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## PELBARTUS OF THEMESWAR'S USE OF SOURCES IN THE *ROSARIUM*. A STATISTICAL STUDY\*

ALEXANDRA BANEU\*\*

**ABSTRACT.** *Pelbartus of Themeswar's Use of Sources in the Rosarium. A Statistical Study.* This article analyses Pelbartus of Themeswar's use of sources in the first volume of the *Rosarium*. In order to make the mapping of influences easier we have **divided the works cited into two categories: medieval and ancient writings.** The group of medieval works is also divided into two subcategories: scotist commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and alphabetical *Summae* and Encyclopedias. These are the two types of works that have inspired the form of the *Rosarium*.

**Keywords:** *commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, explicit sources, alphabetical organization, scotist authors, ancient and medieval sources*

The manner of invoking sources in commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard varied significantly according to temporal and geographical criteria.<sup>1</sup> The tendency was for references to become more and more precise with the passing of time, as Damasus Trapp argues while discussing the context of the commentaries of 14<sup>th</sup> century Augustinian doctors: "(...) much more attention was now paid to the exactness of quoting from the Fathers and to quoting in general; quotations from the Fathers and past theologians furnished material for a critique of the preceding days and ways".<sup>2</sup> Although this quote does not consider the century or the intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> This subject has also been treated by Chris Schabel and Damasus Trapp. See: Chris Schabel. "Haec Ille: Citation, Quotation and Plagiarism in 14<sup>th</sup> Century Scholasticism" in Ioannis Taifacos (ed.), *The Origins of European Scholarship*, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 163–175; Damasus Trapp, "Augustinian Theology of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Notes on Editions, Marginalia, Opinions and Booklore", *Augustinianum* 6/1956, p. 146–274. (From now on: Damasus Trapp, "Augustinian Theology of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century".

<sup>2</sup> Damasus Trapp, "Augustinian Theology of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century", p. 147.

context in which Pelbartus composed his work, it constitutes a good starting point because it specifies that the manner of giving references had changed, becoming more precise in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in comparison to the preceding centuries. Pelbartus gives very precise references in the *Rosarium*, which is a theological encyclopedia inspired by commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

In fact one can find two situations in the *Rosarium*: either the citation is direct either it is mediated by the text of another author. In the first case, he always gives very precise indications. In some cases he even mentions the paragraph of the printed edition.<sup>3</sup> In the second situation, Pelbartus always followed the manner of giving references that the author he was copying from used. He did not bother to correct other people's manner of giving references. For instance, if he copied from the works of William of Vaurrillon who stated that 'Scotus said X' in his commentary on the *Sentences*, without any other specifications, Pelbartus would just copy that, despite the fact that it probably would not have been extremely difficult for him to complete it.

From the point of view of the historical period they were written in, the works that he uses fall under two categories. They also fall within two subcategories if we take in account two different aspects in each category.<sup>4</sup>

The first category consists of medieval authors: he usually invokes doctors of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, but sometimes mentions 13<sup>th</sup> century authors and even earlier ones. The first major subcategory of this group consists of encyclopedias and theological *Summae* that are alphabetically organized. The main writings from this subcategory are: the *Summa* of Antoninus Florentinus, Raynerius of Pisa's *Pantheologia* and the *Summa de casibus conscientiae* of Angelus of Clavasio. The second subcategory consists of commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, especially those of Duns Scotus, William of Vaurrillon and Petrus of Aquila. The preponderance of these sources shows that Pelbartus's work is somewhere in the middle between these two literary genres. The *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium* is not a commentary on the *Sentences* in the strong sense of the word, but it is strongly influenced by that specific type of literature; it is not an encyclopedia in the full meaning of the word either, because it has too strong of a theological focus.

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning at this point that he only copied from works that had a printed version. This is a very interesting aspect for the history of the book. Had manuscripts been replaced in such a short amount of time (he wrote his encyclopedia sometime in the 1490s)? Did the library he worked in only afford to buy printed versions?

<sup>4</sup> This classification only takes into consideration the first volume of the *Rosarium*.

The second category consists of ancient authors. They are never directly quoted. We are sure that, at best, Pelbartus had access to some sort of florilegia; at worst, he cites all ancient authors following their mentions in the works of medieval authors. The ancient authors can be grouped in the following manner: authors that are not usually quoted by medieval doctors, such as Virgil and Ovid (they are quoted second-hand, especially from the works of Antoninus Florentinus) and authors that are always invoked, such as Aristotle and Augustine.

We would like to stress the fact that these are not all the sources that Pelbartus uses. This is mostly a general classification, meant to make the mapping of the sources easier. Besides these, there are numerous citations from the Bible. These do not present a particular interest to us: he must have read and cited the Bible directly.

For a little over 10% from the first volume of the *Rosarium*<sup>5</sup> (19 folios out of 156 in the Hagenau 1503 version), the main explicit citations are as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Angelus of Clavasio is invoked 10 times. The citations are not exactly numerous, but he is mentioned in essential points and his opinions are given as an answer to certain questions. He is a 15<sup>th</sup> century 'moral theologian', a Franciscan and a scotist. Angelus is known to have written the *Summa de casibus conscientiae* also known as the *Summa angelica*. This is the work that Pelbartus copies from. As far as we have seen, in this 10 percent, Angelus is only mentioned by Pelbartus in the 'Addiscere' chapter of his work, when he tries to establish which sciences are necessary for someone who seeks to become a doctor in theology. Pelbartus's view on the subject is not exactly traditional: he considers that the mathematical sciences are not necessary and canon law should be a compulsory object of study for all those who seek to become masters of theology.<sup>7</sup> Pelbartus uses the text of this great canonist in order to prove more points. For instance, following the *Summa de casibus* of Angelus of Clavasio, he divides the books written by pagans into two categories: books such as Ovid's *De arte*

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<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this article we have decided not to include an analysis of the entire *Rosarium*. Usually, in order to be able to offer an accurate image of the sources of a work it is advised to study samples taken from different parts of the text. However, for the *Rosarium* one can get an accurate image even by studying just one sample which is made up of more entries, given that this text is not homogenous. In just 10% of the text the *Rosarium* has very different themes: 'Ab auro', 'Abyssus', 'Attributa divina', etc.

<sup>6</sup> Pelbartus usually has explicit quotes. Even when there is an implicit quotation in the text this was not copied directly by Pelbartus, but by the author that Pelbartus is quoting explicitly.

<sup>7</sup> Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum rosarium theologiae ad 'Sententiarum' quattuor libros pariformiter quadripartitum*, I, ex officina Henrici Gran, expensis Ioannis Rynman de Oringaw, Hagenau, 1503 (from now on: Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Rosarium*, I), 'Addiscere' III, b1rb. Also see: Angelus de Clavasio, *Summa de casibus conscientiae*, Nuremberg impressa per Anthonium Koberger, 1492 (from now on: Angelus de Clavasio, *Summa de casibus*), 'Magister', 185vb.



*amandi* that nobody should ever read given that they are about impudent things, and books that are useful, especially for the enrichment of one's vocabulary, although some indecent things can be found in them.<sup>8</sup> It is not at all unusual to use such justifications for the study of pagan authors. In 8<sup>th</sup> century Gaul, where Latin was considered a foreign language, the monks were allowed to read the classical authors without any restraints in order to learn Latin.<sup>9</sup>

Antoninus Florentinus is invoked 11 times. Although this is not an impressive number, it is worth mentioning because the Florentine is mostly mentioned when Pelbartus tries to solve an issue. Quoting this author is unusual for him because he is usually influenced by the Franciscan scotists. Florentinus, however, is a 15<sup>th</sup> century Dominican. Again, unlike the authors Pelbartus usually uses, Florentinus is influenced by the humanist movement. What is worth mentioning is that classical poets such as Virgil and Ovid and ancient philosophers who are not usually mentioned by late medieval authors (such as Plato) are cited by Pelbartus following the work of the Florentine.<sup>10</sup>

Besides these two comprehensive works, i.e. the *Summa de casibus* and the Florentine's *Summa*, Pelbartus also mentions Raynerius of Pisa's *Pantheologia* 5 times.<sup>11</sup> It is these three works that have influenced him to adopt the encyclopedic form for his *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*.

The second subcategory of texts that are abundantly quoted in the *Rosarium* consists of Franciscan commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Most of the commentaries mentioned belong to Franciscan doctors and especially to scotist ones. The texts belonging to the scotist school are mentioned almost as much as Aristotle and Augustine.

Duns Scotus is invoked 21 times, both under the name of 'Scotus' and under that of 'Doctor Subtilis'. Furthermore, Henry of Ghent and Godefroi de Fontaines, Scotus's main opponents, are only mentioned a few times by Pelbartus. More precisely, Henry of Ghent is named 4 times and Godefroi de Fontaines only once, in a wider enumeration of doctors ('Thomas, Richardus, Godfridus, Henricus de Gandavo') in the chapter 'Attributa divina'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Angelus de Clavasio, *Summa de casibus*, 'Magister', 185vb.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Riché, Jacques Verger, *Maîtres et élèves au Moyen Age*, Tallandier, Paris, 2006, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> On Antoninus Florentinus, see: Luciano Cinelli, Maria Pia Paoli (ed.), *Antonino Pierozzi OP (1389- 1459): la figura e l'opera di un santo arcivescovo nell' Europa del Quattrocento*, Nerbini, Firenze, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> On Raynerius of Pisa, see: Ricardo Quinto, "Estratti e compilazioni alfabetiche da opere di autori scolastici (ca. 1250-1350)" in Claudio Lenardi, Marcelo Morelli, Francesco Santi (eds.), *Fabula in tabula*, Spoleto, 1995, p. 119–134; Eligio Volpini, "Raineri da Rivalto Domenicano" in *Memorie storiche di più uomini illustri Pisani*, IV, Pisa, 1792, p. 137–150.

<sup>12</sup> Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Rosarium* I, 'Attributa divina', c2vb.

Petrus of Aquila, named Scotellus, but to whom Pelbartus refers to as Scotorellus, is cited 32 times: 3 times as Petrus of Aquila, 4 times as Scotorellus - Petrus de Aquila and in all other cases as Scotorellus. He too is invoked in crucial moments of the argumentation. Petrus of Aquila is a 14<sup>th</sup> century scotist. His commentary on the *Sentences* is a compendium of Scotus's own work.

William of Vaurrillon, another scotist author, is named 49 times. He is never contradicted but rather cited as an authority. Vaurrillon finished his commentary on the first three books in 1431 and on the fourth in 1448, getting his license in theology in January 1448 and becoming a master of theology in April 1448. There have been many editions of his works, the first one in Lyon in 1489. Vaurrillon's commentary refers to the *Sentences* in their entirety and is a proof of the so called 'return to the text of the Magister' that happens in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

Francis of Meyronnes, a 14<sup>th</sup> century scotist, is cited 29 times, in most cases alongside Vaurrillon and Scotellus. Meyronnes is a very independent follower of Scotus. He combines his opinions with those of previous authors, such as Henry of Ghent. He read the *Sentences* in Paris in 1320-1321 and was engaged in a controversy concerning the Trinity with Pierre Roger (the future Clement VI).<sup>14</sup>

The scotists are also cited 13 times as a school of thought,<sup>15</sup> in the following phrases: *alii scotistae*, *scotistae*, *scotistae cum quibus teneo*, *praedicti scotistae*, *scotistae communiter* and *opinio scotistarum*.

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<sup>13</sup> On William of Vaurrillon, see: Franciszek Tokarski, "Guillaume de Vaurrillon et son commentaire sur les *Sentences* de Pierre Lombard", *Mediaevalia Philosophica Polonorum*, XXIX, 1988; Ueli Zahnd, "Easy-Going Scholars Lecturing *secundum alium*? Notes on some Franciscan *Sentences* Commentaries in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century" in Philipp Rosemann (ed.), *Mediaeval Commentaries on the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard*, vol. 3, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2015, p. 267–314.

<sup>14</sup> On Francis of Meyronnes, see: Roberto Lambertini, "Francis of Meyronnes" in J. E. Jorge Gracia, Timothy N. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell Publishing, Cornwall, 2002, p. 256–257; Francesco Fiorentino, *Francesco di Meyronnes. Libertà e contingenza nel pensiero tardo-medievale*, Antonianum, Roma, 2006; Bartholomäus Roth, *Franz von Mayronis O.F.M.. Sein Leben, seine Werke, seine Lehre vom Formalunterschied in Gott*, Franziskus-Dr., 1936; For Meyronnes's quodlibetal questions, see: William O. Duba, "Continental Franciscan Quodlibeta after Scotus" in Christopher Schabel (ed.) in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages*, Brill, Leiden–Boston, 2007, p. 569–649.

<sup>15</sup> Maarten Hoenen discusses the main aspects of this school of thought in the article "Scotus and the Scotist School. The Tradition of Scotist Thought in the Medieval and Early Modern Period". See: Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, "Scotus and the Scotist School. The Tradition of Scotist Thought in the Medieval and Early Modern Period" in E. P. Bos (ed.), *John Duns Scotus- Renewal of Philosophy*, Acts of the Third Symposium Organized by the Dutch Society for Medieval Philosophy Medium Aevum May 23 and 24, 1996, Editions Rodopi B. V., Amsterdam–Atlanta, 1998, p. 197–210.

As one can well see, Pelbartus is influenced by the scotist line of thought. In just 10 percent of the first volume, the total number of explicit references to scotist doctors and to the school as a whole amounts to 144 mentions.

The *Rosarium* also collects the opinions of some Franciscan doctors that do not belong to the scotist school. Alexander of Hales is named 8 times, Richardus of Mediavilla is quoted 33 times, Bonaventure is referred to 21 times and the answers to certain questions are given according to him.

For instance, in the ‘Abyssus’ Prologue<sup>16</sup> of the work, the sixth question ‘*causae ex quibus scientia theologica aliis praeclarior apparet*’ is given following Bonaventure.<sup>17</sup> First, the four Aristotelian causes that concur to the creation of a work are named: the material cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause and the final cause. The material cause is the subject of the work; in our case (i.e. in the case of a theological work) this would be God. The final cause in theology, says Pelbartus quoting Bonaventure’s third question of the Prologue to the *Sentences*, is to know and love God. The formal cause is represented by the type of work in which the theological subject is treated. For instance, the Bible is composed of many different kinds of books: prophetic books, apostolic books, historical books, etc. So, theology can be discussed under different ‘forms’: it can take a prophetic form, or it can be the subject of a purely theoretical work. Finally, the fourth cause is the efficient one. The efficient cause of any work is its author, but as simple as this issue might seem, it is not so. The main author of any work is God, thus its actual author is only a secondary efficient cause. It is at this point that Pelbartus introduces Bonaventure’s famous difference between the *scriptor*, *compilator*, *commentator* and *auctor*. The *scriptor* is the mere scribe who copies somebody else’s work; the *compilator* just puts together other people’s works, sometimes adding his own thoughts to the mix; the *commentator* writes down his own thoughts as well as foreign ones, but the foreign ones predominate; it is only the *auctor* who, while being inspired by others, lets his own thoughts take a lead role.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Rosarium I*, ‘Abyssus’, a5vb.

<sup>17</sup> Bonaventura de Bagnoregio, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882 (Opera omnis S. Bonaventurae 1/1), proemii quaestiones, q. 3, p. 12, col. 1, lin. 1 – p. 13, col. 2, lin. 19 and q. 4, p. 14, col. 3, lin. 1 – p. 15, col. 1, lin. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Philipp Rosemann discusses the problem of the author from an ontological perspective. He mostly discusses 13<sup>th</sup> century commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. While commenting on Bonaventure’s text Rosemann states that Bonaventure sees the *Book of Sentences* as an extension of the Bible. This is why God is a main author and the Lombard is just a secondary author. See: Philipp W. Rosemann, “What Is an Author? Divine and Human Authorship in Some Mid-Thirteenth-Century Commentaries on the *Book of Sentence*” in *Archa verbi* 12 (2015), p. 35–65. On the distinction between the *scriptor*, *compilator*, *commentator* and *auctor*, also see: Alastair Minnis, “Nolens Auctor

The most unexpected citations in the *Rosarium* are those from Thomas Aquinas. The official doctor of the Dominican order is referred to 34 times in the first 19 folios. The fact is less surprising if we take into account that in some of the cases he is quoted just to be contradicted. For instance, in the third question of the 'Abyssus' Prologue the Angelic Doctor is quoted with his position on whether our theological science is subordinated to the science of God and the blessed. Aquinas's answer is that our science takes its principles from the science of God which makes it a subordinate science. Pelbartus goes on to contradict this point of view quoting Scotellus's position. He introduces this by the phrase '*sed hoc non tenent scotistse*'.

One can also find a number of traditional theological figures in the *Rosarium*. In this 10%, Bernard of Clairvaux is quoted 13 times and Peter Lombard (whose text inspires the thematic organization into 4 volumes) is only named 21 times.

Besides all these authoritative figures, there also are a number of 22 unidentified citations to *alii*, *alii doctores*, etc. and a number of 70 inside references or self-quotations, i.e. points in which Pelbartus sends us to different places of his own work. Most of them are of the form *vide infra* + the name of the chapter or *de his patebit latius in capitulo* or *ubi* + the name of the chapter. In some points he even indicates the paragraph of the chapter he mentions, which might indicate that he took part in the editing and printing of his own work.

In that which concerns the ancient authors, with the exception of Aristotle, Augustine, Boethius and other authoritative figures, there are 18 such quotes. The authors mentioned are: Hypocrites, Cicero, Plato, Didymus, Lactantius and Virgil.

Augustine is invoked 60 times and Aristotle 78 times. This is quite impressive, given that, for the portion of the text that we have studied, the total number of biblical quotations goes up to a total of 66.

Our conclusion would be that in this eclectic work, Pelbartus of Themeswar mostly quotes Franciscans, especially scotists (when we think about the medieval authors that he names). In that which concerns the ancient authors, the most quoted are Aristotle and Augustine, though we do not think that he is quoting them from their actual books, but rather he used compendiums and the works of other late medieval authors.

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sed Compiler Reputari: the Late- Medieval Discourse of Compilation", in M. Chazan, G. Dahan (eds.), *La méthode critique au Moyen Age*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2006, p. 47–63; Anne Maria Huijbers, *Zealots for Souls – Dominican Narratives between Observant Reform and Humanism, c. 1388-1517*, Ipskamp Drukkers, Enschede, 2015 (Doctoral Thesis), p. 39–40; Bert Roest, "Compilation as Theme and Praxis in Franciscan Universal Chronicles" in Peter Binkley (ed.), *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts. Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, Brill, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997, p. 214–225. On the related issue of plagiarism, see: Monica Brînzei, "Plagium" in I. Atucha, D. Calma, C. König-Pralong., I. Zavatero (eds.), *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, Brepols, Turnhout–Porto, 2011, pp. 559–568.

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## JOHN OF SALISBURY'S SYMBOLICAL BIOGRAPHY

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**ABSTRACT.** *John of Salisbury's Symbolical Biography.* The article *John of Salisbury's Symbolical Biography*, is part of an ampler study upon the relationship between political philosophy and the philosophy of language in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*. The article focuses on the manner in which certain events in Salisbury's life are reflected in the thematic of his work, particularly in the way he addresses the link between political philosophy and the philosophy of language.

**Keywords:** *John of Salisbury, Symbolical Biography, political philosophy, philosophy of language*

### Historical Context of the *Policraticus*

When considering premodern political philosophy, the general tendency is to mention the Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, amongst whom are Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustin, and Justinian, and then to jump directly to the Renaissance, many people still considering that after Antiquity, the first political treatise was Machiavelli's *The Prince*. This view, however is incorrect. While political aspects had been swiftly tackled throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, in works which concentrated on other philosophical topics, it was not until John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* that a political treatise per se appeared.

*Policraticus* was written between 1154 and 1159, the introductory poem called *Entheticus*, which serves as a poetical art for the entire treatise, having been composed between 1154 and 1156, while the treatise itself was written from 1156 up until its completion in 1159.<sup>1</sup> *Policraticus* is made up of eight books, the first four concentrated on the frivolities (*nugae*) of the courtiers and the other four focused on John's political theory per se. The structure is similar to that of Augustin's *De civitate Dei*, as are the topics which Salisbury considers as frivolities in the first four

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<sup>1</sup> See Cary J. Nederman, *Policraticus*, Cambridge University Press, 2007/1990, pp. xviii–xix.



books: hunting, superstition, astrology, drinking. The last four books, comprising John's political theory itself, are under the pretense of being taken from Plutarch's *Instructio Traiani*, a fictional treatise invented by John in order to serve as an argument through authority and to support his view that the prince and the pope should follow in the footsteps of the philosophers (*vestigia philosophorum*). The target readers are the prince, Henry II<sup>nd</sup>, through the chancellor Thomas Becket, and pope Hadrian IV<sup>th</sup>. The work itself is double folded, encompassing the fields of both types of dedicatees, as it treats almost equally both the lay and the clerical side, highlighting the vices which can be found with both sides and the actions which need to be taken for an optimum form of terrestrial and spiritual rule.

Besides being a political treatise, *Policraticus* also focuses on the role of language and its link to politics. Proof in this sense is the fact that *Policraticus* was published together with *Metalogicon*, the latter a treatise of medieval grammar and logic. Medieval grammar was considered to be a meta-science, which lied at the basis of all the other sciences and branches of philosophy, facilitating the learner's access to them. In the same way, John of Salisbury creates the image of language as a necessary intermediary for political philosophy, through the metaphor of his voyaging book, sent by the writer to its dedicatees, as it appears in *Entheticus*. Moreover, language appears to be a simulacrum in Salisbury's approach, authoritative texts being just as significant whether they are real or made up, as the author himself shows in the prologue to *Policraticus*:

If someone, like Lanuinus, would calumny the unknown authors as if they were made up, then they should either accuse Plato's resurrected character, Cicero's dreaming African and the philosophers who celebrated the Saturnalia, or they should be indulgent with the authors' fictions and with ours, if these serve the public utility.<sup>2</sup>

Not only does Salisbury use fictional quotations in order to express his personal beliefs, while giving them at the same time an authoritative value, but he also uses his personal life experience as symbolic exempla throughout both *Policraticus* and *Metalogicon*.

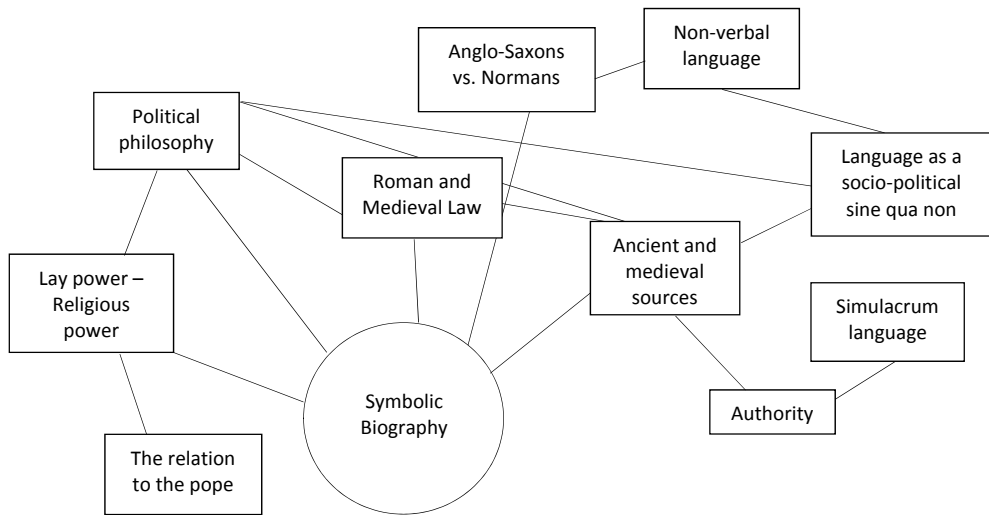
if he does mention in his work a number of events that occurred in his life, this is not with any autobiographical purpose (such an ambition would largely have been alien to him): rather, his intention was to situate these personal events within an exemplary scheme, where the actions and gestures accomplished by others may be

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<sup>2</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, p. 26: "Si quisignotosauctores cum Lanuinocalumpniaturutictos, autredivumPlatonis, Affricanum Ciceroni somniantem et philosophos Saturnalia exercentesaccuset, aut auctorum nostrisquefigmentis indulgeat, si publicaeserviuntutilitati".

used as a model (or counter model) of action. In medieval works that are traditionally seen as autobiographical (such as the *Liber de temptationibus* of Othlo of Saint-Emmeran, the *De vita sua* of Guibert of Nogent or the *Historia calamitatum* of Peter Abelard), individuality always appears within a certain typological framework, and is inserted into existing narrative schemes.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, John's biography becomes significant for his approach towards politics, language, and the relationship between the two, as can be seen from the below figure:



**Normans versus Anglo-Saxons**

The first relevant point of John of Salisbury's biography is represented by his origins, given the historical context in which he was born.

The first date in John's life that is known with any certainty is that of his arrival in Paris as a student, one year after the death of Henry I of England (*Metalogicon* 2.10) – in 1136. Given that "higher studies" at that time began at about the age of fifteen, this leads us to date John's birth at around 1120; unless one accepts that he would have started his cycle of studies in England, in which case a date of around 1115 would be more likely. John was born on the former site of the present-day Salisbury (Old Sarum), to a family that is generally thought to have been of modest origins.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Christophe Grellard, Frederique Lachaud, *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, Brill, 2014, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Grellard, p. 2.

Thus, John was born at less than 100 years after the battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest from 1066, at a time when the relations between the occupant Norman nobility and the conquered Anglo-Saxons were still bitter. After Hastings, William the Conqueror had replaced the entire Anglo-Saxon nobility with Normans, taking the Anglo-Saxons' privileges together with their lands and estates. The official language was also changed from the Anglo-Saxon dialects to Norman French, and together with the new nobility, the conquering king brought new customs. It is these new customs that John of Salisbury sees as frivolities and criticizes. This seems strange in the light of the fact that John's mother was of Norman origin, but since there is no information regarding the identity of his father, it is possible that he was of Anglo-Saxon origin "His mother, Gille Peche, had children by at least two husbands, who were perhaps dignitaries or canons of Salisbury Cathedral".<sup>5</sup> John's constant criticism of the new Norman habits, such as hunting, superstition, astrology, seems to reflect a view upon society as a decaying one from the old Anglo-Saxon morality. This could be explained by the possibility of John having had a father of Anglo-Saxon origin, with which he would have identified himself more in terms of national identity. This hypothesis is supported by the low social status that John's family had.

John was born on the former site of the present-day Salisbury (Old Sarum), to a family that is generally thought to have been of modest origins. Two facts seem to confirm this point. John says that his nickname was "small," an adjective which could refer to a physical characteristic (he was small in size), but also to a social one (small in social status). And we know that John often found himself in a critical financial situation during his student years.<sup>6</sup>

However, Salisbury's criticism of the Norman nobility's habits cannot be explained only by his potential Anglo-Saxon origins. These customs are described by the author as functioning as non-verbal language. Hunting, the first criticized frivolity of the courtiers, acts as a pretext for the manifestation of an exacerbated ego, and as a context for adultery. Superstition and the practice of astrology are depicted as fake signs, and therefore dangerous if used by the leaders of the realm. The danger comes from the fact that language is seen as having an essential role in political and social interaction, without it politics and society becoming impossible.

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<sup>5</sup> Grellard, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Grellard, p. 2.

### John's Classical and Philosophical Education

Another point of John's life which highly influenced his works were his studies. *Policraticus* is filled with quotations, whether marked or unmarked by the author, used in order to support his ideas as arguments of authority. Not mentioning the authors of the inserted quotations has a double role in John's opinion: that of encouraging those who are not familiar with them to read more, and that of not being redundant for those already versed in philosophy and in the Scriptures, particularly for the dedicatees of *Policraticus* and *Metalogicon*:

I took care to insert <passages> from various authors that came into mind, as long as they helped or entertained, keeping their names silent at times, both because I had known that a lot of them are wholly known to you, as you are versed in letters, and so as the one ignorant of them to be led to a more assiduous lecture.<sup>7</sup>

The source of these quotations stands in his studies at Paris and Chartres, where John became acquainted with classical literature and philosophy, but also with some of the most remarkable thinkers of his time such as Abelard, Alberic, William of Conches, Thierry of Chartres, Peter of Celle, Gilbert of Poitiers etc.<sup>8</sup>

### The Power of Language

The multiplicity of quotations and references from John's texts gives birth to two important aspects of his philosophy of language. The first aspect is represented by the problem of authorship, whether it the fictional or non-fictional authorship. The two are depicted as being equal in value and relevance, which leads to the second aspect, which is the role of language as a simulacrum. Language in Salisbury's view is just as important if not more important than facts, it is just as relevant and effective in terms of influence upon the political aspect. This perspective is not limited to verbal language, as non-verbal language was extremely significant in the Middle Ages. An example in this sense is the case of the Norman Conquest. It has been long debated whether William the Conqueror's invasion of Britain was in fact a legitimate act of taking into possession his heirloom or not. The legitimacy of

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<sup>7</sup> Salisbury, p. 24, "Quae vero ad rem pertinentia a diversis auctoribus se animo ingerant, dum conferrent aut iuvarent, curavi inserere, tacitis inter dum nominibus auctorum, tum quia tibi utpote exercitato in litteris pleraque plenissime nota esse noveram, tum ut ad lectionem assiduam magis accenderetur ignarus".

<sup>8</sup> See Grellard, pp. 5–6.

the conquest lies in whether the gestures that took place between William and Eduard the Confessor had been executed correctly, using genuine relics or not. Thus non-verbal language had the power of law during the Middle Ages, if the context and the protagonists were the appropriate ones.

### Salisbury's Knowledge of Law

Law itself was not an unknown aspect to John of Salisbury, as he had become familiarized with it through his contacts from Chartres "Beyond this circle of clerics, John perhaps knew the Bolognese master Vacarius, who resided in Canterbury and who may have been one of the masters who provided him with knowledge of Roman law"<sup>9</sup>. John's familiarity with law did not stop here, but was continued after his studies, when he started working for Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury at that time.

In 1154, John appears as secretary and personal adviser to Theobald. Before that date, as Julie Barrau shows in the following pages ("John of Salisbury as ecclesiastical administrator"), his precise role in the archbishop's entourage remains vague, and he seems to have been employed mainly on missions to the papal Curia. As early as 1149 he was sent to Pope Eugenius III in Rome. In the prologue to *Metalogicon 3*, written in 1159, he states that he has travelled extensively in France and England, and that he has crossed the Alps ten times, even staying in Apulia for a lengthy period. This means that during these ten years of service he would have travelled to Italy on average once a year and stayed there for considerable lengths of time. These travels are significant both socially and intellectually. John was able to create or strengthen links with some influential men in the Church or in lay circles. It was, for instance, during one of his journeys to the Curia that he became close friends with Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, a fellow Englishman who became pope in 1154 under the name of Adrian IV and with whom John stayed for a long period, as he narrates in the *Policraticus* and in his letters. This friendship, which John mentions on several occasions (e.g. *Letter 50*; *Metalogicon 4.42*), probably strengthened his position at the Curia, but it did not enable him – for lack of time, unless it was because Adrian IV did not wish to displease Henry II – to get promoted to the cardinalship, a position John seems to have coveted. These travels were also intellectually significant. John may have acquired some of his legal knowledge in Italy, contrary to what is often assumed.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Grellard, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Grellard, p. 8.

### Relationship With the Papacy

As it can be seen, it is not only the lay law that was known to John, but also the clerical law and the papal environment. However, his consistent contact with the papacy led to his conflicts with the English crown prior to his supporting Becket against Henry II<sup>nd</sup> "it was also this very proximity that damaged his position in the eyes of King Henry II".<sup>11</sup> John was perceived by the king as working in the interest of the papacy and not the English crown, being suspected as a spy for the Pope.

From what John says, one of the accusations made against him was that he had lowered the royal dignity: this probably means that John was considered to have worked in favour of Theobald's interests at the expense of those of the English Crown. But in reality it was Adrian IV who was the great victor in these negotiations: John had obtained for the king the authorization to invade Ireland, but it seems that this was to be placed under the authority of the papacy. Furthermore, the reference in the discussions to the Donation of Constantine raised implicitly the status of England itself – another insular land – in relation to the papacy. The favour shown to John by the Pope in Benevento probably fed suspicions concerning the former's attitude.

In opposition to the accusations the English king brought against John, the latter's *Policraticus* is written from a balanced point of view in what the relationship between the crown and the church is concerned. John criticizes the frivolities that appear both at the court and in the church in the same degree. Furthermore, he does not bring arguments in favour of a state governed by the church, but instead for a state in which the two are equal in power.

### Concluding Remarks

All in all, it can be concluded that John of Salisbury's political philosophy as well as his philosophy of language were highly influenced by his personal experience. Thus his biography becomes an intently symbolical one, representing an argument in itself in favour of John's theories.

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<sup>11</sup> Grellard, p. 9.

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## ANSELM AND THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CRITICISM. METAMORPHOSIS OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT IN THE LATE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION\*

DANIEL COMAN\*\*

**ABSTRACT.** *Anselm and the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Criticism. Metamorphosis of the Ontological Argument in the Late Scholastic Tradition.* The harsh debates that occurred in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and early 14<sup>th</sup> century between Augustinians, Thomists and Scotists forced them to verify the orthodoxy of their own theses by comparing them to patristic sources. Anselm of Canterbury is one of the most reliable sources, according to some texts of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The new theory of knowledge provides the opportunity of an elaborated analysis of the ontological argument by means of the new logical tools. But regardless of how the ontological argument will be refurbished, one thing persists: the ontological argument is used as a tool in proving the existence of God and getting an undoubted knowledge about this fact.

**Keywords:** *Anselm of Canterbury, Gregory of Rimini, Thomas Bradwardine, ontological argument, 14<sup>th</sup> century criticism, late scholasticism.*

Anselm's reception and influence over the Late Middle Ages, has not yet been systematically analyzed, nor may we state that this area has been explored, except indirectly, accidentally and fractionally (to a certain extent).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In a brief exposition of the transformation of the English scholasticism after 1330, William J. Courtenay called to mind the new interest related in the ontological argument among the commentators on the *Sentences (Schools and scholars)*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1987, p. 343–346). The same issue of the ontological argument is addressed by Zénon Kaluza in his



It is true that medieval thinkers, particularly those who held a position in the European universities of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, have only left a few commentaries on the Anselmian opus.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the role played by the Anselmian works in fashioning, affirming and sustaining someone's own philosophical and theological views on the world is neither negligible nor insignificant. On the contrary, it is quite defining that one of the main traits of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Commentary on the *Sentences* is the frequent quoting from the pre 1200 theologians, as compared to quoting from philosophers. In the Middle Ages, commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* were a compulsory task for achieving the title of doctor in theology, which empowered them when it came to circulating ideas. Therefore, the fact that Anselm, following Augustine, is the second most quoted authority of the Commentary of the *Sentences*, places him on a privileged position of authority. Therefore, understanding the theoretical developments of thought that emerge in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, such as the so-called *terminism*, the concept of the sign, the new theories of signification, establishing the role that the theories of signification play in the new development of logic and the theory of language, the new theories of knowledge, that is understanding the extended phenomenon of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that Damasius Trapp calls *logico-critical attitude* is to be considered as closely connected to the retrieval and new reading of the Anselmian writings.<sup>3</sup>

I have divided the present study into two sections. In the first one, I will be dealing with the topic of authority. I will be examining the way in which authorities are used in the scholastic exercises and will rely on a text of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, so as to reveal the architecture or composition of the authority, as imagined in this century, and the position of Anselm in this structure. In the second

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study on *Deum non esse* issue ("Le problème du Deum non esse chez Étienne de Chaumont, Nicolas Aston et Thomas Bradwardin", in Zénon Kaluza, *Études doctrinales sur le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 2013, p. 37–51.). A comprehensive investigation on the ontological argument in the context of propositional analysis of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is included in Julius R. Weinberg, *Ockham, Descartes, and Hume*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1977, p. 3–21. A number of studies deal with the importance of the so-called *regula Anselmi*, a logico-theological tool which was used in the Trinitarian theology of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in the controversy about the intra-Trinitarian personal distinction. Cf. John T. Slotemaker, "The Development of Anselm's Trinitarian Theology", in *Anselm of Canterbury and His Legacy*, ed. Giles Gasper, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 2012, p. 203–219; Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University*, vol. 1, Brill, Boston, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The English Carmelite Baconthorp has commentaries on the following Anselmian writings: *De incarnatione Verbi* and *Cur Deus homo?*, Cf. Bartholomaeus M. Xiberta, *De scriptoribus scholasticis saeculi XIV ex ordine Carmelitarum*, Bureau de la Revue, Louvain, 1931, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> Damasius Trapp, *Augustinian Theology of the 14th Century: Notes on Editions, Marginalia, Opinions and Book-lore*, Augustiniana 6, 1956, p. 149, 230; <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/semiotics-medieval/>.

section, I will be handling the issue itself, the metamorphosis of the ontological argument and will be referring to the way in which the scholastic exercise manages to make use of the authorities and the way in which the use of the sources in these exercises have affected the shape of the Anselmian argument and have corrupted the intention with which it has been formed.

1. The issue of *auctoritas* is a common ground of the Middle Ages. Augustine, who is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for medieval scholastics, also elaborates on this topic, for instance, *The Letters with Jerome*, 82, 1<sup>4</sup>. In this extract, the question of *auctoritas* is connected with the truth. Authority is understood as a carrier and warrantor of the truth and is limited to the canonical books of the Scripture. Anselm, when in the prologue to his *Monologion* mentions that he is going to provide a series of arguments that would edify faith without relying on the authority of the Scripture, to a certain extent broadens the meaning of *auctoritas*, in the sense that reason itself will end up circumscribed to *auctoritas*, as a warrantor of truth.<sup>5</sup>

From here onwards, the meaning of *auctoritas* will develop towards the signifying of the outcome of reason. For instance, when Bonaventure discusses the issue of authority in the prologue to his commentary on the Lombard's *Sentences*, he will describe it in close connection with the activity of reason.<sup>6</sup> Whoever uses

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<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *Letter 82.1.3* in ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland Teske, *The works of Saint Augustine*, Letters 1–99, New City Press, New York, 2001, p. 315–316: “On such terms we might amuse ourselves without fear of offending each other in the field of Scripture, but I might well wonder if the amusement was not at my expense. For I confess to your Charity that I have learned to yield this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it. As to all other writings, in reading them, however great the superiority of the authors to myself in sanctity and learning, I do not accept their teaching as true on the mere ground of the opinion being held by them.”

<sup>5</sup> Anselm, *Monologion*, trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson, The Arthur J. Banning Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p. 1: “For the writing of this meditation they prescribed – in accordance more with their own wishes than with the ease of the task or with my ability – the following format: that nothing at all in the meditation would be argued on Scriptural authority, but that in unembellished style and by unsophisticated arguments and with uncomplicated disputation rational necessity would tersely prove to be the case, whatever the conclusion resulting from the distinct inquiries would declare. [...] after frequently re-examining this treatise, I have not been able to find that I said in it anything inconsistent with the writings of the Catholic Fathers – especially with Blessed Augustine’s writings.”

<sup>6</sup> Bonaventure, *In librum primum Sententiarum*, Prooemium, q.4, conclusio (ed. Quaracchi, vol. 1, p. 14sq.): “. quadruplex est modus faciendi librum. Aliquis enim scribit alienam materiam nihil addendo, vel mutando; et iste mere dicitur scriptor. Aliquis scribit aliena addendo, sed non de suo: et iste compiler dicitur. Aliquis scribit et aliena, et sua; sed aliena tanquam principalia, et sua tanquam annexa ad evidentiam; et iste dicitur commentator. Aliquis scribit et sua, et aliena; sed sua tanquam principalia, aliena tanquam annexa ad confirmationem: et talis debet dici auctor.”

their faculty of reason as they approach a written text is an *auctor*. Therefore, engaged with the results of reason recorded in written, the compiler, the commentator, the author of a text are all *auctores* based on the use of reason while compiling, commenting or writing that text. The only one who engaged with a text is not invested with the function of an *auctor* is the scribe. With this in mind, the significance of the term '*auctoritas*' is enlarged to such an extent that any text, whether or not its thesis supports or opposes the teaching of the Scriptures, is invested with a heightened authority; the authority of reason contests the authority of the Scripture, the truth obtained through exercising reason tends to equal the revealed truth. For this reason, redefining the term '*auctoritas*' is needed, so that the authoritative eminence of the Scripture regarding knowledge and reasoning would be restored.

Starting with Thomas Aquinas, we witness a ranking of authorities based on the principle of the pre-eminence authority of Scripture. In *Summa*, q.1, art.8 this hierarchy that includes Scripture, Church fathers, philosophers, is described.<sup>7</sup>

The 14<sup>th</sup> century inherits this hierarchical structure of authority and enriches it. But the ranking criterion is no longer a positive one, that of the truth, but a negative one, that of the lack of error. We can find this model in Peter of Alliaco's *Tractatus contra Johannem de Montesono*.<sup>8</sup> At the bottom of the pyramid

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima pars,

<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1001.htm#article8, q.1, a.8, ad.2>: "This doctrine is especially based upon arguments from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation: thus we ought to believe on the authority of those to whom the revelation has been made. Nor does this take away from the dignity of this doctrine, for although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest. But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not, indeed, to prove faith (for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end), but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity. Hence the Apostle says: *Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5). Hence sacred doctrine makes use also of the authority of philosophers in those questions in which they were able to know the truth by natural reason, as Paul quotes a saying of Aratus: *As some also of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring* (Acts 17:28). Nevertheless, sacred doctrine makes use of these authorities as extrinsic and probable arguments; but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors."

<sup>8</sup> Peter of Alliaco, *Tractatus contra Johannem de Montesono* in Charles Du Plessis d'Argentré, c. II *Collectio iudiciorum*, Paris, 1728, 121b: "Sextum exemplum potest poni de quibusdam Doctoribus, qui non sunt Sancti canonizati, sicut *venerabilis Anselmus Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus*, *venerabilis Hugo de Sancto Victore*, et quidam alii, quorum dicta vel scripta in aliquibus reperiuntur erronea, et

we find the useful and probable doctrines that contain in fact errors and false opinions. They are followed by doctrines of faith purified from error and heresy, but containing a different kind of false opinions. Finally, we have the doctrines that are entirely free from error and falsehood, i.e. true. These three levels are the result of the conjunction of the well-known *Decretum Gelasium* and the Thomist doctrine of the three *loci ex auctoritate*.<sup>9</sup>

Peter of Alliaco's text exposes the junctures of this hierarchy as follows: in the uppermost point he puts the Scripture; second place is occupied by greater reliable doctrines than others – yet these doctrines are not without erroneous content; therefore, a magister who does not enjoy a high reputation can criticize a magister that surpasses him in fame (in this way may be explained the legitimate criticism made by Paul to Peter, or Augustine's criticism to Saint Cyprian, or the case of minor doctors who criticize Thomas). On the same secondary level are placed the canonized doctors as well, whose status, however, is not an indicator of his doctrinal value. Here is placed Anselm, who is not a canonized doctor, but whose doctrine is true, even if not entirely free from error, and he is compared to Saint Cyprian, canonized saint who fell however in error. Anselm's authentic doctrine should not be criticized in schools, but only glossed and explained.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, there are the secular authorities: philosophers and their commentators. A simple enumeration of those authorities based on the criteria proposed by Peter of Alliaco can be represented in the following manner: the Scripture, *Decretum Gelasium*, Church fathers, Anselm, Hugo of Saint Victor, Peter Lombard, canonized commentators on the *Sentences*, minor doctors, philosophers and their commentators.<sup>11</sup>

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tamen eorum doctrina non minus videtur esse authentica, quam doctrina S. Thomae, cum ipsi communiter in actibus Scholasticis allegentur auctoritative, nec soleant negari, sed eorum dicta reverenter glossari et exponi. Quod tamen Scholastici nondum consueverunt facere de dictis S. Thomae. Et ideo praesumptuosum videtur eius doctrinam supra illos et alios Doctores sic extollere, quod non liceat credere aut asserere ipsum in fide errare, sicut alii erraverunt."

