointment, not even here did I find an exact reference to a Maximian writing. Indeed, the idea seemed to be a Maximian one, but in order to identify that passage, I had only one option left: to review the entire Maximian corpus. Going through these texts has strengthened my belief that the idea is a Maximian one, because I have found it in several places⁵. Among all the inventoried passages, the closest to the fragment quoted by A. Pleșu from A. Scrima seems to be the following: “the activity appears as a working contemplation, and contemplation as an experienced activity” [*Answers to Thalassius*, 63, Romanian translation D. Stăniloae, in *Filocalia*, vol. III, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 327; see the entire answer given by Maximus to question 63].

Regarding the Confessor, A. Pleșu also reminds us about the “*philautia* upon which Saint Maximus the Confessor constantly warns us” [p. 244]. One of these places where we can find Maximus’ “warning” is the following: “mother of passions, i.e. bodily love of self [Φιλαντία]” [Maximus, *Chapters on Love* II, 8, translator D. Stăniloae, in *Filocalia*, vol. II, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 65; see also *Ibid.*, II, 59: “mother of all evil, <i.e.> love of self [Φιλαντία]”, p. 74].

We encounter with another indirect reference when the following passage is invoked: “Prayer – says Saint Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894) – «is spiritual life in action [...]. To pray means to put in act the godly feelings and attitudes, which leads to a more intense, a brighter life»” quoted

⁵ Cf. Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Chapter on Love* II, 28, translation D. Stăniloae, in *Filocalia*, vol. II, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 68: “A strong man is the one who unites knowledge with making”; *Idem.*, *Ambigua*, 10 [Romanian translation D. Stăniloae, Bucharest, EIBMBOR, pp. 160-161]; *Ibid.*, 92 [Romanian translation, p. 355]; *Ibid.*, 102 c [Romanian translation, p. 382]; *Ibid.*, 124 [Romanian translation, p. 460]; *Idem.*, *Answers to Thalassius*, 48 [Romanian translation D. Stăniloae, in *Filocalia*, vol. III, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2005, p. 164]; *Ibid.*, 58 [Romanian translation, p. 268]; *Ibid.*, 58 [Romanian translation, p. 268]; *Ibid.*, 63 [Romanian translation, p. 333]. Things have been similar also in the western Christianity. For example, for Hugo de Saint-Victor [1090 / 1100-1141], perfect wisdom consists in uniting the two, i.e. to conjugate “jubilation of contemplation” with “fertility of action” [PL 175, coll. 514D-515A]. The Victorin emphasizes especially the complementarity and on each ones insufficiency taken separately [*Ibidem*, 176, coll. 655C-657C].

after Eugraph Kovalevsky, *A Method of Prayer for Modern Times...* [p. 242, n. 2]. Hard to identify the writing where this passage is taken from. Meister Eckhart is also indirectly quoted, „*Apud Coomaraswamy...*” [p. 254, n. 1]. I do not have the time to look for that quotation in the huge work of Eckhart.

To our peace, not just the Patristic and scholastic authors are quoted by using second sources, but also contemporaneous authors, such as J. Jeremias, *apud* C. Blomberg [p. 161, n. 2]. We do not find out about Jeremias' text from this reference. We can assume that it is about a sequence of a discussion with a friend. Maurice Blondel, *Histoire et dogme...* is quoted after Jean Pirot [p. 231, n. 1]; Hermann Hesse *apud* Martin Leutsch [p. 291, n. 2].

Usually, during the volume, clues that send to footnotes are after the point from the end of phrase. I have also noticed a few exceptions from this rule, when clues that send to footnotes appear before the point. For example: p. 25, n. 1; p. 32, n. 1; p. 33, n. 1; p. 35, n. 2, 3; p. 37, n. 1; p. 38, n. 1; p. 40, n. 1; p. 41, n. 2; p. 47, n. 1; p. 62, n. 1; p. 63, n. 1; p. 69, n. 1, 6; p. 70, n. 1; p. 80, n. 2; p. 109, n. 1; p. 117, n. 1; p. 119, n. 3; p. 121, n. 2; p. 134, n. 2; p. 158, n. 2; p. 295, n. 1; p. 297, n. 3.

According to the rules of editing of footnotes unanimously accepted, at p. 89, n. 2, we should have *Ibid.*, as it is used also with other occasions during the volume, for example p. 80, n. 1. At the beginning of the great majority of the footnotes we have the abbreviation *Cf.*, but other times this abbreviation does not appear anymore, as it happens for example at p. 89, n. 1 and 2; p. 103, n. 2; p. 115, n. 1; p. 117, n. 2; p. 134, n. 2; p. 162, n. 1; p. 168, n. 2, 3; p. 174, n. 1; p. 288, n. 1; p. 297, n. 2 and 3.

Going through the volume, I have noticed that there are also references insufficiently used, as it happens for example at pp. 246-247, n. 1, where two texts are quoted, without mentioning where those writings have been published, talking about Princeton and Paris. It is true that from the entire reference, one can understand it all, but, even so, it is a discordant note, compared to the majority of the other references from the bottom of the pages, most of them complete.

From the important saying: „Filozofii vor să te lămurească, fără te oblige la decizii fatale” („Philosophers want to enlighten you, without forcing one to make fatal decisions”) [p. 218], the sequence „să” (‘to’) is missing.

The reference to the autochthonous translation of the work of Chrysostom, *Homilies to Matthew*, does not have the pages mentioned; the same situation is also encountered in p. 134, n. 2.

„Cartea Înțelepciunii lui Isus, Fiul lui Sirah” („The Book of Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach”) [for example, thus quoted at p. 105; p. 291, n. 3], also appears as „Cartea Înțelepciunii lui Iisus, Fiul lui Sirah” [p. 224, n. 2].

Briefly, in the volume *The Parables of Jesus*, I have encountered a variety of inconsistencies, incomplete references and errors of typing; a few of them exemplified in the lines above. Therefore, be careful, because not the devil, as we may think, but „le bon Dieu est dans le détail” [a sequence assigned to Gustave Flaubert].

Ending the reading of this beautiful volume, I am still thinking about those intellectuals encountered some time ago in the bookstore, imagining at the same time the situation generated by the pride of colleagues when seeing the book *The Parables of Jesus* on their desk. How interesting and useful should it be for the soul to enter into a conversation with this kind of people ... Regarding my notes above, I can only say this: if the fact that I have lingered too much in search of “fern spores” [p. 293] is to be taken seriously, then I apologize; as for the “elephant”, be it “in broad light”, I leave it to others more worthy than myself, obviously to the intellectuals.