<sup>9</sup> See above n. 7; For a broader analysis of Peter of Alliaco's text on the degrees of authority, see: Zénon Kaluza, "Auteur et plagiaire: quelques remarques", in *What is Philosophy*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen et al., W. De Gruyter, Berlin – New York, 1998, p. 312–314.

<sup>10</sup> Peter of Alliaco, *Tractatus contra Johannem de Montesono* in Charles Du Plessis d'Argentré, c. II Collectio iudiciorum (Paris, 1728) 121b: "Sextum exemplum potest poni de quibusdam Doctoribus, qui non sunt Sancti canonizati, sicut venerabilis Anselmus Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus, venerabilis Hugo de Sancto Victore, et quidam alii, quorum dicta vel scripta in aliquibus reperiuntur erronea, et tamen eorum doctrina non minus videtur esse authentica, quam doctrina S. Thomae, cum ipsi communiter in actibus Scholasticis allegentur auctoritative, nec soleant negari, sed eorum dicta reverenter glossari et exponi. Quod tamen Scholastici nondum consueverunt facere de dictis S. Thomae. Et ideo praesumptuosum videtur eius doctrinam supra illos et alios Doctores sic extollere, quod non liceat credere aut asserere ipsum in fide errare, sicut alii erraverunt."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Peter of Alliaco, *Tractatus contra Johannem de Montesono* in Charles Du Plessis d'Argentré, c. II Collectio iudiciorum, Paris, 1724, p. 115–122.

2. The ontological argument occurs for the first time in association with Anselm's name and with the note in *Proslogion* in *Summa Halensis*, Q. 1.<sup>12</sup> This *quaestio* discusses the necessity of divine essence and is divided in two chapters. The first one is ratiocinating that the divine essence exists with necessity, and the second one defends the idea that it is impossible to think that God does not exist. The fact that the divine essence exists from necessity is argued by relying on the three authorities: Anselm, Richard of Saint Victor and John of Damascus. There are displayed five reasons that substantiate the existence of God derived from five different concepts, that of being, causality, truth, good, and preeminence.

In *De trinitate*, book I, c.6, Richard notices that any being exists or can exist only in time or from eternity and have its existence from itself or from another. From the conjunction of the two modes of existence, Richard concludes that there are three ways of existence that enclose every being: 1) from eternity and from itself; 2) from eternity, but not from itself; 3) neither from eternity, nor from itself. A fourth way of existence, from eternity, but not from itself, is impossible. This is the first way of objectively reasoning the necessary existence of God.<sup>13</sup>

According to John of Damascus, *De fide Orthodoxa*, book I, c.3, whatever exists has or has not a cause, which is equivalent to to be or not to be created. All that is created is changeable, i.e. undergoes a transition from non-being to being. This conversion is possible only if there is an eternal and immutable agent who produce it. Therefore, the causal process call for the necessary existence of a first cause.<sup>14</sup>

The third and fourth ways of proving the necessary existence of God are excerpted from Anselm's *De veritate* and *Proslogion*. The first of these two ways refers to the necessity of the existence of the eternal truth, which has neither a beginning nor an end, and from which any affirmative proposition receives its truth or false value. The second way makes use of the ontological argument: the supreme good or „that than which no greater/good can be conceived” exists not only in the mind when it is conceived, but in reality, too; because to exist in reality is a greater good than to exist only in the mind.

The fifth way, from eminence, regards the matter of the degrees of being drawn from Anselm's *Monologion* and Richard's *De trinitate*. The gradualness of perfection perceivable in the great chain of being compels us to assume the existence of a super-eminent nature, otherwise the endless degrees of being would involve an absurd infinite regress. This nature is no other than God.

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, Quaracchi, Collegii St. Bonaventurae, Florence, 1930, vol. I, Inq.1, Tract.1, q.1. It is believed that *Summa Halensis* is a collective work of many early Franciscans. It is named after Alexander of Hales because he oversaw its co-authorship.

<sup>13</sup> Richard of S. Victore, *De trinitate*, lib. I, c.6 (PL 196, 893).

<sup>14</sup> John of Damascus, *De fide Orthodoxa*, ed. E.M. Buytaert, Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus. St. Bonaventure, Franciscan Institute, New-York, 1955, lib. I, c.3, 2.

In the second chapter, the author of *Summa* asks two questions: 1) whether it is necessarily known that it cannot be thought that the divine essence does not exist; 2) whether it is specific to the divine essence that it cannot be thought as not existing. The two questions consider two possible methods of knowledge: there is a major difference between what the summist calls knowledge of the knower and knowledge pertaining to the object of knowledge. In the first chapter, the summist formulates another distinction: the knowledge of the knower is distinguished in actual cognition and habitual cognition. Through habitual cognition, that is an innate ability or a *habitus* through which the knowledge of God is impressed upon us, man cannot ignore the divine reality. Again, the actual cognition consists in a double motion: in accordance with the part of 'higher reason' and the innate *habitus* we can contemplate the divine being, and according to the part of 'lower reason' we contemplate the creation. If through the second motion, because of our corrupted mind by sin, we cannot know that God exists, notwithstanding, by means of the first motion – which had to provide us with the knowledge of what is (*quid*) God, and to know what is God in himself is impossible for all human beings – we have at least the knowledge of his existence.

In the second article, where the exclusive authority used is Anselm, the summist argues that, despite the fact that the human being knows out of necessity that God exists, someone can assert that God does not exist. But such an affirmation is possible only in terms of knowledge of the knower, and never in terms of knowledge pertaining to the known object. The denial of God's existence is admitted solely as a figment, as an evident false and fabricated idea.

Two things are of note in this brief analysis. Firstly, it should be noted that the argument stated by Anselm in his *Proslogion* is explicitly and deliberately placed here into a background of provability of God's necessary existence, inappropriate context to the Anselm's argument and aim<sup>15</sup>. Secondly, it is significant to see that the summist correlates the epistemology developed in the second chapter with the ontology from the first chapter, and this correlation is thought to be the warrant of acquiring an indubitable knowledge of God's existence.

The 14<sup>th</sup> century presents an inverted image of the Franciscan paradigm from *Summa Halensis*, but it still keeps from there the argument purpose, scilicet its employment in proving the necessary existence of God. Concerning the demonstrable character of God's existence, the 14<sup>th</sup> century commentators of the

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<sup>15</sup> Lydia Schumacher, *The Halensian 'Five Ways' to Prove God's Existence: A Neglected Landmark in the History of Natural Theology*, conference paper, 2015; Lydia Schumacher, *The lost Legacy of Anselm's Argument: Re-thinking the purpose of proofs for the existence of God*, *Modern Theology* 27:1 January, 2011.

*Sentences* take as the starting point of debates the epistemology. They approach this issue by asking questions like *whether we can know God naturally*;<sup>16</sup> or *whether the concept by which we know God is a common notion*;<sup>17</sup> or *whether the sentence 'God is' is known per se*;<sup>18</sup> or *whether the sentence 'God is' can be known by the traveler (viator) through demonstration*<sup>19</sup>. Hence, the ontological argument occurs, after 1330, in a twofold context: the particular one, that of logical theory and propositional analysis, and the universal one, that of the exploitation of epistemology in clarifying the scientific nature of Theology.<sup>20</sup>

Gregory of Rimini is an Augustinian, one of the greatest scholastic theologians of 14<sup>th</sup> century, who lectured on the *Sentences* in Paris during 1343-1344. In his *Lectura* on the *Senteneces*, distinctions 42-44, q.3, Rimini debates on the ontological argument against Monachus Niger, an oxonian commentator of the *Sentences* about 1336.<sup>21</sup> As Monachus states, anyone who understands the proposition 'a greater than God cannot exist' can understand the first part of the sentence, which is the logical subject: 'a greater than God'. Consequently, the logical subject 'a greater than God' may be conceived, despite the fact that nothing greater than God can be conceived. Hence it follows the proposition 'a greater can be thought than that than which no greater can be thought'. The same result is obtained when the predication of existence is added. The derived proposition is a complex and self-contradictory one: 'a greater can exist than that than which no

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum: Super primum*, tom. I, ed. A. Trapp et al., Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, 1981, dist. 1, q.4, p. 412-425; Peter of Attarabia, *In primum Sententiarum scriptum*, ed. P. S. Azcona, Madrid, 1974, pars secunda, q.3-4, p. 201sqq.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Wodeham, *Lectura Secunda in Librum Primum Sententiarum*, vol. 3, ed. Rega Wood and Gedeon Gál, St. Bonaventure, New York, 1990, p. 34-35; Gerard of Siena, *In primum Sententiarum*, dist. 3, q.1.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Duns Scotus, *Commentaria oxoniensia ad IV libros magistri Sententiarum*, ed. M.F. Garcia. Imprint Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi) prope Florentiam: ex typographia Collegii s. Bonaventurae, 1912-1914, Ordinatio I, dist. 2, q.1 et 2, sectio I.; Gregory of Rimini, 2011, dist. 2, q.1, additio 3, p. 275. sqq.; James of Eltville, *Commentarius in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, lib. I, q. 6, dist. 2 et 3. For the stage of Romanian edition of James of Eltville's commentary under the aegis of Monica Brinzei's University of Cluj-Napoca research program see <http://www.jacobusdealtavilla.ro/>.

<sup>19</sup> Altavilla, *Commentarius in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, lib. I, q. 6, dist. 2 et 3.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. William J. Courtenay, *Schools and scholars*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1987, p. 343-346; Paul Vignaux, "La preuve ontologique chez Jean de Ripa (I Sent. Dist. II, qu.I)", in *Die Wirkungsgeschichte Anselms von Canterbury, Akten der ersten Internationalen Anselm-Tagung*, Bad Wimpfen – 13. September bis 16. September 1970, Frankfurt am Main, 1975 (Analecta Anselmiana, t. 4/2), p. 173-194.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum: Super primum*, tom. III, ed. A. Trapp et al., Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, 1984, Lib. I, dist. 42-44, q. 3, a. 3, p. 432-438.

greater can exist'. In order that the synthetic character of this proposition be seen it can be re-written as a disjunctive proposition: 'God exists or a greater than God exists'. Recalling the initial argument it can be observed that the Anselmian argument denies exactly the possibility that something greater than God can exist. Thence, the second part of the disjunctive proposition is false, and the first one is true.

Rimini's criticism is grounded on the scholastic referential theory. Rimini aims not only at avoiding a common error of reason, which Kant, much later, will lay down in sharp words, error insinuated into the Monachus Niger's argument; but aims even at rethinking the ontological argument itself; thus an openly criticism of Anselm. The ratiocination is progressive. At a first stage, the Anselmian argument is rejected in its entirety, Rimini reproaching the claim of provability of the Anselmian argument that occurs in *Proslogion's* prologue. If the Anselmian *modus operandi* is accepted as cogent and well founded, than, following the same line of reasoning, the proof of the existence of any universal may be submitted.<sup>22</sup> Through the second stage, Rimini is preparing the ground for rejecting the argument made by Monachus Niger. Rimini's proposal is to modify the taxis of the Anselmian argument. For the argument to fit Anselm's purpose, the word '*maius*' must be placed in a sequential position of the expression '*potest cogitari*'. The meaning of the word '*maius*' is different depending on the position it holds in the argument. The ontological argument, as composed by Anselm – *quo maius cogitari non potest* –, misses the Anselm's mind itself. The original seat of the word '*maius*' generates the implication of a comparison between beings, things pertaining to the same onto-logical order. But the essence of the ontological argument is not consisting in the impossibility of conceiving or understanding things imagined against reality, such as a fly greater than an elephant, which can be conceived regardless of the existence or non-existence of such a thing. The intent of the argument is to facilitate a comparison between possible and real so as to indicate that that which is possible is better or greater if the real existence is added to it. This type of comparison is realizable only by postposition of '*maius*' in regard to '*potest cogitari*'.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Gregory of Rimini, 1984, Lib. I, dist. 42–44, q. 3, a. 3, p. 432: "Primum patet, quoniam, si ille esset bonum modus arguendi, similiter posset probari quod est aliqua albedo qua maius non potest aliquid cogitari. Patet arguendo in forma sua sic: Albedo qua non potest aliquid maius cogitari est in intellectu, et non solo intellectu; ergo est in re. Consequentia patet ut sua. Et prima pars antecedentis probatur, quia audiens hoc, quod dico 'albedo qua non potest aliquid maius cogitari', intelligit quod audit, et quod intelligit, in intellectu eius est etc. Secunda etiam pars similiter suae probatur, quia, si est in solo intellectu, potest cogitari esse in re – quod maius est –, et sic albedine qua maius cogitari non potest aliquid maius cogitari potest."

<sup>23</sup> Gregory of Rimini, 1984, Lib. I, dist. 42–44, q. 3, a. 3, p. 432–433: "Unus secundum quod ly '*maius*' potest intelligi praecedere totum illud '*potest cogitari*'; alius quod potest sequi. Et haec bene



The third stage of Rimini's criticism brings to the fore, as previously mentioned, the referential theory (*suppositio*). Rimini's proposal regarding the displacing of '*maius*' after verbal construction '*potest cogitari*' makes sense and has strength only in synchrony with this theory. It argues that a term or a sign stands in a propositional context for the thing that is made known through it; the substantive terms have the capacity to stand for something. Thus, when a substantive term is used in a complex structure, i.e. a proposition, the term not only signifies, but also refers to (for example, the term '*stone*' can refer to all its significates, actual or possible stone).<sup>24</sup> The term that refers to a possible significate is called by Rimini a term that signifies in a material manner (*supponit materialiter*), and that which refers to an actual significate is called a term that signifies in a significative and personal manner (*supponit significative et personaliter*).<sup>25</sup> What Rimini understands by term that signifies in a material manner is a meaningful sound (*vox*), a saying. Reconsidered in this framework, the ontological argument is understood as follows: the utterance (*vox*) '*quo maius cogitari non potest*' exists in the intellect, but not only in the intellect; therefore, exists in reality (*est in re*). Understood as such, the argument is logically valid, because the task of utterance is the reification of the mental language. On the other hand, if the subject of the first assumption is understood as referring in a significative and personal manner the argument is formal nonvalid and redundant. To signify something *segnificative et personaliter* is equal with the act of pointing out (*accusatio*) towards a being already existing in reality. The Anselmian error is dual: firstly, no being (*ex: stone*) can exist in the intellect; secondly, trying to prove the existence of a thing that can be indicated directly is redundant. However, there is a class of terms escaping this functionality. Terms such as the universal negative *nihil*, or the particular negative *non aliquid*

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different, sicut patet in exemplo: Supposito quod impossibile sit aliquam formicam esse maiorem elephante, haec est vera 'nulla formica maior elephante potest cogitari', patet, quia sua contradictoria est falsa, scilicet haec 'aliqua formica maior elephante potest cogitari', nullam enim singularem habet veram, sed quaelibet est falsa propter falsam implicationem a parte subiecti, sive demonstratur formica existens sive non existens, et tamen, si ly 'maior' postponatur sic 'nulla formica potest cogitari maior elephante', ipsa est falsa, nihil enim prohibet aliquam, immo certe quamlibet formicam quemquam cogitare esse maiorem elephante. [...] Tunc ad probationem Anselmi, cum dicitur 'aliquid quo maius non potest cogitari est in intellectu, et non solum in intellectu; ergo est in re', patet, quia, si debeat esse ad propositum, oportet quod ly 'maius' intelligitur sequi ly 'potest cogitari', quia in illo sensu negatur antecedens primum, et tunc distingo antecedens huius consequentiae Anselmi..."

<sup>24</sup> The referential theory broadly and briefly considered here (terms signify things) arouses fervent debates between commentators of the *Sentences* (William of Ockham, Adam of Wodeham, Peter of Alliaco), but not only between them (see, for example, Peter of Spain), debates which result in very different and nuanced theses which have their place in a separate study.

<sup>25</sup> Gregory of Rimini, 1984, Lib. I, dist. 42–44, q. 3, a. 3, p. 433–434.

subsume this class. Anselm himself established this distinction and circumscribed the term *nihil* in the category of terms that signify things and being in a destructive way (cf. Anselm, *De casu Diaboli*, c.11). The term 'a greater than God', from Monachus Niger's argument, is a logically equivalent of the subject from the Anselmian argument 'that than which no greater can be conceived', and its function in the argument is to delineate a class of non-being, that is to signify the *omne quod est* in a destructive manner.

Returning to Monachus Niger's proof, as we have already seen, Rimini disapproves the illicit transition from a predication, in antecedent, with a subject that signifies in material manner (*vox*), towards a consequent with a subject that signifies in a significative and personal way (*aliquid*). Moreover, Rimini finds that the ontological argument, as it was thought by Anselm and as it was expounded by Monachus Niger – a greater than God –, does not signify anything, but it serves to delineate and to universalize a negative situation established by the predicate of assertion in the first assumption – 'a greater than God cannot exist'. Thusly, the logical subject is understood by Rimini as an equipollent of the logical predicate, thereby obtaining a tautology: what cannot exist cannot exist.

Bradwardine, another Augustinian theologian from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, approaches the issue from a different perspective. In his case, epistemology and ontology conjoin and serve each other. The existence of God can be proven only by a dialectical blend of the principles of the two fields. Chapter I of the *De causa Dei* gives us the premises of Bradwardine's project. The first one reproduces the definition of God stated in Gaunilo's criticism to Anselm: God is absolutely good and perfect, so nothing better or more perfect can exist. This premise is supported by appealing to authorities: Anselm, Trismegistus, Aristotle, Boethius, Richard of Saint Victor.<sup>26</sup> The second one says that there is no infinite causal process among beings, but that in every genus there must be a first cause.<sup>27</sup>

The reasoning evolves as an interaction between possible and impossible based on the Aristotelian definition of possible.<sup>28</sup> The consequence is the shift from the logical possibility to the real necessity. From the way in which God is understood

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute causarum*, ed. Anna Lukács, V & R unipress in Göttingen, 2013, Lib. I, cap. 1, p. 63–64.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Bradwardine, 2013, Lib. I, cap. 1, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> Aristotel, *De interpretatione*, 12, 21 b; Thomas Bradwardine, 2013, Lib. I, cap. 1, p. 64–67: "Summatum quoque 'possibile' ad communem modum loquendi, vel si oporteat maxime absolute, pro illo videlicet, quod per se et formaliter simpliciter contradictionem seu repugnantiam non includit: Ex quo scilicet posito et admissio pro possibili absolute secundum speciem obligationum, quae positio nominatur, nusquam in consequentia bona et formali simpliciter, sequitur impossibile absolute, quod scilicet per se et formaliter simpliciter contradictionem includit. Omnis namque repugnantia contradictionem importat et parit."

in the first premise, Bradwardine infers that the true proposition 'God can exist' becomes a true declarative proposition 'God exists', and the last one becomes a true necessary proposition 'God necessarily exists'.<sup>29</sup> In this way, God is understood as the first simple (*incomplexe*) ontological principle, and the proposition 'God exists' is accounted as the first true proposition and this truth precedes any other truth in the ontological order. By derivation, the proposition 'God does not exist' is the first false proposition.<sup>30</sup>

As a conclusion I will return to Anselm's *Proslogion* and to the context in which the ontological argument emerged. In the prologue, Anselm calls on God, in a prayer in which he confesses his inability or powerlessness in knowing him, and he requests God to restore in him his image effaced by sin. Anselm does not try to obtain an incontestable knowledge of God's existence nor try to retrieve an innate knowledge of God's existence, but he wants to establish an ontological identity between God and the supreme good so that he can shed a new light on and reshape the things from the world starting from God. It is about restoring the world order in the light of faith, i.e. a redefinition and a reevaluation of things as God has designed them to be. In this regard, the ontological argument is the point where the world conversion takes place, the moment in which man reacquires the ability to think the world in the categories of faith. So, what the 14<sup>th</sup> century inherits and develops is, in fact, a Franciscan construct, essentially different from the Anselmian one.

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<sup>30</sup> Thomæ Bradwardini Archiepiscopi olim Cantuariensis, *De causa Dei, contra Pelagium, et De virtute causarum*, ad suos Mertonenses, libri tres: iussu reverendiss. Georgii Abbot Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi; opera et studio Dr. Henrici Savillii, Colegij Mertonensis in Academia Oxoniensi custodis, ex scriptis codicibus nunc primum editi, 1618, Lib. I, cap. 1; <http://showcases.exist-db.org/exist/apps/eebo/works/A16626.xml?root=1.2.3.1.6&odd=teisimple.odd>.

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## ARCHAIC ELEMENTS IN MIRCEA ELIADE'S "LEGIONARY" WRITINGS

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**ABSTRACT.** *Archaic Elements in Mircea Eliade's "Legionary" Writings.* Mircea Handoca collected Mircea Eliade's articles accused of legionarism in the volume *"Legionary" texts and on "Romanianism"*. The present paper adopts a neutral attitude towards the Romanian scholar's political orientation so the question "Was Eliade a legionary?" will not be asked. Our approach is an attempt to detect in these articles the early presence of some ideas that would later emerge in Eliade's study of the history of religions.

**Keywords:** *Mircea Eliade, the archaic man, homo religiosus, the legionary movement, sacred, profane, sacrifice*

The title of the present paper may seem somewhat rhetorical due to the term "legionary" being written in quotes. Therefore, an explanation is needed at the beginning. Mircea Handoca, considered to be Mircea Eliade's best editor, collected in the volume *"Legionary" texts and on "Romanianism"* the articles incriminated for their legionary, anti-Semitic, fascist, and nationalist position, published by Eliade in periodicals such as *Vremea, Buna Vestire, Iconar, Cuvântul, Sânziana, Credința, Revista Fundațiilor Regale*. The present paper does not aim to discuss Mircea Eliade's political attitude, defend his image against accusations or create an aura around political affiliations specific to Romanian interwar period but, as the title suggests, it attempts to reveal aspects of the archaic in the texts described as extreme right.

The year 1927 sees the emergence of a "movement" of Romanian intellectuals with "headquarters" at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Bucharest. "Nae's children" (as Dan C. Mihăilescu nicknamed them) initiated what was later to become an extreme right political movement; thus, in 1927 Mircea Eliade published a series of articles entitled "Spiritual itinerary" in the paper *Cuvântul* while

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at Iași, on June 24, The Legion of the Archangel Michael was founded by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Ion Moța, Ilie Gârneală, Corneliu Georgescu and Radu Mironovici.<sup>1</sup> Eliade calls it “the ‘class’ of 1927”, who declare themselves as being “in their intentions apolitical, autochthonous, anti-French, orthodox, anti-1848 ideology, anti-Junimea and at the same time in open battle with all preceding generations”.<sup>2</sup>

“The Spiritual Itinerary” includes 12 articles written while Mircea Eliade was on a student scholarship in Geneva (summer and autumn of 1927) and published in *Cuvântul* between September 6 and November 16, 1927.<sup>3</sup> After a few years, Eliade offered an “explanation” of the manifesto: “We were the first Romanian generation who did not have to carry out prerequisite historical objectives. In order not to sink into cultural provincialism or spiritual sterility, we had to know what was going on in the world, in our days”.<sup>4</sup>

Briefly, the generation of 1927 aimed to valorize the national cultural patrimony, to resurrect Romanian spirituality, and create the famous *New Man*, educated in religious and creative spirit:

I felt the culture had to be integrated with the nation. We were all convinced that speaking at the university was not enough. We had to get down into the arena. As in Spain, we thought that, following Unamuno and Ortega, the diary would become the intellectual’s tool. We did not have the inferiority complex of our teachers’ generation, by publishing only in academic journals and refusing to publish in a daily newspaper. We wanted to address the widest audience possible, to give impetus to Romanian culture which, without this participation, risked sinking into provincialism.<sup>5</sup>

The interwar political situation affected the academic and intellectual elites, who “had to” make choices between sides and join either the proponents of the extreme left or those of the extreme right. Mircea Eliade was associated with the latter, together with Emil Cioran, Mihail Polihroniade, Constantin Noica, Haig Acterian, Petre Țuțea, Alexandru Christian Tell and others. Even before the onset of the communist regime, Mircea Eliade was attacked and expatriated from the Romanian culture, a situation that would last for many years. While the scholar’s studies were recognized in

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<sup>1</sup> Dan C. Mihăilescu, „Generația ’27, atunci și acum” [“Generation ’27, Then and Now”] in *Cuvântul*, year XI, March 2005, no. 3, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Marta Petreu, *De la Junimea la Noica. Studii de cultură românească [From Junimea to Noica. Studies in Romanian Culture Studies]*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2011, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Handoca, *Viața lui Mircea Eliade [The Life of Mircea Eliade]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, pp. 29–30.

<sup>4</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Memorii [Memoirs]*, op. cit., p. 137, apud Mircea Handoca, *Viața lui Mircea Eliade [The Life of Mircea Eliade]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului [Ordeal by Labyrinth]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1990, p. 70.

the Western world, in Romania the most grotesque accusations and insults were brought against him. Among his most virulent detractors, we mention: Belu Silber, Oscar Lemnaru, Victor Iliu, D. Murărașu, Anton Dumitriu, Nichifor Crainic, Mihail Sebastian – “They set on him like a pack determined to tear him, dozens of anonymous illiterates, along with valuable envious cultural personalities, some of their own initiative, but most executing orders from the ‘center’.”<sup>6</sup>

I will not dwell on the intellectual massacre of the two sides nor will I accuse or exonerate Mircea Eliade's political attitudes because they have already been analyzed by many commentators.<sup>7</sup> I will refer to the concept of the archaic discussed in his writings, and then continue by identifying specific elements of traditional society in the articles in question.

### Aspects of the archaic

The concept underlying Mircea Eliade's entire hermeneutics (as hermeneutics is the foundation of his studies) is the sacred, which is present in all his writings in a concrete way (predominantly) or is just mentioned, ambiguously, as assumption (in the writings of his youth). The issue of the sacred is encountered both in his scientific writings and in his literary works, in his novels and the fantastic prose. To clarify the concept, Mircea Eliade deals with the manifestations of the sacred in relation to the profane. At the heart of this relationship is the man: firstly, the man of the traditional society, the “instrument” meant for the revealing of the sacred; then, the profane modern man, “suffering” from reminiscences of the “primitive” man. We shall use the term “primitive” in quotation marks, as it is used by Eliade in all his works, precisely to avoid its pejorative meaning. Thus, the “primitive” means the archaic man, who will later be theorized by Eliade as *homo religiosus*.

Returning to the issue of the sacred, it should be noted that in his writings Eliade uses his particular specific terms to describe its dimensions. Thus, we find the concept of *hierophany* which involves the manifestation of the sacred:

Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. To designate the act of manifestation of the sacred, we have proposed the term *hierophany*. It is a fitting term, because it does not imply anything further; it expresses no more than is implicit in its etymological content, i.e., that something sacred shows itself to us.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Mircea Handoca, *Eliade și Noica [Eliade and Noica]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Marta Petreu, *De la Junimea la Noica. Studii de cultură românească [From Junimea to Noica. Studies in Romanian Culture]*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul și profanul [The Sacred and the Profane]*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2007, p. 13. Translation of the excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from French: W. R. Trask, Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957, p. 11



The concept of sacred is antinomic and can only be relevant in relation to the profane – with the sacred being expressed by *homo religiosus* and the profane being expressed by *homo profanus*, with the respective opposition of the *real* and *unreal*:

The man of the archaic societies tends to live as much as possible in the sacred or in close proximity to consecrated objects. The tendency is perfectly understandable, because, for “primitives” as for the man of all pre-modern societies, the sacred is equivalent to a *power* and, in the last analysis, to *reality*.<sup>9</sup>

Presented as “two modes of being in the world”, the sacred and the profane embody different human experiences that are essentially the same in their substance but are perceived and manifest themselves in opposite modes. Adrian Marino synthesizes the explanation of the sacred in the following way:

The simplest definition of the sacred is “religious sentiment” whose existence nobody contests, even if its justification is disputed with rational, valid arguments. This feeling is (we quote from Mircea Eliade’s sphere of references) “an inner and personal conviction, an a priori category of reason”, it is the “in depth insight of the human spirit in its entirety”, of that which is “ultimate, infinite, unconditional in human spiritual life”.<sup>10</sup>

The main elements of Eliade’s hermeneutics that lead to the revelation of the sacred are the archetype, the myth and the symbol, elements which correspond to space, time and nature. Thus, the archaic man lives in a sacred space (considers it sacred and resacralizes it), in a sacred time (which tends to become history, but this is refuted as the man resacralizes it by imitating myths), and in the sacred nature (cosmological space built on religious symbols and meanings). The archaic man lives by the process of *imitatio dei*, finding divine creation, the only real creation, reaching its meaning by deciphering the significances present around (in space, in nature):

For Mircea Eliade, “the sacred man” is, above all a *homo semnificans*. The openness to the sacred is inherent in human condition, in the structure of human consciousness and not a stage in the history of this consciousness: “It is impossible to imagine how consciousness could have occurred without it having assigned significance to human impulses and experiences. The consciousness of the real and

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from French: W.R. Trask, Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957, pp. 12–13

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Marino, *Hermeneutica lui Mircea Eliade [The Hermeneutics of Mircea Eliade]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1980, pp. 151–152.

significant world is intimately related to the discovery of the sacred". This idea is repeated in dozens of texts and contexts and is undoubtedly the foundation of Mircea Eliade's hermeneutics.<sup>11</sup>

Coming back to the sacred elements, the so-called bridges between man and the cosmos, Mircea Eliade questions the archetypes, assigning the archaic man the capacity to decipher them, an action that leads to existential exercises:

If one goes to the trouble of penetrating the authentic meaning of an archaic myth or symbol, one cannot but observe that this meaning shows a recognition of a certain situation in the cosmos and that, consequently, it implies a metaphysical position.<sup>12</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the archaic man is in a continuous process of imitation, of *imitatio dei*, from the places he chooses for dwelling (always in the center of the world – a center that actually is everywhere, but by certain typologies it is revealed to all) to the regeneration of time (e.g., the transition into the New Year – "The Creation of the World, which took place in *illo tempore*, in the beginning of the year, is thus reactualized each year"<sup>13</sup>) and to imitation rituals ("We must do what the Gods did in the beginning").<sup>14</sup>

Another notable aspect is the fact that the modern man, in spite of his profane nature, has not suffered a complete desacralization, meaning that reminiscences of the archaic man can be still found in him because in the modern profane man dwells *homo religiosus*: "We assume that our human condition is based on this fundamental condition. And this 'fundamental human' can be said to be 'religious' no matter the appearances because it is all about the meaning of life."<sup>15</sup>

Hence the connection between the man of the traditional society and the *New Man* described in the articles accused of legionarism. Adrian Marino discusses this issue by calling the new humanism promoted by Eliade, militant hermeneutics. It is called militant because of its structure meant to influence, to transform, to penetrate the human spirit and guide it towards an opening of consciousness – in

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 155.

<sup>12</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Mitul eternei reîntoarceri [The Myth of Eternal Return]*, Univers Enciclopedic Gold Publishing House, București, 2011, p. 13. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, translated: W. R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, translated: W. R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 2, 1, 1, *apud* Mircea Eliade, *Mitul eternei reîntoarceri*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului [Ordeal by Labyrinth]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1990, p. 103.

more colloquial words, to open man's eyes to his human nature and to direct and educate him in a creative spirit. And this initiative of Eliade and of his colleagues in the "class of 1930" subsequently brought upon him denigration, accusations, expatriation, and non-recognition:

The ideas remain inert unless they are accompanied by a certain "agitation and propaganda", of direct social action. Militant hermeneutics is just the crystallization and maturation of this conviction: "A creative historical-religious hermeneutics might stimulate, nourish and renew philosophical thought."<sup>16</sup>

### Archaic elements in the "legionary" writings

A particularly significant article for our topic is "Ion Moța and Vasile Marin", published in *Vremea*, nr. 9, January 24, 1937. Seven legionary volunteers enlisted with the anticommunist camp in the Spanish Civil War, including Ion Moța (founder of the Legion of the Archangel Michael) and Vasile Marin, an action which Eliade considered symbolic: "But the departure of the seven Romanian legionary commanders in Spain – where they fought as mere volunteers in shock troops – was symbolic."<sup>17</sup>

The article is a tribute in memory of the two leaders who lost their lives on the Spanish front – the symbolic death of the two is "above divine values and heroism."<sup>18</sup> Their action, which is perfect and at the same time striving for self-perfection, is in itself a sacrifice founded on a spiritual pillar:

The voluntary death of Ion Moța and Vasile Marin has a mystical meaning: the sacrifice for Christianity. It is a sacrifice to substantiate the heroism and faith of an entire generation. It is a sacrifice meant to exploit, strengthen Christianity, to dynamize the youth.<sup>19</sup>

Ion Moța's portrait can be summarized in one word: "martyr", namely he who sacrifices himself in the name of faith and "proves to the others that such a faith saves one from the fear of death, and in it one may find support after one

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<sup>16</sup> Adrian Marino, *Hermeneutica lui Mircea Eliade [The Hermeneutics of Mircea Eliade]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1980, p. 294.

<sup>17</sup> *Ion Moța și Vasile Marin [Ion Moța and Vasile Marin]*, published in *Vremea*, year X (1937), January 24, no. 472, p. 3, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre românism [Mircea Eliade. "Legionary" Texts and on "Romanianism"]*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Idem*.

found a sense of existence".<sup>20</sup> Or, in this case, the meaning of existence is revealed in the action of the warrior, in its purpose. Ion Moța dies for faith, for spirit, for values that were meant to revive Romania, to create a Christian country:

Ion Moța believed that the younger generation's mission is to reconcile Romania with God. To transform the dead letter in Christian life. To fight with every means against the powers of darkness. In the hour when he felt Lucifer clashed again in the fight with Christ – Ion Moța, orthodox crusader, left adamant, with heart at peace, to sacrifice himself for the Savior's triumph.<sup>21</sup>

The same description can be found in the case of comrade Vasile Marin, a more than heroic figure who, in his turn, showed that he was not afraid of death: "Destiny chose them to testify; to show the others the serenity faith gives you, the Christian and heroic sense life gets when you are ready at any moment to renounce it."<sup>22</sup>

The motif of sacrifice is complex and dates back to prehistoric times, whether it refers to the sacrifice of others or to self-sacrifice. An example from traditional societies would be the creation of a sanctuary, of a space that requires human sacrifice – this is present within the oldest indigenous tribes down to the local regions, in the ballad of Master Manole where the raising of the church demands human sacrifice. Self-sacrifice, in this case, occurs with a meaning, a purpose. It is a consequence of the discovery of the meaning of existence. Or, modern man is confused and lost in history, in the moment and in the social turmoil, alien to the purpose of his existence on earth – in contrast, the sense of existence is revealed to the archaic man, or even more, he "fights" to discover it and his existence is meaningless without a purpose. Ion Moța discovers this meaning – he is doomed to die for an ideal, hence his voluntarism in combat which would not be called mere "courage". Reconciliation in the face of death and acceptance of the destiny make him a prototype of traditional man. Death seen as a "passage from one mode of existence to another"<sup>23</sup> assumes complexity, first of all because it is not planned or deliberate but because it must happen:

It can be said, in a brief formula, that the "primitive" world does not conceive Death as a natural and necessary phenomenon, it is only the consequence of an accident which took place in *illo tempore*, in the mythical time of the beginnings, and to this

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<sup>20</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>23</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Arta de a muri [The Art of Dying]*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 102

accident followed by a downfall is attributed the foundation of the current human condition, substantially depleted in comparison to the previous state.<sup>24</sup>

On studying more thoroughly the archaic element, it is apparent that the sacrifice of Ion Moța and Vasile Marin, their symbolic death, which Eliade appropriates, is not a tragedy, because existence does not stop here (Christianity, the purpose of the two warrior's battle, supports the existence of the afterlife). Thus, this death (which, once identified as symbolic, becomes initiation) is a retreat from time to *illo tempore*, it is an action that also happened first in *illo tempore*, an act repeated *ab origine*:

Death does not have the meaning we are generally tempted to assign it but means the following: the past is done with, a profane existence is put to an end – in order that another regenerated one begins. Initiating death is thus a start, it is never *an end*. There is no ritual or myth in which initiating death is encountered as the end but as a *sine qua non* condition of passing to another mode of being, indispensable evidence of regeneration, of the beginning of a new life.<sup>25</sup>

The funerals of the two martyrs (if we are allowed to call them so) are described in the article “Comments on an oath”, published in *Vremea*, on 21 February 1937. The convoy accompanied by tens of thousands of people swear an oath before the coffin: “Moța and Marin, I swear before God, before your holy sacrifice, for Christ and the Legion, to relinquish the earthly joys, to renounce human love and, for the resurrection of my nation, am ready at any moment to face death!”<sup>26</sup> The entire article, accused mostly of paying tribute to the Legion, relates to the glorification of the two “heroes” but it is not this aspect that interests us but Eliade’s description of the *New Man*. As mentioned above, the sacrifice of Ion Moța and Vasile Marin occurs voluntarily, naturally, as an inherent, predestined given – the man at peace with death, who discovered the meaning of existence and does not avoid it, does not find the tragic or finality in it. Eliade underlines the importance of this oath enthusiastically believing in it because it is meant to revive spiritual Romania, the religiosity of man who could rebuild a society founded on the spirit that knows no political and economical greed. He finds the tragic element in this event due the solemnity and solidarity of those assembled who, having the two volunteers as example, are bound to pass with them:

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120.

<sup>26</sup> “Comentariu la un jurământ” [“Comment on an Oath”], published in *Vremea*, 21 February 1937, no. 476, p. 2, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre românism* [Mircea Eliade. “Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”], p. 44.

The ascetic vision contained by this oath is tragic – as it means fighting with oneself, renunciation, restraint – but not pessimistic. On the contrary, the solemnity and seriousness of the decision to give up the human love fail to hide the joy of the other love, the Christian heavenly one. Renunciation of earthly pleasures is not a diminution of being, a sterilizing of its substance – but on the contrary, a frantic increase of the spiritual being, a true victory of the real against transient, illusory, desperate human joys.<sup>27</sup>

The issue of death and self-sacrifice appears again because the “salvation of the Nation is not possible without sacrifice; no resurrection, in no order of existence is possible without death”.<sup>28</sup> The *New Man* mentioned here is actually the “old”, or the return of the “primitive”, the man of the traditional society who lived in the sacred and for whom there was no possible existence beyond this dimension – “a *new man*, a man for whom spiritual life exists.”

Therefore, in his article *Meditation on Burning of the Cathedrals*, Mircea Eliade insists on blaming the action of church-burning. His references are Christian but could have been to any other denomination because the universality of Eliade’s meditation on religiosity is not diminished by his support for Christianity; thus, the extreme left is condemned for massacres of clergy and for burning churches. Hitler, in his atheism, maintained a synagogue in central Berlin, whereas communists first and foremost acted by destroying cults and dispelling all spiritual values. Hence the denial of the religious and the attempted creation of man spiritually sterile, on the one hand, and the respect for the sacred, on the other. To destroy a place of worship is the equivalent of a spiritual massacre of the individual, it is denying the origins and moving towards chaos, but not to the primordial one that led to the creation of the world, but the Luciferian, meant to destroy religious man:

Take a little time to consider those details that explain one another: bloodlust, unnecessary savagery; the lust to burn churches; the refusal of spiritual primacy (of any spiritual primacy, be it secular or Buddhist); the humiliation of European values (monogamy, family, charity, Mediterranean beauty, the personality).<sup>29</sup>

Another feature of the archaic found in the texts that we are discussing is that of freedom, or rather (in this context) the lack of freedom of modern man, which is a consequence of his captivity in history – in other words, the issue of the “terror of history”, often mentioned by Eliade. Hence the frenzy of the scholar in

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 43.

portraying General Cantacuzino, against the description of Romanian people as a nation of slaves, but not of their own fault, but because of external forces which have been permitted to invade the local culture (an aspect debated in the article “Blind Pilots”<sup>30</sup>):

In the midst of such a society – Balkan trash, the emancipated gypsies,<sup>31</sup> “serfs ignorant of freedom, servants, hired servants and mercenaries – General Cantacuzino would come down as if from legend.”<sup>32</sup> The lack of human freedom described by Mircea Eliade is caused primarily by lack of spirituality, by religious sterility as a really free man is one who is aware of divinity, freedom being basically a consequence of faith:

It is to say the least strange to hear a man who does not believe in God, does not believe in the primacy of the spirit, does not believe in life after death, clamor in the name of “freedom”. Such a man, when he is in good faith, confuses freedom with libertinism and anarchy. There can be no freedom but in spiritual life. Those who refuse the primacy of spirit, automatically fall into mechanistic determinism (Marxism) or irresponsibility.<sup>33</sup>

However, over time, struggle happens strictly historically – the archaic man killed and sacrificed within a religious perimeter, his action having a religious meaning. One could interpret similarly the action of contemporary warriors but that is not so because they are ignorant of the divine, their warfare is intrinsic – they are not aware of the fight of Good against Evil and the actions become merely bestial, without sense or purpose, accomplished outside the spirit. This is illustrated in Eliade’s statement on the Gulag and the Holocaust: “All this can be compared with the Aztecs: They all thought they had a justification. The Aztecs believed they helped the Sun God, the Nazis and the Russians believed that they made history.”<sup>34</sup> That is, for the Aztecs the sacrifice was transcendent and transhistorical while, at the opposite pole, the Communists and Nazis engaged in a historical fight stripped of any religious significance.

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<sup>30</sup> *Piloții orbi [Blind Pilots]*, published in *Vremea*, no. 505, 19 September 1937, p. 3 *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism” [Mircea Eliade. “Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”]*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. “Sloboziile” = emancipated gypsies (cf. Mircea Eliade).

<sup>32</sup> *Mitul generalului [The Myth of the General]*, published in *Buna Vestire*, year I (1937), October 14, no. 189, p. 2, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre românism Mircea Eliade. [“Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”]*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Libertate [Freedom]*, published in *Iconar*, (Cernăuți), year III, 1937, no. 5, p. 2, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism” Mircea Eliade. [“Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”]*, p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului [Ordeal by Labyrinth]*, p. 111.

Beyond religion the man is trapped, a prisoner of the time in which he lives, a prisoner of the past, a prisoner of history. Eliade's hermeneutics proposes the understanding of the past through the present and the understanding of the present through the past. These constraints generate the concept of "terror of history". By being away from God and his own spiritual side, modern man gets trapped and the course of his life contributes to history while he, in his turn, draws on the history of his predecessors:

The "Terror of history" is for me the experience of a man who is no longer religious, who has therefore no hope to find an ultimate meaning in the drama of history, but who is forced to endure the crimes of history without understanding their purpose. A Jew trapped in the city of Babylon suffered enormously, but his suffering made sense: Yahweh wanted to punish His people. And he knew that by the end victory will be Yahweh's, so the Good will prevail... Even for Hegel, any event, any endeavor was a manifestation of the universal spirit and therefore had significance. Therefore, the Evil in history could be if not justified, at least explained rationally... But when historical events are devoid of any transhistorical significance and if they are no longer what they used to be in the traditional world – ordeals for a people or an individual – then we are dealing with what I called the "terror of history".<sup>35</sup>

The archaic man is deemed to be a creation of the divine, a creation that occurred in *illo tempore*, in a mythical time, while the modern man considers himself as the result of linear historical events, thus taking a first step towards his and the world's desacralization. Yet, the desacralization or the demystification of life, living outside the spiritual, proclaims man's lack of freedom.

To exemplify the above, namely the issue of freedom that leads to the perfection of self, we return to Ion Moța and Vasile Marin, embodiments of the free man who lived "the primacy of the spiritual, against the primacy of the temporal in which the previous generations believed."<sup>36</sup> The two martyrs who broke the chains of the mundane and of the profane and for whom death was an initiation, are similar to the archaic man who, "To become a man in the proper sense he must die to this first (natural) life and be reborn to a higher life, which is at once religious and cultural."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>36</sup> *Fără titlu [No Title]*, published in *Buna Vestire*, year II, no. 262, 14 January 1938, p. 4, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism”*. [*Mircea Eliade. "Legionary" Texts and on "Romanianism"*], p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul și profanul [The Sacred and the Profane]*, p. 141. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from French: W.R. Trask, Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957, p. 187.



The man in bondage, chained, trapped in the social and the profane will not find the meaning of existence, will not create, nor will he know the others but his existence will be limited to a simple mechanistic and degrading spiritual sterility which will impact on his whole being, because, as Eliade says: “The purpose of existence and the duty of every man is the creation.”<sup>38</sup>

The article “The Province and the Guard” approaches the concept of reality, of presence and faith in reality, a characteristic element of the archaic man. For the archaic man, the only reality is the sacred: “Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them.”<sup>39</sup> Hence we find the opposition sacred-profane compared with the real-unreal or pseudoreal<sup>40</sup>: *homo religiosus* cannot be conceived outside reality: “Thus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power.”<sup>41</sup>

In this article, Eliade describes his travel experience by train to Călărași where he notes the provincial desert, the isolation from the high congestion of the capital, and states that it is the optimal environment for creation. He wonders why man does not use this environment to create: “How is it that nobody understands this lesson of realism that the province offers us? Where can you look reality more clearly face to face – but this avenue in Călărași on a foggy wet February night?”<sup>42</sup>

The poverty stricken provincial environment, the hard living conditions of the Romanians are still an endless source of inspiration – this is the reality people flee and evade for the crowded cities – “to understand that this rough life and these poor people can be the substance of divine things.”<sup>43</sup> This has been a contemporary issue at all times, that modern man seeks salvation in the social and everything emanating from it: career, rank, a so-called clean environment in

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<sup>38</sup> “România în eternitate” [“Romania in Eternity”], published in *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 409, 13 October 1935, p. 3 *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism”* [Mircea Eliade. “Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”], p. 140.

<sup>39</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Mitul eternei reînnoțiri* [The Myth of the Eternal Return], p. 14. Translation excerpt from *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, translated: W.R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954, p. 4

<sup>40</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Sacru și profanul* [The Sacred and the Profane], p. 14. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from French: W. R. Trask, Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957, p. 13

<sup>41</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>42</sup> *Provincia și legionarismul* [The Province and the Legionarism], published in *Vremea*, year XI (1938), February 13, no. 525, p. 8, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism”* [Mircea Eliade. “Legionary” Texts and on “Romanianism”], p. 79.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 80.

which luxury and comfort prevail. In this situation, the individual suffers again from spiritual abandonment while his salvation is in fact precisely the environment where he would have to fight and would be subject to perfection, where he would reach self-knowledge and knowledge of his forces which in turn lead to creation; and here the situation refers not only to artistic or literary creation, but to that of the spiritual man, a man above the mundane, who by himself was recovered in communion with the transcendent.

Moreover, in the province "you are *alone*. There's nobody to help you, fool you. No comfort, no reverie. Alone in *reality*. A perfect therapy of the soul." And these observations feature again a portrait of the *New Man*, "precursor" of the archaic man who will be described in his later writings: for the "primitive", as for the man in all pre-modern societies, the sacred is *power* and, finally, *reality*.<sup>44</sup> Or, the archaic man is possessed by a thirst for the real and this real is happening only by retrieving the sacred; the unreal, on the other hand, is the state that is outside the sacred, devoid of meaning and sense:

The conscience of a real and significant world is intimately linked to the discovery of the sacred. Through the experience of the sacred the spirit perceives the difference between what is revealed as real, strong, rich and meaningful and what is lacking these qualities, I mean the dangerous and chaotic flow of things, their random and meaningless appearance and disappearance...<sup>45</sup>

The same issue of the real is found in the article "A Conversion to Romanianism", where Mircea Eliade explains the foundation on which spiritual man should be built:

To believe in the primacy of spirituality is not to be an abstract man, a dead individual. On the contrary, the only concrete life, flexible, that one can continually overcome – is this spirituality. That does not mean abstraction, dryness, erudition, cowardice, anarchy – but the only way to take over the real, the only way to live in the concrete.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Sacru și profanul [The Sacred and the Profane]*, p. 14. Translation excerpt from Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from French: W.R. Trask, Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului [Ordeal by Labyrinth]*, p. 131.

<sup>46</sup> *O convertire la românism [A Conversion to Romanianism]*, published in *Cuvântul*, year IX, 22 September, 1933, no. 3021, p. 1, *apud* Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Textele „legionare” și despre „românism” [Mircea Eliade. "Legionary" Texts and on "Romanianism"]*, p. 95.

## Conclusions

Mircea Eliade's militancy was recognized as the new humanism, one that aimed at a spiritual rebirth, a spiritual universalization, the creation of the *New Man* society needs in order to develop culturally and economically. The texts accused of legionarism present concepts that he will discuss later as elements specific to the archaic – they anticipate the man of the traditional society, “the primitive”, the *homo religiosus*.

The basic idea that Eliade goes through is the spiritual as described in the life of the modern man living outside the religious, outside a society that tends to disperse in the profane and history. Death, sacrifice, freedom, reality and creation can not be considered outside the spiritual – they coexist and are consequences, or features of the religious. The purpose of existence can be discovered only by the one who is dedicated to the discovery of the sacred. He who discovers the meaning of the existence is actually a free man, freed from worldly chains, cured of the fear of death and of the biological and mechanical anguish.

Ion Moța is an archaic figure, the synagogue in central Berlin under Nazi expansion is evidence of the conservation of the spiritual; the hypothesis of the *New Man* meant to create a spiritual revolution is the man who will then be called *homo religiosus* – the new humanism supported by Eliade being likened by Adrian Marino with the Enlightenment. Similar to the Platonic theory whereby the soul attains knowledge through the process of recalling, in his theory of *homo religiosus*, Eliade recommends anamnesis. While witnessing a demystification of the world, of life in general, the man still retains peculiarities of the religious man and their continuance (the fact that religiosity is inherent to the being) is a first step towards saving it: “The sacred does not involve belief in God, in gods or in spirits. It is, and I repeat, the experience of reality and the source of the consciousness of being in the world.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului [Ordeal by Labyrinth]*, p. 132.

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## ETERNAL RECURRENCE IN HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION

DIANA KORPOS\*

**ABSTRACT.** *Eternal Recurrence in Heidegger's Interpretation.* The whole concept of being represented by Nietzsche, in Heidegger's opinion, is composed of eternal chaos, alive and not alive determined by limited force, necessary eternal becoming, limited space, unlimited time, without a beginning, nor an end, without divine provenience or providence, excluding planned order, laws, structure, perfect shapes, hierarchy, accidents, ultimate purposes and sense, and the thought of the thoughts, Eternal Recurrence of the same, is assigned to it as its fundamental character. Nietzsche's philosophy, in Heidegger's interpretation, represents the end of metaphysics.

**Keywords:** *Nietzsche, Heidegger, Eternal Recurrence, end of metaphysics, being, becoming, state of being, the whole concept of being*

### Introduction

Martin Heidegger's book, entitled *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, gives a lecture that belongs to a five course series, dedicated to Nietzsche's philosophy, held at University from Freiburg, between 1936 and 1940. In contrast to Heidegger's hiper-terminological from *Being and time*, we meet a Heidegger as teacher, interpret, who gives Nietzsche a place among the great thinkers of western philosophy: Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. Heidegger emerged Nietzsche of a politicized interpretation and an image of a philosophical and poetic nature writer, historicist prophet, the forerunner of existentialism, giving him a metaphysical aura. He does not give importance to aphorisms nor to *The Will to Power*, published posthumously in this formula, focusing on the central thoughts,<sup>1</sup> especially on *the thought of the thoughts*: Eternal Recurrence of the same.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Heidegger's opinion, eternal recurrence is one of the 5 fundamental concepts (besides will to power, nihilism, justice and the overman) that belong to Nietzsche's metaphysics.

<sup>2</sup> Eternal Recurrence plays central position in Heidegger and Karl Löwith's interpretations. See, for instance, Löwith's work: *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*.

Heidegger aims to remove the strangeness of this doctrine drawn in Ernst Bertram's interpretation, where he calls the eternal recurrence of the same a pseudo-revelation and delusional mystery.<sup>3</sup> The contrary, to Heidegger "eternal recurrence teaching is, in Nietzsche's philosophy, the fundamental teaching. Without it, Nietzsche's philosophy is like a tree without roots."<sup>4</sup>

Eternal Recurrence is the heaviest thought that hangs over any action of everyone, as a higher consciousness. Thinking every moment as being eternal, we confer importance and weight to every single decision.

This lecture has four parts: 1) genesis, forms and the area of eternal recurrence 2) the essence of a fundamental metaphysical position 3) eternal recurrence interpreted as the last fundamental metaphysical position from the western thinking<sup>5</sup> 4) the end of western philosophy and the other beginning of it.

At 19 years old, in an autobiographical sketch, Nietzsche notes: "And, so, man grows and emerges from all that surrounds him sometime; he does not need to break the chains, but, unexpectedly, when a God demands, they fall single; but where is the link it contains? Is it the world? Is it God?"<sup>6</sup> In Heidegger's opinion, Nietzsche is answering to this question through eternal recurrence, the link that contains the whole concept of being. This thought came suddenly, in Oberengadin region, on the Silvaplana lakeside, near Surlej, at a pyramid-shaped rock, in august 1888. "The fundamental concept of the work, the idea of the eternal recurrence, the highest formula of affirmation that could ever be attained – belongs to August of the year 1881: it was jotted down hastily on a piece of paper with the inscription *6,000 feet beyond man and time*. That day I was walking through the woods near Lake Surlej, beside a huge, towering, pyramidal boulder. There this idea came to me."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ernst Bertram's book of Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology* was first published in Germany in 1918. He claims that in the case of Nietzsche's existence we are not dealing with the life itself, but rather its legend. Nietzsche gave importance to ancestors, tradition, genealogy, to the idea of atavism in general. Nietzsche constructs a mythology of his own philosophical ancestry, which includes Heraclitus and Goethe. Bertram reduce the eternal recurrence to pseudo-revelation, delusional mystery, eternal auto-crucifixion, fundamental educational chimera, extreme form of auto-sacrifice, dominating monomaniac delusion.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Aaron Dopf, for instance, Lecturer at Clayton State University, in his essay entitled: *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Eternal Return*, published in *Auslegung*, Vol. 26, No. 2, The University of Kansas, wrote that Heidegger is guilty of a gross misinterpretation of Nietzsche, specifically on the issue of eternal recurrence. Heidegger attempt to prove that eternal recurrence is a metaphysical doctrine in a reckless interpretative method, trying to appropriate Nietzsche in such a way that he is played as a prelude to Heidegger's own philosophy.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *My life. Autobiographical sketch of young Nietzsche*, Frankfurt am Main, 1936.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *Ecce Homo*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2004, p. 67.

This thought is communicated, and also concealed, through three exposures: 1) presented as a bizarre idea in *The Gay Science* 2) through Zarathustra in a poetical speech 3) as an interrogation in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

### **Eternal Recurrence – *The Greatest Weight***

A radical philosophy, as Nietzsche's, is in need of prepared future generations that could assimilate it. This thought overwhelms, scares, or crushes you. "Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?"<sup>8</sup> The joyful wisdom is identical to the philosophy that teaches eternal recurrence as a fundamental teaching.

*The Greatest Weight* assumes stability, peace, grouping together, press down, danger, coercion to maintain shoulders lift, tripping, changing of trajectory. Thought will stay on our commitment, which is interpreted by Heidegger as "the whole of man's relation to the state of being and with himself",<sup>9</sup> a thought forcefully determined, a thought as a center of gravity, because the thought determines the human being, in the deepest way. The thought decides the context of human, not otherwise. Human being requires the hanging of the greatest weight to assess what is above it, because, if it would unburden, would think about himself as a center, lost in mediocrity. If a demon would put us in front of the eternal recurrence, we would have two possibilities: either curses or recognize in him a God. The teaching of eternal recurrence thinks the whole concept of being. Heidegger includes in the expression the whole concept of being: nature, history, God, illusion, appearance, deception, false, nothingness, "keyword most worthy of being subjected to interrogation".<sup>10</sup>

342 fragment of the work *The Gay Science* is called: *Incipit tragoedia*. Heidegger completes: *earlier tragedy of the state of being as such, earlier tragic era for Europe*; tragic becoming the fundamental character of existence, with the thought of eternal recurrence. Tragic knowledge is an affirmation of belonging to the awful nice. If we look at something big up, it seems grandiose, but if we look down to the same thing, it seems scary. We have a tragic and heroic attitude when we become masters of our own misery when our powerful spirit feels pain as pleasure. Tragic has to be savored aesthetic, not moral.

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<sup>8</sup> Idem, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 46.



The teaching of eternal recurrence is mediated by the figure of Zarathustra, who took the decision to affirm life, but still has much to learn. Around a hero, it makes up tragedy. Zarathustra acts as the heroic thinker. More important than what is communicated, it is the way that is done. Teaching people to whom they are addressed are not ready for such a doctrine. Today's human being must overcome. The thought of eternal recurrence is more visible in two fragments: *On the Vision and the Riddle*, and *The Convalescent*. It refers to the riddle that hides the whole concept of being. For a correct appreciation, we must observe how, where, when and to whom it is told. After two days of silence, Zarathustra speaks to the seamen, a tale of a climb on a mountain path, on sunset. When depth increases, it becomes precipice, abyss, gulf, for the one who climbs. Zarathustra is climbing, and a dwarf is moving down. Because Zarathustra knows the most abysmal thought, he is superior to the dwarf, and therefore he gets priority pass. The fact that the two of them stopped in front of the gate, on which is written *Moment*, represents the vision of the riddle, the flow of time, back and forth, into eternity, time is seen in a perspective starting from the moment. To the question whether the two paths go in opposite directions, the dwarf answers: "*all truth is crooked, time itself is a circle*".<sup>11</sup> Paths straight and opposite lines are an illusion. The trajectory is a circle, and the state of being is in the mode of eternal recurrence. Riddle does not lie in understanding that everything revolves circle. The dwarf is unable to understand the meaning of the moment. All limited things that flow in a limited time, it is necessary to have already been covered this eternity. In an unlimited time finite world cycle must be ended, because the moment drags after itself all things, exactly like the moment itself is dragging itself. The moment and all things go on these paths over and over again.

Zarathustra's animals are the eagle and the serpent. In the *Great Noontide*, Zarathustra sees an eagle spinning in circles, and on it, hanging like a ring, voluntarily, as a friend, not as prey, a serpent, symbols for eternal recurrence. Specific to the eagle is the pride. Eagle is an animal which remains high in the air borders, and its depth is only the mountains gap. Specific to snake is the intelligence, the mask, dominating "the game of being and appearance."<sup>12</sup> They are looking for someone like Zarathustra who is capable of enduring the lonely solitude, beside them. Pride and intelligence are the way of teacher's own knowledge of the eternal return. Zarathustra has to *become what he is*, to find the being in his becoming.

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<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche Love of Fate Series, 2010, p. 126.

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche Love of Fate Series, 2010, p. 74.

In *The Convalescent* fragment, these animals are talking to Zarathustra about the eternal recurrence. At the same time with the sunset, his becoming commences. His sunset comes to his end, with his convalescence. After the sea journey, Zarathustra is coming back into his cave. One morning, he wakes up screaming: *Asleep worm!* like crazy to someone. In fact, he was addressing to the most abysmal thought. His frightened animals approached him. Zarathustra becomes what he is: *the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the circuit*,<sup>13</sup> which represents the whole concept of being, gathered together in *The Great Noontide* through Zarathustra's Yes. He will collapse in convalescence seven days and nights, while the eagle and the serpent stay with him. The eagle feeds him with yellow and red berries, which means that Zarathustra continues to feed his pride. Yellow is the color of the error and illusion, without having a negative connotation, because "error represents the essence of the truth, necessary for the will to power".<sup>14</sup> The deep yellow may be interpreted as the color of eternal return, and the intense red represents passion, creation, and is the color of the will to power. These colors are the structure of the will to power and form the conditions of possibility of the whole concept of being. The animals are talking to Zarathustra very seductive about the wheel of existence, because "the path of eternity is crooked",<sup>15</sup> which looks alike with what the dwarf said: *all truth is crooked*. But their shiny speech is only *a wag and barrel-organ*.<sup>16</sup>

The dwarf interprets the parable about the arch gate as follows: the endless trails meet in eternity because the circle is closing from itself to infinity, and everything that returned, flows sequentially passing through the arch gate. What the dwarf is missing is the fact that under the arch gate stands the moment and the two paths, the future and the past collide, and the collision happened for the one who is not just a simple watcher, but is itself in the moment and is heading into the future, taking over and claiming the past. What turns into future is decision-based. What returns is decided by the moment and the force of overtaking for what opposes clash in the moment. Eternity is the moment, where the collision between past and future takes place. The moment is not a *now* that flies in from of simply watchers, but a collision which enables the moment to get back to itself, deciding how everything is making its own way back. Zarathustra is upset and sick because he wanted to reject the petty things, that continue to return into existence, but he has overcome the disease by saying yes including to this dark part. The destiny of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 170.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche Love of Fate Series, 2010, p. 171.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 171.

Zarathustra is to become the eternal recurrence teacher. He has to understand himself as someone who has to go through his twilight to achieve his mission, starting from this teaching. In Heidegger's interpretation twilight means pass, descent, moment, alive ring, the whole concept of being.

The circle, endless returning into itself, is specific to time. Return of the same is specific to all beings in time. Based on the following assumptions: infiniteness time, the reality of time is not a subjective form of intuition, finitude of things and their course, Nietzsche concludes that everything that can be taken as being, it must have already existed. "But the plexus of causes returns in which I am intertwined, – it will again create me! I myself pertain to the causes of the eternal return. I come again with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent – not to a new life, or a better life, or a similar life: I come again eternally to this identical and selfsame life, in its greatest and its smallest, to teach again the eternal return of all things, - to speak again the word of the great noontide of earth and man, to announce again to man the overman."<sup>17</sup> From now on, Zarathustra speaks in silence to his soul. He understood that the abyss belongs to height, and to overcome the evil means to admit its necessity in "silence loving transition"<sup>18</sup>. Zarathustra became a hero because he knows that the greatest and the smallest return together, and he can cope paroxysm both suffering and hope. With Zarathustra *incipit tragoedia*, the era of non-resignation.

Heidegger warns us that if we go through the right steps of methodology, we notice that between the three of Nietzsche's communications about eternal recurrence, there are additional connections converging toward a center.

In the third communication of teaching eternal recurrence, from chapter III, *The religious mood* from *Beyond good and evil*, Zarathustra lives according to knowledge that *God is dead*. The one who looked beyond good and evil, saw the ideal of the one who strongly affirm life and wishes the whole show for eternity, named by Nietzsche *circulus vitiosus deus*: "the ideal of the most high-spirited, vital, world-affirming individual, who has learned not just to accept and go along with what was and what is, but who wants it again just as it was and is through all eternity, insatiably shouting da capo not just to himself but to the whole play and performance, and not just to performance, but rather, fundamentally, to the one who needs precisely this performance – and makes himself necessary: because again and again he needs himself – and makes himself necessary. What? And that wouldn't be – *circulus vitiosus deus*?"<sup>19</sup> So the eternal recurrence is the link which

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<sup>17</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche Love of Fate Series, 2010, p. 174.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 50.

brings back the suffering as a necessity. Who is this *circulus vitiosus deus* after all? Is it God, Dionysos, the world? Therefore, God is not dead. Only the moral and the Christian one died because man killed him, measuring his greatness with the pettiness of their need reward for their virtues, depriving God of his power, denying himself and his life. Nietzsche is a unique atheist. If the gods would be available as stones, man would not know what new to create, how to become what he is. The eternal recurrence of the same, link of terror and its eternity, *circulus vitiosus deus*, determines the whole concept of being as the existence. They are comprehensible only starting from the moment, which means that God himself is questionable starting from the moment. God and eternal recurrence are only questions. This communication of the Greatest Weight is not a doctrine, not a specialized scientific theory, nor a philosophical treatise. It determines us to wonder about the form of this thought.

Further on, Heidegger examines four unpublished notes, written by Nietzsche in August 1881, concerning the eternal recurrence. In the first sketch, *Return of the same*, this teaching is called *the greatest teaching* and *the new weight*. Then suddenly he puts this question: *What shall we do with the rest of our lives?* which means that the thought of eternal recurrence transfigures all, and involves a cleavage, without removing what has passed. The assimilation of this new knowledge and its teaching is the most important. This sketch seems to configure the plan of *Thus spoke Zarathustra* masterpiece.

The second sketch stands by the 129 fragment from XII volume: 1. The strongest knowledge. 2. Assimilated errors. 3. Necessity and innocence. 4. Game of life. In this sketch, Nietzsche starts with the eternal recurrence thought. Necessity refers to the necessity of the whole concept of being, and the game of life refers to Heraclitus, to Aion child who plays with the dice. Aion represents the *whole existence, the time of cosmos*. Heidegger says that, in contrast to the first sketch, where the emphasis is on the existential meaning of teaching, on the effect of teaching and the transformation of human existence within the state of being, the second sketch is considering the metaphysical character of teaching, the state of being itself.

In the third sketch, the essential concepts are *noontide* and *eternity*. Noontide and eternity together and simultaneously represent the moment when the hardest thought is being thought. Nietzsche sketches a picture in which *eternity serpent* sits coiled in noontide, when objects don't have a shadow in the *light of knowledge*. Noontide is that moment when morning collides with afternoon, strike the instant of decision, marking a new way of living.

About this transfiguration of being speaks the fourth sketch, where Nietzsche aims a de-anthropomorphized nature, that means the elimination of guilt, goal, intention, providence and a reinstatement of human in nature. The fan of Nietzsche's perspectives soar towards us essential interrogations, whose answers prepare us to understand better the dimension of its thinking. The teaching about will to power origins from the teaching about eternal recurrence and is carried inside assimilated.

Further on, Heidegger offers a summary, composed of ten points, on his own interpretation of Nietzsche's notes dated from 1881, trying to highlight the main perspective. Nietzsche's interest is the totality of the existence, which includes alive and not alive, blended in a unit of becoming. In the 112 fragment of these notes, Nietzsche says: *Our entire world is ashes of countless living beings*, and in *The Gay Science* he says: "The living is only a form of what is dead and a very rare form".<sup>20</sup> The separation between alive and not alive it cannot be perceived only from one perspective. If we take death from a knowledge perspective, then life seems a death species. If we take death from its origin perspective, then death seems the ashes of life.

The force is the universal character of the world, inconceivable in the sense of physics, mechanistic, dynamic, but as the will to power. This force is necessarily limited, fixed and determined, according to its essence, starting from the possibility of force to be thought. The essence of the existence is limited, which means the whole world is limited. The absence of a reduction or growth of the world's force means becoming, in the sense of transformation and change. Even though the existence is an endless becoming and the whole force of the world is limited there is an infinity; more exactly an incommensurability of the transformations of this force.

### **Eternal Recurrence – an anthropomorphic and de-anthropomorphic thought**

Space is limited, is fiction, and is comprised of the force and relationships within. Time has real character, is unlimited, infinite, designed like an eternity. "The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the whole concept of being is represented by chaos which assumes necessary eternal becoming, not derived from any demiurge, for a de-anthropomorphized and de-teo-morphized

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<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

world. Nietzsche excludes from existence order, laws, self-preservation, goals, instincts, hierarchy, Providence, tend of the universe to become more perfect. Nietzsche rejects the hypothesis that the universe is an organism, and removes any human categories from nature. The eternal becoming of the limited existence is devoid of planned orders, but not of necessity.

Nietzsche draws, through these points, the essential characteristics of existence: eternal chaos, alive and not alive determined by limited force, necessary eternal becoming, limited space, unlimited time, without a beginning, nor an end, without divine provenience or Providence, excluding planned order, laws, structure, perfect shapes, hierarchy, accidents, ultimate purposes and sense. The thought of the thoughts, Eternal Recurrence of the same, is assigned to it as its fundamental character.

Any thought reported to the whole concept of being is reported at the same time to the man that thinks it. Therefore, including the thought of eternal recurrence contains anthropomorphic elements, which Nietzsche wanted to avoid. Eternity and recurrence can be seen only starting from the moment. The moment is the collision between past and future, which are fulfilled by the man by decision. Therefore, a man himself is the collision. Man stands in the temporality of eternal time and outlines the present by keeping what it was in the past and deciding what is next. The thought of eternal recurrence is founded in this temporality and that's why it is an anthropomorphic<sup>22</sup> thought.

Any representation of the whole concept of being is anthropomorphic. Any existence interpretation, like a perception through man, reported to man. Representation refers to existence, defining the thing we have in the spotlight, being ours, taken in possession, integration in I. Anthropomorphic refers to world's interpretation, the de-anthropomorphic is one man's attempt, and also anthropomorphic. A possible attitude toward this insurmountable anthropomorphic would be resignation and doubt to everything, accepted as a prospects game. Another possible attitude would be the removal of it and faith in one only interpretation. First of all, we have to clarify what man is. Determining human essence is a process that can be seen as anthropomorphic or even dehumanization. Human essence cannot be determined by biological, historical science, or faith. Human essence can only be determined by a native interrogative attitude, starting from language.

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<sup>22</sup> The anthropological character of Eternal Recurrence is mentioned also by Karl Löwith, in addition to the cosmological equation in *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* work, first published in 1934.

With the question: *Who is a man?* comes the question about the essence of language, and with both, the question about the whole concept of being. Therefore, is a catch 22 situation: existence is a man's interpretation, and man is interpreted starting from the existence. The thought of eternal recurrence is anthropomorphic and de-anthropomorphic. Anthropomorphic and de-anthropomorphic elements of world's interpretation are complementary.

Heidegger dissects the very foundations of these thoughts and puts aside Nietzsche's arguments from physics area, natural sciences between 1870-1880, taken as the positivist period. The fact that eternal recurrence is the fundamental determination of the whole concept of being can be demonstrated by proving the necessity of the recurrence from the whole existence determinations.

From the fact that force is limited, it necessary results in the finitude of the existence and its becoming, which runs in an infinite time. The existence becoming is continuous and eternal, because the limited possibilities of being had to be necessarily exhausted in an infinite time, to reach a state of rest. But this balance doesn't exist. "We deny end goals: if existence had one it would have been reached."<sup>23</sup> Existence becoming is returning in itself. The limited possibilities in an infinite time, without reaching a balance, it must have been repeated and will repeat an infinite number of times. Because the causality between the limited processes of becoming is limited, any process returns carrying its past. Setting as a goal, to avoid eternal recurrence is not in agreement with the whole existence as the eternal chaos of necessity.

Heidegger is wondering if this type of argumentative approach: deducting from the affirmations about essence existence determinations, the affirmation about eternal recurrence, belongs to natural sciences. Natural science is using representations of force, space, time but is not questioning them, like philosophy does.

A science can become philosophical through a philosophy thinking if its area will cause the scientific interrogation or thinking its own roots and define itself, starting from them. Nietzsche does not limit his ideas to the physics, biology, math, or natural sciences area. His ideas scatter toward the whole concept of being, which is determined by limited force without downtimes, limited space, infinite time, endless becoming, eternal chaos, recurrence, necessity.

Any science deals with a specific area of the existence, meanwhile philosophy thinks the whole concept of being, from an embedding perspective of all the others.

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<sup>23</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1968, p. 36.

"We cannot look around our corner."<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the anthropomorphic element is recognized, which exclude the intention of a de-anthropomorphic essence of existence. The character of any philosophy is to adopt a point of view. Independence, not to adopt any point of view, is a point of view itself.

It seems that Nietzsche created an excluding disjunction, but paradoxically, he opts for both variants: free the existence of anthropomorphic without denying the man essence, meaning by this thinking from a space-temporal angle. The world and the thinker's thinking cannot be separated, because it involves the necessary report of the existence, which takes a seat in the whole concept of being, with the whole concept of being.

What is thought cannot be separated of how is thought. The theory of the thought cannot be separated of the practical consequence. We conclude that man has to involve himself as a being in the eternal recurrence thinking to think this thought. He has to determine himself and his corner, starting from the thing which is thought.

### **Eternal Recurrence – a counter-movement, a counter-thought and a counter-faith**

In Heidegger's opinion, what emerges in 115-132 fragments from the unpublished notes, especially chapter II, *The consequence of teaching on humanity*, is the relation between the thinking of the recurrence thought and what is thought in it. In these notes, the greatest weight is called faith, personal and religious belief. "Every belief is a considering-something-true"<sup>25</sup>. Considering a representation true, means a hold in truth, in the sense of having a support, and to keep an attitude, determined of what was established as being true.

Nietzsche's truth is the petrified from becoming. From the sentence fragment 68: *I no longer believe in anything – this is the true way of thinking of a creative man*, results that faith for Nietzsche means to fix the stream to order and stability, and to petrify in this fixation. No longer believe in anything doesn't mean skepticism, inaction, indecision, or weakness. It means that desire doesn't stiffen the world in a specific shape, and allows new possibilities of becoming through creation. The creator possesses a superior possibility of being, breaking what was calcified. Creation is sharing and giving. The future man, completely new, ruler, the figure of unity between knowledge, creation and love, is the overman.

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<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 239.

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1968, p. 14.



The eternal recurrence thinking is a creation itself, is love, sharing and giving. Therefore, it seems that takes the religious form. This thinking of the whole concept of being is called faith because fixes the whole concept of being in a project of being. "The thought of eternal recurrence fixes the way how existence essence is in its endless becoming, as the chaos of eternity".<sup>26</sup>

Eternal recurrence is the being that defines the whole existence. This truth concerns the whole concept of being, and that's why it cannot be demonstrated directly through individual man in his particular actions, or in cause-effect relationships type. In the present reality, we don't meet what is thought in this great thought, and it only appears as a possibility. The possibility of a thought which brings, nonetheless other possibilities, if completely explored, and triggers a decision (to include here that denying the decision becomes a decision itself!) is stronger than any solid deed. We are not ready yet to digest these possibilities, but this is creative thinking.

Eternal recurrence meaning is first of all about having an opinion, hence the emergence of new possibilities for a decision, and secondly relates to encouraging the individuals to use their own instincts to approach a specific perspective, *man's corner*. Who doesn't believe in eternal recurrence truth is fugitive, evanescent, looking for an immediate tangible good, without substance, leaving nothing behind and meant to vanish.

The eternal recurrence thought is, in fact, the truth of the whole concept of being, which is thought by a man who is in this truth. This truth has the change of human and the change of the whole concept of being as consequences. The greatest weight brings with it another history, another way of creation, other events and transforms the existence.

If what is now and will be in the future is just a necessary and predetermined returning, means that free will is impossible and denies the possibility of man essence. The 116 fragment summarize: *My teaching says: live so, as to be compelled to desire to live again, this is the task – you will do it anyway!*

*The greatest weight* refers to the existence of each of us. What becomes is what returns. But we don't remember an anterior life, and only rarely, déjà-vu sensations flash us. More interesting is the fact that we can think before, about something, and from this thinking, directed toward future, we learn something about the past. What will happen in the next moment, it has already happened and will return. The existence is decided in the moment, starting from the attitude of each being in the whole concept of being. Calculating from the outside, the content and the consequences of the eternal recurrence and considering man an element of a succession of events that circular return, means taking you out of the state of being.

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 182.

The range between reversions depends on how we calculate. If we start from our own temporality, there is no time between. If we are on the outside, calculating objective, it wouldn't be conceivable either by billion years. In this range, all the factors come together, where you came from as a being: acquiring own self, taking this own self in seized hold, in the project through essential will. You will get to freedom if you become free through the will. The thought of recurrence doesn't represent a categorical contradiction between necessity and freedom that mutually excluded. Man is included in the link of the whole concept of being, as the eternal recurrence itself is.

This event has its own time: *The Great Noontide*, the moment of eternity, unit of everything is temporal, the spot in which man existence is transfigured in his most powerful will.

Heidegger discovers that some unpublished notes dated from 1881-1882 are in disagreement with the ones this period. The main directions of the recurrence thought are drawn as follows: as a thought, it re-shapes the whole world. To be a thought, has to be thought, and needs a thinker and a teacher.

From these unpublished notes, results that the thought of the thought belongs to life itself, hence, belongs to the will to power. Existence, in its becoming, is creative-destructive, breeding possibilities of transformation into masterpieces. Eternal recurrence arises from the essence of life.

Fragment 723: *I teach you the release from the eternal flow: river always flows back into itself, and you always bathe in the same river, being the same play a special reporting to Heraclitus teaching, a reply to: No man can enter in the same river two times because neither river nor man, are the same.* It's teaching us the discharge from the eternal etcetera, setting the continuity in becoming. In fact, eternal recurrence determines the character of becoming. The narrow world becomes continuity in a real infinite time, therefore occurs the returning.

The human eternal recurrence thought doesn't bring a lack of sympathy toward human behavior; contrariwise, this thought is the greatest weight that brings gravity, the strength to decide at any time. Nietzsche himself doubts about the veracity of this thought, winnowing it always using questions, thus the possibility feature becomes essential.

Since 1884 till 1888 Nietzsche dedicated his time for a masterpiece supposed to reflect his philosophy as a totality. Heidegger thinks that even in this period, eternal recurrence plays a central position. For all these disparate fragments, Nietzsche temporarily had in mind the title: *Will to Power*. Heidegger draws attention to the fact that, concerning the posthumous work *Will to Power*, Nietzsche in person never redacted this work and quit the plan with this title. "Thought never has to be thought, starting always only from the creative moment of an individual's decision, but it belongs to life itself, under the semblance of a

historical decision – of a crisis.”<sup>27</sup> Heidegger clarifies that eternal recurrence is a thought, the thought of the thought, and will to power is a fact, the ultimate fact. Nietzsche planned to present his philosophy as the philosophy of eternal recurrence, but in order to take shape had to have the process interpreted as will to power. Man has two alternatives: absconding or affirm life, this way overcoming it. Teaching about eternal recurrence is the real crisis, gap between an age where weight is absent, and an age in research after a new weight.

From the fact that Nietzsche speaks about presuppositions of eternal recurrence teaching, and the will to power is the fundamental conformation of the existence, would result in that will to power would be a presupposition for eternal recurrence. Not excluding it, would result in that will to power requests eternal recurrence. Understood as a process, eternal recurrence is will to power. The existence as will to power is the development of the project of the existence as eternal recurrence. Eternal recurrence is the basis and the essence of the will to power. It remains to be seen whether the whole concept of being represents the thinking as eternal recurrence and will to power in their essential co-affiliation, *what is thought*, the area of the teaching of returning, and *how is thought*, its form.

Till now, we could notice the plurality of teaching forms, and somehow, its lack of form. The form of teaching doesn't mean the exterior organization of dogmatic theories, but the internal structure of its truth. In Heidegger's opinion, this form could detach of his latest plans, to outline his fundamental opera, because changes can be seen here, to what specifically he dropped, what he kept, continued or reconfigured. The formative principle that clears from these plans should be sought in the three titles selected for the opera that would systematically depict his whole philosophy: Eternal Recurrence, Will to Power, Revaluation of All Values. The thought of eternal recurrence, (as long as special and rare people thinks it necessarily, determining a historical moment), is the thought of which transpires the eternity of the area seize hold in this thought.

The whole concept of being is an expression that has to be understood as being interrogative, always questioning its area. Nietzsche's thinking is perceived by Heidegger as a counter-movement and a reversal of entire occidental philosophy understood as Platonism. In other words, a counter-movement directed against training conditions, a reversal of the values of occidental philosophy, up to him. Nietzsche is the last platonic metaphysician.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 210.

<sup>28</sup> Of Nietzsche seen as the last platonic metaphysician, opposes Nietzsche as a thinker of the difference, theorized by Jacques Derrida and his French disciples: Bernard Pautrait, Jean Michel Rey, Sarah Kofman. In 1966 Derrida wrote that *only in bad faith* Heidegger could qualify Nietzsche point of platonism and metaphysic arrival.

From the fact that such a project of necessarily overcome arises, it results an extensive knowledge a thorough testing of its opposite, from which derives and remains rooted. If eternal recurrence is a counter-movement, then the thought of the thought is a counter-thought. If the essence of this thought is a faith, then the thought of eternal recurrence is a counter-faith.

The event that requires a reversal of values is called by Nietzsche nihilism. Nihilism would mean denial of the whole concept of being. Nietzsche himself understood his own thinking as nihilism and he experienced nihilism up to the end. Including eternal recurrence is a nihilist thought. Existence doesn't have any final goal. Nihilism, "what is exceeded and what has already been exceeded through will to create".<sup>29</sup> Is the returning thought area.

Now we are more ready to return to the interpretation of Zarathustra's parable. A counter-image of the atmosphere, specific to the thought of eternal recurrence, (the serpent coiled like a ring, around eagle's neck that rotates in the high sky during noontide), represents the shivering dog howling at midnight. This lugubrious atmosphere bringing back memories from Zarathustra's childhood could be interpreted as the prehistory thought of eternal recurrence, genesis of nihilism. The child then, felt mercy for the dog. Pity and compassion are specific for those too immature for the state of being. Even mature Zarathustra felt mercy that makes us think about Nietzsche's belonging to Wagner and Schopenhauer worlds, both teachers of refuge in *nihil*. All creators are deprived of mercy. Nietzsche himself arrived at himself and his own thought, after passing through the prehistory of this thought, through the wilderness years of 1874-1881.

The young shepherd lying on the ground, in the vapid moonlight, with a black serpent hanging on his mouth, is nobody else, but Zarathustra. The black serpent, heavy, purposeless and meaningless, who caught the shepherd through his bite, it is nihilism itself. This cannot be overcome from the outside. Danger has to be bitten from the interior. The overcoming of nihilism is possible only if all those affected bite off, particularly, the head of the black serpent. After the bite, "he was no longer shepherd, no longer man – a transfigured being, a light-surrounded being, that laughed! Never on earth laughed a man as he laughed!"<sup>30</sup> "Perhaps I know best why man alone laughs: he alone suffers so deeply that he had to invent laughter."<sup>31</sup> This laughter comes from the joy of *The Gay Science*, and that's why intentionally, the thought of eternal recurrence appears from the first time at the end of this

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<sup>29</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 236.

<sup>30</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche Love of Fate Series, 2010, p. 127.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1968, p. 56.

work. The shepherd is Zarathustra, the thinker of the thought of eternal recurrence. The bite represents the overcome of the nihilism, and the thought of recurrence is the bite of the overcoming of nihilism. The bite represents the decision through which the history of nihilism is exceeded. We conclude that the bite of the black serpent's head is absolutely necessary for the transfiguration of the moment's thought thinker.

### Conclusion

The overcome of the abyss between *everything's the same*, nothing worth, and *everything's the same*, or everything is important, takes place in the thought of eternal recurrence. "To me, on the contrary, everything seems far too valuable to be so fleeting: I seek an eternity for everything: ought one to pour the most precious salves and wines into the sea? My consolation is that everything that has been is eternal: the sea will cast it up again."<sup>32</sup>

This presentation pointed out the right way of the thought of recurrence needs to be thought, and its circumstances, to the detriments of its content: has to be thought as starting from the moment as an overcoming of nihilism. In order to have an active thought the conditions which reveal the content of the thought, have to be met. The thinking of recurrence takes place only into nihilism, only within the moment. In the thinking of the eternal recurrence thought, what's to be thought, it falls upon thinker, and includes him in its circle, still being a factor of movement, rotation, decision, transformation.

Because this thought is thinking the whole concept of being, is a metaphysical thought, belongs to metaphysics, to the genuine question of philosophy: what is the state of being?

Whatever Heidegger calls fundamental metaphysical position determines the occidental history. The development of the guiding question *what is the state of being?* Target what makes the state of being to be state of being, the One, the totality, (beyond it is *nihil*), questioning area, question's target, the constitution of the state of being, (his own modality of being: possible, real, necessary), its own horizon. To address this question means to look for an answer and to develop this question means to assume a native question that carries it, called by Heidegger the *fundamental question*.

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<sup>32</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1968, p. 548.

From the state of being constitution and its own modality of being, Heidegger determines the fundamental metaphysical position of Nietzsche in western philosophy. Starting from Nietzsche's answer to the guiding question, we can assert that the whole concept of being is will to power from the perspective of its own constitution (constitution of the state of being as will to power). The whole concept of being is eternal recurrence of the same from the perspective of its own modality of being, (the whole concept of being is in eternal recurrence modality). Constitution and modality of being are determinations of what makes a being to be being, two moments that belong to each other.

Through his answer, Nietzsche transfigures the fundamental positions of the beginning: *the state of being is*, Parmenides answer; and *the state of being becomes*, Heraclitus answer. Nietzsche's philosophy is interpreted by Heidegger as the end of metaphysics.<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche unites these two fundamental determinations of the state of being, saying that the state of being is a continual creation that needs fixation to overcome it, and fixes to overcome and transfigures the creator.

"The essence of the state of being is becoming, but what becomes is and has being only through its transfiguration in the creation area. The state of being and becoming are merged in the fundamental thought is that what becomes is, actually, what, through creation, *becomes existence in a perfect state and is the becoming*. But this *fact-to-become-absolute-existence-in-a-perfect-state* turns to be a being-that-becomes especially through the fact that those someday fixed in a form of stillness, are actually fixed for a liberating transfiguration."<sup>34</sup>

"To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power."<sup>35</sup> This means to give form to the becoming as the state of being, in the way that the state of being exists as becoming. "Imposing, the imposing of the character of being that reconfigures, upon becoming, is the supreme will to power."<sup>36</sup> The imposing that reconfigures is the creation beyond itself, the moment of decision, moment of the eternal recurrence of the same, giving up to the things that were, for the future, thus conserving them. "To impose in a way that reconfigures becoming as the state of being – the will to power in its supreme form – is, in its deepest essence, instantaneity, meaning eternal recurrence of the same. The will to power, as the state

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<sup>33</sup> With Nietzsche metaphysics ends for Heidegger, but for Gianni Vattimo, for example, because Nietzsche's thinking is allegorical-prophetic, is necessarily unfinished and foreboding. Vattimo wrote in his work: *Le avventure della differenza*, published in 1983, that Nietzsche, from Heidegger's interpretation, as last removal of the being, closed and final path of metaphysics, which only repetitive and unconscious announces a new era, leaves us unsatisfied.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 269.

<sup>35</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1968, p. 330.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2014, p. 270.

of being constitution, only in its own modality of being, a modality in which Nietzsche designs the whole concept of being: the will to power is, according to its internal essence and possibilities, eternal recurrence of the same."<sup>37</sup>

Even though Heidegger, through his interpretation of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician of the West, woke up many theories to the contrary, lots of grate ideas of his logical and coherent argumentation are overtaken and reinterpreted by Nietzsche's next exegetes<sup>38</sup>.

Nietzsche closes down the circle, returning to the origins. He represents a fundamental metaphysical effective position, if this one becomes a counter-position for an approach which is rather questionable to the other beginning.

In Heidegger's opinion *amor fati*—love of fate means Nietzsche's fundamental metaphysical position: love understood as will, the will transfiguring through creation, and the necessity as change revealed as *circulus vitiosus deus*—the vicious circle of God.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 271.

<sup>38</sup> Notice, for example, the importance that has for Vattimo the idea of active nihilism and the existence of the intermediate world of incomplete nihilism between *ratio*'s world of negative nihilism and overman's world of positive and creative nihilism.