Ciprian JELER⁶

Philosophy Struggles with Nature

(Review of Thomas Nagel's *Mind and Cosmos. Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*, Oxford University Press, 2012)



Abstract. Thomas Nagel's most recent book, *Mind and Cosmos*, announces in its subtitle that it would show 'Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False'. Through an analysis of some of the most important concepts of this book, this paper shows why Nagel's book doesn't live up to the promise of its subtitle.

Keywords: consciousness, evolutionary theory, variation, natural selection, Thomas Nagel

At just under 130 pages long, Thomas Nagel's most recent book, *Mind and Cosmos*, is certainly an ambitious project. The sheer magnitude of its scope is clearly visible on the cover of the book, where we can read its subtitle: *Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost*

⁶ Interdisciplinary Research Department – Human and Social Sciences “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Certainly False. However, the contents of the book doesn't live up to the expectation created by this audacious subtitle, and an account of the downsides and upsides of this book can be given by a simple comparison between what the subtitle announces and what the book actually delivers. This is what I'm going to try to do here: analyze the claims that are made in this subtitle in the light of what is actually said in the book. Hopefully, this critical analysis will succeed in highlighting the salient ideas in Nagel's book and the shortcomings of his approach to the subject matter. By way of consequence, breaking down the subtitle into its components – the 'why', the 'materialist neo-darwinian conception of nature' and the 'almost certainly false' components – will actually offer the main lines of this account of the book.

The 'why' component

It is difficult to understand why the subtitle of the book lets us expect that we will find a demonstration of the falsity of what Nagel calls the 'materialist neo-Darwinian conception of nature'. After the introductory first chapter, the beginning of the second chapter already announces what the book would actually provide:

My aim is not so much to argue against reductionism as to investigate the consequences of rejecting it—to present the problem rather than to propose a solution. (p. 15)

This phrase accurately anticipates on the contents of the book: readers who expect to find here arguments against reductionism – or against 'materialist naturalism' of Darwinian descent – will be disappointed. Whether they expect an argumentation based on the lack of empirical evidence for the Darwinian theory of evolution by natural selection or an argumentation indicating the inconsistencies in the logical or epistemological structure of evolutionary theory, these avid readers' expectations are not going to be fulfilled by this book.

In this case, it remains a mystery as to why the subtitle announces that a demonstration of this kind would be provided by Nagel's book. While some mysteries are worth pursuing, I think this mystery is best left unsolved, since, in all probability, there is nothing philosophical about it. Let's just say that a more accurate subtitle for the book would have replaced the 'why' component and would have sounded something like this: 'What alternative theories could be proposed in case the neo-Darwinian conception of nature were proven to be false'. This subtitle would have provided a more suitable indication of the contents of the book since the three important chapters of the book (chapters 3, 4 and 5) pose this question with respect to consciousness, cognition and values. Chapter 3

poses the question of what alternative or additional principles would be necessary to explain both the manner of existence and the fact of the historical appearance of consciousness if we assume that the current neurosciences are unable to provide an explanation for the relationship between the body and the mind and that evolutionary biology in its current form is unable to provide an explanation of how this relationship itself has come into existence. Chapter 4 poses the same question with regards to superior cognition processes, stating that while evolutionary theory can provide an explanation for the appearance and persistence of simpler forms of cognition (e.g. perception), we need a more comprehensive approach in order to understand how superior forms of cognition (that may lead, for example, to the discovery of physical laws) have appeared historically and how their intrinsic functioning is to be described. Finally, chapter 5 asks a similar question regarding the alternative/additional principles needed in order to provide an explanation of the nature and appearance of moral values when the latter are described in a moral realist manner. However, the inadequacy of the ‘why’ component in the subtitle is the mildest of the problems of this book, and we need to move on to the more serious ones.

The ‘materialist neo-Darwinian conception of nature’

This notion is certainly the most problematic one of the book. It constitutes the target of critique throughout the book, and yet it is a target that Nagel both unjustifiably rejects and keeps using even after he has allegedly distanced himself from it. These two aspects – the insufficiently justified rejection and the surreptitious usage of what had been previously rejected – are actually interrelated, and I will detail them below.

First of all, in what way is Nagel’s rejection of the neo-Darwinian frame of thought insufficiently justified? A brief clarification is needed. In its ‘canonical’ form, the theory of evolution by natural selection describes the latter as a ‘two-step process’.⁷ The first step consists in the appearance of genetic variation (by way of different processes like mutation, recombination etc.), whereas the second step is the selection process itself, that favors certain variations and increases their representation in the global population (by way of viability and/or fertility selection etc.). These two steps are to be kept distinct: the variation step describes *how* an organism is (what are the underlying bio-chemical mechanisms and elements that make, for example, black mountain goats be what they are and, consequently, what distinguishes them from their immediate predecessor); the selection (or, in Mayr’s terms, the ‘elimination’ step) provides an explanation for the fact *that*

⁷ Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution Is*, Phoenix, London, 2002, pp. 131-133.

that type of organism keeps existing (it explains – in this openly imaginary example – why the blackness of mountain goats proves to be important for their persistence or, in other words, for the fact that while non-black mountain goats have been eliminated or have become less common, the black ones have not shared the same fate).

However, and this is the important point, even if the two steps need to be kept distinct, even if the ‘*how* an organism exists’ and the ‘*that* a type of organisms keeps existing’ are two separate questions, this doesn’t mean that they do not shape one another *historically*. To put it very bluntly, if a type of organism is eliminated by natural selection (so, by the second step), then this elimination has limited the amount and the types of future variations that remain available. New variations of a genome cannot appear since that genome is no longer extant. The selection step therefore partly determines the type and quantum of new variations that are possible in the future,⁸ while, conversely, the new variations can determine the type of selection processes that could possibly occur within a given population (if the variation step doesn’t only introduce the blackness of mountain goat in a population of goats with a different color, but also introduces, for example, running speed differences within the same population, then we might have two selective processes that will act on the two varying traits within the given population). To sum it up: natural selection involves two distinct steps, but precisely because they are distinct, the two steps shape each other historically. Evolutionary biology is a historical science *precisely because* it keeps these two steps distinct.