## THE LATE PHILOSOPHY OF GEORG LUKÁCS: HISTORY, FETISHISM AND ALIENATION

CRISTIAN NICHITEAN\*

**ABSTRACT. The Late Philosophy of Georg Lukács: History, Fetishism and Alienation.**

Lukács's late ontological turn is an attempt to go beyond the limitations of his early thesis of the identical subject-object and to better understand those forms of objectivity that appear as a consequence of social existence. In this category of social forms of objectivity he includes the phenomena of fetishism and reification, determined by the dual character, simultaneously material and social, of the objects produced under the rule of commodity form and of exchange value. Closely related is the phenomenon of alienation, caused by the difference between the development of society and that of human personality, crushed under the weight of fetishism.

**Keywords:** *fetishism, alienation, ontological turn, marxism, objectivity*

“It is the bad side that produces the movement  
which makes history, by providing a struggle.”

*Karl Marx*

The most important early philosophical work of Georg Lukács, *History and class consciousness (HCC)*, put forward a concept, *reification*, that has made a nice philosophical career, being the foundation of what was later to become the *western marxism*. We cannot say that the later work of the Hungarian philosopher has enjoyed the same reputation, maybe with the exception of the monumental *Ästhetik*. One of the reasons for this skepticism is the association of Lukács with stalinism and his supposed compromises with the simplistic dogmatism of the *diamat*. I will try to prove that, regardless of the tortuous political trajectory of the man, once the nonphilosophical interpretative frameworks are cast aside, his theoretical work stands on its own and can be analyzed and criticized from a philosophical standpoint.

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### A case for the late philosophy of Lukács

In the opening essay of *History and Class Consciousness*, (*What is orthodox marxism?*) Lukács makes clear that the orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. In other words, even if a number of marxian theses were to be infirmed by the empirical historical development, “dialectical materialism is the road to truth and that its methods can be developed, expanded and deepened only along the lines laid down by its founders” (*HCC*: 1). We think that we are not mistaken if we apply this principle to Lukács’s own work, in its entirety. Even if one thesis or another asserted in the *HCC* were reconsidered or even retracted by the author himself, his marxist engagement cannot be disputed as long as we detect there the same fidelity to the dialectical method. The road from the *marxism of the revolutionary subjectivity*<sup>1</sup> to a philosophical position that was perceived (unjustly, in my view) to be close to the objectivist determinism of the *Third International*, doesn’t mean that Lukács abandoned the dialectical method; instead he embraced a new point of view, ontological-genetic, that was meant to clear the way to the understanding of the concrete socio-historical process in its dynamic, as a dialectic between subject and the forms of objectivity that he creates in his social existence.

As happened with Marx a century before, the revolutionary Lukács of youth seems to have given way to a mature cautious thinker who didn’t believe anymore that an unlimited freedom of the political praxis can radically transform society and discovered instead the crucial role of man’s economic activity in shaping it. Lukács didn’t deny the possibility for new revolutionary situations to emerge, but he didn’t believe anymore that a conscious revolutionary agent, the *identical subject-object*, can be produced only by means of providing it from outside with the adequate consciousness, disregarding the economic base and the role of contingency. This is why the strange sensation of detachment that Lukács projects when looking back to his early work, relegating it to the level of a time capsule, a document of the epoch, an expression (even if not completely adequate) of that messianic time when the philosopher tried to jump ahead of his shadow, in other words, a form of *ideological consciousness*.

What motivated such a shift? Lukács fully felt the ebb, the recoil of the revolutionary wave. His late work is not an expression of capitulation, a fatalistic reconciliation with stalinism or with the prosaic communism of his contemporary Hungary, but an attempt to better ground theoretically the emancipatory movement of the working class. For Lukács remained throughout his life a revolutionary marxist,

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<sup>1</sup> This formula belongs to Michael Löwy: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article4485>.

fully hostile to reformism and revisionism à la Eduard Bernstein. The texts and interviews of his final years confirm this perspective, although the work that was supposed to update his views of youth regarding the human praxis, the *Ethics*, was never written.

The new cannot repeat the ideological forms of the past and a new theory should not fail to take into account the objective conditions: on the one hand the capitalist consumer society and the social-democrat post-war consensus which lead to the welfare state, on the other hand the bureaucratic communism from which any revolutionary impetus had vanished. Those who disagree with Lukács' assessment of the political situation of the late sixties and accuse him of appeasement and passivity or deplore his detachment and caution should take into consideration that the same state of mind was not unusual among the intellectuals of the Frankfurt school. It is enough to recall here a letter that Marcuse wrote to Adorno on the 5th of April 1969: *We know (and they know) that the situation is not a revolutionary one, not even a prerevolutionary one.*<sup>2</sup> Marcuse wasn't too impressed with rebellious youth of '68 and Adorno seemed to fully agree with him. As for Lukács, he believed that the mass organization and class consciousness of the proletariat had regressed to the levels of the early nineteenth century. In the changed circumstances, a new theory was needed that would ground a new revolutionary praxis. The socio-centric approach outlined in *HCC* seemed to cause some unwanted but not totally abusive interpretations that would find its author culpable of a Hegelian supersession of nature by society or of an over-estimation of the "imputed" class consciousness. Also, for a materialist philosopher who believes that the objective reality has an existence independent of consciousness a socio-centric starting point would always be a shaky foundation, so Lukács felt that a theory of society had to be ontologically grounded in more elemental forms of existence, ultimately in the relation of man with nature, in *labour*.

In the already mentioned essay, Michael Löwy traces the path followed by the thought of Lukács, between the newly discovered missing link *Tailism and the dialectics* written around 1925 and the next station represented by the essay on Moses Hess, in this way: In *Tailism*, while rejecting the accusation of "subjective idealism", Lukács does not retract from his subjectivist and voluntarist viewpoint: in the decisive moments of the struggle "everything depends on class consciousness, on the conscious will of the proletariat" – the subjective component. Of course, there is a dialectical interaction between subject and object in the historical process, but in the *Augenblick* of crisis, the subjective moment gives the direction of

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<sup>2</sup> [https://hutnyk.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/adornomarcuse\\_germannewleft.pdf](https://hutnyk.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/adornomarcuse_germannewleft.pdf)

the events, in the form of revolutionary consciousness and praxis. In exchange, all that Löwy has to say about *Moses Hess* is that this essay provided the philosophical justification for Lukács own “reconciliation with reality<sup>3</sup>”, i.e. with the Stalinist Soviet Union, implicitly meaning his agreement with the official thesis of “the objective dialectics of the historical process”. So, for Löwy the trajectory of Lukács is one from the dialectic between subject and object, with the accent on the subjective moment, to a purely objective dialectic in which the subject is only the effect and never the cause of dialectical developments.

There are in Lukács’s writings enough indications that point out to a shift in his later position, in the sense of the inclusion of social objectivity among the determining factors of reality. For example, in the 1967 preface to *HCC*. But to assert that this is a form of the “objective dialectics” in tune with the stalinist dogma is provable wrong. First, although by 1926 the western capitalism was already stable, stalinism as such was not yet fully coagulated until the first five year plan which abolished the *NEP* by 1929. So the objective limits that must have dissuaded Lukács from his messianic beliefs were more probably, as he himself asserted, those determined by the failure of the european revolution, which imposed a new international proletarian policy oriented, in the short run, towards less ambitious goals. If by reconciliation with reality Löwy understands a slightly more authoritarian nuance of Lukács’s political writings, traces of that can be already found in the leninist essays of *HCC*. On the other hand, in his later works, Lukács distances himself clearly from the stalinist objectivism and asserts that subjectivity is one of the constitutive components of social existence. He repudiates, it’s true, his youth thesis in which the dialectic between subject and object is close to become a real identity in the shape of the proletariat, with the aim of emphasizing the autonomy of the two moments. Between objectivism and voluntarism, between economic determinism and the total autonomy of ideology, his answer is *Tertium datur!*, a dialectical process between subject and object that is tracked back to its origins. This explains the anthropological overtones of the *Ontology*.

The reception of Lukács in the west raises a few interesting questions. While *HCC* is largely praised for its emancipatory views, his later work is ignored or rejected for its alleged compromises with stalinism. However, in the *Ontology* you will hardly find any references to the role of the communist party, which in *HCC* was “the first conscious step towards the empire of freedom”, the “conscious general will”, the revolutionary form of consciousness of the proletariat etc. Nothing would

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<sup>3</sup> The famous phrase “reconciliation under duress” was coined by Adorno in an essay directed against Lukács.

have been easier, if he were a stalinist, than to retain these leninist formulae in order to justify the not so bright communist realities. Instead Lukács searched a new theoretical basis for explaining the genesis of the social forms of consciousness, other than their imputing by the party intellectuals.

Another paradox: unlike more fashionable marxist currents that shaped the western debates at the time, Lukács neither traced a line of separation between an early marxian work, still contaminated by idealist and subjectivist views, and a mature “scientific”, objective one, nor did he repudiate an allegedly metaphysical core that were supposed to be found in the former. Like Marcuse, Lukács asserted the essential continuity of Marx’s thought and in the late works of Lukács we can find quotations from, say, *The Holy Family* and phrases extracted from *Capital*, sometimes on the same page, or in the same thread of argumentation.

### **The ontological turn**

In its author’s view, one of the merits of *HCC* was its attempt to sketch a materialist ontology of the social existence, to present the dialectical categories in their real objectivity and ontological movement (*HCC*: xxvi). For Lukács these categories were not conceptual artifacts, not subjective implantations into the objects from outside, but the manifestation of their own real, objective structure. But later he came to believe that his attempt failed, however, because of the aforementioned general socio-centric approach of the work. These efforts recalled in the 1967 *Preface* are the starting point of the *Ontology*, which tries to reestablish the role of the economic processes and the exchange between man and nature in the shaping and development of society. The ontological priority of the productive activity of man has its roots in the fact that “there cannot be exchange value without use value” (*OM*: 9), so the purely social existence rests upon and presupposes the natural existence. Labour is the ontological basis of man’s sociality.

Lukács remarks that Marx’ writings have always had an ontological character, even the scientific ones (*OM*: 14). He believes that the goal of Marx’ philosophy was to recreate in thought the genuine reality as it exists in itself (a rather hegelian assumption). So Marx’s thought reconstructs the totality of social being and from this perspective weighs the reality and the significance of every particular phenomenon (*OM*: 17). This scientific reflection of reality, one which is not photographic but a process of abstraction and generalization mediated by the ontological categories, is necessary because the outward appearance and the essence of things don’t directly coincide (*OM*: 16). This reflection is not a formal and simply ideal totality, the mental reproduction of the real existence and the

categories are not building blocks of a hierarchical system but, in Marx's words "forms of being, characteristics of existence" (OM: 19). To further exemplify, I must mention that for Lukács the marxian category of *labour* is not a conceptual or analytical tool, but the reflection in thought of a real process of abstraction of labour through its socialization, namely the emergence of a new ontological category of labour: *abstract labour* (OM: 40). These categories of thought adhere directly to reality, which does not mean at all that they can be discovered immediately. But, as Lukács warns, all ontological categories have a historical development, they are not static, eternal entities (OES: 73). In other words, he doesn't try to re-ontologize history but, rather the opposite, he historicizes ontology.

The perspective that Lukács introduces is ontological but also genetic. For him, the structure of a social formation cannot be understood without knowing its genesis and that of its components, as well as their function in the complex, or, in other words, the genesis determines the structure. Continuing the search inaugurated with HCC's attempt to produce the producer of history, Lukács gives us an account of the dynamic picture of the genesis of social existence since the emergence of mankind from the animal world due to *labour*. The social life comes into being at the same time with labour (the originary form of human praxis), with the emergence of new forms of created objectuality that are as real as the natural objects. Also, labour has as its premise the capacity of man to consciously plan its activity, the so called teleological project (*teleologische Setzung*) based on alternative options. So, humans are the ones that introduce teleology in a causally deterministic world, but for this to happen, some subjective conditions have to be met: the creation of the new objects require an adequate process of labour and this in turn is based on adequate teleological projects and alternative decisions which can be adopted only if the subject's mind can reflect adequately reality as it exists in itself. Two processes occur simultaneously: a separation between subject and object and an "assimilation" of the object into the subject as reflection.

So, human praxis is possible only as the consequence of a teleological act effected by a subject (OES: 49). These teleological projects are the basic elements of the social existence, because only at this level can the natural causal chains be interrupted. The development of the productive forces as a general tendency triggered by the new man-made objects and the division of labour, determines the retreat of the bounds of nature and an ever stronger socialization of society. Simultaneously, the demands exerted by the labour process, the correct reflection of reality and the adequation of the teleological projects to the desired result, determine the conscious self-domination of the labour subject and his progressive transformation, that is the *humanization of man*. Therefore, the socialization of society and the humanization of man are two aspects of the same historical process. We find thus, at the end of the route proposed by Lukács, the two poles of the

social existence: on the one hand the social totality, the result of the global and objective historical process, produced by man even though not in full awareness, on the other hand the individuals, the subjects of the teleological projects. In this complex, freedom of praxis coexists with determination by the social reality and keep each other in check (with the exception of a revolutionary situation, where the freedom of subjectivity seems to prevail) – this is the final view of the dialectic between subject and object, the *tertium datur* that Lukács was searching for.

### Capitalism and reification

The theory of reification is one of the most important early contributions of Lukács to a radical critique of the capitalist society. Leaning on the Marxian theory of commodity fetishism, Lukács further explores the way in which the social relations between men vanish beneath the relations between things. In turn, these reified forms penetrate human consciousness and veil the social rapports of domination beneath quantitative, formal relations. No domain of social consciousness escapes this fate: art, law, philosophy. “This is the reason the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things qua commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising the reform. There is only a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things”, said Marx.<sup>4</sup> Lukács adds: “because of this situation a man’s own activity, his own labour becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man” (HCC: 86–87). As the commodity production generalizes, “reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange” (HCC: 91), and this in turn has profound repercussions on the subjectivity: even its most elevated expression, the modern critical philosophy, “springs from the reified structure of consciousness” (HCC: 110).

Later Lukács became rather dissatisfied with some of his early conclusions. What displeased him most was his equation of reification (which in *HCC* is synonymous with alienation) with objectivation (HCC: xxiii-xxv). Objectivation, as the elementary form of human activity, is an unsurpassable fate. Alienation is a specific form of objectification that characterizes some historical epochs, including capitalism. Because of this limitations, the concept of reification cannot grasp the role of labour

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<sup>4</sup> Marx, Engels MECW vol. 35, p. 83, also quoted by Lukács in HCC, p. 86.

in the humanization of man, the objectivation of man as a species, the development of his productive capacities, material production as the objective ontological basis for the historical change (HCC: xxvii). I will return to this important aspect when discussing alienation.

So, if in *HCC* Lukács mainly superimposed his theory of reification on Marx's conception of fetishism, indicating by it a distortion that obfuscates real historical and social processes beneath the veil of rigid objects, and then expanded the results to the field of arts and social sciences, the same problematic reappear in *The Young Hegel*, this time in the larger context of the philosophical concept of objectivity, of objectivity as such. As I alluded to earlier, this became a *leitmotif* in Lukács's late work, after he reconsidered the importance of nature and circumscribed the relative autonomous sphere of social being.

In his social existence, man's teleological activity is incorporated in the objects and institutions he creates, and in turn society appears more and more clearly as the product of man's actions. But simultaneously social existence gave birth to forms of life, social structures and institutions that hindered the development of human personality and crushed man with the force of their dead objectivity (YH: 111). These institutions, results of longstanding processes and interplay of social forces, often surrounded by an aura of venerability, are opaque, their origins and role escape human understanding. One example of such mysterious entities is the commodity, whose dual nature of thing and of social relation was the object of Marx's analysis. This magical power that some objects have over men, because their dual nature (simultaneously objectual and social) remains hidden, is exactly what Marx called *fetishism*. In *HCC*, Lukács showed that the philosophical antidote to reification and fetishism is dialectical thought, dissolving the objects into processes. In *The Young Hegel* he reiterates that only historical materialism can draw a clear distinction between the real forms of objectivity, nature and the practical activity of man,<sup>5</sup> and the fetishistic, phantom-like<sup>6</sup> forms of objectivity scrutinized by Marx. This distinction could not have been fully grasped by Hegel because, on the one hand, he could not determine the relation between the fetish forms and the economic structure of society (he could not infer a theory of fetishism from the undeveloped German capitalism of his time) and, on the other hand, for idealist thinking any form of objectivity is phantom-like (YH: 82).

So, for Lukács the historical progress engenders the appearance of new, more complex and social forms of objectivity (such as the socially necessary labour time or the law of value) and these forms must be adequately grasped by philosophical thought. This thought has to fight against metaphysical dogmas as well as against

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<sup>5</sup> We shall have in mind the first thesis on Feuerbach.

<sup>6</sup> See YH, note 57, p. 653.

fetishized categories of philosophy that objectify human relations as self-created social institutions, has to be dialectical so that human activity can interact with the world of objective determinations (YH: 365). Now, if we know Lukács's preoccupation with objectivity, and we know that for a materialist thinker objectivity is the fundamental characteristic of the world as it is, independent of human thought, the reasons for his late ontological turn should be clearer.

From this standpoint the commodity, for example, is such a form of objectivity simultaneously phantom-like and real. It has therefore a particular ontological constitution, a socio-processual objectivity (Prolegomeni: 94). For Lukács, this ontological structure is shared by all the fetish forms. Their appearance that of a "second nature" obfuscates their hidden core, the social relations and processes that creates them. Because of their objectivity, the fetish forms don't vanish when their structure enters the consciousness of the social subject, they cannot be abolished by contemplation. But, because their objective, second-nature character is just an appearance, they can be overthrown by practical activity.

Fetishism is a key factor in the dialectic between subject and object that Lukács outlines in his late work, because of its overwhelming and generally degrading influence on human personality and human development. This leads us to another essential point in Lukács late thought, the concept of *alienation*.

### **The concept of *alienation***

In the 1967 *Preface*, Lukács considers that the HCC equation of alienation and objectification was the biggest theoretical error of the book. He traces this error back to Hegel, appropriating the criticism outlined by Marx in the *Economical and philosophical manuscripts*. Externalization or alienation is the concepts that Hegel used to describe the relation between subject and object in the process of the self-knowledge of the Absolute Spirit. This is what Lukács has to say: "there is a broad philosophical extension of the concept 'externalization' which then comes to be synonymous with 'thinghood' or objectivity. This is the form in which the history of objectivity is portrayed: objectivity as a dialectical moment in the journey of the identical subject-object on its way back to itself via 'externalization'" (YH: 539–540). So objectivity as such is just a moment of the Odissey of the Spirit, which discovers himself behind the objective world, implicitly the knowledge of the world is just a stage of self-knowledge of the Spirit, a stage that will be transcended. Finally, as objectivity itself is just a moment of the development of the Spirit, the central problem of the emergence and transcendence of alienation becomes that of the *aufhebung* of objectivity as such in the absolute knowledge, a historical process which culminates with the identical subject–object.



Unlike Hegel, who reached these erroneous conclusions because of the idealist equation of man with his self-consciousness, Marx, “drawing on his knowledge of the empirical evidence, distinguishes sharply between objectification in work in general and the alienation of subject and object in the capitalist form of work” (YH: 551–552). This marxian distinction between alienation and objectification is restated many times in Lukács’s later works. In the 1967 *Preface*, objectification is described as the natural means by which man masters the world, a phenomenon that cannot be eliminated from life in society, while alienation is just a special variant of objectification that takes place in definite historical circumstances (HCC: xxxvi). In the *Ontology*, objectification is the general form of human activity.

This unsurpassable character of objectivity is the materialist overturn operated by Marx in philosophy and Lukács follows him closely. With Hegel, objectivity as such was regarded as an estranged human relationship; for Marx it is an primordial ontological fact, while the dialectic of the Absolute Spirit is nothing more than conceptual mythology. So, Marx rejected the idealist conception of alienation as an externalization of the Spirit and simultaneously restricted its boundaries: from the objectification as such in Hegel to the concrete forms that this objectification takes in his contemporary society, more precisely to the way in which the human spirit, not the *Absolute Spirit* is alienated in capitalism. Man is an objectual being and as such he acts upon other objectual entities in his exchange of substances with nature, he necessarily externalizes himself in creating new objects. But, as Lukács carefully states, although alienation is to be found in the context of externalization and the material relations between men and between men and nature, it is a specific mode of externalization in relation with the process of production and of distribution in class society. Therefore, its existence depends on a social and historical situation in which human essence objectifies itself inhumanely, in contradiction with itself (YH: 550–553).

After following Marx in tracing the limits of alienation as a historical phenomenon determined by the human progress and establishing its ontological basis, Lukács is ready to present his own contributions, building on Marx’s insights. Dismissing those critical advocates of marxism who consider that the problematic of alienation was specific to the young, metaphysical Marx and was overcome by the mature, „economist” Marx, Lukács quotes from *Theories of surplus value*, to prove that the focus of Marx’ interest, the development process (including that of the individual) in its historical totality is closely connected with the problematic of alienation: “production for its own sake means nothing but the development of human productive forces, in other words the *development of the richness of human nature as an end in itself* although at first the development of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and whole human classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides

with the development of the individual; the higher development of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process during which individuals are sacrificed, for the interests of the species in the human kingdom” (MECW 31: 347–348). So, in Lukács’s view, alienation will be superseded only when the development of the human species will coincide with that of human personality, of the individual.

Now for Lukács it is this dialectical contradiction as such that manifests itself as alienation. It is the development of the productive forces that leads immediately to the superior development of human capacities, but it also implies the possibility that in this process individuals or even entire classes be sacrificed. This contradiction is necessary, writes Lukács, because it has at its basis certain ontological moments of the social process of labour, moments that are inescapable. One such moment is the fact that although the production process is the synthesis of teleological acts, as such it has a purely causal character, never a teleological one. The particular teleological acts are starting points for different causal chains that cumulate in an overall process, acquiring at this level new functions and characteristics, without ever losing their causal character. (OES: 568). In other words, the practical activity of man has always unpredictable and unintended consequences. Man is crushed by his own creation, the economic system.

In the end Lukács defines alienation in this way: although the development of the forces of production entails simultaneously and necessarily the development of the human capacities, this doesn’t necessarily bring about the development of the human personality. On the contrary, such an expansion can deform or degrade human personality. (OES: 569) But although alienation manifests itself directly at the level of the individual, and even if the individual alternative decision is part of the essence of its dynamics, it’s phenomenal existence (*Geradesosein*) is still a social process, albeit mediated by many interactions. Only in the last instance, the individual decision is the ontological basis of alienation (OES: 573). But although this individual moment is always present and determines the contemporary forms of alienation as much as it did the past ones, Lukács believes that often philosophical analysis falls into an opposite error by generalizing this unmediated, real and important aspect of alienation and transforming this phenomenon (that can always be clearly and concretely circumscribed from a social perspective) into something related to an eternal *condition humaine*, that has a general and suprahistorical character, as in the well-known philosophical clichés that sets man against society, subject against objectivity and so on (OES: 565, 572). For Lukács, man without society and society without man are empty abstractions that can be objects of logical or semantic speculations that don’t have any correspondent in the real existence (OES: 574).

## Conclusions

I hope that I shed some light on the late philosophy of Georg Lukács and proved that its intent, focus and direction were determined by internal, philosophical arguments rather than by external pressures and psychological motivations such as the need of reconciliation with official doctrines. In the changed historic circumstances, the reflux of the revolutionary wave and the emergence of fascism, Lukács felt that the messianic thesis of the proletariat as the identical subject-object of history was no longer useful. Still, he never repudiated his analysis of bourgeois society, but integrated its results concerning fetishism and reification into a new frame of thought, a dialectic between subject and object grounded in labour. Even the ontological turn can be explained as a consequence of his investigations regarding alienation and the dual nature of the fetish forms of objectivity, as he thought he had to depart his early socio-centric approach for a better understanding of the ontological substratum of these social phenomena.

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## HERBERT PAUL GRICE ON MEANING (SOME REMARKS)\*

P. ALPÁR GERGELY\*\*

**ABSTRACT.** **Herbert Paul Grice on Meaning (Some Remarks).** In order to get a more complete idea of Herbert Paul Grice's theory of meaning, we have to go beyond his article entitled Meaning, and pay attention to the details he later added to his theory in his other texts. With the introduction of such concepts as the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims he outlined a more complex theory of meaning, which completes the formal theories of meaning. This paper is an outline of the modified Griceian theory of meaning.

**Keywords:** *sentence, utterance, intention, meaning, implicature, cooperative principle, conversational maxims*

### Contradiction

We are facing a contradiction, it seems. Technical progress and development seems to have reassured us that the creation of a thinking machine is not an impossible enterprise. We have ATM machines, self-driving cars, and computers that were programmed to execute certain task, yet we don't seem to have come any closer to creating a thinking machine. It is enough to think of such machines as the robot waiter who was so perplexed at the sight of a nosebleed that he didn't know what to do, or the chess machine, which as a response to his opponent's non-optimal move lost the game. In these cases the robots didn't know how to react to an unknown situation.

The most plausible explanation for these phenomena is the one that states that the cause the robots were perplexed was that they were unable to learn. And by this we mean that they were unable to learn from their experience, because they

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don't even have any experience. The following simplistic explanation can shed some light on the issue: the robots are unable to learn, because they are unable to think, and this is because they don't have their own language. A robot only "knows" the things that he was programmed "to know", in some cases he also knows some things he can deduce from his initial knowledge base with the help of certain deductive rules.

### Limits of a Formal Language

The research of artificial intelligence is based on the formal conception of language, and this formal conception of language can be traced back to Gottlob Frege's article *Begriffsschrift*.<sup>1</sup> In the *Begriffsschrift* Frege wanted to create a language that was void of the ambiguities of natural language. In such an ideal language every word has one and only one clearly defined meaning, and every sign has one and only one interpretation. We all know this language. It is the language of Logics (Mathematics). Frege wanted this language to solve the problem of ambiguity by getting rid of it. According to him this language works quite simple. The meaning of a sentence can be reduced to the meaning of its words and the order of the words in the sentence. This is called the *principle of compositionality*.

However, put into practice the Fregeian theory has its difficulties. When creating utterances, speakers don't seem to take into consideration the Fregeian principles. The Fregeian theory of language presented in the *Begriffsschrift* and in *On Sense and Reference*<sup>2</sup> can't handle sentences that are about fictional entities. According to Frege every sentence has a truth value that is every sentence is either true or false. But this is so, only if the words have a reference in reality, and if the sentences describe entities as they are in reality. Yet the sentences about fictional entities show that these are neither true, nor false. (E.g. "Ulysses's horse can speak". The reason for the Fregeian theory not assigning any truth value to this sentence is that the "Ulysses's horse" expression doesn't have a real world reference.)<sup>3</sup> These formal theories presuppose in fact two things: a realist ontology and the correspondence theory of truth. According to the first one the world is a set of mind-independent objects. Irrespective of what objects' existence we accept, the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Frege, Gottlob, "*Begriffsschrift*", in Jean van Heijenoort, *From Frege to Gödel*, Harvard University Press, 1967, 1–82.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Frege, Gottlob, "*On Sense and Reference*", in Peter Geach, Max Black, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, Basil Blackwell, 1960, 56–78.

<sup>3</sup> See Farkas Katalin, Kelemen János, *Nyelvfilozófia*, Áron Kiadó, Budapest, 2002.

objects in the world *exist* and *they are as they are* regardless of our experience about them. According to the second view sentences are true or false based on how they represent the world. A sentence is true if it represents the world as it is, otherwise the sentence is false.

If we again consider the examples presented at the beginning of this paper, the question arises: why did the two robots recoil from the unknown situations? The answer seems to be simple, but also poses some serious questions. The robots recoiled from the unknown situations because they did not understand those situations. And it seems that together with the answer we have arrived at the core question of the whole problem. And the question sounds the following: what does it mean to understand a certain situation? Or if we reformulate the question and translate it to the language of the philosophy of language: what does it mean to understand a sentence? In this case we of course accept the view that to understand a situation is to understand the sentence that describes that particular situation.

### John L. Austin's Remark

As we have seen the Fregeian theory doesn't give us a satisfactory explanation for the problem of meaning. This is because the principle of compositionality takes into consideration just two dimensions of language: the syntactic and the semantic dimensions, totally ignoring the pragmatic dimension. In his William James lectures John L. Austin draws our attention to the pragmatic dimension of language. Very briefly: Austin drew our attention to the fact that besides the *descriptive* (constative) utterances there are also *performative* utterances (performatives).<sup>4</sup> Performatives are utterances that when uttered, don't describe a state of fact, but rather an action is performed by them. Such performatives would be the act of naming, apologizing, betting, promising, etc. Thus, if in the case of uttering "It is morning" we describe an actual state of the world, in case of uttering "I promise, I will be there" we don't describe a state of the world, but rather we make a promise, that we will be present at a certain place. In case of the performatives we don't even use the true-false truth values, but label these utterances as *successful* and *unsuccessful*. Austin however did not end his analysis here. He further split the utterances into *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* acts. By locutionary act he meant the voicing/uttering of an utterance (e.g. we utter the words "Forgive me"); by illocutionary act he meant the phenomenon of performing a certain act by uttering certain words (e.g. we perform

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Austin, John L., *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press, 1962. 1–11.

the act of apologizing by uttering the words “Forgive me”); by perlocutionary act he meant the impact of an utterance (e.g. the listener forgives the speaker because he believes that the speaker uttered the words sincerely, and as a result of his utterance the speaker would like the listener to forgive him).<sup>5</sup>

### Herbert Paul Grice vs John R. Searle<sup>6</sup>

The problem of meaning veritably enthralled the analytic philosophers in the twentieth century. I would like to focus my attention especially on two philosophers: H. P. Grice and J. R. Searle, because their debate on meaning shapes and defines the views on meaning in today’s analytic philosophy.

When we consider the Gricean view on meaning, first and foremost we tend to look at his very famous article, *Meaning*.<sup>7</sup> In this article Grice differentiates between two types of meaning.<sup>8</sup> He calls the first type of meaning the *natural meaning*, and except one example, he doesn’t really focus on it. The classic example is the example of smoke and fire. According to Grice whenever we say that “The smoke meant fire”, we suppose that there is an intrinsic, substantive relation between the sign and the thing the sign is a sign of. In the second case however, the link between the sign and the thing of which the sign is a sign of can be reduced to convention. Thus if we utter the sentence “The blinking of the turn signal meant that the car will change direction” we can’t claim that between the blinking of a bulb and a vehicle’s change in direction there is a necessary or natural connection. (Vehicles change directions without signaling this with the blinking of the turn signal. As a counterexample it is enough to think of bicyclists, who signal their intent in direction change with their hands.) Grice calls this second type of meaning *non-natural meaning*. While in case of the natural meaning the link between the sign and the thing that the sign is a sign of is necessary, this is not the case with the non-natural meaning. Thus Grice had to explain, why is it that a certain sign in a certain situation signifies a certain thing and not something else. Simply put: how can a sign signify something at all? The Griceian answer is quite simple. A non-natural sign can be a sign of something simply because someone (a speaker) wants for that sign to

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Austin, John L., *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press, 1962. 94–107.

<sup>6</sup> For a more in-depth analysis see my article: Gergely P. Alpár, “Grice jelentéseméletének searle-i kritikája”, in *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 4/2015, 148–155.

<sup>7</sup> Grice, Herbert Paul, “Meaning”, in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 213–223.

<sup>8</sup> Grice, Herbert Paul, “Meaning”, in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 214.

be a sign of something for another person (listener). And the listener recognizes the meaning of the sign by realizing that the speaker wanted to signal something in the following way: so that the listener recognizes the speaker's intention to signal something, and the speaker's intention for the listener to react to the message in a specific way. Thus we can say, that according to the Griceian idea, the meaning is equal to the listener's intended reaction triggered by the speaker.<sup>9</sup>

According to John R. Searle there are at least two problems with the Griceian definition of meaning.<sup>10</sup> One of the shortcomings is the lack of clarification that is needed to explain the tie between meaning and convention; and the second one is that Grice doesn't clearly differentiate between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts. In the first case, taking in consideration that according to Grice meaning can be reduced to the speaker's intention and the listener's intended reaction triggered by the speaker, Searle would like to know how is it possible for a sign not to mean everything.<sup>11</sup> (E.g. Why can't the "Sun is shining" utterance mean that "The grass is green"?) Searle's answer to this question is that an utterance can't mean everything, because the conventional meaning of the words (the one that it is defined by the dictionary) and their places in the utterance already determines the meaning of the utterance. In the second case Searle's criticism claims that not every utterance has a perlocutionary effect.<sup>12</sup> If in case of a declarative sentence we can say that the speaker's intended effect is to persuade the listener, there are cases in which such an intended effect cannot be set. For example in the case when a sentence wasn't uttered in all seriousness, or in the case of greetings.

### Grice's Remark and Its Consequences

We said that whenever we speak of the Gricean definition of meaning first and foremost we think of his article *Meaning*. This is justified in the sense in which Grice formulated his first remarks about meaning in this article. We would be utterly mistaken however thinking that in this article Grice presented his theory of meaning in its complete form. After the publication of *Meaning* partly as a reaction of the criticism that he received, partly because he himself thought that some issues should be clarified about meaning, Grice published a series of articles in which he re-examined the problem of meaning.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Gergely P. Alpár, "Grice jelentéseméletének searle-i kritikája", in *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 4./2015, 150.

<sup>10</sup> See Searle, John R., *Speech Acts*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 43–44.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Searle, John R., *Speech Acts*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 44–45.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Searle, John R., *Speech Acts*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 46–47.



Grice based his article *Logic and Conversation*<sup>13</sup> on an observation. He witnessed the debate between the formalists and the informalists about the language. The formalists maintained Frege's position. They thought that an ideal language consists of axioms and logical principles; every word has one and only one meaning; and since this language is used primarily as the language of science, within this language valid arguments play a substantial part. In contrast, the informalists thought that the fact that a language can be used primarily for science is just one aspect of language. We use language for several other things. Moreover, everyday experience shows us that we make deductions without the aid of formal means. The solution would be to create a logic that is not reductionist. But the members of the two groups agreed on one thing: the meaning of the formal words used in formal logic is not the same as the meaning of the words that are used in natural language that correspond with these formal words. Grice didn't want to take sides in the debate. His remark about the debate was the following "the common assumptions of the contestants that the divergences do in fact exist is (broadly speaking) a common mistake, and that the mistake arises from an inadequate attention to the nature and importance of the conditions governing conversation."<sup>14</sup> Thus the cause of the perplexity was the omission of an aspect, and as we shall see, this aspect plays a huge part in Grice's theory of meaning.

### **The Way the Gricean Theory Works**

First we should examine Grice's response to the explicit criticism of Searle. The question in this case is: why cannot a sentence mean anything, or considering the earlier presented examples, why "The sun is shining" sentence doesn't mean the same as "The grass is green"? Grice's answer to this question is identical with the Searleian answer. The meaning of the first sentence cannot be the same as the meaning of the second sentence, simply because the words in the first sentence are not the same as the words in the second sentence. The meanings of the words are different, so the meanings of the sentences also have to be different. We have to note here that Grice is concerned with word-meaning on the one hand and with sentence-meaning on the other hand, and that he also accepts the compositionality principle. Thus we can say, that according to Grice the meaning of a sentence can be

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<sup>13</sup> Grice, Herbert Paul, "Logic and Conversation", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 22–40.

<sup>14</sup> Grice, Herbert Paul, "Logic and Conversation", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 24.

reduced to the meaning of the words in that particular sentence and the rules that were used to combine those words. Moreover, he explicitly claims that in certain situations the speaker's intentions can be recognized based on the conventional meaning of the words that were used, and the conventional meaning of the sentence.<sup>15</sup> We know that a speaker intended to express such-and-such a meaning because he used these words so-and-so. If the "sun" in "The sun is shining" sentence refers to the celestial body, it cannot also refer to the "grass" in the sentence "The grass is green", because here the "grass" refers to the plant that has narrow green leaves, and so on and so forth. In this respect Grice accepts the Searleian explanation, however their views still differ.

Grice accepts that the compositionality principle can be a solution when discussing meaning, but only in certain cases. For there are cases, when this principle cannot offer a viable explanation. Consider the following example: X says to Y that "He [Z] is in the grip of a vice". If we only rely on the principle of compositionality, we will define the sentence's meaning as follows: some parts of Z is stuck in a certain tool. But X's intention wasn't that to express this meaning, but the meaning that Z was unable to change one of the negative features of his personality. The question is, how did X manage to express this latter meaning by uttering the above mentioned sentence?

This is the point that we arrive at the aspect that was omitted by both the formalists and the informalists, and that according to Grice govern every conversation of ours. We have to think of two things here: the *cooperative principle* and the *conversational maxims*. But before looking at these conditions, we have to clarify the meaning of some basic notions.

Let us consider our former example. X tells Y about Z that "He's in the grip of a vice", and he says the same thing to A about B. The sentence that was uttered is the same in both cases, but while in the first case X expresses the thought that Z was unable to change one of the negative features of his personality, in the second case he expresses the thought that a part of B is stuck in a certain tool. The sentences are the same, but their meanings are different. What X utters in both cases is the *sentence*, and regardless of the utterance's place, time and other circumstances it doesn't change. In contrast, depending on the circumstances the utterance of the same sentence will result in different *utterances*.<sup>16</sup> The utterances then depend on the circumstances, or as Grice would say, they depend on different contexts. Grice thinks that one of the elements that will decide the result of uttering a certain

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, "Utterer's Meaning and Intentions", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 100–101.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Reboul, Anne, Moeschler, Jacques, *A társalgás cselei (La pragmatique aujourd'hui. Une nouvelle science de la communication)* [in Hungarian translation], Osiris Kiadó, 2006, 52.

sentence is *context*. Thus uttering the sentence “Then I told him that he’s in the grip of a vice” will result in different utterances based on the following factors: who uttered the sentence, to whom, in what circumstances. Based on these circumstances the sentence can have different meanings; it can refer to a person’s inability to change a negative feature of his personality or to someone being stuck in a tool.

Considering the notions of sentence and utterance we can also distinguish between two other notions, the notions of *saying* and *suggesting*, or *implying* as Grice calls it.<sup>17</sup> The notion of saying is in close relation with the notion of sentence. If a speaker says something, it means that he produces a string of words called sentence. If we don’t take into consideration any of the circumstances that were the case when a sentence was uttered, we can say that the speaker meant exactly what he said. This will be the case of the conventional meaning. By uttering the sentence “He’s in the grip of a vice” the speaker means that someone is stuck in a certain tool. But does the speaker really mean this? In the case of the first pair of notions we saw that the speaker sometimes means one thing, and sometimes not. And the intention of the speaker depends on the context. In a strict sense even if the speaker refers to a person’s inability to change a negative feature of his personality or that person’s certain part being stuck in a tool, he says the same thing, but he suggests or implies two different things. It seems then, that the speaker has two possibilities: he says something (utters a sentence) and means what he says – this would be the case of the conventional meaning; or he says something and he means something else than what was uttered. In the first case he utters p and he means p, in the second case he utters p but suggests q, or utters p and implies q.

Grice introduced the expression *to imply* as a technical term, and according to his definition he uses this expression in cases when he doesn’t want to choose between words that are part of the same family of verbs with the same meaning<sup>18</sup>. The noun *implicature* is the noun counterpart of the verb to implicate and in all the cases when we say p and suggest or imply q we are faced with an implicature. This is the case when uttering the sentence “He’s in the grip of a vice” with the meaning referring to the feature of personality.

Grice distinguishes between two major groups of implicature, that of *conventional* and *conversational implicature*.<sup>19</sup> In case of the conventional implicature, we can think of implicatures where the conventional meaning of the words signal

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, “*Logic and Conversation*”, in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, “*Logic and Conversation*”, in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Reboul, Anne, Moeschler, Jacques, *A társalgás cselei (La pragmatique aujourd’hui. Une nouvelle science de la communication)* [in Hungarian translation], Osiris Kiadó, 2006, 54.

that we are dealing with more than what it is uttered. Consider the sentence “John is an Englishman, hence he is brave”. Based on the notions that we have introduced earlier, we can analyze the sentence in the following way: it is clear that we are dealing with two sentences instead of one. The first sentence is “John is an Englishman”, the second one is “He is brave”. The personal pronoun “he” refers to “John”, and the two sentences are connected with the conjunction “hence”. By joining these two sentences together an implicature is created; the listener has the feeling that the speaker suggests that John is brave *because* John is an Englishman. From the fact that John is an Englishman follows the fact that John is brave. This implication is signaled by the presence of “hence”. The meaning of the sentence is: John is brave because John is an Englishman. For someone to be brave there is a necessary and sufficient condition, that of the person being an Englishman. This instance is a typical example of what Grice calls *conventional implicature*. In the case of a conventional implicature the meaning of the words tend to suggest a certain meaning. The conventional meaning of these words signal that we are dealing with a conventional implicature. We have several such words, like “but”, “although” (that express contrast and internal tension), “and” (expressing the link between two things; sometimes signaling the successiveness of two actions), “if... then...” (expressing the link between cause and effect, and the successiveness of two actions), etc.

The second group of implicatures are the conversational implicatures. This is the point where Grice arrives at the aspect ignored both by the formalists and the informalists. These conditions are in fact principles and rules that govern our everyday conversations. One such principle is the *cooperative principle*. The cooperative principle is a very simple presumption. According to this principle every time we engage in a conversation, we do that governed by a certain goal.<sup>20</sup> We want to discuss about a certain thing and our (common) goal governs the conversation. Only the cooperation with our peer can lead us to reach the common goal. The goal can be explicit or tacit, but no matter how it is, we always presume that there is such a goal.

And since there is a goal, there are also means with the aid of which we can reach the goal. The means in this case are rules, *conversational maxims* according to Grice, that help us reach the goal in the conversation. These are the *maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner*. According to the maxim of quantity the speaker, taking in consideration the goal of the conversation, has to provide enough information for the listener, neither less, nor more than it is needed. According to the maxim of quality the speaker’s contribution has to be true. The speaker has to

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, “*Logic and Conversation*”, in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 26.

avoid false statements and statements that he doesn't have adequate evidence for. The maxim of relation calls our attention to relevance. The maxim of manner calls upon a clear contribution from the speaker's part.<sup>21</sup>

After Grice's review of the conversational maxims and the cooperative principle the question arises: do we, whenever we communicate, always obey to these principles and act upon them? It seems that we always have to take the cooperative principle into consideration, otherwise we wouldn't be able to communicate. The fact that we speak with each other presupposes that we could make our goal explicit, be they however broad. When it comes to the maxims the situation is not that simple. In case a speaker acts according to all of the maxims, everything goes according to the plan and the speaker creates a conversational implicature (utters *p* and implies *q*) without violating any of the maxims. The classic example is a short dialogue between A and B, where A says "I am out of petrol" to which B replies "There is a garage round the corner".<sup>22</sup> In this case B implies that the garage is open and A could potentially fill up his car. The short analysis of this case would be: 1. both A and B presuppose the cooperative principle (this is a standard case of asking for help); 2. according to the maxim of quantity B provides enough information (the information is also necessary and sufficient) for A in order to help him; 3. according to the maxim of quality B uttered a true, easily verifiable statement (the garage was really around the corner); 4. B's utterance was relevant in the given situation (he replied to A's utterance); 5. according to the maxim of manner B's utterance was sufficiently clear.

The situation gets more complicated whenever the speaker violates a maxim or plain ignores it. The Griceian example in this case is the case of a professor who when asked to account for the philosophy skills of a former student, supplied the following testimonial "Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc."<sup>23</sup> The professor clearly implies that X's philosophy skill is questionable at best. We also presuppose the cooperative principle in this case, otherwise the professor wouldn't have had written the testimonial. It is also clear that the professor can potentially provide relevant information about his former student's philosophy skills, but he didn't. The maxim of quantity was violated here, because the speaker didn't provide enough information according to the situation.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, "Logic and Conversation", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 26–27.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, "Logic and Conversation", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Grice, Herbert Paul, "Logic and Conversation", in Herbert Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, 2002, 33.

What happens in these cases? How does the listener know that he faces an implicature? As mentioned before the presupposition of the cooperative principle is absolutely necessary. But it is also preferable that the speaker utters a statement according to both the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims. So if we notice that the speaker ignored some of the maxims, or that the maxims were violated, we can rely on a method of inference with the help of which we can figure out the reason, why the speaker uttered the sentence that he did. The method of inference works in the following way in the testimonial's case: 1. X's former professor knows X's philosophy skills (it is impossible for him not to know more about it); 2. the professor knew that he had to provide information about X's philosophy skills; 3. despite all this, the professor barely said anything about X's philosophy skills (he violated the maxim of quantity by not providing enough information); 4. the professor didn't want to share any information about X's philosophy skill; 5. the professor had to have a low opinion on X's philosophy skill, otherwise he would have shared the information.

Grice by introducing the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims in his theory of meaning, urged others to take notice of these guiding principles. A common feature of the theories of meaning that were elaborated before Grice's theory was that they were based solely on the notion of inference rules. Just think of the formal theories of meaning. These theories all worked with a code-like image of language. The code-like theory of language considers that every sign has its conventional meaning, and that the meaning of a sentence can be reduced to the meaning of its constituent words and their places in the sentence. The basic scheme of the code-like view of language is  $A \rightarrow B$ ,  $B \rightarrow C$ ,  $C \rightarrow D$ , etc., and the basic idea is that between the antecedent and the consequent the relation is based on necessity. Such a view however has at least two difficulties. The two difficulties in form of a question are the following: how can such a view account for mistakes? and how can it account for cases of indirect speech acts?

### **The Difficulties of the Code-like View of Language**

If we imagine language as code and reduce meaning to convention, we are unable to account for mistakes when it comes to meaning, because on the one hand the dictionary defines the meaning of a certain word, on the other hand the relation of necessity guarantees that only one consequent follows from a certain antecedent (the one that actually follows). The case of the indirect speech acts poses the same difficulty. Indirect speech acts can be defined as speech acts in case of which the

speaker utters a certain utterance and means what he says, but also means something else. A typical example of an indirect speech act is the utterance “Can you pass the salt?”. When uttering the sentence the speaker means it as a question, but also as a request; that is by uttering the utterance the speaker also requests the listener to give him the salt. But how is this possible? The conventional theory of meaning makes it impossible for us to regard a question also as a request. In this case also the meaning of the sentence is reduced to the meaning of its constituent words and their places in the sentence. And the question mark at the end of the sentence signals that we are dealing with a question. This is one potential explanation. The second potential explanation is the one presented by Searle. This is a highly complex system of deduction that we won’t expose here.<sup>24</sup>

### Griceian Solutions of the Difficulties

In both cases the Griceian solution is much simpler. Remember, Grice defined the non-natural meaning as the effect of the listener’s intended reaction triggered by the speaker, resulting from the fact that the listener recognizes the speaker’s intention. According to Grice the fact that we ascribe intentions to another person plays a crucial role. He presupposes that a speaker utters a certain utterance with a certain intention, and the listener will only understand the meaning of an utterance if beyond the fact that he reduces the utterance’s meaning to the meaning of the words, the listener also understands the speaker’s intention. In the cases of mistakes and indirect speech acts the listener doesn’t understand the speaker due to the fact that he does not ascribe any intention to the speaker, or because the listener cannot override and revise the intention that he initially ascribed to the speaker.

In both the cases of indirect speech acts and of the cooperative principle the listener is challenged to give further considerations to the situation. Consider once again the example “Can you pass the salt?” According to the Griceian view the listener would reason in the following way: 1. it is obvious for the speaker that I would be able to pass him the salt; 2. it would be absurd to question something that it is obvious for the speaker; 3. thus he didn’t want to ask me if I were able to pass him the salt, he wants something else: he wants me to pass him the salt.<sup>25</sup> The situation is similar in case of a mistake also. If a speaker utters the sentence “He’s in

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<sup>24</sup> See Searle, John R., “*Indirect Speech Acts*” in John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 33–35.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Reboul, Anne, Moeschler, Jacques, *A társalgás cselei (La pragmatique aujourd’hui. Une nouvelle science de la communication)* [in Hungarian translation], Osiris Kiadó, 2006, 57.

the grip of a vice”, the listener will know that the speaker referred to the fact that someone was unable to change a negative feature of his personality because: 1. the listener presupposes the cooperative principle; 2. the listener knows that the speaker’s remark of someone being stuck in a certain tool wouldn’t make any sense in the context of the conversation (the maxim of relation would be overlooked); 3. based on 1. and 2. the listener arrives at the conclusion that the speaker couldn’t have referred to someone being stuck in a tool; 4. the listener concludes that the speaker meant something else when uttering the sentence: he must have intended that someone couldn’t change one of the negative features of his personality. We see that according to the Griceian theory the listener’s interpretation doesn’t end with the first impediment. When facing a difficulty, the listener is trying to trace interpretational options based on both the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims. According to the goal of conversation and its context the listener sets out certain hypotheses in order to be able to find the best possible meaning of an utterance.

### Conclusion

The problem of meaning seems to be a huge challenge for linguists, philosophers and researchers of artificial intelligence. The code-like view of language, as we have seen, tends to simplify the problem in such a way, that it almost makes progress impossible. This kind of theory cannot account for as simple issues as the ones raised by mistakes or indirect speech acts. In contrast, the Griceian view can explain both the phenomenon of mistakes and indirect speech acts. It does this by allowing the listener to ascribe intentions to the speaker, and also by claiming that the listener while trying to tackle the problem of meaning sketches certain hypotheses according to the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims. This strategy helps the listener decide and define the meaning of words and utterances in all cases.

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE IN GROUNDING COGNITION

LEVENTE PAPP\*

**ABSTRACT. The Significance of Life in Grounding Cognition.** In this study I would like to investigate the relationship between life and mind. First, I take up the problem of defining life based on the theory of autopoiesis. Next, I consider the meaning of cognition and I interpret two lines of reasoning regarding the criteria for having a mind and about the beginnings of mind in the living world. I will argue that if we consider the narrow, more familiar meaning of the term “mind”, then it turns out that only a subclass of living entities can be regarded as minded, but if we consider the broad sense of the term, that all living systems can be rightly thought of as cognitive. Secondly, the more advanced forms of cognitive processes found in animal life can be thought of as complexified extensions of the basic life-regulative capacities.

**Keywords:** *life, mind, enactive approach, autopoiesis, agency, autonomy*

### Introduction – questions

In this study I want to demonstrate the current phase and results of an on-going research. This is the first part of a bigger project, and it is logically prior to the future research related to this. My central theme is the relationship between life and mind, and based on these results, I want to consider the implications of these conclusions regarding the artificial intelligence research. So, in this work, I want to focus on the first of these interrelated questions, which will be the basis of my further study. In this study I want to consider specifically the question of the meaning of natural cognition, or in other words, the question of what it means to ground the naturally occurring mind in biology. Phrasing it in a different way: what does it mean to say that the naturally occurring cognitive capacities are capacities of *living* systems? Although we know that different kinds of minds were realised in living systems in the course of evolution, this correlation still leaves open the next problem: can the mind be realised in non-living systems too? Is the relationship between life and mind contingent or necessary?

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The classic idea of artificial intelligence research contains the thesis of the multiple realizability of minds, according to which mind can be realized in non-living entities too. This assumption has the implication according to which the connection between life and mind is not necessary and we can speak, on the one hand, about the natural form of cognition, and on the other hand about the realisation of cognition in artificial systems, which doesn't require the biological organizations essential to life. So this assumption contains the thought that we have good reasons to hold the view according to which intrinsic, true intelligence can be realised in non-living systems (for example in robots). In the future I want to question this assumption (based on the enactive approach), but in order to do this I first need this introduction, in which I investigate the meaning of the phenomenon of life and mind, and also the question of what it means to ground the latter in the former.

First, we would like to have a definitional framework related to these two phenomena.

### **The problem of defining life**

Let's start with the crucial question about the criteria used to separate those systems in the world which can be regarded living from those which are not. The reason why this definitional problem is really hard consists in the fact that, even after we come up with a list of characteristics, which can be generalised to hold across the living world, there remains the question about which of these characteristics should be regarded as essential, and which should not. Can we come up with a classical definition, which is based on necessary and sufficient conditions? Can we draw a precise line between the living and non-living systems?

When it comes to defining life, the science of biology in general holds that life has the following crucial, emergent characteristics: *self-organization, metabolism, homeostasis, sensibility, development, adaptivity, reproduction, evolutionary capacity etc.* But this or other, similar kinds of definitions, based on such lists, still leaves us with the following question: are all of these capacities in the list necessary for something to count as a living system? Can there be a living system without having one or more of these capacities?

One of the key discoveries of modern biology is the general idea that all biological systems are composed of the most elementary forms of living unities, namely cells. This discovery really made it possible to state a general proposition about life, but we can still ask, what it is about the cells, that makes them living, or can life exist, which is not based on cells.

One of the solutions to this puzzle comes from Francesco Varela and Humberto Maturana, who came to the conclusion that the essence of life consists of its unique autopoietic organization. The living cell is open to its environment, while constantly exchanging matter and energy. The cell membrane can be regarded as its boundary, which separates the cell from its surrounding<sup>1</sup>. Through its cell membrane molecules get inside the cell, are participating in cell functioning, while certain other molecules exit the cell as waste products. Through this metabolism the cell constantly regenerates itself, including those component parts, which are necessary for the on-going function of the metabolic network. This circular, self-building, self-organizing process is called autopoiesis.<sup>2</sup> Through this process, the cell constantly rebuilds and sustains its invariant organization as well as its own self-identity and its separation from its environment. The reason why this point is important for our purposes, consists of the fact that according to Varela and Maturana, the autopoietic organization is a necessary and sufficient requirement for life (it is debatable whether the original formulation implicitly contained the capacity for adaptivity, and we will return to this issue in the future). It can stand as a criterion, which holds the key for deciding whether certain borderline cases can count as living systems or not. Based on these considerations, the viruses don't fulfil the criteria necessary for life, because they don't have autonomous metabolism.<sup>3</sup>

According to the theory of autopoiesis, the perspective, which puts forward the functioning of the individual organism, is better than those other approaches, which stress the importance of reproduction, genetic information-processing or evolutionary changes. The approach which emphasizes the organismic perspective is based on the thought that although reproduction and evolution are crucial for understanding life, these processes are logically and empirically secondary, because they first require the living organism in place.<sup>4</sup>

For our purposes of discussion, let's grant the definition of life set forth this far. We know that about a few billion years ago the first autopoietic unicellular cells came into being on our planet Earth. In the perspective of big history this was the moment when the soil was ready to plant all other life forms on this planet. Based

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<sup>1</sup> Multiple Realizability. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. First published Mon Nov 23, 1998; substantive revision Tue Jan 15, 2013. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiple-realizability/>)

<sup>2</sup> VARELA, Francisco J. – MATURANA, H. R: *Autopoiesis: The Organization of the Living Systems, its Characterization and a Model*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1974. 188.

<sup>3</sup> THOMPSON, Evan: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge–Massachusetts, London–England, 2007. 104.

<sup>4</sup> VARELA, Francisco J. – MATURANA, H. R: *Autopoiesis: The organization of the Living Systems, its Characterization and a Model*. 189.

on our knowledge of life history and evolution we can now see that every living organism is part of the single Life-Tree, which represents the history of life, the unfolding of the many ways in which organism changed over time and adapted to their environments in countless ways. In this history we can highlight a few crucial steps, for example the emergence of eucaryotes, the rise of multicellular organisms etc. In this paper we cannot pursue this remarkable narrative in detail, but we have to ask a crucial question related to this history, namely when, why and how do some organisms acquire capacities which we recognise as cognitive, or minded? When does the mind begin? At this point I am not interested in the scientific question about exactly which organisms in the past became minded, but in the prior philosophical question regarding those criteria which we can use to make another distinction among the living entities, namely the distinction between minded creatures and systems which cannot properly be regarded as cognitive (in this paper I use the term mind and cognitive interchangeably). Related to this question I will consider two lines of thought in the next sections.

**The demarcation problem about minded beings. First line of thought: the unique aspects of psychological capacities – intentionality/representation, consciousness**

In this section I won't present the theoretical frame of a particular research program, instead I will be focusing on a quite popular way of thinking, which is very general and can be the background framework for more specific theorizing. According to this framework, we have some quite reasonable and intuitive criteria in hand by which we distinguish among the living systems those which are minded from those which aren't. Based on this reasoning, we find it quite obvious, that in the course of evolution the mind emerges quite late, so that there were many organisms living on Earth in such a way that they were not minded by any standards. This line of reasoning holds that it would be too absurd to say that all living entities are minded. The separation of the living beings into the minded and un-minded entities rests on a criterion according to which life is not sufficient for having a mind and in order for a system to count as minded it needs some additional capacities which point beyond mere biology (of course not in the sense of Cartesian dualism). Compatible with this thought is the idea that mind or psychology is a new, emergent level of reality, which transcends mere biology. While biology studies the living processes of living beings, psychology (in the broad sense) focuses on the minded capacities and the behaviour generated by these capacities of those living creatures, which make up a class in the living world – the subcategory of the living, but also minded beings.

If we follow this way of thinking, our most important job would be to investigate this supposedly obvious criterion. On what grounds do we think that not all living beings are minded? What would be the criteria for having a mind? We can provide different answers to this question, but maybe the two most important characteristics, which we usually think of as providing necessary and sufficient conditions for the presence of mind, are intentionality/representations and consciousness (one or both, depending on the way we think about their relationships).<sup>5,6</sup> These capacities are usually thought of as correlating with the emergence of the nervous system. With this change the mere biological bodies become extended with neuronal circuits, which make the control and regulation of the body possible through representational processes too. Because not all living systems are endowed with these capacities, it follows that not all living entities can be part of the class of minded creatures. According to this reasoning, psychological capacities begin in evolutionary time when we can speak about the emergence of representational capacities in unconscious or in conscious forms.

We can make a list about different mental capacities in general, and in doing so we can be more specific about the different modalities the representational/intentional capacities can take. (By mental modality I simply mean the different types of minded capacities – for example sensation is different from cognition. There are more encompassing categories, which hold together more specific ones – for example, inside the category of sensation, we can speak about auditory or visual modalities). In harmony with this frame of thought, we can carve up the mental world into the following classes: 1. sensations (includes all processes of interoception and exteroception, like pain, touch, kinesthesia), 2. conative-motivational states (drives, wants), 3. emotional states and moods (fear, anger) and 4. cognitive states (attention, memory, planning, drawing inferences, concept formation, decision making etc.).

The most important specification about this list can be summed up in the following line of thought: a concrete individual minded being can have a unique configuration of a set of mental capacities. The cognitive entities may differ from each other depending on how rich or poor, how complex or simple is their mental repertoire (relatively speaking). The same capacity can have multiple forms and qualities, depending on concrete realisations of it. For example, common sense knows it well that the olfactory capacity of the dog is much more sophisticated than that of humans. We can't forget the fact that there are unique species-specific

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<sup>5</sup> CRANE, Tim: *Elements of Mind. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2001. 3.

<sup>6</sup> MCGINN, Colin: *The Character of Mind. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1996. 8.

capacities too – for example the bats navigating systems of echolocation. Between the many modalities there exist complicated relationships, because some of them can only exist as coupled with others, or based on others. Some of them are more basic or have a constitutive role in others' existence. It's obvious for example, that in order to have a conceptual apparatus, there has to be first a range of sensory information, because perception (identifying things) requires the more basic level of sensation. Furthermore, the different modalities sometimes fuse together, influence each other and often it is hard to separate them rigorously (emotions have cognitive components, for example the evaluations of situations).

Given the many varieties, the crucial generalisation could be the following: a living system by these considerations can be regarded as minded, only if it has some form of representational-intentional capacities, or can process information in this relevant sense.

### **Other fundamental concepts in grasping cognitive systems**

In order to better understand those criteria which can be used in separating the cognitive systems from the entities not having minds, we need a whole range of other concepts.

Right now I will only point to these in a nutshell. One crucial aspect of cognition refers to the abilities to gain knowledge about the world, to acquire ideas, to be able to make sense of things and operate with concepts. We see in these capacities the mark of advanced forms of intelligence and the fundamental goal of the A. I research is to create systems which are capable of these kinds of mental operations. But if we want to build machines capable of these kinds of "higher level forms of intelligence", we cannot forget those more fundamental bases, which ground these levels in the first place. First of all – conception, understanding, having propositional attitudes, mastering a language – all require the so called symbol grounding<sup>7</sup> or in other words, the many varieties of pre-propositional experiences. The sensory experience is in turn inseparably bound up with the movements and interactions with the environment.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, this requires embodiment, embeddedness in the world and actions, while these, of course, require agency and teleology. However, insofar as teleology is not grounded in the system's own motivational bases, the system's teleology remains pseudo-purposive, which is imposed from

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<sup>7</sup> HARNAD, S: *Minds, Machines and Searle*. Journal of Theoretical and Experimental Artificial Intelligence 1: 5-25. 1989.

<sup>8</sup> NOË, Alva: *Action in Perception*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2004. 1.

outside.<sup>9</sup> That is the reason why it is necessary, when building an artificial intelligent system, to create something akin to the motivational and emotional life of biological organism, through the light of which the system can have some interest (in doing whatever). But this kind of real teleology and agency require autonomy at its core.

This compressed line of thought (which we will extract in details) calls our attention to the fact that, when thinking about the essence of cognitive systems, we have to take into account not just the question of intentionality and consciousness, but also other fundamental concepts, like individuality, agency, autonomy and teleology. Interestingly, this points back to the organization of life itself, which from its beginning shows these characteristics. So based on these considerations, we have to rethink the boundaries of mind in the living order.

### **The demarcation problem about minded beings – Second theoretical frame: the enactive approach, the continuity thesis**

According to the enactive approach in cognitive science (which was introduced by Varela, Thompson, Rosh in their book, *The embodied mind*) the basic organizational principles of life need to be considered when trying to understand cognition in nature. Life from its inception is already mind-like, and conversely, mind is always life-like. The two processes unfold in a continuum.<sup>10</sup> How is that possible?

The first step would be the thought according to which biological and cognitive systems are autonomous entities. Autonomy in the first instance means self-regulation and self-creation. The specific way, in which processes in the system relate to each other determines the system's autonomous character. More specifically: the processes constituting an autonomous systems network **a.** recursively depend on each other for their generation and realization as a network **b.** give rise to a unity in whatever domain they exist **c.** specify a domain of possible interactions with the environment.<sup>11</sup> The paradigm case for the autonomous system is the cell's autopoietic organization. The meaning of the autonomous system doesn't imply independence from the environment, but it rather means that the autonomous system can give itself laws or settle its own norms. In contrast with the autonomous systems stand the heteronomous ones, those which are determined from the outside: for example systems which are designed, built and controlled by human

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<sup>9</sup> ZIEMKE, T – FROESE T: *Enactive Artificial Intelligence: Investigating the Systemic Organization of Life and Mind*. In: *Artificial Intelligence* 173 (2009) 466–500. 14.

<sup>10</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 128.

<sup>11</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 44.



designers. In these cases the norms which govern the system's behaviour would not properly count as the system's own laws, because these derive from the outside designers. In the domain of biology then, the self-determined character of autonomous system implies not just the capacity for self-regulation, but also the capacity for self-building, self-creation. Autonomy requires an active, self-sustaining identity creation.

By identity in this point we have to think about the *organizational closure*, the interdependence of the system's internal components and processes. The system's network components and processes define the system's unity in the world in a self-referential, circular and recursive manner. The autonomous system's components affect each other in such a way as to create a closure and with it a unity, brought forth by these inter-relationships and mutual dependencies.<sup>12</sup> According to the enactive approach, the autopoietic organization of the cell, the minimal form of autonomy (together with adaptivity) is already a cognitive system. In other words – life, from its very inception is minded (in a specific and broad sense). From this it follows that looking at the functioning of the first unicellular lives we can already figure out those organizational principles, by which we can understand why all life can be thought of as minded (and not just those organisms, which are endowed with nervous systems with enough complexity). Let's look at the minimal form of cognition (in this case the organism is one single living cell):

The unicellular organism, through its metabolism constantly changes its own material components, while sustaining a formal, dynamic, invariant identity. The sustaining of life processes however, require that the dynamic activities inside the organism should work in the range of certain parameters – let's just think about the amount of certain materials, or the level of the temperature etc. Life-processes can only work within certain parameters, which are compatible with the on-going life-regulation. We can speak about the optimal circumstances, in which the management of life can be very efficient, and we can speak about the different levels of equilibrium break-up. Life has the essential capacity of *homeostasis*, the regulation and maintenance of equilibrium.<sup>13</sup>

Strongly related to homeostasis is the other essential characteristic of life, namely *adaptivity*. In order to better understand this capacity, we can start from the fact that the autopoietic system, embedded in its environment, is always facing uncertainties, disturbances, dangers, obstacles but also opportunities which could positively contribute to the good management of life regulation. The living system

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<sup>12</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 45.

<sup>13</sup> DAMASIO, Antonio R: *Self Comes to Mind. Constructing the Conscious Brain*. New York, 2010.

already has certain powers and tolerance to survive some kind of disturbances. But the capacity of adaptation points beyond this, because it requires that the organism is able to have some sensibility of its own internal states (primitive “monitoring”), of the negative and positive (actual or possible) environmental effects on its own functioning and furthermore, to be able to have some form of evaluation and to show some tendency toward avoiding dangerous situations, to make the best out of the positive opportunities and to regulate its behaviour accordingly.<sup>14</sup> In order to provide an example we can now speak about the behaviour of the much discussed bacteria, *E. coli*, which shows this kind of behaviour pattern. The bacteria have the tendency to avoid dangerous environmental situations and to swim toward the nutrient rich environment. Adaptivity then requires a lot of other crucial capacities, which will be now taken into account.

Given the description of the autopoietic organization, we can see as outside observers which are those circumstances, effects, conditions, which can positively contribute to the maintenance and workings of autopoiesis, and which can affect it in the negative way. But meanwhile we can observe that the system itself is somehow able to be sensitive to these circumstances (on a certain level) and through its homeostasis and adaptivity is able to regulate itself in such a way, that in light of this we can state that it behaves precisely according to the *norm* of life sustaining. If we are considering a mere physical, but non-living entity, which was affected by a destructive force, it would be very strange to say that this effect was bad for the thing itself, but this idea becomes very natural in the moment when we are considering living systems, regardless of the fact that they have or lack consciousness. So the value of sustaining life cannot be just an outside projection, because we can see that living systems behave according to this norm, which they have “internalised”. Of course, this normativity and evaluation is not a conscious process, but still, living systems are able to have some form of “discrimination” and “evaluation” even if these processes are not mental or conceptual in the usual senses of these terms. And all this is valid even in the case of bacteria (of course the evaluation of situations in the light of the norms of survival doesn’t mean that the organism is sensitive to all effects and conditions, it just means the capability of some kind of evaluation).

From these thoughts it becomes clear what it means to say that according to the enactive approach living entities can accomplish something which is called *sense-making*, because we can see that organisms have mechanisms, through which

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<sup>14</sup> DI PAOLO, E. A. *Autopoiesis, Adaptivity, Teleology, Agency*. In: *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*. 4: 429–452. 2005.

they can enact meaning, values and significances (of course we have to keep in mind to use these terms in a very broad sense). And these activities don't require a nervous system of any kind. So, for the bacteria some level of temperature is not just a mere physical fact about the world, but it is evaluated as good or bad, depending on the relation it has to its own norm of life-regulation. Similarly, the sugar as nutrient cannot be observed through the lenses of physics, because it is a relational property, which reflects the needs of bacteria and the value associated with its own life-regulative behaviour. In this respect the living organism, through its interaction with its environment enacts an Umwelt. This environment cannot be captured only by physics, because for the living being it has surplus of significance – something can be food, shelter, poison etc. which are all relational properties. The organism constitutes a perspective through which it can evaluate things in its environment.<sup>15</sup>

From all of these considerations it follows that we can speak about the living organism as an *agent*, which, by the light of the thoughts so far, means: that autonomous, identity-creating and sustaining self-regulation, which makes it possible the adaptive behaviour to the environment in precarious conditions. So agency requires an individual entity, which, through the light of its norms, can actively regulate its own behaviour in its environment.<sup>16</sup> The normativity is very important, otherwise the activity could be totally random. The behaviour, through norms can become directional and purposive.

*Cognition* then, is basically the already explained meaning-creating adaptive conduct in an environment. It's important to note that this kind of cognitive behaviour reflects the sustaining of autopoiesis. This self-organization defines a domain of interaction with the environment, in which the system can behave in accordance with the relevance of its own identity-sustaining norm. Cognition refers to this kind of behaviour or self-regulative activity.<sup>17</sup>

Let's go back for a moment to the capacity of adaptivity and homeostasis. The action-tendencies related to the life-regulations were already in place in the first unicellular. This capacity presuppose the organismic sensibility to its own needs (some kind of primitive monitoring), and the tendencies to satisfy these needs. We can associate with this the thought, according to which in some way, life, already from its start, has some form of „instinct to carry on”, „desire to survive”, „concern for its own existence”, „care for its own needs”. From this pattern it becomes even more obvious to treat the living entities as autonomous agents, who enact their

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<sup>15</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 153–154.

<sup>16</sup> BARANDIARAN, X., DI PAOLO, E. & ROHDE, M.: *Defining Agency*. *Journal of Adaptive Behavior*, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 124.

own problem-space and with it their own problem-solving capacities. If it's reasonable to speak even about the first living beings as agents with cognition, evaluation, significance (as it happens in the enactive approach) we can also speak about the roots of the early forms of intelligence, namely, those problem-solving capacities, which are there for handling the difficult situations facing life-maintenance.

Moreover, the meaning of one kind of teleology becomes clear, because the reason why the language of teleology comes to us naturally when applied to living systems (as opposed to non-living entities) comes from their norm governed autonomy, which enable purposive behaviour.

From the enactive approach, the roots of intentionality (in the phenomenological sense) also points to the origin of life, because if we regard the intentional capacity as the constitution of a world from a perspective in such a manner that this disclosure of a world bears the stamp of the subjective conditions of possibility of experience, than the origin of this correlation is precisely the enactment of an Umwelt.<sup>18</sup>

### **The resolving of the contradiction between the two presented approaches**

While according to the enactive approach all living things are cognitive-minded<sup>19</sup>, the most widely held view is that life doesn't imply this equivalence. As we saw it before, in the latter perspective you need to have some additional criteria for separating the minded living beings from the non-minded ones, which cannot be cognitive systems, because they lack those requirements which are necessary for cognition. These requirements, of course, can vary, but among the usual ones we find the necessity of the nervous system activity, or some kind of intentional capacity with conditions of satisfactions or accuracy conditions. From these comparisons we can immediately see the contradiction of these two perspectives, but in my opinion this can be resolved in the following way: we can speak about the narrow or the broad extension of the concept mind. The point is to recognise that actually both perspectives can be right depending on which concept they operate with. Of course, by the usual sense of the word "mind", we understand psychological states, which are clearly lacking in unicellular organisms or plants. In this sense the right approach would be that one, which sees the emergence of mind in evolution as a new property beyond mere biology. But in the enactive approach,

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<sup>18</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 159.

<sup>19</sup> VARELA, Francisco J. – MATURANA, H. R.: *Autopoiesis and Cognition*. D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 1972. 13.

the unusual usage of the term cognition as applying to relatively simple living systems doesn't mean that we are taking the usual term (with the same meaning) and without any rational justification we force it to be applicable even to describe the behaviours of simple organisms.<sup>20</sup> In other words, the enactive approach does not state that relatively speaking simple organisms are conscious, or have representational or intentional capacities the same way as those living entities which are endowed with nervous systems or brains. For exactly this reason – at least if we are not concerned with other possible differences – we won't come up against contradictions, because the enactive approach admits that we can speak about the narrower or broader concept of cognition. So, in the broader sense then, all living system are cognitive, but in the narrower respect, only a part of the living world can be properly regarded as minded.

### **The origin of animal minds**

Even after we have resolved the seeming contradiction before, we can still ask how and why the capabilities associated with the narrower concept of mind emerge in the living world (sensations, thinking, emotional life, which all require the usual sense of representational/intentional capacities or the different forms of phenomenal experiences).

With the rise of multicellular organisms (the second order autopoietic systems) the basic form of life and mind becomes much more complex. With animal life the original life-regulation and adaptation takes a richer form. We see the beginnings of those cognitive capacities which are more familiar to us, and about which we can use our term "mind" in a more natural way. But the origins of these capacities all points back to the activities of the early life-forms, because we can't forget about those grounds, which were put in place by the unicellular entities. In a certain sense what happens is that those basic organizational principles, which governed the unicellular systems, are now being brought back in a much more sophisticated way into the lives of the multicellular entities.

The primordial sensitivity to the inside/outside world and the related movements (let's think back to the activity of the bacteria, while approaching sugar or trying to avoid the dangerous environment) are now coming back in a complex sensory-motor form, based on the nervous system. The sensation directed to the outside world, or in other words – exteroception – will take the form of touch,

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<sup>20</sup> THOMPSON: *Mind in Life. Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. 159.

vision, olfaction, gustation, audition. The sensation directed at the inside environment, namely interoception, proprioception, kinesthesia will provide the organism with a rich array of information. Because animals, unlike plants, have the need to search for food, the appropriate regulation of movements becomes crucial. Sensations would be impossible without movements, and inversely, movements would be impossible without sensations. In this sense, there is a circular interdependence and interplay between these two processes.

But the coordination of movement and sensation, the navigation through the environment needs some sort of directions and frames of relevance – otherwise the sensations and movements would become purposeless. There have to be some drives and motivations, in light of which this can be achieved. Of course, in the most fundamental sense, this role is played by the norm of life-maintenance and reproduction. The early form of homeostasis becomes more complex, because the biological needs will end up reaching to the level of psychology too, in the forms of those processes, which are witnessed by the animal as experiences of pains, exhaustion, hunger, thirst, sexual arousal etc. These organismic processes are signalling the states related to the equilibrium, the needs of the organisms and its satisfaction or dissatisfaction. As the equilibrium gets to an undesired state, it causes tension in the animal, motivating it to regulate its behaviour in such a way as to re-establish its well-being. If we look at these balancing states at the level of experience, the optimal level of homeostasis, and the states which are departing from it, we find those positive and negative bodily feelings and sensations, which constitute the first forms of experiences of well-being or suffering. The satisfactions or dissatisfactions of the needs can play a role as rewards and punishments in the regulation of life and it will have an important role to play in the process of learning (obviously, the pleasures are correlated with the satisfactions and become motivating forces to repeating and enforcing those patterns of behaviours, which were contributing positively to the good management of life).

Of course, the well-being and equilibrium of the internal bodily environment (getting the right amount of food and securing the right level of energy and temperature etc.) is not a process which only requires the regulation of the internal activities, because this achievement depends on the right interactions with the outside environment. This requires the animal being capable of sensing the environment in such a way as to be able to evaluate the significances of the stimuli for its own life. So the sensing of the environment has to incorporate detection mechanisms, which enables the animal to sense danger (for example predators) shelters, foods in contrast to poisons etc. There is the need for sensing and evaluating not just occurring stimuli, but sensing opportunities in an anticipatory way and so having some predictive power

either for the purpose of taking the right action when there is a favourable situation, or for avoiding a dangerous condition. The significances are brought forth by the light of the norms of life-sustaining and reproducing. So the fundamental biological and psychological well-being depends on taking the right actions, which in turn depend on this evaluative capacity, but of course we don't need to suppose that in animal life this process is accompanied by a conceptual understanding and conscious reflection.

From this perspective we can understand the significance of the basic emotional systems too. According to Joseph Ledoux, we can speak about different survival circuits in organisms, which are there for enabling survival and each system has its own role in defence, the balancing of energy, nutrition and fluids, temperature regulation and recreation.<sup>21</sup> Each system is dedicated to evaluate the occurring or expected challenges and to motivate reaction tendencies, which are appropriate to the computed significance of the stimuli. These systems are sensitive to specific environmental effects and after sensing the right stimuli they actuate a range of innate and learned responses to cope with those challenges, which are facing the organism. Many such activities can be called emotion. For example, fear is the action tendency in the defence mechanisms. The subjective experience of emotion emerges when the organism is able to witness these kinds of activities. The emotions are contributing to the basic motivational states, like, hunger, thirst, sexual arousal, because they have additional powers and drives in their core. Fear helps to flee, aggression helps in fighting or taking revenge, curiosity moves the organism to explore the environment, disgust helps avoiding poisonous material intake, pleasure signals the state of well-being and enforces those activities, which help maintaining this state etc.

The norm of life-maintenance, together with the sensing of the needs and motivational powers settles the directions and frames of relevance for the activities of living organism, in the light of which we can also see how cognition, which was traditionally referred to as "cold" can have its direction and meaning. Life-regulation establishes a core for the cognitive capacities of animals – discrimination, attention, memory, planning, prediction, learning, decision-making – in such a way as to establish an appropriate frame of relevance for the problems and for the problem-solving capacities, otherwise, cognition would stand without grounds, without directions, relevance and values. In other words – if we deprived cognition from the processes of motivations and affections – it would become groundless and purposeless. So the cognition in a more narrow sense can only find its place in harmony with the emotional and motivational basis and this basis comes from the characteristics of life-regulations.

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<sup>21</sup> LeDOUX, Joseph: *Rethinking the Emotional Brain*. Neuron Journal, Volume 73, 2012. 655.

## Conclusions

Let's think back to the third section, where I tried to give a classification of mental capacities (sensation, motivation, emotion, cognition). These capacities are actually the activities of organism brought about by their autonomous mode of being. If we look at these mental activities in the context of life, we immediately see that natural cognition refers to the activities of the *living bodies* in such a way that the more advanced forms of cognitive processes found in animal life are complexified extensions of the basic life-regulative capacities, or arise from more basic life-mechanisms. Now, this thought only points to the strong relationship between psychology and biology in this bottom-up approach (just to be clear, my whole presentation was not meant to be reductionist, my point was to find the ground from which a system of thought can be built). From all of these discussions we can see on the one hand how life itself can be sufficient for mind, or if that sounds too radical, we can see the logic behind the way in which mind arises from life. The really interesting problem however, is to investigate the question whether life is also necessary for having a mind.

Although today, the attitude of the embodied cognitive science perspective doesn't treat the mind as purely disembodied abstract computational information-processing, the emphasis on the crucial role of the body (besides the enactive approach) does not mean the thought that maybe the body as *living body* is necessary for the realization of cognition. Even within the enactive approach the question whether life is necessary for mind is an open problem for the future. Interestingly, there is a distinction between autopoiesis and autonomy in the sense that autopoiesis meant to be just one kind of autonomy.<sup>22</sup> So from these considerations the gates are open for those who wish to argue that autonomy can be realised in non-living form in a way as to support genuine cognitive processes. However, we have to keep in mind life's unique mode of being, namely what Hans Jonas called needful freedom, the way in which life constantly and necessarily has to keep doing its self-sustaining processes in order to even exist.<sup>23</sup> This character of life is crucial in grounding the needs, drives, motivations of natural agents, or what we can call in one word: care. It is not obvious how this base for agency and teleology can be accomplished without life.

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<sup>22</sup> VARELA, Francisco J. – MATURANA, H. R: *The Tree of Knowledge*. Shambhala Publication, Boston and London, 1998. 48.

<sup>23</sup> ZIEMKE, T – FROESE T: *Enactive Artificial Intelligence: Investigating the Systemic Organization of Life and Mind*.14.





## LA VEILLE COMME ÉTAT D'EXCEPTION? «VEILLE POUR SOI» ET «VEILLE POUR L'AUTRE»: ENTRE NORME ET EXCEPTION

PAUL MERCIER\*

**ABSTRACT. Watchfulness as a State of Exception? Watchfulness and Vigilance: between Norm and Exception.** It may be uncommon and irrelevant to characterize watchfulness as a state of exception. Watchfulness regards to a spiritual (at the Greeks) or to a religious (in Christianity) metaphysic, whereas the state of exception refers to political philosophy. But if we state, as Agamben, that the exception suspends its norm to reinforce its application, we should seek in which sense watchfulness, in its close bond to sleep and awakening, abolishes the positive experience of these last two, in order to redefine the intrinsic and powerful relationship of the subject with Humanity, through his possibilities within his soul's obscurity for feeling Grace.

**Keywords:** *watchfulness, exception, Boutang, grace, obscurity*

Le titre est un peu provocateur. En effet, comment relier la veille à l'état d'exception? L'état d'exception est premièrement la suspension de la norme politique, qui aboutit à l'état d'urgence, c'est-à-dire la suspension de la loi et par conséquent des droits. De son côté, la veille dénote un état d'éclaircissement et de repos de l'âme. Je tenterai dès ici une traduction de ce mot en roumain afin d'opérer une distinction conceptuelle.<sup>1</sup> La veille se dit «veghere» en roumain; les deux mots trouvent donc leur racine commune dans *Vigilia* et justifient la protection d'une autre vie. Mais il existe un autre mot, plus archaïque: «trezvia», venant de *trezvanje* en slavon.<sup>2</sup> On remarque dès lors une tension conceptuelle:

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<sup>1</sup> A l'issue des différentes traductions en roumain, nous allons ainsi découvrir que les deux mots – *trezvia* et *veghere* – bien qu'appartenant à deux groupes de langue différents (respectivement le slave et la langue romane), font référence tout deux à l'humilité. D'où l'utilité de passer par une traduction dans une langue qui contient un univers sémantique à la fois issu des langues latines, mais aussi des langues slaves.

<sup>2</sup> En roumain, ce mot dénote un état de clarté et de purification de l'âme. Dans l'orthodoxie, il fait aussi référence à ceux qui ne dorment pas et prient toute la nuit.

d'une part il y aurait une «veille pour soi» (*trezvia*), c'est-à-dire la possibilité d'une «kénose du sujet», pour reprendre Lévinas; d'autre part, il y aurait une «veille pour l'autre», dans un sens de «protéger» (ro. *Veghere*; lat. *Vigilia*), en gardant à l'esprit l'image du berger; mais, premièrement, c'est bien Dieu et les anges qui veillent sur les hommes.

Le domaine de l'état d'exception serait celui du politique, le domaine de la veille celui de la métaphysique religieuse. C'est donc l'état d'exception qu'il faudrait redéfinir, non pas comme suspension des droits, mais comme suspension d'une norme métaphysique, et c'est là que je m'aide du commentaire écrit par Agamben sur Saint-Paul. En effet, la loi ne serait pas une application positive sous la forme d'un interdit, mais la conscience de la faute, son auto-imputation telle qu'on la voit chez Kafka qui nous conduit à l'informulabilité de la loi, c'est-à-dire la connaissance du péché et la possibilité de sa réalisation ici et maintenant par la grâce. Dès lors, le lien le plus probable entre la veille et l'état d'exception serait le temps, bien que ce dernier reste à définir aussi bien dans son vécu que hors de lui.

Nous aboutissons donc au conflit entre temps prophétique d'une part, temps messianique d'autre part (bien que la différence n'existe pas dans la pensée chrétienne, nous faisons la distinction, bien que brièvement, afin d'éclairer notre problème). Le temps prophétique donne un contenu au futur, mais ce contenu ne peut être connu que par certains élus. Le temps messianique est la figure de ce monde qui passera comme réponse à sa propre énigme, mais il peut au contraire se comprendre comme une absence du souci au présent, qui rejoindrait l'impatience des promesses du temps apocalyptique, dans l'attente d'un bien qui nous échappe dans le contemporain, bien qu'il s'épanouisse dans les délices de l'espérance.

La résolution de l'aporie, ainsi, se trouverait dans l'exploration du concept de contemporanéité, jusqu'à la permutation des figures du présent, passé, futur; la veille y aurait toute sa place, car elle ne porte pas son attention au seul futur, mais le retient dans le passé au présent, elle n'attend aucune réponse de ce monde, et pourtant garde son énigme dans le secret de l'être, au sein de la participation à un autre-du-temps, inexpérience tout aussi ineffable que réelle. La résolution de cet insoutenable paradoxe, celui de la veille pour soi comme réalisation de la personne d'un côté, et de la veille pour l'autre comme *praxis* dans la communauté, se trouverait dans l'amour du prochain comme obligation et éthique, épanoui dans les règles de l'humilité, qui persévère en dépit des déterminations extérieures qui peuvent m'anéantir.

Le premier moment cherche à définir la veille, à la distinguer de l'éveil et du réveil, mais aussi de son pire ennemi, dont il reste toutefois proche pour le métamorphoser – l'insomnie. Ces concepts s'inscrivent dans l'actualisation ici et maintenant du *logos* au cœur de la dyade. La veille ferait ainsi exception à une norme métaphysique, celle des dormeurs.

Le second moment recherche en quoi la veille est un état d'exception: en l'identifiant au mouvement oblique de l'âme, elle propose un viatique, et la subsistance de celui-ci, où l'exception devient instant. Toutefois, la limite consiste dans l'expérience strictement personnelle dans laquelle s'accomplit cette veille. Comment établir, par conséquent, une philosophie de la communion?

Le troisième moment articule la capacité au devoir de veiller: en découvrant que la grâce n'est pas strictement réservée au moi, mais au Soi (dans sa relation avec autrui) dans une tension – entre la grâce et son absence, mais aussi entre la norme et l'exception - on y recherche la veille comme amour du prochain dans l'origine du langage: règle de la charité, expérience de l'humilité, elle dépasse le caractère abstrait du monde dans lequel nous vivons, comme réalisation du Désir dépassant les existences et les essences.

### **I. Articulation de la veille au logos et à la dyade. Sa distinction avec l'insomnie**

J'emprunte, premièrement, le concept de veille à Pierre Boutang dans le chapitre «veille et sommeil» de *l'ontologie du secret*, car c'est-à-mon avis l'auteur qui pose le mieux le problème. Nous allons voir de quelle manière, tout d'abord en partant de cette citation:

Ni la veille, ni l'éveil, moins encore le réveil n'ont, en français, un sens pleinement positif; le premier mot se rapporte à demain; au lendemain; il porte une marque chrétienne, dépendant, selon nous de la transformation subie par la *vigilia* latine, demeurée, certes, de la bonne heure du jour, mais associée, pour la sensibilité évangélique, au moment où Marie-Madeleine constate que Christ est ressuscité.<sup>3</sup>

Le mot «veille» est ainsi à relier à *vigere*, la vigueur de la vie.<sup>4</sup> Il semble, de ce fait, que le sens de la *trezvia* et de *veghere* se trouvent tout deux dans ce texte. Ce qu'il faut comprendre, c'est bien le tournant privatif qu'a pris ce concept: la veille n'est plus la vigueur que l'on tient pour soi, ni une protection envers autrui, mais est devenue surveillance.