This properly *historical* structure of evolutionary theory is what Nagel completely misrepresents. He does indeed distinguish between what he calls a constitutive question (with respect to consciousness it reads: ‘why specific organisms have the conscious life they have’) and a historical question (‘why conscious organisms arose in the history of life on earth’). But he then goes on to add:

Suppose there were a general psychophysical theory that, if we could discover it, would allow us to understand, for any type of physical organism, why it did or did not have conscious life, and if it did, why it had the specific type of conscious life that it had. This could be called a nonhistorical theory of consciousness. It would accomplish task (1) [i.e. give an answer to the constitutive question]. But I believe that even if such a powerful non-historical theory were conjoined with a purely physical theory

⁸ In my imaginary example, if non-black mountain goats are eliminated and only black ones remain in existence, the new variation that may appear will only affect the gene pool of this type of organism. A new variation may appear – let’s say, goats with longer horns and goats with shorter horns –, but they will necessarily be *black* goats with longer horns and *black* goats with shorter horns.

of how those organisms arose through evolution, the result would not be an explanation of the appearance of consciousness as such. It would not accomplish task (2) [i.e. give an answer to the historical question]; it would still leave the appearance of consciousness as an accidental and therefore unexplained concomitant of something else—the genuinely intelligible physical history. (p. 51)

This is certainly a puzzling statement. Even if we could explain the connection between the physical aspects of an organism and the consciousness that it has – so even if we were to give an accurate account of *how* a given conscious organism is, in the terms of my distinction above – this couldn't explain the appearance of consciousness in the history of life. But, in the account of the two-step process of natural selection given above, if we did have the kind of 'general psychophysical theory' that Nagel talks about, it would mean that we would have an account of several other facts: 1) of the previous type of organism a variation of which (step 1) has led to the given organism with the given consciousness we are now fully capable of explaining; 2) of why that previous type of organism had previously been favored by selection (step 2). In other words, the conjunction of the two steps, made possible by their historical co-shaping I've described above, would offer us the means to explain why consciousness has appeared (provided, of course, that we did have at our disposal that powerful psychophysical theory that Nagel is imagining here). All that would be left for us to explain would be not why conscious beings have come into existence, but why they kept existing, i.e. what trait – whether it's the consciousness itself or something else – is responsible for the fact that they have persisted over time.

But why doesn't Nagel acknowledge this? Why does he insist that having an answer to the constitutive question (*how* a conscious organism exists, i.e. how the specific organism that it is corresponds to the specific consciousness that it has) doesn't explain the appearance of consciousness? The deeper answer is not axiological – the fact, as stated in the text, that consciousness cannot be 'accidental' or a 'concomitant' of something else –, but theoretical. As the discussion above has shown, he misrepresents the questions that evolutionary theory poses. As I've shown, there are two answers that are needed in evolutionary theory: *how* an organism exists and an account of the fact *that* it keeps existing⁹ at a given moment. It is only the conjunction of these two answers – and therefore the co-shaping of the two steps involved in natural selection – that renders evolutionary biology a historical discipline. But Nagel's questions are not identical with the ones above. While the constitutive question is pretty much the same as the 'how'

⁹ Or that it exists in a certain proportion with respect to other types within the given population.

question above, when he sets his ‘historical’ question next to it he leaves aside the other question regarding the fact ‘that’ a type of organism – the type described by the ‘how’ question – keeps existing. But it was only the conjunction of the ‘how’ and the ‘that’ questions that introduced history in discussion in the first place. In other words, by only referring to two questions – the constitutive and the historical ones –, Nagel actually misses the very historicity of evolution. What he is actually seeking – at least with regards to consciousness – is a theory that would give *the same answer* to the constitutive and the historical question. But this is tantamount to saying that the theory he is looking for is non-historical. It gives the impression of historicity, but it is only an impression. This is obvious in the passage below:

It isn’t enough that C should be the consequence, even the necessary consequence, of B, which is explained by A. There must be something about A itself that makes C a likely consequence. I believe that if A is the evolutionary history, B is the appearance of certain organisms, and C is their consciousness, this means that some kind of psychophysical theory must apply not only nonhistorically, at the end of the process, but also to the evolutionary process itself. That process would have to be not only the physical history of the appearance and development of physical organisms but also a mental history of the appearance and development of conscious beings. *And somehow it would have to be one process, making both aspects of the result intelligible.* (p. 52, my emphasis)

What Nagel is looking for, is a general theory of evolution whereby the historical appearance of consciousness is explained, but that would also show that consciousness had been there all along, it had been there from the very beginning, long before its actual appearance. This is visible in the way he answers his two questions, the constitutive and the historical question with respect to consciousness. Since, he argues, no accurate scientific explanation of the mind-body problem has yet been provided, we might offer a reductive solution to the constitutive question and support a panpsychism whereby physical particles are intrinsically ‘mental’. The building blocks of nature are also the building blocks of consciousness (‘all the elements of the physical world are also mental’ – p. 57). This is a philosophical hypothesis, and should be treated as such. The problem however is that when he moves on to the historical question, he also tends towards a reductive – and not emergent – solution, but then the difficulty Nagel raises for himself is the following: why conscious organisms appear at a certain moment, if everything physical is also mental? What is even more problematic is that he frames this question in biological terms, asking how the monistic (i.e., at the same time, physical and mental) properties that

underlie consciousness lead ‘to the appearance of conscious systems on the menu of mutations available for natural selection’ (p. 65).¹⁰

The serious problems of Nagel’s project become clearer now. First of all, he rejects the historicity of evolutionary biology by neglecting one of its questions that is however fundamental for the historicity of the object itself of evolutionary theory. Why he rejects it remains unclear, since, as stated above, he offers no empirical evidence against the theory of evolution by natural selection (not even with respect to the evolution of consciousness); nor does he criticize the epistemological structure of evolutionary biology. Instead, he simply replaces the two central questions of evolutionary theory *and their conjunction* with just two questions of his own – the constitutive and the historical ones – where one of them (the historical one) is meant not only to replace the corresponding question of the evolutionary theory, but also the conjunction of the two questions – or the co-shaping of the two steps of natural selection – that actually underlies the historicity of the object of evolutionary theory. However, having done this replacement, Nagel would somehow like to keep his answers to the historical question within the conceptual frame of evolutionary theory – by appealing to mutations, selection etc. –, even though this move has been rendered impossible by his substitution of the central questions of evolutionary theory.

The ‘almost certainly false’ component

This decidedly undecided nature of Nagel’s theoretical enterprise also underlies the end of his book’s subtitle. One of the motivations for Nagel’s project is presented in the following way:

It may be frustrating to acknowledge, but we are simply at the point in the history of human thought at which we find ourselves, and our successors will make discoveries and develop forms of understanding of which we have not dreamt. Humans are addicted to the hope for a final reckoning, but intellectual humility requires that we resist the temptation to assume that tools of the kind we now have are in principle sufficient to understand the universe as a whole. Pointing out their limits is a philosophical task, whoever engages in it, rather than part of the internal pursuit of science. (p. 3)

¹⁰ For lack of space, I will leave aside here his responses to the constitutive and historical questions with respect to cognition and values. I will only state that he tends to offer an emergentist answer to the constitutive question with respect to cognition and values, while he argues that a teleological – of a non-purposive type – answer to the historical question regarding cognition and values would probably be preferable.

It is precisely this argument that can be turned against Nagel himself, since it is this very humility that his enterprise betrays. There are two main ways in which the limits of science can be indicated, and neither is sufficiently represented in Nagel's book.

The first one would be that of indicating what remains unexplained by the 'neo-Darwinian' frame of thought with regards to, for example, consciousness, cognition and values. But the fact that certain things are not yet explained by a scientific theory is certainly not sufficient to lead us to the conclusion that that theory is false. The 'humility' Nagel is talking about would, in this respect, be simply that of conceptually isolating what remains unexplained by that theory and, subsequently, passing to the scientists themselves the task of building explanatory theories that would encompass what is yet unknown. This patience lacks in Nagel's book because, we are lead to assume, if evolutionary theory hasn't explained consciousness yet, then the theory is simply false. Why this is so remains another mystery, particularly since, as stressed above, his book doesn't offer empirical arguments against evolutionary theory, nor theoretical arguments indicating inconsistencies in the logical and epistemological structure of evolutionary biology. When the subtitle announces that the book would prove that the 'neo-Darwinian' conception of nature is almost certainly false, this 'almost' underlines the fundamental impatience that underlies Nagel's philosophical project.

There would however be another way of indicating the limits of current knowledge or science, and that would be a more speculative one. It wouldn't consist simply in trying to isolate what is not yet explained, but in trying to show why current science could *never* explain certain phenomena because the fundamental principles and presuppositions that their epistemological structure assumes is incompatible with the 'essence' of those phenomena. An attempt to do this exists in Nagel's book, as manifested by the equivalence he tries to establish between 'materialist naturalism' and the 'neo-Darwinian' frame of thought. But, from this point of view, Nagel's project is not radical enough. If this is the road a philosopher wants to take, than it would be vital for him not only to criticize those fundamental principals and presuppositions, but also, and above all, to avoid making use of them when he tries to forge the building blocks of a new explanatory theory. This is where Nagel's enterprise falls short, and this is visible in the fact that his stab at an explanation of consciousness can't help involve mental 'particles' or 'microelements' (p. 62), while his stab at an explanation of the historical appearance of consciousness is still framed in terms of mutations, selection etc. If one wants to provide a deeper, properly philosophical explanatory theory by criticizing certain sciences, than it is crucial that one keeps clear of the

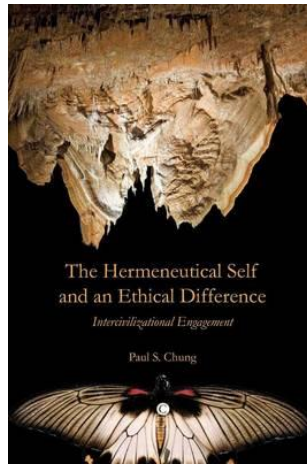
presuppositions and principles that govern those very sciences. The physical-biological language that Nagel keeps using marks the fact of an insufficient radicalism of his philosophical enterprise. What he would need, as we've seen above with respect to consciousness, is a theory that would explain that something can preexist without being pre-formed (for example without being given under the form of 'particles'); and, at the same time, a theory that would explain the fact that something can preexist and yet be entirely new at the moment of its actual appearance. But such a *philosophical* theory exists and it is known since Bergson as the theory of actualization. It is a shame that Bergson's only appearance in Nagel's book is connected to a theodicy problem regarding values and not to the ontological theory of actualization. It is also a shame that an entire line of French philosophers of the 20th century that tried to build on the theory of actualization are completely left out from this discussion. Since Nagel's project is not humble enough anyway, it could at least have become more radical.

In conclusion, Thomas Nagel's book doesn't live up to its subtitle's promise. However, it is an interesting read and it is stimulating in that particular way in which insufficiently grounded philosophical works sometimes provide food for thought.

Dana TABREA¹¹

A Global Hermeneutics. The Cave and the Butterfly¹²

(Review to *The hermeneutical Self and an Ethical Difference. Intercivilizational Engagement* by Paul S. Chung, James Clarke and Co., Cambridge, 2012, 287p)



Abstract Paul S. Chung's all-encompassing hermeneutical project is relevant for the historical inquiry into hermeneutics, and for the comparing of different hermeneutical approaches, coming from the Western as well as from the Eastern traditions (on the one hand, from Schleiermacher to Gadamer, and on the other hand considering Confucianism and Daoism). And mostly it is a plea for a global hermeneutics as a consequence of and need for *intercivilizational engagement*.

Keywords: ethics, hermeneutics, intercivilizational reconstruction, global hermeneutics, Plato, Zhuangzi

¹¹ Associate Professor, Dr., Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi, Romania, dtabrea@yahoo.com

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Paul S. Chung's all-encompassing hermeneutical project is relevant for the historical inquiry into hermeneutics, and for the comparing of different hermeneutical approaches, coming from the Western as well as from the Eastern traditions (on the one hand, from Schleiermacher to Gadamer, and on the other hand considering Confucianism and Daoism). And mostly it is a plea for a global hermeneutics as a consequence of and need for *intercivilizational engagement*.

The book under review here is structured into four parts as it follows: Part I is focused on the Western philosophical tradition and the development of hermeneutics as a theory (authors such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer are brought into discussion) with the purpose of finding the bridge across the theory of interpretation and ethics (the moral concept of virtue is analyzed at this point). Part II reveals the relationship between the hermeneutical self and moral theory (Foucault and Gadamer are considered, but a comparative undertaking is also assumed between the West and the East – some possible dialogues between Confucius and Aristotle or between Aquinas are created). Part III connects the theory of interpretation with the theory of communication, and even considers the aesthetical dimension of postmodern ethics. Finally, Part IV is the most relevant to the issue I am concerned of here – an intercivilizational reconstruction, beyond an inquiry enclosing both hermeneutics and ethics, as well as the Western and the Eastern traditions.