Le chapitre «veille-sommeil» se dénomme ainsi car ce couple forme une dyade. Mais qu'est-ce qu'une dyade? Chez les Grecs (notamment chez Platon, et de manière plus précise, chez Plotin), la dyade peut être vue comme le lien entre l'Un et le multiple, mais aussi entre tout étant et l'être qui le fonde. Mais comment la

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<sup>3</sup> P. Boutang, *Ontologie du secret*, 2<sup>ème</sup> édition «Quadriga», 2009, Section III, «Dyades», ch. «veille et sommeil», p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

dyade peut-elle former un couple qui ne se comporte pas contrairement, alors que tout en apparence les oppose? Restons-en à nos définitions platoniciennes: tout étant est composé, c'est le *mikton*; composé d'une limite (*peiras*) et de l'illimité (*apeiron*), ce dernier étant déterminé par le *peras*, sans quoi elle tomberait dans la pléthore, l'excès sans consistance. Ainsi, l'illimité possède des degrés d'intensité (chaud, froid), mais sans que l'un des deux ne soit jamais porté à l'excès puisque la dyade y intervient. Nous sommes donc arrivés à une première définition: la dyade est un couple formé de deux contraires mais qui restent face-à-face. Pierre Boutang reprend à son compte cette définition par l'image des îles jumelles au sein desquelles il faut s'insérer pour prendre leur forme.<sup>5</sup>

Par conséquent, les deux termes de la dyade peuvent s'inverser en quelques occasions, c'est-à-dire dans l'instant,<sup>6</sup> d'où surgit une nouvelle forme qui leur est commune. Survient derechef une question: quelle serait la forme de la dyade veille-sommeil? Nous serions tentés de répondre «l'éveil», et cette réponse serait plausible. Mais si nous traduisons les termes en roumain (et cette traduction nous aidera conceptuellement en français), les choses se compliquent: on peut former la dyade «trezvie-somn», dont la forme serait «trezire» (l'éveil). Toutefois, il n'y aurait plus de terme en roumain pour le mot «réveil» présent dans ce chapitre de *l'ontologie du secret*.<sup>7</sup> Une autre voie est possible: former le couple «veghere-somn» dont la forme serait la *trezvia*. Expliquons-nous: «la veille surveille le sommeil», au sens de protéger, nous dit Boutang. Introduisant une détermination dans le monde, cette veille est bien *veghere*, *vigilia* en latin. En revanche, la forme de la dyade est toujours l'advenue d'une existence supérieure, qu'ici décrit et accomplit la *trezvia*. Veille et sommeil, en s'entremêlant, donnent naissance à ce qu'on appelle une vigueur suprême.

La conceptualisation de la dyade a permis de préciser le mot «veille» pour répondre à notre problème. Mais, pour expliquer en quoi la veille est un «état d'exception», encore faut-il relier la dyade au logos. Boutang explique, ainsi, que ce soit chez Héraclite ou chez Platon, que l'état de sommeil, dans son sens métaphorique, décrit l'incapacité à recevoir le Logos. Originellement, le *logos* qui peut se traduire d'inombrable façon (il existe pas moins d'une dizaine de significations dans le *Sophiste* de Platon), dénote en fait un degré d'initiation, et ce dès chez

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Boutang, *Ontologie du secret*, op.cit., p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> Que nous définissons plus précisément dans le chapitre II.

<sup>7</sup> Cette difficulté nous poussera à faire la distinction, plus loin, entre l'éveil chez les grecs, la *Theoria*, et la veille, qui est *egeiro*. La traduction ici présentée permet de différencier les concepts à notre époque mais, d'autre part, c'est bien à une étymologie grecque qu'il faudrait parvenir pour les délimiter.

Héraclite. Le logos est un contenu, que l'on peut et se doit d'accueillir, de recueillir. Si les hommes ne font pas l'expérience du logos, c'est parce qu'ils «dorment», comme ceux qui voient passer leurs rêves sans pouvoir agir. Mais, chez Héraclite, explique Boutang, il y a comme un fossé entre ceux qui sont initiés au Logos, et ceux qui ne le sont pas, c'est-à-dire une bien trop grande distance entre ceux qui sont éveillés et ceux qui «dorment», d'où il suit l'abolition presque cauchemardesque de la dyade présentée ci-avant. Le logos se fait origine et raison du concept, dont le duel, c'est-à-dire un «être-ensemble», permet de préparer de la meilleure façon ce qui relève de la *Vigilia*, entre origine et expérience à venir. Ainsi tout logos implique-t-il un duel actualisé *hic et nunc*, que reprend la dyade, et permet une distinction parvenant à une connaissance possible. Par conséquent, le logos fonde une maïeutique de la participation tandis que la dyade stabilise une sémantique de l'appartenance.<sup>8</sup> Si nous avons fait ce ci long détour, c'est que la veille réveille à la fois le logos et la dyade. Elle réveille le logos dans un mouvement de la pensée au cœur du secret de la vie, c'est-à-dire fait parvenir à la conscience du sujet la cause (gr. *aitia*) fondatrice de tout étant. Ce logos, appliqué dans ses particularités distinctives, éveille les trois dyades fondamentales qui permettent de contourner celle qui demeure impalpable, la vie et la mort: veille-sommeil; oubli-mémoire; larme-sourire.<sup>9</sup>

Première conséquence : il semblerait bien que la veille décrive l'état d'un «comme si» paulinien, c'est-à-dire «dormir comme non-dormant», tandis que dans le monde moderne – mais c'est ce qu'avait déjà aussi décrit Plotin – nous somme éveillés d'un sommeil léthargique, c'est-à-dire «éveillés comme dormant», état de somnambulisme.<sup>10</sup> L'état d'exception, qui se définit par la suspension d'une norme pour renforcer son application, se retrouve dans la veille : bien que nous ne soyons pas éveillés d'une même teneur,<sup>11</sup> la veille permet d'assurer la pérennité du sommeil, qui protège en retour la vigueur une première fois réveillée nous nous

<sup>8</sup> Sémantique de l'appartenance en ce sens que la dyade, intervenant entre l'Un et le Multiple, permet d'empêcher, en quelque sorte, l'avenir indéfini de *l-apeiron*, l'excès inconsistant; cette sémantique attachant l'homme à la terre, l'*humus*, d'où il peut établir un plan de coordonnées entre ciel et terre. La maïeutique de la participation, de son côté, réveille l'homme ancien par l'accouchement de l'homme nouveau: dans l'actualisation du logos, il y a comme une sorte de réminiscence, qui garantit la conservation et la pérennité du devenir, au cœur de la dyade oubli-mémoire, comme reproduction duelle qui conserve et dépasse son propre concept.

<sup>9</sup> Nous aurons à nous en souvenir, plus loin, lorsqu'il sera question de «l'instant d'exception».

<sup>10</sup> Le terme de «somnambulisme» se retrouve chez Gabriel Marcel à travers *Homo viator* pour décrire l'état de l'homme contraire à la veille:

<sup>11</sup> P. Boutang, *Ontologie du secret, op.cit.*, p.287: «l'homme conventionnellement éveillé ne passe que quelques par fois par jour, et en des instants, par cet état de veille». Il est intéressant de remarquer que si la veille est reliée à la nuit, Boutang dit bien que son expérience est de jour!

trouverions en possession de tout le contraire du cercle vicieux! En revanche, le terme employé par Plotin est «*agrupnou*», que B. Collette-Ducic traduit soit par vigilance, soit par éveil,<sup>12</sup> étant donné que le mot en grec décrit la privation du sommeil, la sortie de l'hypnose, nous préférierions le traduire soit par réveil, soit par éveil, d'où nous pourrions, enfin, faire la distinction entre éveil et veille.

Si le mot «veille» est *agrupnou* ou *egeiro* chez les Grecs, c'est-à-dire la sortie hors du mouvement rectiligne, telle une bifurcation, peut-être faut-il renoncer à chercher la veille comme état d'exception chez les Grecs, mais plutôt y considérer l'éveil, ou le réveil, comme leur état d'exception (ce qui serait plus proche des mots donnés ci-dessus), et rapprocher de nouveau la veille de la *Vigilia*. Mais l'éveil, c'est la *Theoria* chez Aristote, la pure contemplation, introduisant une philosophie diurne, tandis que la veille introduit une philosophie nocturne.<sup>13</sup> C'est ainsi que l'ensemble de *l'ontologie du secret* de Pierre Boutang est marquée par l'obscurité féconde, la possibilité de la connaissance au milieu des ténèbres, le dévoilement au cœur de la nuit.<sup>14</sup> Et un tel mouvement de la pensée impose de relier la veille à cette obscurité, d'autant plus que la veille ne se pense pas sans le sommeil.

Cependant, nous arriverions à une nouvelle confusion : la veille a pris un tournant négatif car elle a été assimilée à l'insomnie. Que ce soit chez Blanchot, T. Corbière, et même chez Cioran, il est question d'une veille neutre. Pour repérer cette erreur, lisons un texte de Cioran :

«Trois heures du matin, je perçois cette seconde, et puis cette autre, je fais le bilan de chaque minute. Pourquoi tout cela? Parce que je suis né. C'est d'un type spécial de veilles que dérive la mise en cause de la naissance».<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bernard Collette-Ducic, «Sommeil, éveil et attention chez Plotin», in *Chora*, 9-10 / 2011-2012, p. 259.

<sup>13</sup> Ce que fait remarquer Pierre Boutang, mais aussi Lévinas, c'est la présence d'une «Hauteur» chez les grecs, que l'on retrouve dans la cosmologie platonicienne, mais qu'abolit le voyage intersidéral, c'est-à-dire un espace de coordonnées entre l'*apeiron*, l'infini constitué de notre chemin, et le *peras*, la limite comme détermination, qui limite ce même chemin. Les étoiles, ou leur absence, définiront le désir comme *desiderata*, la perte des coordonnées stellaire. L'éveil comme *Theoria* introduit une pensée du diurne, elle équivaut à la pure contemplation. Par conséquent, elle trace l'itinéraire, le chemin «de jour», comme contemplation du ciel et du soleil; au contraire de la veille, qui recherchera l'astre perdu, possibilité du salut au cœur de la nuit voici pourquoi, avec Boutang, nous parlons bien de l'obscurité qui recèle la lumière.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.395: «Il faut que nuit soit faite, que quelque liberté ou „relâche“ de l'être du temps soit en creux, ménagés, pour que l'intention de l'âme appelle cette lumière, pour que l'objet visé, ou désiré, par une de ses puissances, soit atteint à travers le chemin et l'obstacle du temps qu'elle transmue en limite». Il est à noter, par ailleurs, que la *Montée du Carmel* de Saint-Jean de la Croix débute lors d'une « nuit obscure » comme point de départ de la foi.

<sup>15</sup> E. Cioran, *De l'inconvénient d'être né*, Gallimard, 1985, §1.

C'est ainsi que s'ouvre *de l'inconvénient d'être né* d'Emil Cioran. Ici, nous avons l'impression que la veille fait face à l'effroi de la nuit, qu'elle serait en quelque sorte inféconde mais la veille n'est pas le bilan du temps qui passe, du temps linéaire. Ce qui est ressenti, chez Cioran, est le moment de l'anxiété, de la veille qui ne reste pas aux portes de l'éternité, mais bien qui reste ancrée dans la linéarité, dans l'immanence. Et donc ce n'est pas la veille, mais l'insomnie! L'insomnie est bien privation, perte de la Transcendance, elle est tout le contraire de la veille. D'autre part, si nous regardons l'étymologie de *trezvanje* en slavon, il existe une racine en attique, le mot *tarros*, qui veut dire «terre» – qui ressemblerait sémantiquement à notre *humus* en latin, ayant donné le mot «humilité», c'est-à-dire la reconnaissance faite par la personne envers la Création. Si la veille renforce l'humilité de l'homme, son contraire, l'insomnie, serait relié au nihilisme, c'est-à-dire à la privation de toute «*hilè*», le point de rattachement à la terre, que l'*humus* conserve et enrichit. Et Cioran dit bien: de *l'inconvénient d'être né*! L'insomnie à la manière de Cioran est donc une manière de surveiller l'alternance éveil-sommeil, à l'instar des tranquillisants et des excitants, qui spatialisent la temporalité de nos rêveries telle une religion de l'arithmétique: c'est le monde de l'immanence stricte, c'est-à-dire de l'absence de la grâce.

Pour préciser la liaison entre veille et nuit, nous proposons d'emprunter le mot latin *lucubrum* à Saint-Isidore de Séville, auteur des *Etymologies*, qui a donné le mot «élucubration», bien que ce dernier terme soit éloigné de son étymologie. Le mot *lucubrum* désigne un travail fait de nuit à la petite lampe. Mais le mot «travail» n'est pas convenu: nous traiterions bien d'une «veille» à la bougie, à la chandelle, qui implique une activité, tout le contraire du bilan des heures fait par Cioran. Comment sortir derechef de la contradiction qui survient entre activité nocturne et nécessité du vide de soi?

## II. La veille pour soi comme expérience personnelle et exception faite au temps

Nous allons, dans le mouvement de l'argumentation, caractériser la veille comme un état d'exception fait au temps, en découvrant que le mot «état» ne convient plus.

Boutang, dans le chapitre «veille et sommeil», affirme que l'instant où les dyades s'inversent seraient un instant semblable à celui du *Parménide*, tout en précisant que ce n'est pas un instant déduit.<sup>16</sup> Que cela signifie-t-il? Que l'instant, en

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<sup>16</sup> P. Boutang, *Ontologie du secret, op.cit.*, p. 289: «un instant, dont à la différence de celui du Parménide qui n'est que déduit, qui ne se donne pas pour autre chose que la dénomination d'une hypothèse, nous avons quelque expérience, avant s'endormir et s'éveiller, ou plutôt à leur limite».



réalité, définit une présence supérieure qui a déjà été vécue par tous. L'instant, exposé tel quel comme ce qui intervient entre l'Un et le multiple, n'en appelle pas moins à son expérience. Il est ce qui n'est pas du temps, mais aussi ce qui n'est pas de l'éternité; ensuite, ce qui n'est ni au mouvement, ni au repos. Ensuite, Boutang utilise l'expression «comme dans un rêve» pour qualifier le moment où Marie-Madeleine constate que le Christ est ressuscité, d'où il suit qu'il serait peut-être judicieux de relier le moment où Socrate constate l'apparition de l'instant (*to exaiaphnes*) – semblable à un rêve – ainsi que la dislocation de l'Un dans le temps.<sup>17</sup> Nous avons donc comme première supposition que la veille est éveillée dans l'instant.

C'est ainsi que Boutang fonde la théorie du maintenant originel de cet instant déduit ou vécu. Boutang s'appuie sur le *ur-jetz* husserlien, mais nous possédons aussi d'autres sources: Lévinas, en effet, s'appuie sur Heidegger, pour définir le souci comme structure du temps «originelle», c'est-à-dire comme projet de l'avenir mais, comme d'ores et déjà passé, se tient auprès du présent<sup>18</sup>. Ce souci du temps peut-être conceptualisé comme «*praesence*» (si nous restons héritiers de Heidegger), c'est-à-dire d'avoir un souci du temps à un degré supérieur, d'être simultanément un trois-en-un (le *ur-jetz*). Cette nouvelle présence est donc exception faite au temps, car elle ne relève plus du temps! Comment se fait-il?

Boutang, dans le «dénouement» de *l'ontologie du secret*, établit le lien entre le trois-en-un et le mouvement oblique. Cependant, ce couloir oblique, en ce qu'il a d'obscur, mais aussi d'éclairant, manque de fondement dans le livre précédemment cité. C'est donc *l'Apocalypse du Désir* qui comble le fossé de cette argumentation : en effet, après quelques années de recherche, Boutang dit avoir trouvé que le mouvement oblique a été étudié par Saint Thomas D'Aquin, citant Denys. Ce que ne dit pas Boutang, ou ce qu'il n'a pas découvert, c'est que le mouvement oblique se réfère aussi à Albert le Grand. Par conséquent, nous allons esquisser, quoique brièvement, une histoire de ce concept:

Secundum tamen quod (comentantor) Dicit, motus sensibilis est most corporum sensibilium, et dicit, quod motus circularis est, quando aliquid generatur ex altero univoce sicut ex igne ignis, et hoc dicit secundum proprias virtutes ; obliquum autem dicit, quando generatum transmigratur, idest in alienam speciem, sicut ex aqua pisces et breviter ex elementis mixta ; rectus autem est, quando fit resolutio in primam materiam. [...] Scilicet obliquum, secundum rationem [...] secundus autem est secundum processum luminis intellectuellis in rationem, quod deinde obumbratum in ratione reflectitur in lumen intellectus [...] scilicet secundum exitum secundi a primo et tertii a secundo et secundum conversam resolutionem.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Parménide*, 164d.

<sup>18</sup> E. Lévinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, Editions Grasset et Fasquelle, Paris, 1993, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> Albert le Grand, *Super Dionysium, De Div.Nom, Opera Omnia*, 37, l.

Dans l'obliquité, il est question de changement, de progrès, contrairement à la linéarité ou à la cyclicité. Ce que nous retenons, c'est que le mouvement oblique s'identifie à une sorte de passage. Il se situerait, d'après l'interprétation de cette citation, entre le circulaire et le rectiligne, c'est-à-dire entre l'éternité divine et le temps abstrait.<sup>20</sup>

De son côté, Saint Thomas d'Aquin écrit:<sup>21</sup>

Or il y a trois sortes de mouvements locaux. Le mouvement est dit circulaire lorsqu'une chose se déplace uniformément autour d'un même centre. Il est dit rectiligne lorsqu'une chose se porte d'un point à un autre. Il est dit en spirale lorsqu'il combine les deux précédents. Les opérations intellectuelles où s'observe une constante uniformité sont donc assimilées au mouvement circulaire. Celles où l'on procède d'une chose à une autre sont comparées au mouvement rectiligne. Celles enfin où se combine une certaine uniformité avec un certain progrès vers des termes divers se voient assimiler au mouvement en spirale.

Ce texte ajoute une précision à notre argumentation: cette transition est une ascension. La difficulté qu'a relevée Saint-Thomas d'Aquin plus en avant dans le texte est le paradoxe d'un mouvement au repos.<sup>22</sup> Pour sortir de cette contradiction, revenons à nos définitions: le *peras* est défini comme εστη και

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<sup>20</sup> Chez Albert, le mouvement oblique est celui de la raison, alors que le mouvement circulaire est celui de l'intellect. Boutang sort de ce vocabulaire, identifie plus l'oblicité comme une sorte de secret que nous devons accueillir, mais tout en y participant : il est moins question d'une division des facultés de l'esprit que de ses possibilités. On pourrait déjà trouver un point commun, c'est-à-dire qu'Albert part d'un mouvement vers la lumière à partir d'une ombre dans la Raison, et nous avons appris, avec Boutang, que ce mouvement s'effectue dans une nuit lumineuse (il y a le même vocabulaire chez Saint Jean de la Croix), tout comme dans la veille on trouve cette obscurité qui recèle la lumière la plus lumineuse. Et donc notre point le plus commun consisterait dans le fait que seuls Dieu et les anges ont un mouvement parfait de l'intellect, c'est-à-dire qu'ils vivent dans le temps circulaire parfait, au contraire de l'être humain. Nous affirmons que l'oblicité serait ce mouvement de l'esprit qui compenserait le cercle imparfait de l'esprit humain; on peut dès lors tracer un cercle imparfait, avec une sorte d'embouchure à la gauche, et rectifier, par la droite à l'aide d'une ligne qui se dirige vers la Transcendance. C'est sur cette différence que nous supposons que Boutang fonde le mythe de l'oblicité qui comblerait mais tout en assumant, en quelque sorte, cette imperfection, d'autant plus que la modernité, elle aussi, peut être définie comme le temps pseudo-cyclique, autrement dit le mouvement circulaire imparfait que l'homme doit combler d'une façon ou d'une autre. Que ce soit chez les anciens et les scolastiques (Denys, M-C, Albert) ou chez Boutang qui reprend à son compte ce mouvement, il est bien question d'une «transition», à la seule différence, que la «trans-ition» chez Boutang n'est pas la progression vers le circulaire, mais en quelque sorte le chemin où se rencontrent l'origine et la fin, un aboutissement qui demanderait un autre chemin.

<sup>21</sup> Saint Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique*, IIa. IIae. q. 180. a. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

προιον επαυσατο (ce qui est et s'est arrêté); alors que l'*apeiron* est προχωρειν και ου μενειω<sup>23</sup> (ce qui avance et ne s'arrête pas). Ainsi, le mouvement oblique n'est ni le *peras*, ni l'*apeiron*, mais ce qui s'insère entre les deux: la veille y est bien confondue avec l'ascension en spirale. Par conséquent, nous ne qualifions pas encore ici la veille comme «état d'exception», car elle impliquerait une statique, et c'est bien le problème qu'affronte Durtal dans *En route* de Huysmans: si la veille consiste dans un retrait hors du monde, dans un monastère, comment appliquer le vide de soi dans le monde mondain – par exemple, dans ce roman, une fois de retour à Paris? Avec Pierre Boutang, nous posons bien le problème du passage, qu'implique le mouvement oblique.<sup>24</sup>

Boutang ne fait pas le lien explicitement entre la veille et l'obliquité dans *l'ontologie du secret*, mais la page 291 permet de faire le lien dans cet article:

Impossible de ne pas noter l'analogie, au moins dans ce cas nullement rare, entre s'endormir et une ascension qui peut être soudain interrompue; mais il faut ajouter aussitôt que ce n'est ainsi que dans l'instant qui suit l'interruption (...) l'instant de s'endormir ressemblerait donc à un passage à l'autre que vrai, mais avec cette allusion, dans ce mouvement, à une sorte de montée libératrice.

La veille, s'identifiant à l'ascension en spirale au sein de l'instant, va rencontrer la Transcendance dans cet autre-du-temps. Remarquons que *trans* indique lui aussi un passage, qui n'est pas au-delà de l'essence, mais inscrit dans la limite, le *peras*.<sup>25</sup> Cette hypothèse se rapproche très clairement du commentaire d'Urs Von Balthazar sur Saint Maxime le Confesseur:

<sup>23</sup> Platon, *Philèbe*, 24d. Boutang décrit le couloir oblique comme le non-lieu où: «Il est aussi difficile de s'arrêter que d'avancer» et «sans que ce couloir ne resserre, ni s'ouvre», confirmant notre hypothèse. Le mouvement oblique part du sentiment de la finitude, qui est déployé dès chez Platon, c'est-à-dire la composition de l'étant (c.f. „l'oblicité naît de la composition” = *peras* et *apeiron* puis la cause du mélange, *aitia*), elle est donc le point de passage ultime où se rencontre l'Un et le Multiple). En second lieu, dans la mesure où laquelle cette composition accompagne le présent vivant, c'est-à-dire l'autre mode de l'étant, formant le voyage dont il est question ici. Le mouvement circulaire se lierait, ainsi, à l'éveil, lorsque l'obliquité se lierait à la veille.

<sup>24</sup> C'est, semble-t-il, Kierkegaard qui pour la première fois a posé le problème du passage comme instant dans la philosophie moderne. L'instant n'a été compris qu'abstraitement des grecs, pour le philosophe danois, car ils méconnaissaient le futur. Ce que le futur ontologique apporte, c'est la réalité de l'éternité, qui pose l'instant comme point de rencontre entre temps et éternité. Cf. *Le concept d'angoisse*, Ed. Gallimard, Paris, 1990, p.256.

<sup>25</sup> On pourra s'aider de ce commentaire très précieux de Lévinas: «La Transcendance signifie un mouvement de traversée (*trans*) et un mouvement de montée (*scando*) elle signifie en ce sens un double effort d'enjambement de l'intervalle par élévation, par changement de niveau; avant toute métaphore, le mot est donc à penser dans sa signification de changement de lieu». Cf. Lévinas, *op.cit.*, p. 190. Il n'y a pas à douter, d'après notre analyse, que ce mouvement d'élévation qu'indiquent le – trans et le – scando soient propres à l'obliquité.

«Le regard de Dieu ne descend pas seulement le long de la 'chaîne' où les chœurs célestes d'êtres de plus en plus spiritualisés tendent vers la divinité. Mais il rencontre une limite entre les deux mondes (une sphère), celle des sens et celle de l'esprit, et ce point de jonction des deux sphères qui, dans leur attraction réciproque constituent le monde, devient précisément le lieu où la transcendance apparaît comme le tout-autre dans ce monde de l'immanence.»<sup>26</sup>

La remarque de Urs Von Balthazar est d'autant plus intéressante pour notre étude qu'elle ne sépare pas la Transcendance de l'immanence, mais l'inscrit dans l'expérience de l'étant au sein de cette dernière. Reprenons: la transcendance est le passage au sein duquel où d'une part la kénose de l'Un lui permet de s'approcher du temps, et d'autre part au sein duquel l'étant fini s'élève vers l'autre-du-temps, mais non l'éternité; autrement dit, le passage par lequel l'Un participe (la *methesis*) auprès du temps en corrélation de l'ascension de l'étant: cette rencontre forme le présent vivant.<sup>27</sup> La nuit sera alors le recueil de la finitude humaine dans la possibilité de son ascension.<sup>28</sup>

En conclusion partielle:

- Premièrement, la veille est un état d'exception au sens d'un instant (un instant d'exception serait déjà un pléonasme); un instant comme «passage d'exception» dans lequel les figures de la dyade s'inversent et permettent l'ascension de la personne vers ce nouveau *topos* qu'est la transcendance.

- Cette exception n'est donc pas une statique, mais un passage entre le temps et l'éternité : c'est l'autre-du-temps (succinctement, le mouvement rectiligne, relatif aux sens, reste dans le temps spatialisé; lorsque le mouvement circulaire, par sa force d'inertie, appartient à Dieu, aux anges, et à quelques élus. Ici nous recherchons le mouvement d'un esprit capable d'être partagé par l'ensemble de l'humanité).

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<sup>26</sup> La citation peut se trouver dans l'article de V. Dupont, «Le dynamisme de l'action liturgique. Une étude de la *Mystagogie* de saint Maxime le Confesseur», in «Revue des Sciences Religieuses, Année 1991, Volume 65, Numéro 4, pp. 363–388. Lien: [[http://www.persee.fr/doc/rscir\\_0035-2217\\_1991\\_num\\_65\\_4\\_3183](http://www.persee.fr/doc/rscir_0035-2217_1991_num_65_4_3183)]

<sup>27</sup> Ce présent vivant, en quoi l'étant rejoint son mode d'être, peut se retrouver dans le secret du *sum qui sum*. le premier *sum* est la question de Moïse, c'est l'analogie du passé qui survient, le *qui* manifeste le présent actif, enfin le second *sum* devient répétition fondatrice. Ainsi, le *sum qui sum* manifesterait le mouvement du logos, qui est actualisé par le désir de l'homme, et demande son ascension vers le divin. Cf. *Ontologie du secret, op. cit.*, «dénouement».

<sup>28</sup> Ou, comme le fait remarquer Simone Weil, la nuit obscure est la métaphore du vide de soi comme arrachement, comme inquiétude.

La limite de notre entreprise consiste dans le fait que la veille ici conceptualisée se réfère à une expérience strictement personnelle, au sens de la *trezvia* en roumain. Or, si nous considérons avec Boutang que la relation entre l'esprit infini et la finitude au sein du secret ontologique «procure un modèle de mise à jour (...) pas seulement entre Dieu et l'homme, mais entre les personnes»,<sup>29</sup> alors nous devons nous interroger en quel sens la veille est une exception dans notre contemporanéité tout en devenant une obligation au sein de la communauté,<sup>30</sup> que reflète le sens du mot veille au sens de «protéger», et la *Vigilia* en latin. Cependant, la *trezvanje*, si elle accompagne et rassure la prière – et parce qu'elle est prière – est donc pour l'Autre: voici un autre argument en faveur de «la veille pour l'autre», car nous avons oublié combien la larme, la prière, l'humilité sont des modalités de l'esse qui rencontrent intimement, et pourtant à découvert, comme nus dans la délivrance, le chemin de l'Autre.<sup>31</sup>

### III. La veille pour l'autre *via* la grâce comme délivrance de la personne et accomplissement du sujet

Qui veille? Selon Durtal dans *En route* de Huysmans, le monde est si horrible que n'importe qui peut veiller! Pourquoi pas Durtal, qui est le modèle du personnage commun, sans qualité?

L'interrogation de Durtal est moins révélatrice que l'expérience de la grâce qui l'habite. Si, en effet, l'expérience de la veille peut s'accomplir dans un monastère et non dans une ville comme Paris, où subsistent des millions de prochains à aider et à aimer, nous ferions une stricte démarcation entre un moi absolu et un moi social. Pour sortir de ce paradoxe, nous définirons le moi comme la tension entre la grâce et son absence. D'où il suit que si la veille n'est pas une expérience commune partagée par tous, qu'elle est *de facto* une exception, chacun n'en pas moins capable de veiller. La veille requiert alors la possibilité d'éveiller la tension qu'implique la grâce chez Autrui. Il semble, par conséquent, que ce soit la tentative des philosophes dits «existentialistes» – bien que le terme soit rejeté par quelqu'un comme Gabriel Marcel – de fonder une philosophie de la recherche et de l'itinérance sans se désengager de la charité: elle est une pensée de l'humilité. La

<sup>29</sup> P. Boutang, *Ontologie du secret*, op. cit., p. 461.

<sup>30</sup> Ici nous devons nous interroger sur le sens de la communauté.

<sup>31</sup> Simone Weil écrit notamment: «celui chez qui l'Amour de Dieu a fait disparaître ici-bas le pur amour des êtres est un faux ami de Dieu».

philosophie existentielle, ainsi, est la pensée qui sans cesse se cherche, croit se trouver en des instants, et est capable de changer, de se métamorphoser en des personnages conceptuels, à l'instar de Kierkegaard (et ce serait toute l'œuvre de Socrate de s'interroger et de s'arrêter dans des démonstrations qui font obstacle à la pensée, quand bien même le *logos*, tentative au sein de cet embarras, relèverait du *ti esti kalon*), dans tout problème du vécu qui inscrit le concept dans le mouvement de la pensée. Cette manière de penser invite chacun au cœur de cette nuit obscure, dans l'instant de cette décision pour sortir, sereinement mais en tout quiétude, de l'abstraction du monde dans lequel nous vivons: il n'est donc point question d'un quelconque élitisme.

L'expérience partagée de la veille doit, par la suite, faire appel à une nouvelle visite de notre rapport au monde par le langage, ce pourquoi nous nous aidons d'Agamben. Pour arriver à cette relation, il faut considérer, avec cet auteur commentant Saint-Paul dans *Le temps qui reste*, que le pré-droit a été séparé des obligations, qui aboutit à la séparation entre le *pistis* et le *nomos*, séparation fondée par Saint Paul (le *pistis* est alors à relier à la *creditas*, la confiance en autrui): le *nomos* est la prédication de la loi comme détermination de tous les usages. Or, l'excès de *performantivum sacramenti* sur le *performantivum fidei* est le règne absolu du *nomos*, dans lequel la tension de la grâce perd toute vitalité et, par conséquent, équivaut à la juridisation de tous les rapports humains: c'est le monde de la séparation dans lequel le pré-droit n'entretient plus de rapport complexe avec la loi. La veille aurait alors un lien inextricable avec la foi, le *pistis*, qui est «l'abandon sans condition au pouvoir d'autrui, et qui cependant oblige également le recevant».<sup>32</sup>

L'expérience de la grâce se déploie, par conséquent, dans le «comme si», c'est-à-dire la suspension de la détermination des usages, elle devient «la capacité de faire usage de toutes les déterminations et prestations sociales».<sup>33</sup> La veille demanderait à vivre l'impropre de manière propre, c'est-à-dire tout simplement à vaincre les déterminations extérieures qui me nuisent, par la vigueur de la vie, elle peut s'apparenter alors au courage du *Lachès*, force d'âme suivie d'intelligence. C'est bien l'absence de courage, la mollesse qui s'est abattue sur notre modernité occidentale, dont le «spectacle» – pour reprendre un terme debordien – diffus ou concentré, a confisqué l'âme des peuples. On traiterait donc bien d'une présence supérieure.

A son tour, cette présence supérieure renforce la charité, c'est-à-dire le commandement d'aimer autrui comme soi-même: «l'amour est le plérôme de la loi»,

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<sup>32</sup> G. Agamben, *Le temps qui reste*, Editions Rivage Poche, Paris, 2004, p.197.

<sup>33</sup> G. Agamben, *op.cit.*, p .208.

c'est-à-dire la forme qui accomplit la scission apparente entre foi et obligation.<sup>34</sup> Au contraire d'Agamben qui ne dissocie pas cette loi de la foi de la récapitulation messianique,<sup>35</sup> nous l'inscrivons dans la tension qui se joue entre «la veille pour soi» et la «veille pour l'autre». Aimer son prochain, cela ne veut pas dire l'aider en tout temps, jusqu'à s'oublier. Justement, dans la modernité, nous vivons avec des milliers de prochains potentiels, du moins dans les villes. C'est alors que si obligation et devoir il y a, ils consisteraient à s'occuper de soi nécessairement, et d'autrui autant que faire ce peu. Comment va donc être définie cette présence supérieure? Comme «une expérience de l'être aussi bien au-delà de l'existence qu'au-delà de l'essence, tant du sujet que du prédicat».<sup>36</sup> Cette présence s'inscrit dans l'exception, c'est-à-dire une exclusion inclusive, qui définit la loi de la foi, par le *performantivum fider*, la parole de la foi.<sup>37</sup> Dans cette expérience s'accomplit la parole proche, c'est-à-dire une puissance de conservation du dire, «capable d'un usage gratuit à la fois du temps et du monde»,<sup>38</sup> c'est le reste de la puissance de la parole en acte, une *kinesis* définissant la grâce comme excès de ce reste qui oppose tout en conservant, se faisant ainsi garant de la proximité entre la bouche et le cœur. Comment relier, par conséquent, cet exception de la parole au Dire lévinassien, afin de renforcer le concept de veille?

Nous avons vu, dans notre deuxième partie, que la limite de l'obliquité se situe dans son expérience strictement individuelle. Avec les acquis de Boutang et de l'analyse d'Agamben, nous pouvons à présent réunir cette expérience individuelle et collective. L'opposition entre «pouvoir constituant» et «pouvoir constitué» peut se ramener, *mutatis mutandis*, à celle entre le Dire et le Dit. Lévinas dans le chapitre «La corrélation sujet-objet», déploie une argumentation indispensable à la résolution de notre problème. Si l'infini est ce qui est au-delà de l'essence, c'est dans la mesure où

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<sup>34</sup> On peut émettre l'hypothèse suivante, mais qui reste sous forme d'hypothèse : lorsque Agamben dit (Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 202) : «la grâce est cet excès qui – en même temps qu'il divise à chaque fois les deux éléments du pré-droit et les empêche de coïncider – ne leur permet pas non plus de les diviser complètement» ne souligne-t-il pas la grâce comme forme de la dyade de la foi et de l'obligation ? De même, puisque dans l'époque moderne, dominée par l'excès de *l'a-peiron* sur le *peras*, la dyade devenant „inversée”, c'est-à-dire tout au plus, ou tout au moins, cela expliquerait l'existence des Etats laïques, ou des Etats religieux, sans que jamais l'un des deux ne contienne l'élément de l'autre, et ramènerait l'existence des sujets à une biopolitique, victoire du *bios* sur le *zoè*.

<sup>35</sup> G. Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>36</sup> G. Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>37</sup> G. Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 224: «tout comme, dans l'état d'exception, la loi ne suspend sa propre application que pour fonder de cette manière son application dans les cas normaux, ainsi, dans le performatif, le langage ne suspend sa *dénotation* que pour fonder son lien avec les choses».

<sup>38</sup> G. Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

elle est une relation avec ce que la pensée ne saurait contenir, où l'être se retrouve, s'affirme et se confirme. Lévinas conceptualise ce «plus dans le moins» comme «réveil» (ni veille, ni éveil): intervient derechef l'Autre comme traumatisme, qui requiert le sujet dans son indispensable veille, permettant une relation entre veille et réveil. Cette relation, par où la veille du sujet se prolonge, est définie comme réveil du Même par l'Autre; elle permet, ainsi, de faire passer l'individu (comme corps et esprit) de la personne (*imitatio christi*) à la subjectivité (qui peut être vu, certes, comme une régression de la personne), qui comprend la première tout en la mettant en jeu dans l'ambiguïté de l'être et de l'autrement qu'être, c'est-à-dire éclaircit la thématization du Dit.<sup>39</sup> Le sujet serait, ainsi, la clairière de la personne.

Veille, entre norme et exception, avons-nous déclaré : voici la structure normée du sujet. Séparées une fois thématisées (sous le Dit), les intelligibilités procurent une compréhension de l'ensemble du Système comme significations des étants. Or, la subjectivité comme esprit devient ainsi rationnelle, elle permet de retenir le temps (et nous avons, pour le comprendre, les acquis de notre deuxième partie) comme rassemblement de ce qui est dispersé, en d'autres termes comme activité, par où le Même fait jaillir la lumière de l'Autre, irréductible transcendance contenue déjà dans l'immanence, sans quoi cette rationalité se réduirait strictement au Dit de la totalité, de la globalisation, du savoir. La subjectivité, par conséquent, fait éclater la norme du Dit dans la totalité de son essence, comme « excès qui arrache la rationalité universelle »,<sup>40</sup> ou encore ce qui l'éveille d'une autre raison. Une philosophie de la vigilance (ou dans notre vocabulaire: de la veille) qui ne se désengage ni de la Transcendance, ni de l'Infini, doit faire passer la norme du Dit à la norme du Dire, bien qu'elle soit *de facto* une exception occultée par la philosophie occidentale.

L'amour devient dès lors le lien entre la suspension de la loi et l'un-pour-l'autre: dans cette relation, l'Infini éveille le fini:<sup>41</sup> responsabilité dans laquelle se réveille la proximité avec autrui, le prochain. Cette agitation, cette inquiétude, par

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<sup>39</sup> Toutefois, Lévinas, dans certaines de ses pages, assimile la veille à une neutralité au cœur de la nuit: «la veille est anonyme. Il n'y a pas ma vigilance à la nuit, dans l'insomnie, c'est la nuit elle-même qui veille»; comme le fait également Blanchot qui, de son côté, déclare: «Qui veille? Précisément, la question est écartée par la neutralité de la veille : personne ne veille». Cf. M. Blanchot, *L'écriture du désastre*, Gallimard, Paris, 1980, p. 82. Or, nous allons voir que dans le chapitre «éloge de l'insomnie» (Cf. Lévinas, *op. cit.*) Lévinas redonne une positivité à ce concept.

<sup>40</sup> Nicolas Antenat, «Respect et vulnérabilité chez Levinas», *Le Portique* [En ligne], 11. 2003, mis en ligne le 15 décembre 2005, consulté le 11 mai 2016. URL: [ <http://leportique.revues.org/558> ]

<sup>41</sup> L'éveil est «la non-quiétude, qui est l'agitation du Même par l'Autre». Cf. Lévinas, *op.cit.*, p. 241. Au cœur de cette agitation nous remontons plus haut que la conscience elle-même: c'est la veille.



suite, donne naissance à la veille, ex-position à l'autre, se distinguant radicalement de la vigilance, semblant de lucidité portée «sur» le monde, et non inquiétude de l'être troublé «dans» le monde.

En conclusion, la veille est un passage d'exception en ce qu'elle s'insère entre le Mouvement et le Repos, au cœur du couloir oblique.<sup>42</sup> Mais, en nous concentrant tout aussi bien sur les genres du Même et de l'Autre du *Sophiste*, *l'en-avant-de-l'étant* que je suis se détache, en quelque sorte, de l'essence, répond à l'appel de l'Autre, en devenant exception du langage; *edere vellem sensa cordis*, exception au sens où en suspendant son application normative, il fonde un rapport intrinsèque non avec les choses – ce serait à la fois général et abstrait – mais avec les hommes et conséquemment avec Dieu. *Etat du viatique, exception du Désir*.<sup>43</sup>

En découvrant le paradoxe de Dostoïevski sur l'amour pour le prochain, c'est-à-dire la nécessité d'affirmer son *ego* et le devoir de veiller sur les autres, par où naît la liberté, nous remarquons que la veille devient cette norme qui règle l'humilité dans ce que Marcel appelle «l'universel» et non «la masse», cette dernière étant une abstraction de la modernité dans laquelle nous vivons. Nous aurions, de ce fait, à méditer sur la réflexion première de Gabriel Marcel, celle du mystère ontologie comme une résistance de l'être, qui fait obstacle à toute analyse théorique, permettant de méditer sur ce que signifie la communion du Nous.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> En conclusion, la résolution de l'aporie par une analyse du temps se ramène, *in fine*, à la relation des cinq genres du *Sophiste*: en quoi la veille épouse l'être de l'étant? C'est-à-dire: entre le Mouvement et le Repos, instant du mouvement oblique, qui définit son état et; de même, affirme sa personne; ensuite, entre le Même et l'Autre, grâce du sujet qui accomplit son exception.

<sup>43</sup> Brièvement: pour vivre l'impropre de manière propre, saint Jean de la Croix, dans *la montée du Carmel*, décrit le dépouillement de l'âme comme une sorte de plongée dans les choses les plus insipides, les plus effrayantes, c'est-à-dire que nous devons désirer le plus ce que nous désirons le moins! Si nous réveillons cette vigueur de l'esprit dans notre âme, alors nous pouvons nous dépouiller de nous-mêmes et veiller sur les autres: vivre le temps comme la grâce, dans lequel la veille réveille les trois vertus théologales. Accomplissement du Désir, en quoi l'homme tend à rejoindre son *esse* au cœur du secret de l'être de l'étant; en d'autres termes, délivrance du sujet, mais aussi de la divinité (Cf. Boutang, *Apocalypse du Désir*, *op.cit.*, «délivrance», «ascension du présent», p. 395).

<sup>44</sup> Ce que nous entendons par norme, c'est un modèle concret, un «exemple ou un type à imiter». On peut retrouver les définitions du concept de norme chez André Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 2<sup>ème</sup> édition «Quadrige», 2006, juin, p. 691. Ainsi la veille, telle que définie dans le troisième chapitre de notre réflexion, est un état d'exception, mais en tant que telle, devient un modèle à imiter.

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## SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN FACE-TO-FACE SITUATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE. THE SELF AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT IN THE “HERE AND NOW” HUMAN INTERACTIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** *Social Interactions in Face-To-Face Situations throughout the Reality of Everyday Life. The Self as a Social Construct in the “Here And Now” Human Interactions.* The reality of everyday life presents itself to the individual as an inter-subjective world, a world shared with others, with which one lives in common. The most important experience of daily life is the one taking place in face-to-face interactions. Only during this kind of interaction the other’s manifest subjectivity is completely accessible and visible to me, through a maximum of symptoms. I have access at my own subjectivity thought an inner reflection. Individual identity is the key element of the subjective reality, being formed, maintained and modified inside interactive social processes taking place between individuals in a certain social context. In the defining of the self-image of the individual there are mirrored, the attitudes and behavior of the signifying others towards the respective individual.

**Keywords:** *Thomas Luckmann; face-to-face interactions; the reality of everyday life; subjective reality/identity; internalization of reality; significant others*

### Introduction

The world is made up from many distinct realities (the reality of daily life, the world of theater, the world of play, the dream-world, etc.), of which the individual is aware and inside of which he co-exists alongside his peers. He “wanders” through the different spheres of reality<sup>1</sup> around which he organizes his existence, but always returns to the reality of daily life.<sup>2</sup> Moving from one sphere of

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<sup>1</sup> “Put differently, I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. As I move from one reality to another, I experience the transition as a kind of shock. This shock is to be understood as caused by the shift in attentiveness that the transition entails. Waking up from a dream illustrates this shift most simply.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 38.

<sup>2</sup> “Yet all these – dreamer, physicist, artist and mystic – also live in the reality of everyday life. Indeed, one of their important problems is to interpret the coexistence of this reality with the reality enclaves into which they have ventured. Berger, Luckmann (2008), 43.

reality to another entails different experiences to the individual and require the allocation of different degrees of attention. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann maintain, in their work, *The Social Construction of Reality*, that the reality of daily life is the only supreme and inalienable sphere of reality between all the others, a given fact that constrains the individual to live his life in the waking world. This world springs from and is maintained as real by the thoughts and subjectively significant actions of the individuals that occur in the inter-subjective milieu. Compared with the pervasiveness of the reality of daily life, all other realities are considered to be zones of limited significance, enclaves inside the supreme reality.<sup>3</sup> In order to underline the differences between the reality of daily life and the other realities, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their work, *The Social Construction of Reality*, analyze the distinctions between the daily life the world of the theater. The curtain is the threshold of transition between the two worlds. It introduces the spectator inside the unreal world of the theater when it lifts, and also it brings him back to daily life with its fall, where the former spectator becomes again one besides many others.<sup>4</sup> The shared reality of daily life is grasped by the individual as an objectified reality<sup>5</sup> through the medium of language. Language assures the permanent link with daily life, allowing the individual to interpret and objectify his daily experiences, and also to order his relationships with other people. Language provides to the individual the necessary objectifications and establishes the order in which they acquire sense, but also the framework in which daily life makes sense for every other of one's peers, thereby establishing the basis for the commonality of everyday life.