The author insists upon the possibility of an intercivilizational dialogue with the intention of constructing an ethical-hermeneutical theory by which to bridge the gap between the West and the East by examining various theories of interpretation in terms of ethical self, on the one hand, and of self-cultivation on the other hand. The great number and density of complex religious traditions makes a very generic concept out of the globalization of hermeneutics. The main issue that the author has in mind – a comparative religious study of ethical hermeneutics focused upon a dialectics of enlightenment between the East, specifically East Asia, and the West – conflicts the real possibility of complete systematization of the religious traditions under discussion.

A global hermeneutics represents the background of the comparative religious study that Chung undertakes with the purpose of bringing upfront the topic of the dialogue among civilizations. The intercivilizational reconstruction based upon what the author names a *global-critical inquiry* establishes its main goal: the link between the Western dialectics of enlightenment and Neo-Confucian hermeneutics and ethical self. Following this line of thought, the author makes use of two distinct metaphors: 1. Plato's metaphor of the cave; 2. Zhuangzi's metaphor of the butterfly. The two metaphors are meant to mediate some „cross-cultural encounter for a hermeneutic of intertextuality through assuming the human subject as

hermeneutical self and moral integrity". First, the Confucian theory of ethical hermeneutics is elaborated while Zhu Xi's analogical hermeneutics is brought into dialogue with Gadamer and Aristotle's notion of analogy. Second, Wang's discursive hermeneutics of elimination is reinterpreted within the frame of thought of Heidegger's notion of Dao as original saying.

The comparison between Plato's analogy of the cave and Zhuangzi's story about the butterfly dream serves for the entire comparative religious study of interpretation and morality in an intercivilizational framework. The myth of the cave, that can be considered the basis of the Western dialectic of enlightenment, illustrates the human condition as a difficult journey from the state of prisoner to that of the enlightened, from shadows to light. The sun symbolizes the light and the illumination brought to the human being when it comes across the truth. Zhuangzi used to live in China around Plato's time. He is one of the main pupils of Laozi. He used to tell his dream about the butterfly: the dream was about him being a butterfly and the special enjoyment that this felt that he forgot who he really was; he forgot that he was Zhuangzi. He began to question this: Did Zhuangzi dream about the butterfly? Or was it that the butterfly dreamt of Zhuangzi? Human consciousness, he thought, and rationality are not enough when it comes to understanding the truth. One could reach reality as a whole by the recognition of the otherness of the self. This otherness can be referred to as the unconscious, nature, or the others. Anyhow, the metaphor of the butterfly, differently from the one of the cave suggests that liberation and enlightenment resides within the individual and not outside him or her.

Florin CRÎSMÎREANU¹³

Sur la métaphysique de R.G. Collingwood



Dana Țabrea¹⁴ est l'auteur d'un excellent livre, le meilleur peut-être dans notre littérature de spécialité, sur le philosophe anglais Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943)¹⁵. Contrairement à une opinion largement

¹³ Researcher, „Al. I.Cuza” University, Iași, Romania, fcristmareanu@gmail.com

¹⁴ Docteur en philosophie depuis 2008, Dana Țabrea est une présence importante et constante dans les publications de spécialité et culturelles. En plus des études, des articles parus dans des revues comme par exemple *Hermeneia*, *Meta*, *Collingwood and British Idealism Studies* e.a., Dana Țabrea est également traductrice du volume signé par Katherine Crowley, Kathi Elster, *Mă exasperează să lucrez cu tine. Cum să scapi din capcanele emoționale de la serviciu*, București, Editura Trei, 2012.

¹⁵ Cf. Dana Țabrea, *Dezvoltarea metafizicii ca hermeneutică: Robin George Collingwood. O filosofie practică*, Iași, Editura Universității „Al.I.Cuza”, 2012, 358 p. Autant que je sache, dans la culture roumaine, jusqu'à la parution de cette étude, ce n'est que Florin Lobonț et Sergiu Bălan qui se sont préoccupés de manière systématique de l'œuvre du penseur Robin G. Collingwood; voir, dans ce sens, F. Lobonț, *Noua metafizică engleză. O regretabilă necunoscută*, București, Editura Trei, 2002. Une contribution également importante est la traduction en roumain d'un ouvrage de R.G. Collingwood, *O autobiografie filosofică*, réalisée par F. Lobonț et C. Mesaroș, București, Editura Trei, 1998; voir aussi Sergiu Bălan, *Între istorie și filosofie. Sistemul lui R.G. Collingwood*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 2009, 202 p. Afin

répandue, qu'analyse aussi en détail l'auteur de l'ouvrage que nous désirons présenter brièvement, R.G. Collingwood n'appartient pas à la philosophie analytique, mais plutôt à une tradition intitulée « le tournant herméneutique », à côté d'autres auteurs représentatifs pour ce paradigme tels M. Heidegger, R. Bultmann, H.-G. Gadamer, P. Suppes, T. Kuhn, M. Eliade *et alii*.

L'ouvrage *Dezvoltarea metafizicii ca hermenetică: Robin George Collingwood. O filosofie practică* (*Le développement de la métaphysique comme herméneutique: Robin George Collingwood. Une philosophie pratique*) est structuré de la manière suivante: I. « Premisele filosofiei lui R.G. Collingwood - Francis Herbert Bradley » / « Les prémisses de la philosophie de R.G. Collingwood – Francis Herbert Bradley » (pp. 21-62); II. « Cum este posibilă metafizica în mediul analitic? » / « Comment est-elle possible la métaphysique dans le milieu analytique? » (pp. 63-223); III. « Istorie și hermenetică » / « Histoire et herméneutique » (pp. 225-275); IV. « Presupoziții în posteritatea lui Collingwood: lecturi alternative » / « Présuppositions dans la postérité de Collingwood: lectures alternatives » (pp. 277-339). Les quatre chapitres de l'ouvrage sont, à leur tour, formés de plusieurs sous-chapitres. Le livre finit par une « Conclusion » (pp. 341-347) et la « Bibliographie » (pp. 349-358).

Dans la première partie du volume notamment on analyse les textes des auteurs ayant exercé une influence quelconque sur la pensée de Collingwood. Parmi ceux-ci, H. Bradley (1846–1924), dont l'auteur d'*Autobiographie philosophique* emprunte la formule « présuppositions absolues », détient une place importante, car « c'est à partir de Bradley que Collingwood élabore sa fameuse théorie des présuppositions » (p. 61). Au long de l'ouvrage on invoque également d'autres auteurs importants ayant influencé, d'une manière ou d'autre, l'œuvre de Collingwood, tels: I. Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, A. J. Ayer, B. Croce, G. Gentile, G. de Ruggiero, A. N. Whitehead. De même, on mentionne des auteurs dont les thèses ont été analysées par certains exégètes en parallèle aux écrits de Collingwood, par exemple E. Husserl (1859-1938) et H.-G. Gadamer (1900-2002). Pour une raison qui m'échappe, souvent (mais ce n'est pas le cas pour l'analyse proposée par Dana Țabrea), la chronologie normale est renversée lorsqu'on a en vue l'analyse comparée entre Collingwood et Gadamer. Pour l'exégèse, en général, c'est le philosophe allemand qui a la primauté lorsqu'on parle de données préalables, tradition, herméneutique e.a. Je considère que l'un des exemples les plus éloquents dans ce sens c'est la thèse du « passé encapsulé dans le présent » (p. 231), fort similaire à ce que, plus tard, dans *Vérité et*

d'esquisser un tableau aussi complet que possible de la présence de Collingwood dans la littérature roumaine, je tiens à signaler aussi la traduction récente : Robin G. Collingwood, *Ideea de natură. O istorie a gândirii cosmologice europene*, traduit de l'anglais par Alexandru Anghel, București, Herald (Collection „Mathesis”), 2012, 304 p.

méthode (1960), H.-G. Gadamer allait appeler « fusion des horizons » (*Horizontverschmelzung*).

Le noyau dur du livre est en même temps la partie la plus substantielle, le II^e chapitre, où l'on analyse en détail les éléments centraux de l'œuvre de Collingwood: la métaphysique, la doctrine des présuppositions absolues, la logique de la question et de la réponse. Ce qui est intéressant c'est le fait que ces composants de la philosophie de Collingwood font partie d'un tout, engendrant ainsi un système, car il est impossible de les théoriser et de les comprendre les uns sans les autres, dans un conditionnement réciproque. Ainsi, pour le philosophe anglais, « la métaphysique, en tant que science des présuppositions absolues, est une discipline historique-herméneutique. Le devoir du métaphysicien consiste à détecter, comparer et identifier les contextes de la transformation survenue dans les sets de présuppositions absolues » (p. 156). La métaphysique comprise comme discipline herméneutique apparaît comme possible avec F. Nietzsche (1844-1900), qui, à un moment donné, affirmait qu'« il n'y a pas des faits, mais des interprétations seulement » (aspect analysé à la p. 261). Indestructiblement liée à la doctrine des présuppositions, est la logique de la question et de la réponse¹⁶, qui, à son tour, « se dévoile comme une herméneutique » (p. 182). En définitive, dans les cadres établis par Collingwood, « penser signifie poser des questions, et ces questions ont pour point de départ nos présuppositions absolues » (p. 187).

Dana Țabrea distingue attentivement dans son livre entre présuppositions et propositions, en délimitant les premières tant par rapport aux assomptions et aux préjugés, qu'aux paradigmes. Les présuppositions absolues ne sont rien d'autre que « des systèmes de *croyances*, qui constituent le fondement de la pensée et de la pratique d'une certaine société à un moment historique donné » (p. 125). Qui plus est, « les présuppositions absolues n'apparaissent que sous la forme de "constellations", qui doivent être "consuptionnelles", c'est-à-dire, après qu'on en découvre une, toutes les autres apparaissent nécessairement » (p. 61 *et passim*).

Une des idées directrices du volume est celle conformément à laquelle R.G. Collingwood « conteste le sens traditionnel, aristotélicien de la métaphysique en tant qu'ontologie ("science de l'être pur") » (p. 15, 63, 82 *et passim*), ce qui signifie qu'« au XX^e siècle, la métaphysique ne saurait plus être une science de l'être pur, mais elle devient une métaphysique » (p. 18). Aussi Dana Țabrea met-elle en évidence le fait qu'« à une ontologie abstraite de l'être se substitue une ontologie concrète, du devenir » (p. 339). Ce qui

¹⁶ Pour cet aspect, voir aussi H.-G. Gadamer, *Adevăr și metodă*, traduction en roumain par Gabriel Cercel, Larisa Dumitru, Gabriel Kohn, Călin Petcana, București, Teora, 2001, p. 228 *sqq.*; P. Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, t. III, Paris, Seuil, 1985, p. 402, cite aussi bien Gadamer et Collingwood lorsqu'il se réfère à la « logique de la question et de la réponse ».

est intéressant c'est qu'un auteur comme « Collingwood ne fait pas une distinction entre la métaphysique et la théologie, dans la mesure où les deux concernent des convictions fondamentales, des croyances implicites de notre pensée » (p. 89). A partir de cette formulation, sans précisions supplémentaires, on peut déduire que la métaphysique conçue de cette manière par le philosophe anglais est spéciale, tout comme la théologie (seulement celle rationnelle, il est vrai) est une métaphysique spéciale (selon la distinction formulée à la p. 82).

Un autre enjeu de l'ouvrage est de démontrer l'inconsistance d'une perception, commune au rang des exégètes, de considérer R.G. Collingwood comme un philosophe analytique: « l'un des mythes que j'ai l'intention de détruire est celui de Collingwood vu comme philosophe analytique » (voir surtout pp. 64-67). Dans ce milieu, analytique, on peut comprendre la métaphysique d'une manière différente, tant comme analyse logique du langage, comme étude des présuppositions absolues, mais le plus souvent, dans le cadre de cette tradition philosophique, on a essayé d'« éliminer la métaphysique ».

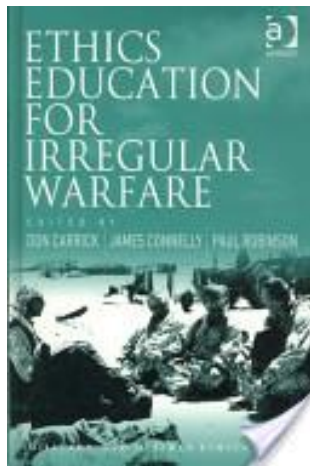
Le dernier chapitre est extrêmement intéressant par la vaste perspective qu'il offre à une éventuelle recherche à venir. La doctrine des présuppositions absolues théorisée par Collingwood est analysée en parallèle avec d'autres expressions célèbres, comme, par exemple, « les jeux de langage » (L. Wittgenstein), « le paradigme » (T. Kuhn), « l'épistème » (M. Foucault), « les présuppositions des cultures archaïques » (M. Eliade), « les préjugés » (H.-G. Gadamer), « les jeux de l'esprit » (I.-P. Culianu). Le IV^e chapitre finit par « Receptarea lui Collingwood în filosofia română » / « La réception de Collingwood dans la philosophie roumaine » (p. 330-339).