The time that governs the proper existence of every individual inside the framework of daily life is finite (due to the certainty of the finitude of human beings) and continuous (because it has existed since before the birth of each individual and will continue to exist after the individual will cease to be). The temporal structure of daily life influences the course of the individual's life and the

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<sup>3</sup> "Compared to the reality of everyday life, other realities appear as finite provinces of meaning, enclaves within the paramount reality marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience. The paramount reality envelops them on all sides, as it were, and consciousness always returns to the paramount reality as from an excursion." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 42.

<sup>4</sup> "The transition between realities is marked by the rising and falling of the curtain. As the curtain rises the spectator is "transported to another world", with its own meanings and an order that may or may not have much to do with the order of everyday life. As the curtain falls, the spectator "returns to reality", that is, to the paramount reality of everyday life by comparison with which the reality presented on the stage now appears tenuous and ephemeral, however vivid the presentation may have been a few moments previously." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 42.

<sup>5</sup> "The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 38.

degree of realization of personal projects.<sup>6</sup> This means that, for example, there are certain stages that one must pass through in order to obtain a professional qualification, there is a certain period in life during which one may practice professional sports, etc. The temporal structure organizes the biography, integrates it into world history and gives me confirmation that I live in the reality of present time: for example, I know that I was born at a certain X date, that I've entered school in year Y, that I've got my first job after the revolution etc. The clock and the calendar assure me that I live in the living present, that I am a "woman of my time".<sup>7</sup>

**Social interactions in the face-to-face situations ("here and now").  
The role of the significant others in the construction of personal identity**

The reality of daily life presents itself to the individual as an inter-subjective world, a world shared with others, with which one lives in common. The world of daily life is as real for all the individuals to the same extent, being impossible to doubt of its reality under any circumstance and without needing any supplementary verification, except in case of madness. The reality of daily life is commonly considered to be reality as such, under the conditions in which a usual individual lives the normality of day to day life.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "My own life is an episode in the externally factitious stream of time. It was there before I was born and it will be there after I die. The knowledge of my inevitable death makes this time finite for me. I have only a certain amount of time available for the realization of my projects, and the knowledge of this affects my attitude to these projects. Also, since I do not want to die, this knowledge injects an underlying anxiety into my projects. Thus I cannot endlessly repeat my participation in sports events. I know that I am getting older. It may even be that this is the last occasion on which I have the chance to participate. My waiting will be anxious to the degree in which the finitude of time impinges upon the project." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 45.

<sup>7</sup> "The temporal structure of everyday life not only imposes prearranged sequence upon the "agenda" of any single day but also imposes itself upon my biography as a whole. Within the coordinates set by this temporal structure I apprehend both daily "agenda" and overall biography. Clock and calendar ensure that, indeed, I am a "man of my time". Only within this temporal structure does everyday life retain for me its accent of reality. Thus in cases where I may be "disoriented" for one reason or another (say, I have been in an automobile accident in which I was knocked unconscious), I feel an almost instinctive urge to "reorient" myself within the temporal structure of everyday life. I look at my watch and try to recall what day it is. By these acts alone I re-enter the reality of everyday life." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 45–46.

<sup>8</sup> "The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply there, as self-evident and compelling facticity. I know that it is real. While I am capable of engaging in doubt about its reality, I am obliged to suspend such doubt as I routinely exist in everyday life." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 40.

Living in this world of daily life presupposes interacting, communicating continuously and constantly with others (with whom the individual shares the reality of daily life), even if they possess different world-views. Even when individuals share the same time and space, even when they live in common, reality and knowledge are understood differently by each, in function of their own knowledge stores (what is real for one may be unreal for another; what is “here” for me may be “there” for another) and interests.<sup>9</sup> The knowledge each one has on daily life is structured in function of the relevant elements. Some of them are determined by immediate personal pragmatic interests, while others by the general position of the individual in society. Each one’s structures of relevance intersect at many points, in function of the aspects each considers as relevant. To know the structure of relevance of others is an important element of the knowledge I have about daily life.

Social interaction is influenced by the common participation of all the individuals to a store of socially accessible knowledge that is transmitted and enriched during the generations. This common store of knowledge refers to knowing one’s existential situation and the boundaries that this entails.<sup>10</sup> The store of socially accessible knowledge differs from a society to another, therefore each society will have another vision on the values and principles that inform a good governance. Knowledge has as its first moment primary/pre-theoretical knowledge/ “knowledge-recipes”. These encompass a collection of general truths about reality expressed as maxims, proverbs, moral precepts, values, beliefs, myths that are known by all the members of a community. Such “knowledge-recipes” define and control the rules of conduct accepted for every social context, being the motivational engine of institutionalized conduct. Inside an institution, the knowledge-recipe defines the roles that have to be fulfilled and controls and predicts adequate conduct. Knowledge-recipes understood as knowledge limited to practical competencies for routine actions occupy a main place in the store of social knowledge. It contains complex and detailed information on those domains of daily life with which the individual intersects more frequently (routine activities), on which he has specialized

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<sup>9</sup> “Indeed, I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others. I know that my natural attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitude of others, that they also comprehend the objectifications by which this world is ordered, that they also organize this world around the “here and now” of their being in it and have projects for working in it. I also know, of course, that the others have a perspective on this common world that is not identical with mine. My “here” is their “there”. My “now” does not fully overlap with theirs. My projects differ from and may even conflict with theirs. All the same, I know that I live with them in a common world.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 40.

<sup>10</sup> For example: I am conscious that I am a poor man and because of this, I never be able to live in a residence district.

and detailed knowledge – knowledge that influences him directly and that helps him to fulfil his immediate and future practical goals. The degree of attention one directs towards a certain activity is influenced by the interest of the individual towards that activity and by its level of relevancy for the individual.<sup>11</sup> On the rest of the domains the individual has only vague and summary information, either because they do not wake his interest or they just do not interest him from a pragmatic point of view, or they interest him only indirectly (secondarily) in the measure that they might become a threat in the present or in a close future. These are problematic activities that the individual is constrained to undertake although lacking sufficient specialized knowledge. The realization of such problematic activities brings with it a plus of knowledge, increasing the knowledge of the individual and therefore also the extent of his reality. As individual ages, his stock of knowledge also increases.<sup>12</sup> Repeated activity becomes habitual, an acquired skill stored in the general stock of knowledge as a blueprint or matrix that contains a description of the algorithm to be followed in order that the respective activity be realized efficiently and with reduced effort.<sup>13</sup>

Knowledge gained during socialization constitutes the second moment of knowledge. It has the role of mediating interiorization into individual consciousness of the objectified structures of the social world. The own self (self as person) is formed during the period in which the human organism is developing towards maturity, both with regard to its biological development (the genetic basis of the self are assured since birth due to the sociability with which every individual is

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<sup>11</sup> “In this world of working my consciousness is dominated by the pragmatic motive, that is, my attention to this world is mainly determined by what I am doing, have done or plan to do in it. In this way it is *my world par excellence*.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 39.

<sup>12</sup> “My world is structured in terms of routines applying in good or bad weather, in the hay-fever season and in situations when a speck of dirt gets caught under my eyelid. “I know what to do” with regard to all these others and all these events within my everyday life. By presenting itself to me as an integrated whole the social stock of knowledge also provides me with the means to integrate discrete elements of my own knowledge. In other words, “what everybody knows” has its own logic, and the same logic can be applied to order various things that I know. For example, I know that my friend Henry is an Englishman, and I know that he is always very punctual in keeping appointments. Since “everybody knows” that punctuality is an English trait, I can now integrate these two elements of my knowledge of Henry into a typification that is meaningful in terms of the social stock of knowledge.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 64–65.

<sup>13</sup> All human activity is subject to habitualization. Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which, ipso facto, is apprehended by its performer as that pattern. Habitualization further implies that the action in question may be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort. This is true of non-social as well as of social activity.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 79.



born), as well as with regard to the social processes in which significant others have a special relevance (the self as a social product). The self as person, as a subjectively or objectively recognized identity, is not inborn, being developed through the action of the social context and through interactive social bilateral processes. The understanding and defining of the own self is efficient only through referring to the individual's social context.<sup>14</sup> The self as a social construct is determined and defined not only by the particular configuration with which the individual identifies himself, which has strong ties with the culture to which he belongs,<sup>15</sup> but also with the complex psychological endowment (somatic reactions, behaviors, attitudes, value sets, principles).

The most important experience of daily life is the one taking place in face-to-face interactions, "here and now", when every participant is oriented directly towards the other. The "here and now" present during which a meeting of individuals happens is concrete, live and shared by both participants. In other words, each one meets the other during the same present, which becomes a shared "here and now". During the reciprocal influence between my "here and now" and the other's, there takes place a continuous exchange between his expressivity and mine. This is a continuous reciprocity of each one's expressive acts, which means that during the face-to-face interaction happening "here and now", each perceives in real time the other's reactions as effects of one's own reactions (inter-subjective closeness during face-to-face situations). Social action has the form of manifest behavior to which everyone has direct access, everyone may interpret it and to which everyone may react. Social action is determined and oriented towards others. Therefore, it may be argued that during face-to-face interactions, the other's manifest subjectivity is completely accessible and visible to me, through a maximum of symptoms, but the veracity of their interpretation is not guaranteed at all. I may interpret correctly or incorrectly these symptoms, and the other, as well, may be honest in their

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<sup>14</sup> "The genetic presuppositions for the self are, of course, given at birth. But the self, as it is experienced later as a subjectively and objectively recognizable identity, is not. The same social processes that determine the completion of the organism produce the self in its particular, culturally relative form. The character of the self as a social product is not limited to the particular configuration the individual identifies as himself (for instance, as "a man", in the particular way in which this identity is defined and formed in the culture in question), but to the comprehensive psychological equipment that serves as an appendage to the particular configuration (for instance, "manly" emotions, attitudes and even somatic reactions). It goes without saying, then, that the organism and, even more, the self cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they were shaped." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 75–76.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the individual defines himself as a man. The signification of this identity (what he understands from this self-identification) is taken exactly as it is defined in the culture to which he belongs and with which he identifies himself.

expression (that which he transmits verbally and non-verbally is identical to what he feels), or he may try to mislead me by attempting to disguise his true intentions, his real thoughts and feelings regarding my person and the message I transmitted. Nevertheless, the other becomes truly real to me, as presence, only during such face-to-face interactions, when the other's subjectivity is at its maximum closeness.

I know myself better than I know the other, notwithstanding how much he tells me about himself and no matter how close a relationship we have. My own subjectivity is accessible to me in a way in which his will never be, because I know very well my personal past, that defines me as human being and that influences my decisions. Despite the fact that the access to one's own subjectivity is soundest, nevertheless, during face-to-face interaction, the other is more real to me than I am. This is due to the fact that the access to one's own subjectivity is not immediate, requiring interior reflection directed towards one's person. In internal reflection, an important role is played by the attitude the other has manifested towards me during the face-to-face interaction.<sup>16</sup> For this reason it may be argued that during face-to-face interaction the other is more real than I am, because he is known immediately, his subjectivity is directly accessible, continuously and pre-reflexively, without any kind of mediation. I have this kind of immediate, real, continuous and massive presence of his expressivity only in this kind of interaction. The other's access to my own subjectivity is made possible by the corporal signs of the subjective attitude of each of the participants in the direct interaction. Corporal signs are directly and permanently accessible to others only during face-to-face interaction. These signs betray the true intentions of the interlocutor and that he was aware from the beginning of the true significance of his actions. Besides the corporal signs of the other's subjectivity, the objectification of expressivity and the revelation of the other's subjective intentions may be mediated by objectively accessible objects of the reality that the individual shares with the others<sup>17</sup> and that represent an objectification of human subjectivity, a mark of the true feelings that the individual has for the other. The object enables the access towards the subjective significance that the individual assigns to his gesture.

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<sup>16</sup> "On the other hand, "What I am" is not so available. To make it available requires that I stop, arrest the continuous spontaneity of my experience, and deliberately turn my attention back upon myself. What is more, such reflection about myself is typically occasioned by the attitude towards me that *the other* exhibits. It is typically a "mirror" response to attitudes of the other." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 48.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the knife represents a clear intention of violence, feelings of hatred, the objectification of anger that an individual can cherish for the other. If at night, an individual thrusts a knife into the other's door, with which he has a rebuked, the knife paves the way to the perpetrator's own subjectivity. "In other words, the knife in my wall has become an objectively available constituent of the reality I share with my adversary and with other men." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 54–55.

The direct access to the other's subjectivity favors the possibility of modifying the initial pattern into which I have integrated the other since even before the initiation of the interaction between us.<sup>18</sup> This shows that the relations with others during face-to-face interactions are flexible and even constructive. The initial interaction between individuals is based on reciprocal observation of the manifest behavior of the other, followed by the formation of the first reciprocal assignments to a type. At the basis of categorizing the other as being of a certain type, or, in other words, as belonging to a general category of human beings, stand typifying schemes.<sup>19</sup> The typifying schemes model and determine the way in which the interaction between individuals will evolve. I relate to the other and interpret his behavior during the face-to-face interaction in function of such typifying schemes. Following the classification of the interlocutor as belonging to a certain general category of people, he will be considered as being an anonymous person of that type, either as someone with whom I share the same tastes, ideas, passions, or the opposite, etc. The common features of the general category under which my interlocutor from the face-to-face communicational situation is classified will be used as basis for explaining the reactions and behavior adopted by the other during our interaction. The access to one's own subjectivity during direct interaction favors the installation of a detailed knowledge about the other, revealing new particular data, specific to the other.<sup>20</sup> Therefore the other will no longer be considered an anonymous person, just as someone belonging to a general type. I will relate to him as to an unique individual, possessing certain particular traits, specific to his own person (the individualization of the other).<sup>21</sup> The individualization of the other

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<sup>18</sup> "In the face-to-face situation, however, the other may confront me with attitudes and acts that contradict this pattern, perhaps up to a point where I am led to abandon the pattern as inapplicable and to view him as friendly. In other words, the pattern cannot sustain the massive evidence of the other's subjectivity that is available to me in the face-to-face situation." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 48–49.

<sup>19</sup> Some examples of typification schemes: man, European, generous customer, funny boy, liberal.

<sup>20</sup> "In face-to-face situations I have direct evidence of my fellowman, of his actions, his attributes, and so on." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 51.

<sup>21</sup> "If I typify my friend Henry as a member of category X (say, as an Englishman), I *ipso facto* interpret at least certain aspects of his conduct as resulting from this typification - for instance, his tastes in food are typical of Englishmen, as are his manners, certain of his emotional reactions, and so on. This implies, though, that these characteristics and actions of my friend Henry appertain to *anyone* in the category of Englishman, that is, I apprehend these aspects of his being in anonymous terms. Nevertheless, as long as my friend Henry is available in the plenitude of expressivity of the face-to-face situation, he will constantly break through my type of anonymous Englishman and manifest himself as a unique and therefore atypical individual - to wit, as my friend Henry. The anonymity of the type is obviously less susceptible to this kind of individualization when face-to-face interaction is a matter of the past (my friend Henry, *the Englishman*, whom I knew when I was a college student), or is of a superficial and transient kind (the Englishman with whom I have a brief conversation on a train), or has never taken place (my business competitors in England)." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 50–51.

following the modification of the initial typifying scheme is optimally realized when we take into consideration the “interior circle”<sup>22</sup> of the individual, as it is called by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Construction of Social Reality*, meaning the closest friends, with whom we have constantly interacted in the past and with whom we manifest interest to interact more. The modification of the typifying scheme is effective only when there have been previous constant interactions with the respective person. The sum of typifying schemes forms the social structure, which is the key element of the daily reality.

At the basis of the interactions between individuals lies language. It is the most important element of socialization, common to all individuals and it allows for the reciprocity of their interactions. During “here and now” communicational situations, both partners talk together, each having thus access towards the subjectivity of the other and, implicitly, towards its own. By exposing towards the exterior my own thoughts, my subjective meanings become objectively accessible to me. This is the objectification of one’s own being through language. If earlier I have mentioned the direct, continuous and pre-reflexive access to the other’s subjectivity, as compared with the access mediated through interior reflection that I have with regard to my own person, in the case of the objectification that a subject undergoes through language the things stand differently. The reflection directed towards my own person takes place simultaneously while I’m communicating with the other. Our interaction does not have to be interrupted in order that I may be able to reflect on myself. It may be said that language has also the role to stabilize one’s own subjectivity.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “The social reality of everyday life is thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications, which are progressively anonymous as they are removed from the “here and now” of the face-to-face situation. At one pole of the continuum are those others with whom I frequently and intensively interact in face-to-face situations – my “inner circle”, as it were. At the other pole are highly anonymous abstractions, which by their very nature can never be available in face-to-face interaction. Social structure is the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them. As such, social structure is an essential element of the reality of everyday life.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 52.

<sup>23</sup> “Another way of putting this is to recall the previous point about my “better knowledge” of the other as against my knowledge of myself in the face-to-face situation. This apparently paradoxical fact has been previously explained by the massive, continuous and prereflective availability of the others being in the face-to-face situation, as against the requirement of reflection for the availability of my own. Now, however, as I objectivate my own being by means of language, my own being becomes massively and continuously available to myself at the same time that it is so available to him, and I can spontaneously respond to it without the “interruption” of deliberate reflection. It can, therefore, be said that language makes “more real” my subjectivity not only to my conversation partner but also to myself. This capacity of language to crystallize and stabilize for me my own subjectivity is retained (albeit with modifications) as language is detached from the face-to-face situation. This very important characteristic of language is well caught in the saying that men must talk about themselves until they know themselves.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 58.

Society exists both as subjective<sup>24</sup> and as objective reality<sup>25</sup> (appearing to the individual as a separate reality, independent of his will; it is produced by objective social processes).<sup>26</sup> Each of the members of society exteriorizes his own being in the social world and, at the same time, interiorizes it as an objective reality. Interiorization refers to the fact that the objective social world is introjected, reflected in consciousness during contact with the social reality, during socialization. Being in society means participating to its dialectics. The starting point of this process is interiorization, followed by primary and secondary socialization.

Interiorization represents the perception or immediate interpretation of an objective event (something outside the individual) as having significance (the attribution of sense/meaning to the objective exterior event). It is a manifestation of the subjective processes of the other that during face-to-face communication become interiorized by the self and become meaningful.<sup>27</sup> Interiorization and attribution of significance to the other's manifest actions do not guarantee the correctness of my understanding of the other (as I have already specified earlier in this article), they only underline the fact that the other's subjectivity is objectively accessible and meaningful only from inside my point of view, and only because I decide to attribute meaning to it (therefore independently of any correspondence between my subjective process and that of the other). The fact that I am the one who attributes significance to the other's manifest actions means that an accord was established between the two subjective meanings (what I am understanding from what the other transmits and what the other understands that he is transmitting) and that this concordance is recognized as such by both partners of the dialogue. Therefore it may be argued that interiorization represents the basis of what permits people to understand each other and of perceiving the world as a

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<sup>24</sup> "The subjective side consists in the consciousness an actor has, shaped in pervasive processes of socialization, and sustained and modified in daily interactions." Eberle (1992), 493.

<sup>25</sup> "The objective social reality, although produced by social action, appears to the individual as separate and independent from him or her." Eberle (1992), 493.

<sup>26</sup> "Whereas the human world, too, should be looked at from the 'outside', that is, as a reality that is to be objectively observed, described and, as best as one can, explained, the position which I find immeasurably more convincing maintains that the human world also has an 'inside', that it is a world of individual subjects, of persons. In fact, the matter can be expressed in a seemingly absurd statement: the 'inside' is the 'outside'. It would seem obvious that social worlds are made by people for people, by individuals acting as persons, as actors on a stage with other actors. The *dramatis personae* act in comedies and tragedies which follow the stage directions of social and historical institutions and organizations." Luckmann (2008), 280.

<sup>27</sup> "The beginning point of this process is internalization: the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 177.

meaningful social reality. Successful realization of interiorization as reaching an understanding of the other is based on the following necessary conditions: understanding the other's momentary subjective processes, understanding the other's world and understanding the fact that through interiorization the other's world becomes also my own (my own world communicates with and is altered by that of the other) An important aspect of interiorization is that it enables the formation of a mutual continuous identity, that refer to the fact that we live in the same world and that each one participates in the other's existence.<sup>28</sup>

Socialization is defined by Berger and Luckmann in *Social Construction of Reality* as the individual's initiation into the objective world of a society.<sup>29</sup> There are two types of socialization that the individual passes throughout his lifetime: the primary and the secondary socialization. Apparently, these resemble the interiorization of the world of the other (described earlier), but these two types of socialization are not structurally identical with interiorization.

a) Primary socialization is the first socialization of the individual. It takes place during childhood and through it the individual becomes member of society.

In every society, each individual interacts with other people. The first persons with whom the individual usually interacts are the members of his family. They mediate the individual's entrance into the objective social world (modified during mediation according to their own vision and beliefs) and play an important part in the individual's socialization. The family members are called to be the first "significant others". The significant others of primary socialization are not chosen, they are imposed upon the individual. The conceptions, opinions and views – on the world, on other people and on the individual himself – of the significant others are imposed upon the individual as objective reality.<sup>30</sup> The significant others are intermediaries between the individual and objective reality. The world that the first significant others present is interiorized not as a world that the individual-child has chosen from between

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<sup>28</sup> "We not only live in the same world, we participate in each other's being. Only when he has achieved this degree of internalization is an individual a member of society." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 178.

<sup>29</sup> "The ontogenetic process by which this is brought about is socialization, which may thus be defined as the comprehensive and consistent introduction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 179.

<sup>30</sup> "Every individual is born into an objective social structure within which he encounters the significant others who are in charge of his socialization. These significant others are imposed upon him. Their definitions of his situation are posited for him as objective reality. He is thus born into not only an objective social structure but also an objective social world. The significant others who mediate this world to him modify it in the course of mediating it. They select aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure, and also by virtue of their individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. The social world is "filtered" to the individual through this double selectivity." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 179–180.

more possible worlds, but as the only possible world, the World itself. This is deeply embedded in the individual consciousness, the individual only with great difficulty being able to expunge the teachings, values, principles and view on the self, the world and the other people that were transmitted to him. These all will accompany his journey into the existing social world.<sup>31</sup>

Primary socialization involves more than cognitive learning. It takes place in surroundings strongly charged emotionally. The emotional factor facilitates learning and faithful identification with the significant others. The identification with the significant others takes place naturally, as an inevitable and given fact, simultaneously with interiorization. Identification presupposes that the individual assumes the roles and attitudes that other family members adopt towards his self, towards others and towards everyday problems. This assumption involves the interiorization of opinions, beliefs, attitudes manifested by significant others as being proper to the individual, as if they had emerged out of his own self. The identification with significant others lays the foundation for the construction of the subjective personal identity of the individual. Only through faithful identification with significant others the individual will succeed to recognize himself, to identify himself and to form his own identity. The subjective acquiring of identity and of the basic social world are different aspects of the same process of interiorization, mediated by the same significant others. The self is a reflected reality, in which the attitudes and behavior of the significant others towards the respective individual are mirrored.<sup>32</sup> To define one's self-image is equivalent to establishing one's place in the world.<sup>33</sup>

The consequence of the interiorization of the roles and attitudes manifested by the significant others towards the individual consists in their generalization, in other words their application not only in the familial context (the micro level), but to any social situation in which the individual may find himself (the macro level). This is called by Berger and Luckmann as "the progressive retreat from the roles and attitudes

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<sup>31</sup> "The child does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He internalizes it as *the* world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world *tout court*. It is for this reason that the world internalized in primary socialization is so much more firmly entrenched in consciousness than worlds internalized in secondary socializations." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 184.

<sup>32</sup> "The child identifies with the significant others in a variety of emotional ways. Whatever they may be, internalization occurs only as identification occurs. The child takes on the significant others' roles and attitudes, that is, internalizes them and makes them his own. And by this identification with significant others the child becomes capable of identifying himself, of acquiring a subjectively coherent and plausible identity. In other words, the self is a reflected entity, reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others towards it; the individual becomes what he is addressed as by his significant others." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 180.

<sup>33</sup> "Indeed, identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 180.

imposed by others, and the assumption of other general roles and attitudes”,<sup>34</sup> in other words the apparition of a generalized (an-)other. This change takes place beginning with the stage of the interiorization of norms, teachings and worldview transmitted by the first significant others. The generalization of teachings, norms, of the set of values and principles guarantees their effective imprinting into memory. The emergence of a generalized (an-)other at the level of consciousness generates the identification of the individual not only with concrete significant others, but also with their generalization, therefore with society as whole. Identification with society as a whole presupposes the interiorization by the individual of the existing objective reality and the subjective founding of concrete, stable and continuous identity. The individual has not only a certain identity when facing his significant others, but also a general identity that gathers all the generalized roles and attitudes of the individual, and that will remain effective in relation with anyone will enter into the category of significant others.

The stage of primary socialization ends when the concept of generalized (an-)other is assimilated at the level of consciousness, the individual becoming an effective member of society, in possession of his own self and of the social world.<sup>35</sup> The crystallization of the generalized (an-)other generates a symmetry between objective reality (that which really is in exterior) and subjective reality (that which is inwardly real).<sup>36</sup>

b) Secondary socialization is based on the previous process of primary socialization, through which the own self was formed and the world was interiorized. Secondary socialization has the role of guiding the individual in order that he may accede into the new sectors of the objective world, specific to the society in which

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<sup>34</sup> Berger, Luckmann (2008), 182.

<sup>35</sup> “The decisive step comes when the child recognizes that *everybody* is against soup-spilling, and the norm is generalized to, “*One* does not spill soup” – “one” being himself as part of a generality that includes, in principle, *all* of society in so far as it is significant to the child. This abstraction from the roles and attitudes of concrete significant others is called the generalized other. Its formation within consciousness means that the individual now identifies not only with concrete others but with a generality of others, that is, with a society. Only by virtue of this generalized identification does his own self-identification attain stability and continuity. He now has not only an identity *vis-a-vis* this or that significant other, but an identity in general, which is subjectively apprehended as remaining the same no matter what others, significant or not, are encountered. This newly coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various internalized roles and attitudes - including, among many other things, the self-identification as a non-spiller of soups.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 182.

<sup>36</sup> “What is real “outside” corresponds to what is real “within”. Objective reality can readily be “translated” into subjective reality, and vice versa. ... There is always more objective reality “available” than is actually internalized in any individual consciousness, simply because the contents of socialization are determined by the social distribution of knowledge.” Berger, Luckmann (2008), 183.



he lives.<sup>37</sup> In modern society, characterized by the division of labor and the social distribution of knowledge, secondary socialization is indispensable.

If primary socialization implies the interiorization of the basic world, secondary socialization will require the interiorization of an institutional subset of the world (a sub-universe of signification; a partial reality), the acquirement of a role-specific knowledge and the acquirement of the specialized language presupposed by it. The individual participates in the social world by interpreting more social roles. Each social role played brings with it a plus of knowledge to the respective individual, enriching his knowledge stock. The individual gains knowledge when he stores in memory an experience that he deems will be useful further on. All the experiences are deposited in the subjective structures of signification, in function of their relevancy and type. The accumulation of knowledge that is specific to the social role must be sustained by society, that must facilitate the possibility that individuals focus on the activities implied by their respective specialization. If during primary socialization the individual assimilates general knowledge, secondary socialization is about specialization and the segmentation of the common stock of knowledge in contemporary society. In the social distribution of knowledge, knowledge that is role-specific becomes reserved to certain types of individuals. The old knowledge, gained through tradition, is no longer sufficient for solving the new problematic situations.

In contemporary society, economic surplus, the division of labor and the accent on specialized knowledge may lead to the emergence of socially separated sub-universes of signification, structured in function of different criteria (sex, age, occupation, tastes, passions, beliefs, etc.). Such sub-universes of signification are considered as different thought schools, each with its own objective reality and its own vision of society, shared by its members. The shared nature of the beliefs and worldviews of the members of the respective group/collectivity legitimates the existence of that universe. There may arise conflicts between distinct sub-universes of signification, each group desiring to consolidate its position and to discredit that of the rival group. The complexity and the large number of sub-universes renders them inaccessible to outsiders. The outsiders must be kept away from knowledge accessible only to those inside the sub-universe through intimidation techniques, propaganda (appeals to the interests and feelings of the outsiders), the manipulation of the symbols of social prestige.<sup>38</sup> Theoretically, each member of the sub-universe has the right to change his vision on society, to stop sharing in the group's beliefs

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<sup>37</sup> "Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 179.

<sup>38</sup> "The outsiders have to be *kept out*, sometimes even kept ignorant of the existence of the sub-universe." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 122.

and to adhere to another sub-universe. Practically, the insiders (the members of the sub-universe of signification) must be kept inside. To achieve this, theoretical and practical procedures are being developed, in order to control the temptations to escape.

The subjective reality of the interiorizations made by the individual during secondary socialization are vulnerable to the reality that was interiorized by the individual during primary socialization, not because the former would be suspected as not as real or valid, but because (as mentioned earlier, when discussing primary socialization) the later is deeply entrenched in the consciousness of the individual (and due to its emotional charge), being difficult to eliminate.<sup>39</sup>

Constant and continuous inter-human interaction represents the main way in which the subjective reality of personal identity is successfully constructed and conserved.<sup>40</sup> All the individuals with whom we interact contribute to the re-affirmation of the own subjective reality. The process of conservation of reality permits distinguishing between significant others and less significant others. In order to succeed maintaining the faith that he is as he considers that he is, the individual needs the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation of his subjective identity from the part of his significant others (identity is proven to be precarious and susceptible to be influenced).<sup>41</sup> The significant others from his life are main agents of the conservation of subjective reality.<sup>42</sup> The less significant others are considered a kind of "chorus" that either sustains or not the identity being confirmed by

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<sup>39</sup> "The more "artificial" character of secondary socialization makes the subjective reality of its internalizations even more vulnerable to challenging definitions of reality, not because they are not taken for granted or are apprehended as less than real in everyday life, but because their reality is less deeply rooted in consciousness and thus more susceptible to displacement." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 200.

<sup>40</sup> "The most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation. One may view the individual's everyday life in terms of the working away of a conversational apparatus that ongoingly maintains, modifies and reconstructs his subjective reality." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 205. "Generally speaking, the conversational apparatus maintains reality by "talking through" various elements of experience and allocating them a definite place in the real world." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 206. "The subjective side consists in the consciousness an actor has, shaped in pervasive processes of socialization, and sustained and modified in daily interactions." Elberle (1992), 493.

<sup>41</sup> "To retain confidence that he is indeed who he thinks he is, the individual requires not only the implicit confirmation of this identity that even casual everyday contacts will supply, but the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation that his significant others bestow on him." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 203.

<sup>42</sup> "In the terms of Plessner's philosophical anthropology one may say that personal identity begins to form when an individual, eccentrically positioned in the world by the triad of its body, living body and the unity of the two, recognizes himself or herself in the perspective of others." Luckmann (2008), 2.

the significant others. If there is a disagreement between the significant others and the less significant others, individual is put in the position of either modifying his own reality, or modifying his relations involved in conserving reality. He can either accept that his identity is a failure, or he may orient himself towards other individuals in order to obtain from them significant confirmations of his reality. The individual maintains his own self-definition only in an environment where it gets confirmed.<sup>43</sup>

Socialization implies that subjective reality can be transformed. This is a re-socialization process, whereby the individual chooses to adhere to another social group (the sub-universe of signification described earlier), to identify himself with other ideas, opinions, worldview, and therefore with a new reality (structure of verisimilitude) shared by the members of that respective group. The new identification of the individual with the signifying others from the social group to which he has adhered are similar with that corresponding to primary socialization. This process is therefore motivated by the necessity of re-establishing the important factors of reality and leads to an identification having an increased degree of emotional dependency towards the new significant others. This new identification represents the basis for a radical transformation of subjective reality (including personal identity). The significant others function like some kind of guides into the new reality that has been offered during the re-socialization process, their role being to intermediate between the individual and the new world. The new social group to which the individual is adhering is for him the means through which he may confirm his subjective identity. For this, the new social group must recognize the individual in the same way in which he recognizes himself.<sup>44</sup> The process of re-socialization requires the re-organization of the conversational apparatus, since the discursive partners have been changed. The interiorization of the new group's value system, norms, principles implies the rejection of everything that tied the individual to the old social group to which he belonged. The old reality must be re-interpreted inside the legitimacy apparatus of the new reality. Re-interpretation functions as a rupture in the subjective biography of the individual, meaning that during discussions with others he will refer to himself using expressions such as: "before I have affiliated myself to your group" and "after I became integrated into this social group".

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<sup>43</sup> "Subjective reality is thus always dependent upon specific plausibility structures, that is, the specific social base and social processes required for its maintenance. One can maintain one's self-identification as a man of importance only in a milieu that confirms this identity." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 208.

<sup>44</sup> "In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could remain Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognized him as such and confirmed the "new being" in which he now located this identity." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 212.

At this point of the discussion it must be stated that re-socialization is not similar to secondary socialization. When secondary socialization is based on primary socialization, re-socialization implies re-constructing reality *ab novo*. If in the case of secondary socialization the present was being interpreted in such a manner that it remained in relation continuously with the past (the past being the basis of reality), in the case of re-socialization the basis of reality is the present, the past being re-interpreted in order to conform to the present reality.

### Conclusion

The effectiveness of socialization is guaranteed by a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality. There is no absolutely successful socialization, and neither completely failed one. Absolutely effective socialization is specific to societies in which a weak division of labor and a minimal distribution of knowledge are present. In such societies, socialization has the task of producing socially predefined and highly specified identities, in which to reflect the objective order of society. Each individual is exactly whom it is presupposed he is, the identities being socially predefined, recognized both subjectively as well as subjectively, and confirmed in any social interaction (the nobleman was a nobleman, the peasant was a peasant, both in their own eyes as well as in those of the others).<sup>45</sup> There are no identity problems (no one asking about whom he really is) because everyone knows perfectly well his own status, social role inside society and his corresponding identity.<sup>46</sup> Individual identities were integrated in the egocentric identity of a community.

Unsuccessful socialization, or socialization realized to a low degree, may be found, for example, in the case of individuals suffering from disabilities, who are stigmatized by society. Due to stigmatization, due to the mocking behavior other people have towards them, they may start to perceive themselves as inferior beings, identifying absolutely with the type attributed to them by the other members of society. Such negative opinion on their own person is deeply imprinted in the consciousness of each individual being in this situation, so that any attempt to modify this opinion is sorted to failure. They feel trapped in the objective reality of society, from which they cannot escape, a foreign world inside which they need to carry on with their lives while being constantly discriminated against by other people.

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<sup>45</sup> "In other words, the individual in such a society not only is what he is supposed to be, but he is that in a unified, "unstratified" way." Berger, Luckmann (2008), 221.

<sup>46</sup> "Personal identities were formed exclusively in immediate, face-to-face, intimate social relations. In the small communities everybody knew everybody and everybody was known to everybody. Communication was limited to relatively few persons, but the density of communication with the few was relatively high." Luckmann (2008) 5.

A society in which discrepant worlds are available in “market” regime facilitate the emergence of a multitude of possible identities and subjective realities. Here there is no socially pre-established model of identity. One’s own world is no longer the World, the only possible world, as it was perceived during primary socialization. It is just a world amongst many. The individual conduct is perceived as a social role played in a certain social context, from which the individual may detach himself anytime, since he no longer has to identify with the role. Individual identity is the key element of the subjective reality, being formed, maintained and modified inside interactive social processes taking place between individuals in a certain social context. In the defining of the self-image of the individual there are mirrored, mostly, the attitudes and behavior of the signifying others towards the respective individual.

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## WHY MERELY TOLERANCE?

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**ABSTRACT.** *Why Merely Tolerance?* The present paper discusses two possible responses to ethical pluralism. Starting from the premise that there exists a multitude of irreducible moral values, the paper analyzes two of the possible responses to this fact, namely ethical promiscuity and tolerance. The first one, as defined by Ivanhoe, promises to outdo tolerance and to solve the insufficiencies of the latter. However, the paper analyzes the main claims and arguments in favor of ethical promiscuity, putting in light the fact that this view does not actually manage to deal with the problem of clashing and mutually excluding moral values.

**Keywords:** *ethical pluralism, ethical promiscuity, tolerance*

In a world aiming for multiculturalism, pluralism and equality, tolerance does not seem the right ideal when conflicts arise. On the contrary, tolerance has been “unmasked” by different thinkers as a solution that supports power relations. Among those, Derrida<sup>1</sup> claims that tolerance is a mask of violence for some relations based on power which legitimates the superiority of one side. Hence, there is a multitude of voices that propose solutions meant to outdo the insufficiencies of tolerance. One of those is the ideal of ethical promiscuity, brought about by Ivanhoe. This paper comes as an answer to Ivanhoe’s arguments supporting the ideal of surpassing toleration by ethical promiscuity. The aim of this paper is to show that tolerance, understood as the decision to respect someone whose way of life and principles one disapproves of, based on the capacity of seeing the human value of the other,<sup>2</sup> is a more viable response to ethical pluralism than ethical promiscuity, even though the latter seems to solve some of the insufficiencies of tolerance.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Deconstrucția politicii*, Idea Design and Print, 2005, Cluj, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Yirmiyahu Yovel, “Tolerance as Grace and Rightful Recognition” in *Social Research*, Winter 1998, 65. 4, p. 909.

Hence, the first part of this article makes a short summary of Ivanhoe's main arguments, while the second part analyzes two of them and points to their weaknesses. The paper ends by putting in light some of the reasons why I believe tolerance is a better and more realistic response to ethical pluralism than the proposed ethical promiscuity.

### **Ivanhoe's Ethical Promiscuity**

In an article entitled "Pluralism, Toleration and ethical Promiscuity", Ivanhoe argues in favor of the idea that we "should embrace ethical promiscuity – a view that not only acknowledges ethical pluralism but also offers good reasons to celebrate this state of affairs".<sup>3</sup> He starts from the premise that there is an irreducible variety of ethical values, and wants to draw attention that this fact alone is not sufficient. But there needs to be a discussion about the significance of this ethical pluralism and the response to it. Faced with the reality of ethical pluralism, he notes that people have three possible response: to bemoan it, to be indifferent or to celebrate this diversity, by which he means "to see and welcome it as a good thing".<sup>4</sup>

He also claims, that while tolerance is one of the most commonly recommended responses to moral pluralism, just the simple avoiding of an unjustified war is not the best option to hope for or defend. It must be mentioned that tolerance, in this respect, is defined as an "uncritical acceptance of a range of competing and mutually irreconcilable values or forms of life". In change, he argues for ethical promiscuity, claiming that this warrantees for a "morally better life". Before forging ahead in his arguments, I will bring into attention the definition he gives to ethical promiscuity. As compared to tolerance, which carries a sense of "bearing opposing points of view", the new concept "argues for a more demanding response, one that celebrates ethical diversity as an important feature of good human lives".<sup>5</sup>

The author continues by explaining that this ideal of ethical promiscuity relies upon two supporting claims. The first one is simply the acknowledgement of ethical pluralism as a fact. The second is the "recognition that no single human life or culture can realize all of the values that are possible for creatures like us". And this includes "attitudes, actions and states of affaires that play a central role in the well-being of human beings", which includes issues relevant to personal welfare as well as interpersonal relationships.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Pluralism, Toleration and Ethical Promiscuity" in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 37, No. 2, January 2009, pp. 311–319.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 314.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 314.

There is no need to dwell upon the first of the claims as this is widely accepted. Nevertheless, the second claim is the one that raises problems and questions.

### **“The richness of each human lifestyle” argument**

In order to clarify what he meant by the statement that “no single human life (...) can realize all of the values that are possible (...)”, he goes on by explaining that a business woman will never understand the experience of a military, and vice-versa. Yet, they could come and appreciate what is valuable in the other. And this is the kind of “recognition and appraisal respect at the heart of ethical promiscuity”.<sup>7</sup>

The problem with these examples is that they do not involve a moral problem. They do not have an ethical dimension, but rather a cultural one that does not require any relevant moral judgment. What I mean by that is that the mere fact that the business woman has a completely different life experience than the military does not cause any of them to be inclined to judge the other as doing something wrong. There is no relevant moral judgment involved here or, in Habermas’ words, “the cognitive difference must be a meaningful response here. Tolerance can only come to bear if there are legitimate justifications for the rejection of competing validity claims”.<sup>8</sup> That is to say, there is no right or wrong in having any of these lives. But what would remain of Ivanhoe’s argument if the different lifestyles in question are that of being a non-drinking father supporting the ideal of having a life-time partner and a family, on the one hand, and an alcoholic man having no regard to the value of a family or loyalty to his wife. Of course, none of these two men could possibly experience, at the same time, the richness of the experiences of the other lifestyle. But can there be a mutual respect here? Can the first man actually respect the other’s decision that more or less directly harms the wellbeing of some children? I believe the real problem about tolerance raises when it is about mutually exclusive ethical and life values. To give another example, though zoophile is a legal practice in Canada,<sup>9</sup> that does not mean that it can make a lifestyle that can gain the respect of the Christians who believe the Bible explicitly condemns it. These are issues larger than a mere different lifestyle. It is about clashing values. This is where the question of tolerance comes as the only possible solution.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 311

<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “The Pacemaker for Cultural Rights”, in *Philosophy*, Vol. 79, no. 307 (Jan. 2004), p. 10

<sup>9</sup> A Canada Supreme Court ruled that the crime of bestiality only applies to sexual penetration, and not other sexual acts between people and animals, Read more at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/canadas-supreme-court-ruling-on-sex-acts-with-animals-exposes-weak-bestiality-law-165080/#GtI5vpIfqRKerCb.99>. (accessed on July 6, 2016).



Sam Harris rightly notes that to tell a devoted Christian or Muslim (and others too) that what he believes is merely a social or cultural construct or just one truth among others, it simply means to reduce the intensity and complexity of their beliefs to match some postmodern view of the world. But that will not change the exclusivism of their beliefs. In his own words, Harris notes that, “the central tenet of every religious tradition is that all others are mere repositories of error or, at best, dangerously incomplete. Intolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed”.<sup>10</sup> He goes on by explaining that “many religious moderates have taken the apparent high road of pluralism, asserting the equal validity of all faiths, but in doing so they neglect to notice the irredeemably sectarian truth claims of each. As long as a Christian believes that only his baptized brethren will be saved on the Day of Judgment, he cannot possibly “respect” the beliefs of others, for he knows that the flames of hell have been stoked by these very ideas and await their adherents even now”.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, one might find citing from Harris at odds with my intentions, as Harris argues against the possibility of tolerance itself. Nevertheless, I think this serves my purpose in that he makes a realistic remark about what believing means for different groups of people, putting in light the fact that not everyone in this world can suppress his beliefs to reduce them to a merely lifestyle void of any metaphysical truth. Hence, the “high road of pluralism, asserting the equal validity of all faiths” is not a realistic option for any of those that would fit to Harris’s category of those who “really believe”.