Je considère que, ayant une excellente connaissance de la pensée de R.G. Collingwood et de la langue de ses œuvres, comme il résulte du volume analysé ci-dessus, Dana Țabrea accomplirait son projet en traduisant en roumain le texte fondamental pour la compréhension de la métaphysique du philosophe anglais: *An Essay on Metaphysics* (1940).

Dana TABREA*

Military ethics: issues of non-conventional battleship¹⁷

(Review of *Ethics Education for Irregular Warfare*, editors Don Carrick, University of Hull, James Connelly, University of Hull, Paul Robinson, University of Ottawa, Canada, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England, USA, 2009)



Abstract Irregular warfare means war operations other than conventional war, such as counter – insurgency (COIN) and peace operations (peacekeeping, peace building, peacemaking, and peace enforcement). We can follow the red thread of the book by considering its different parts (theoretical, operational, or applicative, and pedagogical). The main issues of the book under review here consider ethical aspects of war with the purpose of answering questions such as how to educate troops to act ethically or how to guide military institutions to respond ethically to difficult situations that may appear in irregular warfare. The book addresses issues of interest for specialists in military ethics, adding an important contribution on irregular warfare situations and proper ethical responses to more regularly discussed topics of conventional war. But it can be also of interest to the non-specialist reader. The virtues evoked in reference to military personnel are general

* Associate Professor, Dr., Al. I.Cuza University, Iași, Romania, dtabrea@yahoo.com

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human virtues. The same can be said on vices. Moreover, the situations presented in the book can be extrapolated so that they cover humans in general.

Keywords: professional ethics, military ethics, irregular warfare, ethics education, moral/immoral conduct, ethical/unethical behavior, moral character, dispositional vs. situational ethics

Irregular warfare or *asymmetrical warfare* or *operations other than war* are terms that refer to non-conventional warfare, distinct from conventional war. There are several types of irregular warfare among which I enumerate: Counter – insurgency and peace operations. Insurgency means non - state actors acting against the authority of the state in order to change the government. Terrorism and guerrilla warfare may be used as forms of irregular warfare instead of military combats. Terrorism involves illegal violence against the civilian. Guerilla may appear behind the front lines, associated with conventional war (e.g. The Vietnam War). Peace support operations are attempts to rebuild the state system: peacekeeping (a third party force preserves an agreed ceasefire and create conditions for a settlement between the two sides to be formulated), peace building (an attempt to prevent a conflict from resuming by addressing its causes, disarming, demobilizing, training police and armed forces), peacemaking (actions undertaken to bring a conflict to an end, involving either negotiation or force), and peace enforcement (the use of force to impose, maintain, or restore a peace settlement). The boundaries between the various types of irregular warfare are not strictly delimited and they may slip from one into the other and sometimes even into conventional war.

The main issues of the book under review here consider ethical aspects of war with the purpose of answering questions such as how to educate troops to act ethically or how to guide military institutions to respond ethically to difficult situations that may appear in irregular warfare. The book is divided into three parts: a theoretical part on the ethics education for irregular warfare, an applicative part, including an examination of torture, and case studies from Iraq and Israel. A final conclusive part explores how military academies in the USA, UK and Netherlands address the problem of educating military officers for irregular warfare.

Part one, a theoretical background, includes articles on *Preserving Soldiers' Moral Character in Counterinsurgency Operations* (H. R. McMaster), *The Philosophical Warrior* (Alexander Moseley), *Culture Centric Warfare: The Moral Dynamics* (Patrick Mileham). Part two, dedicated to operational issues, is composed of the following articles: *Preventing Torture in Counter – insurgency Operations* (Jessica Wolfendale), *The Fall of the Warrior King: Situational Ethics in Iraq* (Paul Robinson), *Military Ethics of Facing Fellow Citizens: IDF Preparations for Disengagement* (Asa Kasher). Part three, on pedagogical issues, contains the

following articles: *Teaching Military Ethics in the United States Air Force: Challenges Posed by Service Culture* (Martin Cook), *Counter Insurgency Ethics at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst* (Stephen Deakin), *International Law and the Ethics of War at the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College* (David Whetam), *Ethics Education for Operations Other Than War: The Dutch Approach* (Peter Olsthoorn).

The contributors to the volume are: Martin Cook (Professor of Philosophy and Deputy Department Head at the United States Air Force Academy), Stephen Deakin (who has taught at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst), Asa Kasher (Senior Research Associate of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) College of National Defense, Vice-Chair of the Jerusalem Centre for Ethics and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Tel Aviv University), H.R. McMaster (an officer in the USA army, Doctor in history, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has taught military history at the United States Military Academy at West Point and is a senior consulting fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies), Patrick Mileham (a defence analyst working for the Ministry of Defence), Alexander Mosely (former Lecturer at the University of Evansville, now he runs a private educational company), Peter Olsthoorn (Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Netherlands Defence Academy), Paul Robinson (Associate Professor in Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa), David Whetham (works at the Defence Studies Department of King's College London), Jessica Wolfendale (an Australian Research Council Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the University of Melbourne).

The theme of the present volume reunites ideas such as: *Education in ethics can help produce ethically better behavior in soldiers*. Soldiers should learn that use of force that reduces risk to the soldier, but places either the mission or innocents at risk is seen as inconsistent with the military's code of honor and professional ethic. Apart from educating soldiers in professional military ethics, they should be prepared to cope with the stress – a factor that may determine bad ethical behavior in irregular warfare. Part of the stress is not only stress generated by danger, but also cultural stress determined by the fact that soldiers are to encounter a different culture. And educating soldiers should consider familiarizing them with the language, history and culture of the region they are to operate in. Also cultural training of soldiers help them properly evaluate sources of information and anticipate potential consequences of their actions, recognize and counter the enemy's misrepresentation of history for propaganda purposes, and develop moral conduct in counterinsurgency operations by generating empathy for the population, this empathy to the population being an effective weapon against insurgents.

The operational issues of the volume consider, above all, preventing torture in counter – insurgency (COIN) operations. Torture in COIN operations is often authorized by military superiors, most often with the support of the political administration, and claimed to be necessary in order to fight terrorism or for successful operation.

Torture is rationalized and justified by different arguments such as the *new wars* argument. The new wars argument stress upon the fact that the COIN operation is like a new war that requires special methods and a different approach against terrorist acts. The rules of war are morally important, but they must be overridden in order to fight a very dangerous enemy. For instance, torture is necessary to force a terrorist to reveal the location of a bomb that will kill thousands – even millions – of innocent people if it is not deactivated. So the new wars argument reveals the resort to torture as not only morally permissible because of the importance of protecting innocent lives, but even morally desirable and even virtuous. However, in COIN operations torture is used mainly as a means of interrogating prisoners that may hide important information concerning acts of terrorism or insurgency.

More than often soldiers engaged in COIN operations have to face situations where the rules of the game named war are being broken: insurgents may hide among the local population, making it hard for soldiers to distinguish the enemies from the civilians, insurgents often use propaganda and lies to get the support of the local population, and they may use tactics such as terrorism, child soldiers, and human shields. Also they may provoke soldiers to break the rules, by their attacks and terrorist tactics. And there is a human tendency that manifests in soldiers as well to give moral standards away, or at least to loosen them when the opponent is not playing by the rules. Therefore it is imperative to cultivate moral restraint among soldiers so that they do not change their moral principles when confronting terrorists and insurgents or when encountering a climate of violence and immorality.

Torture used in COIN operations is justified and normalized by different institutional structures. The normalization of torture is facilitated by the diffusion of responsibility (the division of responsibility within army minimizes the individual's personal moral responsibility and may, consequently, facilitate torture, as individuals can arrive to perform acts that they wouldn't normally perform, if torture is authorized and required by superiors), by the role - orientation (individuals in large hierarchical institutions such as army, in which tasks are divided tend to focus not on the morality of the actions they are carrying out, but on how well they are performing the task assigned to them), and by the obedience to authority (soldiers are expected to obey orders however immoral they might be).

Preventing torture cannot be realized only by training programs. The military should disobey the civilian government if the government authorizes the use of torture. In order to accomplish this, theoretical training of soldiers and practical experiencing should merge. If it is important that soldiers disobey orders such as to throw prisoners into a river, then it would be useful to create scenarios in which soldiers on field exercises are ordered to throw prisoners into a river. Their response can then be determined, lessons learnt and the correct behavior taught.

The values of military ethics are courage, responsibility, discipline, loyalty, integrity, moderation and restraint, and the respect of the human life. A soldier is required to jeopardize his or her own life or that of a subordinate when and only when it is necessary under the circumstances of a special military activity. If soldiers find themselves in circumstances that put their lives at risk because of actions taken by citizens violating the law, they will have to react in exactly the same way as would the police in such circumstances. The whole military mode of operation is going to be special, careful, moderate, and patient. Just as during a confrontation with citizens committing a crime the police do not assault the criminals, soldiers coming to the help of the police do not use their weapons to assault, but act in a restrained and responsible way so as to ensure protection of human life, both their own and others.

Analysis of study cases show that it is not sufficient to work on building the character of the soldier. There are two different sorts of explanations for abusive behavior: the *dispositional ethics*, which considers abusive behavior as the result of failures in personality and by contrast the *situational ethics*. Situational ethics considers that people act according to a certain environment, independently of their character. In most countries, military ethics education focuses on the dispositional approach, as it insists on the development of the character of the soldier. Enrolled officers who sometimes order illegal crimes during war are nothing but ordinary people not at all immoral, and not at all lacking a good character. The environment that they are placed into sometimes forces them to perform abominable deeds (e.g. the case of Colonel Sassaman, described as an intelligent, knowledgeable, and ethical, a good man, who in 2004 ordered his troops the forcing of two Iraqis into the Tigris River; one of the two Iraqis drowned, and the facts were hidden from investigators; finally the deeds were discovered and the guilty ones court - martialed).

Examples prove that the problem resides not in lack of character, but in lack of education, training, and moral leadership. It is imperative to understand that conventional war and guerrilla war are highly different and that they necessitate different moral preparations in both soldiers and their leaders. The credo of the American soldier (the *Warrior ethos*), part of which I will quote here - "I will always place the mission first/ I will never accept

defeat/ I will never quit/ I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I will always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself/ I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life” - does not fit the COIN operations where soldiers are expected to protect somebody else’s way of life, to use minimum force, and accept losses in order to help others. So we may say that Colonel Sassaman acted as if educated for proper war (to do anything to protect his soldiers, to destroy the enemy, and succeed in combat without being defeated) and not for irregular warfare. And this lack of preparation is his main guilt, which is not a real guilt after all. In order to behave properly in irregular warfare, soldiers must be educated and prepared for irregular warfare.

Military academies in many countries have special courses that train the officers - to - become in military ethics, insisting on ideas such as *just war* (bringing as much justice as possible in warfare), together with their consequent ethics (use of minimum force and applying *hearts and minds* policies, meaning that the local community should be won by amiability rather than by force). Some illustrative military academies are chosen for their ways of teaching these ideas, and they are analyzed in the present volume (the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College, the Netherlands Defence Academy).

The book addresses issues of interest for specialists in military ethics, adding an important contribution on irregular warfare situations and proper ethical responses to more regularly discussed topics of conventional war. But it can be also of interest to the non-specialist reader. The virtues evoked in reference to military personnel are general human virtues. The same can be said on vices. Moreover, the situations presented in the book can be extrapolated so that they cover humans in general. Nowadays stress is the main factor of illnesses, dysfunctions, and disorders. And these may lead to unethical behavior. People the most stressed at work have the most immoral conduct: they have affairs with their co-workers, disobey elementary rules of politeness, correctness, and respect to others. This corresponds to the situation of the soldiers having to face COIN operations that stress them by being totally unknown, frightening, and menacing. In order to change the situations, ethics education seems to be the key. This solution also applies to society in general where personnel should be educated to face new situations, such as those created by difficult customers or unpredictable scenarios. It is important that we come to think that some other’s not playing by the rules does not justify our own immoral conduct.

Violence in society can be prevented by educating teenagers against the wrong way education provided by movies and computer games. In schools, practical scenarios should be created so that students may learn the

democratic values that should guide them along the way. However, should any violent act affect us in any way, we must learn that sometimes dispositional ethics cannot offer the best explanation and that we should look for justification further on in situational ethics. If people wrong us, it is not always a sign of their lack of character, but they can be good people acting wrongly because of the environment. This new perspective helps us differently understand the situations that we come across in our everyday life, at work, at school, in public as well as private space. Also we may learn to forgive our friends, colleagues, people who have wronged us in one way or another, because we find out that the fault is not in them but in what happens to them.