Regarding Harris’s claim that “intolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed”<sup>12</sup>, I need to depart my view from his. When he talks about tolerance, it comes clear that the definition of tolerance that he uses is similar to that of pluralism, namely an acceptance of all points of view as equally valid. Hence, a respect for all of them. D. A. Carson<sup>13</sup> and Josh McDowell<sup>14</sup> refer to this understanding of things as “the new tolerance”, compared to the old understanding of tolerance as the acceptance of the existence of different points of view. In the context of Ivanhoe’s article, that would be the acceptance of ethical pluralism as a fact. But before forging more into Ivanhoe’s apology, I must add one more argument in favor of the traditional understanding of tolerance. The new tolerance implies an equal respect for all points of view. The problem is the one’s personal identity is so strongly infused with what one believes

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<sup>10</sup> Sam Harris, *The End of Faith*, Norton & Company, NY, 2004, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Josh McDowell, Bob Hochstetler, *Noua toleranță*, Editura Aquaforte, Cluj, 2006.

or does that it is almost impossible to where one is from what one does/believes. Therefore, somehow the accent on respect has moved from the person to the lifestyle. Yet, I want to draw the attention to the fact that the person longs for respect, not for the idea. Thinking of Taylor's explanation of the process and struggle for identity that each one goes through,<sup>15</sup> one can easily see that the ideas and lifestyle one embraces is only a tool in this process of the "making of the self". Yet, even denying the moral validity of one's lifestyle is not a hinder in this process, but rather a natural step in this process.

I added these observations to show that there is a significant difference between what one is and what one does. There is a Christian saying that God hates sin while He loves the sinner. This line of folkloric wisdom draws to my point. Those who make no distinction between what one is and what one does will face a serious problem when faced with simple situations of life, such as a child lying. Supposing that the parent believes lying is an abominable attitude, will the parent hate his child because he lied, or can he hate the fact that he/she is lying while still loving the child? Or, regarding more mediatized stereotypes, like some anti-catholic phrases accusing the church of hating gays because it does not agree to the practice of homosexuality. To make this point, Jenkins cites Signorile, a leading figure in supporting gay ideology and rights, who has argued that the Pope's moral and intellectual position constitutes violence in its own right: the Vatican believes that "homosexuality is 'evil' and 'intrinsically disordered,' terminology that in my view amounts to gay-bashing".<sup>16</sup> This is a relevant example to emphasize that the confusion between a lifestyle and a person leads to logically unacceptable conclusions. A discussion could develop from here, whether this new tolerance is actually leading to denying free speech, and even freedom of consciousness? Is this going to turn into another version of Orwell's memorable "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others"?<sup>17</sup> That is to say, everyone has the right to freedom of thought and of speech, unless they speak against some minority group lifestyle? In a well-documented work, Jenkins makes a convincing argument enumerating and analyzing numerous cases of how the American society is sensitive to all types of stereotypes except for those against the catholic church, rightfully calling it "the last acceptable prejudice".<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The new anti-catholicism: the last acceptable prejudice*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> George Orwell, *Animal Farm. A Fairy Story*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009, p. 192.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Jenkins, this is the purpose of his book: the new anti-catholicism: the last acceptable prejudice.

There is a point for which Ian McEwan, in his discourse at Dickinson College,<sup>19</sup> feels like encouraging graduating students to consider “the precious gift of being offended”.

### **The “good forms of life” argument**

Going back to Ivanhoe’s development of the argument in favor of ethical promiscuity, after several pages, he subtly adds to his definition the notion of “good forms of life”. And this is where ethical promiscuity finds great value. However, there is no criteria given by which one can decide what is a “good form of life” and what is not. Adding to it, in the conclusions, he explains that ethical promiscuity (as different from relativism), “rejects some values and forms of life as repugnant and is just as capable as any other ethical stance of criticizing individual practices within a given form of life”.<sup>20</sup> Of course, the logical question is under what criteria? If each person continues to decide what they find good or bad in other life forms from their own perspective (be that a religious or a cultural biased perspective), the natural response would be that they will appreciate the different lifestyles that do not involve mutually exclusive moral values; but what would they do when something is found to be repugnant? Respect that per se? Respect the person despite that? Merely tolerate?

### **In favor of tolerance**

It seems like a great deal of the critics of the concept of tolerance are eager to replace it with some better looking ideal. But what happens when that ideal finds its limits? Many of its critics simply mistake it for a generalized attitude towards everything and everyone translated into some sort of power relation. Yet, there is also a good deal of thinkers who argue it only makes sense to talk about tolerance when there is some sort of an irreducible conflict. For example, in “Justifying tolerance”, the two authors show that to talk about tolerance implies that there is an offense.

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<sup>19</sup> Ian McEwan, “Defend Free Speech”, discours ținut la Dickinson College, mai 2015.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/18/ian-mcewan-dickinson-college\\_n\\_7308314.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/18/ian-mcewan-dickinson-college_n_7308314.html).

<sup>20</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, *op.cit.*, p. 325.

One has the power to respond to that, or to somehow suppress that but decides not to, by a matter of free choice.<sup>21</sup> And there tolerance is the attitude that decides to value a person despite, or regardless of that conflict. Andrew Jason Cohen<sup>22</sup> makes a relevant analysis of the concept of tolerance, showing what it is not. And he clearly separates tolerance from indifference, resignation or even a principle of noninterference that would hinder rational dialogue. Therefore, a life lived by the principle of tolerance rather than ethical promiscuity does not involve being indifferent to a great richness that cultural diversity can offer. Yet, it does leave one the possibility to stick to one's inherited or chosen values, not merely for the sake that they are just as good or valid as all the others, but rather, in the case of moral values, for the sake of the truth value that one might assign to their own worldview.

### Conclusions

To conclude with, I will summarize the three reasons that show that tolerance is a more viable solution to conflicting world views than ethical promiscuity.

First of all, tolerance is a way of dealing with clashing moral values which allows one to respect a person for their human value, despite their moral values. And tolerance refers to situations of clashing moral values. To say that one is tolerant does not mean one is indifferent to the richness offered by the diversity of a multitude of lifestyles.

Secondly, tolerance does not depend on what the other believes, and does not bring into discussion any vague criteria of what one could celebrate or not, as it has to do with one's humanness – an intrinsic value to every person, not specific beliefs or lifestyles.

Finally, tolerance can cope with accepting the other while not requiring to bracket one's own worldview. That is to say, tolerance does not put impossible requirements for those who are devoted to an exclusivist worldview, which is not an insignificant part of the population of this Globe.

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<sup>21</sup> Vernon Richard, LaSelva Samuel V., "Justifying Tolerance" in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 1984, pp. 3–23.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Jason Cohen, "What tolerance is" in *Ethics*, Vol. 115, No. 1 October 2004, pp. 68–95.

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## THE ARTIST AS CURATOR IN POST-INTERNET ART

ANDRA MAVROPOL\*

**ABSTRACT. The Artist as Curator in Post-Internet Art.** The aim of this essay is an examination of the idea of the *artist as curator* in the contemporary phenomenon called post-internet art. First of all I will focus on the conditions in which post-internet art reverses the concept of creativity with that of selection, as it also alters the role of the gallery, which becomes ‘a point of departure, not a destination’ (D. Quaranta). Secondly, I will turn to a conceptual analysis and a comparative analysis of the objects of post-internet art and Duchamp’s ready mades. The idea of the artist as curator is relevant in the context of contemporary art because it causes a chasm between the traditional approaches of the artist and of the objects that fall into the category of the term art.

**Keywords:** *artist, curator, post-internet, readymade, uncreativity*

### Specific Features of Post-Internet Art

A short definition of post-internet art would be ‘art about the internet’, which began its development from what we call today *net.art*. In order to grasp the concept of post-internet art, I will begin by analyzing the starting point of this phenomenon, in other words the main requisite that allowed the phenomenon of post-internet to coagulate. *Net.art* or Internet art describes a type of art that implies a visual exposure of the digital culture of the 1990s, profoundly influenced by the internet. The outcome of the latter’s accessibility was that institutional artists became more and more interested in occupying its domains with a new type of art. On another note, *net.art* was perceived as a medium auspicious to art rather than a symptom of a contemporary cultural condition.<sup>1</sup> What I mean is that the old media

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Burke believes the internet may be the symptom, and not the cause of change.

Burke, Harry, “Uncreative Writing, Poetry and Language” in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, p. 36.

could have been all absorbed into one, more visually-accessible to the interested public from all over the world, and this particular aspect fascinated the internet artists from the 1990s. The internet unleashed a new interest in the “form and materiality of code”,<sup>2</sup> which led to different practices such as web collages, founding surf clubs, writing HTML code exploring aesthetics of computer errors, aestheticizing interface, glitches,<sup>3</sup> and so on.

An important factor to be considered is that “internet is simultaneously a technological and cultural factor, a productive and connective tool. Therefore, the Net Art here defined seems to be a form of artistic production, based on the connective, collective and sharable possibilities Internet offers.”<sup>4</sup>

The next phase, chronologically speaking, was characterized by a power transfer from the concept of *creation* to that of *collection*. Therefore, post-internet art evolves after the *net.art* phenomenon, not just as an extension of it, but as an upgrade, determined by the fact that artists that were interested in the internet figured out that the *selection* and *ordering* processes can be just as fascinating as developing the web.<sup>5</sup> Thus, one of the essential features of post-internet art is its curatorial character. By ‘curatorial’ I mean an artistic impulse of searching, selecting, ordering and archiving objects in a public space, submitting to a personal aesthetic logic.

Regarding the objects that can be included into the sphere of post-internet art, Marisa Olso, namely the artist that initiated this term, argues that post-internet art is working with ‘found photography’, that is, photographs found on-line that are reused with a different purpose. These photographs are often unimportant in their initial conjuncture, but through the process of recontextualization they are given new aesthetic values. However, post-internet art cannot be reduced to a series of photographs that are found somewhere on-line and then redistributed. The artistry in this case is given by the fact that “the work of pro-surfers transcends the art of found photography insofar as the act of finding is elevated to a performance in its own right, and the ways in which the images are appropriated distinguishes this practice from one of quotation by taking them out of their circulation and reinscribing them with new meaning and authority.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.slideshare.net/rhizomedotorg/net-art-anatomy-by-rhizome>, accessed 09.03.2016.

<sup>3</sup> idem

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/issue-064/josephine-bosma-nettitudes-lets-talk-net-art/>, accessed 09.03.2016.

<sup>5</sup> Turning point marked the moment when “early surfing clubs like Nasty Nets realized that filtering & recontextualizing is more interesting than designing the web” from Quaranta, Domenico, “Authorship, Appropriation, Surfing Clubs and Post-Internet Art” in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Olson, Marisa, “Postinternet: Art After the Internet”, 2013, in *Art and the Internet*, Black Dog Publishing, p. 213.

Furthermore, we might find problematic just being an artist in the World Wide Web, a space accessible to everyone, where objects are not really objects, but pixels. The substantial question here would be: can there be a sign of equivalence between on-line and offline curatorship, in the world of objects? By comparison, on-line galleries could be more visible and accessible in time than all the offline galleries that function according to the logic/ economy of tangible objects. This does not mean that life is moving on-line, but that more and more art amateurs that do not have capital are going to consume on-line art (be it images of offline art that are placed on-line or internet-related art).

Nonetheless, it is a certainty that post-internet art has been taken over by the art market, thus obtaining institutional acknowledgment.<sup>7</sup> This means that, whether displaced in an on-line or offline space, post-internet art becomes a commodified product of the institutions of art, and this fact, in turn, undermines the intention of internet artists to distance themselves from and to rebel against the white cube, the unique space destined for artwork exhibiting.

### **The concept of creativity, reversed**

An important moment that marks the rebaptizing of the concept of creativity in the art world with new meanings is the initiative of Duchamp of bringing profane ready-made objects into the art gallery. Therefore,

Nearly a century ago, the art world put to rest conventional notions of originality and replication with the gestures of Marcel Duchamp's ready mades, Francis Picabia's mechanical drawings, and Walter Benjamin's oft-quoted essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.<sup>8</sup>

Starting from this premise, we can infer that, in a sense, 'to create', the basis of creativity, is being substituted with 'to recontextualize', thus suggesting a change in the artist's priorities, which does not need to be 'creative' anymore in a traditional sense, but 'selective'. Thereby the transfer of power mentioned above takes place, from 'creativity' and 'originality' to 'selection' and 'ordering', in other words the artist assumes the attributions of the curator.

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<sup>7</sup> "Susanne Pfeffer's inaugural exhibition in Kassel »Speculations on Anonymous Materials« (2013) was the first in a trilogy of group shows that marked the institutional arrival of post-Internet art." <http://032c.com/2016/how-arts-post-human-turn-began-in-kassel/>, accessed 07.03.2016.

<sup>8</sup> Goldsmith, Kenneth, "From Uncreative Writing", in *No Internet, No Art – A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, p. 29.



In a similar manner, in post-internet art, artists such as Clement Valla (visual artist) or Kenneth Goldsmith (poet) have been using as necessary materials objects or better said digital files, jpeg or txt, already made by someone or something else. For example, saving images made by satellites from the website Google Earth or transcribing texts that have known and appreciated authors seem to be non-artistic practices, or non-creative nonetheless. In this framework, to be creative means to constitute an archive of recontextualized files found on the internet according to their subjective logic, in order to be seen on-line as free content. Nevertheless, in Harry Burke's opinion, context, although having a key role in post-internet art, cannot replace content,<sup>9</sup> and the latter must be subordinated to an aesthetic of the internet.

Because of the reification of creativity in every labour area, especially in art, Kenneth Goldsmith introduces a substitute term for it, namely 'uncreativity'. In my view, the purpose of using a negative concept in order to redefine art, was not only shredding the creativity label applied to every artist, but to change the public opinion about art, which does not remain constant in form or in content, and it does not work according to immutable recipes. Being 'uncreative' does not mean being 'unproductive' or 'inefficient' artistically, but it is the equivalent of building an archive from texts, artworks or audio-video recordings, basically selecting, collecting and ordering objects. This matter brings back into forefront the model-copy dialectic that was representative of the initial phase of postmodernity, but only to be equalized by the artist-curator.

Kenneth Goldsmith is the creator of the UbuWeb archive, a reference point for people interested in avant-garde art of the 20th century. This archive supports the practice of abstracting objects from their initial context and rendering them online as free content. At the same time, UbuWeb represents a working model for the contemporary internet artists, because it favours reproduction instead of production, pointing out to 1980s postmodern aesthetic.<sup>10</sup> In this context, Goldsmith submits the following concepts: (1) 'uncreative art', that assumes archiving, collecting, selecting and arranging objects, (2) 'uncreative genius', which rejects the traditional notion of genius, and 'uncreative genius', who proves ingenuousness concerning information management.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Burke, Harry, "Uncreative Writing, Poetry and Language" in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopée 102, 2015, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Sollfrank, Cornelia, "Nothing New Needs to Be Created: Kenneth Goldsmith's Claim to Uncreativity" (interview), *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopée 102, 2015, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, p. 42.

Likewise, Michael Wetzel redefines the concept of 'meta-author', an "operator of copies (instead of originals), of quotations (instead of descriptions), and of pluralities (instead of individualities)".<sup>12</sup> Thus, the concept 'uncreativity' can easily describe post-internet art because it functions according to a logic of recycling, which in turn presumes a process of collecting, ordering and recontextualizing.

On a positive note, this "new media ecology" offers "democratic access to the digital means of production",<sup>13</sup> as contemporary art critic and curator Domenico Quaranta claims. He insists upon the fact that artists must "reframe what seems meaningless and valueless in order to bring up its meaning, and value."<sup>14</sup> But, on another, less positive note, there is a threatening side of the internet as a virtual space of sharing art. Characterized by fluidity, the internet contains an unstructured mass of images, of which some are considered works of art. Nicholas Lambert claims that Jack Burnham foresees the fact that "any art based on fallible and replaceable systems presents a threat to these economic advances [in the art market for unique objects]."<sup>15</sup> This can be seen as an attempt to undermine the museum because most of the works created under the label 'net.art' were designed just for on-line visualization. Also, "a found online image of an artwork is better than the artwork, because it's ubiquitous, free, easy to share & use, and loaded with info (tags, metadata, etc)".<sup>16</sup> Following this reasoning, "making an expensive artwork and placing it in a respected whitecube for the sole purpose of generating a good JPEG may actually be the most corrosive challenge brought by netizen artists to the artworld and its values."<sup>17</sup> This brings us to the conclusion that was mentioned above, namely that the gallery becomes 'a point of departure, not a destination'.<sup>18</sup>

### Ready-mades vs. Post-internet art

A ready-made object "designates a work, which is 'already' made by mass production, but whose readiness to be 'made' into art is delayed by its technological history and whose terms are unassimilable to an artistic terminology."<sup>19</sup> First of

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<sup>12</sup> Idem, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Quaranta, Domenico, "Authorship, Appropriation, Surfing Clubs and Post-Internet Art" in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Idem, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> Lambert, Nicholas, "Internet Art versus the Institutions of art" in *Art and the Internet*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2013, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Quaranta, Domenico, "Authorship, Appropriation, Surfing Clubs and Post-Internet Art" in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Idem, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Quaranta, Domenico, "Authorship, Appropriation, Surfing Clubs and Post-Internet Art" in *No Internet, No Art. A Lunch Bytes Anthology*, Ed. By Melanie Buhler, Onomatopoe 102, 2015, idem.

<sup>19</sup> Judovitz, Dalia, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*, University of California Press, 1998, p. 76.

all, an essential resemblance between ready-mades and post-internet art 'objects' is the rejection of traditional media of art that imply manufacturing art objects. Secondly, one must take into consideration the intellectual<sup>20</sup> nature attributed to both art categories, that implies not just redefining the status of art objects (on one side there can be ordinary objects, while on the other side reproductions that question art's function of representation),<sup>21</sup> but a reconciliation between art and technology.

For example, New York based artist Clement Valla takes the surveillance art current a bit further, investigating not just the potential creativity of the satellite, but also the image interpretation of computer algorithms. Thus, Valla offers an external perspective, given by the multitude of images provided by the satellite, and an internal perspective, given by the images that are one their way to be processed inside the GoogleEarth algorithm. These images don't have the necessary form, namely 3D, to be observed and used by humans. Between the time of the creation of these images and the moment they are being processed, there can be found the 2D versions of these images, called texture maps, that are nothing more than "flattened, fragmented and exploded photographs"<sup>22</sup> serving as texture for the 3D maps.

In *3D-maps-minus-3D* one is dealing with an interpretation of space, which is translated into code. "Spaces and urban arrangements are usually treated as collections of objects or volumes, not as actors. Yet the organization itself is active."<sup>23</sup> Further one can observe a new type of reorganization of space inside the *texture mapping* software, according to the flatness or the volume of objects, where a plane image is applied to the surface of a 3D model. Before this process, the software is parsing just these plane, flat images, also called textures. "But unlike a long list of 1s and 0s, or some other cold alien encoding, they still look like the objects they represent. They are uncannily close to photographs or human made collages",<sup>24</sup> which grants them the possibility of being aesthetically interpreted by humans.

In this case, the main purpose of the artist is "to not just make art that looks like art as an end in itself, but art that looks like art in a way that shifts the viewers perspective or to open up some alternative reality."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "art is primarily the record of an intellectual process rather than a visual experience" – Marcel Duchamp, "A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions by Marcel Duchamp, Iconoclast" in Judovitz, Dalia, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*, University of California Press, 1998, p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> Valla, Clement, <http://www.3d-maps-minus-3d.com/#info>

<sup>23</sup> Easterling, Keller, "An Internet of Things" in *The Internet does not exist*, Sternberg Press, 2015, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Valla, Clement, <http://www.3d-maps-minus-3d.com/#info>

<sup>25</sup> *No Internet, No art*, 75–76.

### Artist-Curator power struggles

The manner in which an exhibition is curated is problematic because it establishes power-relations between all the actors that are taking part to that exhibition.

Artists aimed to restrict the mediating function of art institutions, organizers, and curators alike. In this way, the exhibition space came to function as the main context of, and the primary medium for, the realization of the artwork and, at the same time, as the site in which the work of art was adapted and modified in response to each specific exhibition context.<sup>26</sup>

My interpretation of this quote is that artists found a way of claiming not just the material space of the gallery, but the manner in which this space is occupied; and they achieved this state of things through installations, which, in turn, have provided the public with the opportunity to participate and to interact directly with the work of art, without the mediation of the curator. As a result, through installations, artists have regained their sovereignty in the gallery, becoming, in a way, the curators of their chosen objects. This point of view is also sustained by Boris Groys' theory regarding the politics of installation. In his article with the same name, he points out that "contemporary art can be understood primarily as an exhibition practice. This means, among other things, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between two main figures of the contemporary art world: the artist and the curator."<sup>27</sup> In this case, one can acknowledge a distinction between the *exhibition-as-medium* and the *exhibition-as-form*,<sup>28</sup> as two sides of the same coin or as two practices with potentially different authors: while the *exhibition-as-medium* represents, in my view, the manner in which the artist occupies the space of an exhibition following his own reasoning, thus refusing a mediator between the work of art and the spectator-participant, the *exhibition-as-form* is what appears to be the result of a process, what has already been made, ready-to-be-discovered,

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<sup>26</sup> O'Neill, Paul, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2012, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Groys, Boris, "Politics of Installation", <http://conversations.e-flux.com/t/e-flux-journal-redux-boris-groys-politics-of-installation/3065>

<sup>28</sup> „This suggests that the curatorial act is equivalent to artistic practice, with the distinction between what and who constitutes the exhibition-as-medium and the exhibition-as-form being central to these debates.” in O'Neill, Paul, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2012, p. 87.

something that requires further clarifications from a negotiator of meanings between the artwork and the spectator-participant, namely the curator. Nevertheless, the roles of all the actors involved have not been reversed, nor did they dissolve one in favor of the other, but a convergence<sup>29</sup> between the artist's work and that of the curator's has been produced.

## Conclusions

The objects that are included in the category of post-internet art are not limited to be interpreted as such (as text or as image), yet they refer to, on one side, millions of people that are posting photographs every day, and on the other side, to the softwares that are in charge of reading and parsing images, that are functioning according to their own logic. Thus, the resemblance to the ready-mades is not random, but they both have, to some extent, the same purposes: to bring up the intellectual character of art and to reconcile art and science. The viewer-receptor is accordingly constrain to ask him/herself certain questions, such as: what objects fall under the art category? What is the sole purpose behind a work of art? What is the process of parsing and distributing images?, and so on.

In this context, the 'artist as curator' of post-internet art represents, the same as Duchamp, a collector and a re-distributor of profane objects that are incorporated with new meaning and social functions. But, unlike Duchamp, the post-internet 'artist-curator' operates with digital images and not with palpable objects, and the distribution takes place in a virtual environment, available for relatively low prices (here the viewer comes in contact with art not by paying for a ticket at a museum, but by paying for an internet subscription, devices, and so on); this fact can be seen as a beginning of making the artworld more democratic at a global scale.

Although post-internet art is aesthetic, to the extent that it is a discourse about the internet as a space that is visible through computers or other devices that followed, it can be considered a restart that had to be given to art, in the same manner Duchamp had done in 1920.

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<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, Paul, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2012, p. 87.

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## ISSUES OF PUBLIC SPACE: DECISION-MAKERS AND ART

VOICA PUȘCAȘIU\*

**ABSTRACT. Issues of Public Space: Decision-Makers and Art.** This research addresses the problem of the way public space has been used and thought of throughout history as well as to show just how much exclusion has been part of an apparently democratic space. It will then follow Henri Lefebvre's well-known theory on "the right to the city" in order to analyze how this is relevant for Graffiti and Street Art practices, while pointing out the seemingly inherent hypocrisy of decision makers when it comes to commissioned public artworks.

**Keywords:** *public space, public art, Graffiti, Street Art, the right to the city*

### Introduction to a Much-Debated Area

When one talks about public space, the term itself does not seem to pose a serious question, mostly due to the fact that instinctively everyone thinks they have a good-enough definition as to what it refers to. This perception often arises from the opposition perceived between the public and the private spaces. The general and common-sense notion regarding public space is centered on the idea that it belongs to everyone and through that it simultaneously it is no one's property so much so that an individual should not impose his/hers beliefs or tendencies in a way that is detrimental for the others. This strengthens the concept that one may do whatever in his own private space, while reserving some self-restraint when acting in public,<sup>1</sup> out of mutual respect.<sup>2</sup> However when one goes a bit deeper than that, it become easy to see that not all public spaces are alike and their (rather numerous) rules are contradictory to the instinctual definition, it is precisely this reason and the

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<sup>1</sup> Gert Biesta, "Becoming public: public pedagogy, citizenship and the public sphere", *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol. 13, No. 7, (November 2012), 686.

<sup>2</sup> Gürçan Koçan, "Models of Public Sphere in Political Philosophy", *Eurosphere: Working Paper Series*, No. 2 (2008), 14.



inherent paradoxes of public space that made it a subject worthy of the consideration of many thinkers. The perspective used here provokes a departure from the concept of public sphere as theorized by Habermas,<sup>3</sup> as abstract and universal realm of democracy, and towards a more pragmatic one of public space as an actual and problematic site.<sup>4</sup>

Aristotle was the first philosopher to underline a strict demarcation between the private and the public space concerning the urban territory as he remarked that the good of the city is not necessarily the same as the good of the individual.<sup>5</sup> Today, even though his opinion is not only appealing, but also very important for the constitution of a democratic society, the concept of public space is still as elusive as it ever, which leaves it highly open to interpretation through which it can be juggled in more than one direction as it comes to mean different things to different (types of) people. As an adjective, the word “public” has several definitions, seemingly revolving around the same general consensus: “of, for, connected with or owned by people in general” and “known to all”,<sup>6</sup> while as a noun it is defined both as “people in general” and as “a particular section of the community”,<sup>7</sup> and by accepting this distinction public space becomes obviously problematic and every theory regarding it as at the disposition of *all* the members of society tends to being merely utopist.

In regard to methodology two main types of conceptualization of public space have been identified, the first is descriptive, concerned with facts, it mostly seeks to explain the whats and the whys and how they come to affect social and political life, while the second is normative, concerned with principles, it is necessarily evaluative and striving to establish what and how public space ought to be.<sup>8</sup> Throughout this paper the descriptive conceptualization will be put in the service of the normative one, as it would be necessary to be aware of the mechanics and the issues that arise before being able to formulate a more favorable direction. Therefore, firstly some of the most important theories on public space will be analyzed along with the most common policies they have inspired, as well as their pitfalls, with special emphasis on the art that is to be encountered in these

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<sup>3</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Don Mitchell, “The End of Public Space? People’s Park Definitions of the Public, and Democracy”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (March 1995), 116–117.

<sup>5</sup> Gürcan Koçan, “Models of Public Sphere in Political Philosophy”, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Christina Ruse, ed. *Oxford Student’s Dictionary of Current English*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 501.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Gürcan Koçan, “Models of Public Sphere in Political Philosophy”, 3.

spaces. Secondly, Henri Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city", which has spawned numerous movements and ideologies, some quite contrary to the author's intentions,<sup>9</sup> will be used to explain and maybe even justify the unsanctioned artistic expressions that are such a common feature of today's urban landscape.

It must also be mentioned that this article will only take under consideration for analyses the *proper* public spaces such as streets, public plazas and parks, as opposed to the quasi-public ones like malls, museums, libraries, etc. Although they seemingly are public spaces, the fact that they are open only during certain times, greatly limits their accessibility and this is but one of their many specific conduct rules and restrictions which greatly narrow their usage.<sup>10</sup> Especially when discussing art, it can be considered that the gallery and the museum, be they public, are actually the "antithesis of public space"<sup>11</sup> and the issues of public art be it commissioned or unsanctioned are very specifically applicable to the art outside these established institutions. Here, unsanctioned is used in opposition to commissioned, in the sense that the works were done without a proper permit, or authorization, and thus often illegal, even though sometimes informal permission is asked. A different kind of public space that will not be dwelled upon on this occasion is the virtual one, the Internet cannot yet be considered as encompassing the entire society<sup>12</sup> and that is because despite the fact that at the present moment connectivity is common-place it is still the attribute of both certain age and certain social standing. A special mention however must be made in regard to the way the virtual space is largely responsible for keeping and spreading works of Graffiti and Street Art that usually have a short life in the real world.

It can be argued that urban communities have, since their beginnings been defined by their urban public space, especially in the West, where a direct line was drawn from the Greek agora and the Roman forum,<sup>13</sup> so that not only does this ideology of public space feed into the idea of democracy, but it is also considered the actual place where "citizenship is enacted",<sup>14</sup> thus playing a very important role in cementing society. Even though they rarely are these true expressions of

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<sup>9</sup> Judith Bodnar, "What's Left of the Right to the City?", in *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, ed. Daniel J. Sherman et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 73.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander J. Reichl, "The High Line and the ideal of democratic public space", *Urban Geography* (2016), 6.

<sup>11</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy", *Social Text*, No. 33 (1992), 46.

<sup>12</sup> Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (March 1995), 123.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Williams, "Public Space: Designing in Community", in *The Future of Community: Reports of a Death Greatly Exaggerated*, ed. Dave Clemments et al. (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 42.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Rogers, *Cities for a Small Planet* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 15, quoted in Richard Williams, "Public Space: Designing in Community", 42.

democracy, it is still considered that meaningful public spaces are instrumental for the well-being of the citizens, and they are essential in order to complement the private and the work space.<sup>15</sup> It of course remains a major goal of every professional involved in contemporary urban design and planning to create a public space that would instill a sense of social belonging and pride, to achieve this, art onto itself is not sufficient,<sup>16</sup> but it is generally regarded as an important element and often encouraged.<sup>17 18 19</sup> The relationship between art and the public space through which the collective memory is build and thus helping the social cohesion of a group, can be traced as tribal gatherings, where relevant memories were presented in the “public”, common space.<sup>20</sup> This memorial function of public art remained one of its main roles through its long history, and the need for it still remains to this day,<sup>21</sup> even if it has massively started to lose this role in the past hundred years.

The stated goal may be noble, but appears elusive since it is notoriously hard to satisfy the general public, but also the decision-makers often seem to suffer from what Michel de Certeau called the “paradox of authority”<sup>22</sup> as any competences they might have had in order to become invested with authority over the public space, is drowned out, usually by their political responsibilities. Although not localized to any specific area, this paper will trace politics and practices concerning public space in the western culture, where it is curious to notice different approaches to public space and to public art in Europe and in the United States of America. It has been shown that European countries spend significantly more of the taxpayers’ money on public art that the United States,<sup>23</sup> where the situation there is complicated by the difficulties involving the Federal administration and its conflicts with the local authorities and the urban government.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Vikas Mehta, “Lively Streets: Determining Environmental Characteristics to Support Social Behavior”, *Journal of Planning, Education, and Research*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2007), 165.

<sup>16</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishings, 2000), 156.

<sup>17</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, “Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy”, 34.

<sup>18</sup> David H. Fisher, “Public Art and Public Space”, *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 79, No. 1/2 (Summer 1996), 41.

<sup>19</sup> Debbie Qadri, “Memories in Motion: learning, process, history and art in public space”, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (November 2015), 380.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Spheres, Vol 2: Globes: Macrospherology*, trans. Wieland Hoban, (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2014), 164.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Elsen, “What We Have Learned about Modern Public Sculpture: Ten Proposals”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Winter 1989), 292.

<sup>22</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph J. Cordes and Robert S. Goldfarb, “The value of public art as public culture”, in *The Value of Culture*, ed. Arjo Klamer, (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 1996), 77.

<sup>24</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 125.

Aside that however, there is another rather ironic aspect of the American perception of public space, this stems from the apparent desire and openness of the authorities (here in the form of scholars, politicians, policy-makers, etc.) towards finding a solution to their issues and to properly define public space and its role.<sup>25</sup> However has a consensus not been reached, and what is more their policies seem to get ever more restrictive and less flexible particularly when it comes to public art. The remarks can be read in a particularly elitist key, proving time and again that Hannah Arendt's observation on the fact that America is more open to modernism since, unlike Europe, the value of art is not determined by taste and social class<sup>26</sup> is misinformed. Even though it would seem that Europeans have a more matter-of-fact approach to these issues, recent examples have shown the adoption of American-style politics in public spaces.<sup>27 28</sup>

### Past Regulations, Current Trends, and Future Possibilities

Even though the public space is considered by many a democratic space, a space of inclusion, where different people are expected to converge, it is exactly this vast difference, that is most likely to cause a rift between the ideology of public space and the real-life practices enacted within these spaces. Large urban areas are, of course, the ones most prone to difference between the actors found in the public spaces,<sup>29</sup> and it is here also here where the struggle for inclusion is at its peak. One must be careful before judging this as a characteristic specific of contemporary society, because historically speaking, the public space never was quite as free as misguided nostalgia would influence us to think. The opposite is in fact true, as public spaces have always painted a picture of exclusion ever since the Greek agora, the democratic space *par excellence*, where only free men were considered citizens.

The issues largely seem to stem from an equilibrium that is by all indication impossible to strike, namely the liberties of the citizens versus the legitimacy of the administration of public spaces, which continues to be a preoccupation for scholars

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<sup>25</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 201.

<sup>26</sup> Cecilia Sjöholm, *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt: How to See Things*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 24.

<sup>27</sup> Quentin Stevens, "'Broken' Public Spaces in Theory and in Practice", *The Town Planning Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4/5, Place Shaping and Livability, (2009), 373.

<sup>28</sup> Bernd Belina, "Ending Public Space as We Know It", *Social Justice*, Vol. 38. No. 1/2 (123-124) *Policing the Crisis – Policing in Crisis*, (2011), 19.

<sup>29</sup> Don Mitchell, "To Go Again to Hyde Park: Public Space, Rights and Social Justice", in *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Giesecking et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 193.

in this field. Administration is always combined with a process of elimination and there are often inevitably conflicting visions of the decision-makers in opposition to the individuals<sup>30</sup> and their different modes of appropriation and use of a certain space, and although most would tend to agree to the fact that not everything belongs in the street, the same majority would admit that regulations, though needed, should not also include a selection of the participants,<sup>31</sup> except this is precisely what is going on, sometimes in a surprisingly assumed manner. Nowadays, at least in theory, one can observe a tendency towards opposing segregation, as society is increasingly preoccupied with integration, participation, and diversity. However these tendencies often do not make the translation to practice,<sup>32</sup> where not only segregation is as common as ever, but it is sometimes encouraged as laws continue to eliminate the “undesirables”<sup>33</sup> from both public view and public space.

Not so long ago homosexuals were banned from using public spaces<sup>34</sup> and chasing away the homeless in nothing new either,<sup>35</sup> however these practices are now being carried on in name of “livability”, along with the exclusion of teenagers with their noise and their graffiti which seems to be the norm for newly implemented public spaces.<sup>36 37 38 39 40 41</sup> The continuous criminalization of these practices does not however address the bigger issues that have caused them in the first place and only manage to create ghettos and increase the differentiation between classes of citizens as well as further delinquency.<sup>42</sup> The fact that these minorities are not seen as representative for society as a whole, transforms public spaces into ones available for

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<sup>30</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> Cecilia Sjöholm, *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sascha Rabinovitch, (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 95.

<sup>33</sup> Z. Muge Akkar, “Questioning the “Publicness” of Public Spaces in Postindustrial Cities”, *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2005), 82.

<sup>34</sup> George Chauncey, “Privacy Could Only Be Had in Public: Gay Uses of the Streets”, in *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Gieseck et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 202.

<sup>35</sup> Lawrence A. Herzog, *Return to the Center*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>36</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, “Art and Public Space”, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Don Mitchell, “The End of Public Space?”, 117.

<sup>38</sup> Alexander J. Reichl, “The High Line”, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Mike Davis, “Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space”, in *Variations on a theme park*, ed. Michael Sorkin, (New York: Noonday Press, 1992), 163.

<sup>40</sup> Don Mitchell and Nik Heynen, “The Geography of Survival and the Right to the City: Speculations on Surveillance, Legal Innovation, and the Criminalization of Intervention”, *Urban Geography*, 30:6 (2009), 614.

<sup>41</sup> Quentin Stevens, “‘Broken’ Public Spaces”, 387.

<sup>42</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 206.

the privileged and as the undesirables are shuffled away, they are not even registered anymore, creating a picture-perfect image that is indisputably very far from the actual social reality. The success of the policies centered on livability signals the fact that they are comfortable both for the authorities and for the majority of the people (who are not destitute), marking a trend on the rise, a quick fix to a much larger problem, while no permanent solution is on the horizon for the ones who continue to be displaced. However the order imposed by them also represents a rise in the authority of the policy-makers which inevitably comes at the cost of individual freedom of expression.

This shift is problematic because the existence of a proper public space is a quintessential requirement for a properly functioning democracy, and its legal status as such should be a primary concern.<sup>43</sup> Commenting on Lefebvre's writings, Don Mitchell believes that public spaces start off as orderly representations of space, that are then appropriated and turned into unconstrained representational space,<sup>44</sup> but this process is more and more often reversed and truly representation space keeps getting smaller. Lefebvre's "right to the city" was taken on as a model for many movements, indicating a need for this type of behavior, however through so many readings it was sometimes stripped in part of its radical character, by being applied to a capitalist society that may not be able to fully sustain it.<sup>45</sup> This softened version of the theory does not mean there is not a real need for it, but instead it may just point to the practical impossibility of imagining something other than a capitalist system which in the minds of most appears to be currently irreplaceable.<sup>46</sup>

Many authors consider that the current and prevalent neoliberal doctrine is responsible for the increase of displacement through gentrification, the militarization, as well as the commercialization of public space.<sup>47 48 49 50</sup> Favoring competition and free market, neoliberalism assumes that those who fall behind get exactly what they deserve, and although there is no government implication in the market economy, the authorities are very much responsible for facilitating the transformation of its

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<sup>43</sup> Laura Stein, *Speech Rights in America: The First Amendment, Democracy, and the Media*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 66.

<sup>44</sup> Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space?", 115.

<sup>45</sup> Andy Merrifield, *The Politics of the Encounter: Urban Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 26.

<sup>46</sup> Alejandro Quinteros, "The colonized mind: Place making and the right to the city", *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2015), 324.

<sup>47</sup> Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles", 154.

<sup>48</sup> Judith Bodnar, "What's Left of the Right to the City?", 81.

<sup>49</sup> Gert Biesta, "Becoming public", 685.

<sup>50</sup> Krishan Kumar and Ekaterina Makarova, "The Portable Home: Domestication of Public Space", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (December 2008), 326.

citizens into consumers.<sup>51</sup> The citizenship here is not related to the legal terms of citizenry, but rather to the more nuanced idea of what a citizen should stand for. By turning into a consumer, the individual is dulled into submission, as he gets to choose from a previously set list, instead on being able to choose what goes on the list. This explains why the authorities only seem to cater to the needs of those who are able to fulfill this role and they are made increasingly comfortable in doing so. These actions have further implications as the much-debated opposition between the right to public space and the right to private property<sup>52 53</sup> is no longer truly the heart of the problem, because the authorities often themselves invade the right to the private property by acting on behalf and in the benefit of large companies which gives way to the privatization and commodification of the public spaces. A prime example of this is the removal from the wall of private properties by the city council of unsanctioned art that was done *with* permission<sup>54</sup> in the idea of livability, but simultaneously allowing and encouraging the ever-increasing apparition of advertisements in the public space.

This type of privatization of the urban space is clearly preferred by the authorities over the personalization of the space by the citizens, probably because it is after all a method of planned communication,<sup>55</sup> and thus ultimately controllable, but it in fact ends up in undermining the needs of the community over the ones of the private companies<sup>56</sup> and dulls the uniqueness of each urban area, while at the same time cluttering it in a seemingly unnecessary manner. Some form of advertising was always part of the public place as merchants looked to sell their products, but it was only with the massive industrialization that it truly started to invade the public realm by all means. Despite initial opposition, on the basis of aesthetics and the preservation of the landscape<sup>57</sup> it managed to insert and establish itself and this is a tendency which does not give any signs of receding, especially if the planning of the cities

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<sup>51</sup> George Monbiot, "Neoliberalism – the ideology at the root of all our problems", *The Guardian*, (15 April 2016), accessed 6 June 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>.

<sup>52</sup> Lynn A. Staeheli, Don Mitchell, Kristina Gibson, "Conflicting rights to the city in New York's community gardens", *Geo Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 2/3 Social Transformations, Citizenship, and the Right to the City (2002), 197.

<sup>53</sup> David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 315.

<sup>54</sup> Debbie Qadri, "Memories in Motion", 381.

<sup>55</sup> Leif Dahlberg, "On the Open and Closed Spaces of Public Discourse", *Nordicom Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2006), 35.

<sup>56</sup> Z. Muge Akkar, "Questioning the "Publicness"", 76.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine Gudis, "The Billboard War: Gender, Commerce, and Public Space", in *Public Culture: Diversity, Democracy, and Community in the United States*, ed. Marguerite S. Schafer, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 171.

continues to be left at the hand of developers who are only interested in turning out a profit, or that of the administrators who are linked to the public sector,<sup>58</sup> both of which are currently omnipresent practices.

Concerning contemporary artistic manifestations in the public space the same tendencies seem to apply as commissioned art is nowadays more attentive to diversity and the way it is perceived by the enlarged audience,<sup>59</sup> at least on a theoretical level. However even if the art world started to take democracy more seriously in the last decade or so and art started to try closing the gap towards everyday life, the criteria for public art is still formulated by the art administrators and the city officials, and while they sometimes try to relinquish elitism,<sup>60</sup> this is a perilous path as it could lead to the creation of bland artworks that tend to please everyone or simply prettify an existing space, especially considering the fact that true unity of culture can only be achieved at the higher levels of the institutions.<sup>61</sup> A possible solution to this could reside in what is being called “new genre public art”<sup>62</sup> which focuses on creating a greater connection to its viewers by also feeding into society’s apparent obsession with integration and participation<sup>63</sup> and at the same time it is often functional,<sup>64</sup> which makes it even more appropriate for the public arena. However one can’t help but observe that many of the sought-after characteristics of public art are fulfilled by the unsanctioned one that can be found on the streets, which is still illegal for the most part and generally not encouraged by the authorities<sup>65</sup> in the same way established art is, despite the fact that it would be one of the most sincere expressions of democracy.

Although one of the most important difficulty is raised by the heterogeneity of the public itself,<sup>66</sup> ignoring a large part of it and only taking account of the others in certainly not a viable or worthy solution, and at least when it comes to public art. Although many other options were offered,<sup>67</sup> one of the most sustainable ones

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<sup>58</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 83.

<sup>59</sup> Cecilia Sjöholm, *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, “Art and Public Space”, 34.

<sup>61</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*, 97.

<sup>62</sup> Suzanne Lacy, “Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys”, in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacy, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), cited in David H. Fisher, “Public Art and Public Space”, *Surroundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 79, No. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 1996), 51.

<sup>63</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 144.

<sup>64</sup> Debbie Qadri, “Memories in Motion”, 384.

<sup>65</sup> Alexander J. Reichl, “The High Line”, 18.

<sup>66</sup> John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1954), cited in Maxine Greene, “Public Education and the Public Space”, *Educational Research*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (June-July 1982), 5.

<sup>67</sup> Joseph J. Cordes, and Robert S. Goldfarb, “Decreasing the “Bad” for Mixed Public Goods and Bads: The Case of Public Sculpture”, *Eastern Economic Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Spring 2007), 165–168.



should come in the form of education. This of course implies long-term involvement in a policy, but the results could bring real improvements all around if taken seriously by transforming existing practices. Attention must be paid however to the way public education is implemented, because its methods could just as well be used towards the manipulation of the masses, which of course would pretty much leave problems unattended, or possibly reinforce them. This being said, public education should not be understood as the instruction of the citizens, as it often is, because this tends to annul the differences, nor should the public feel compelled to learn from the educators in order to become upstanding actors on the public scene. So far an acceptable approach seems to be revolving around awareness by turning social and political problems into learning opportunities<sup>68</sup> so that the users could eventually judge the public quality of a particular space for themselves, which in turn could prompt their implication in bettering the situation.

### **Asserting “The Right to the City” by Means of Art**

When it comes to unsanctioned art in public spaces, the discourse changes drastically as these manifestations are never seen as something that might help in binding the community, quite the contrary according to livability policies. The presence of Graffiti in particular<sup>69</sup> triggers negative feelings such as lack of pride and safety on the streets, and thus their makers are targeted and the signs are erased.<sup>70</sup> In the spirit of these policies, Graffiti has never been considered to be anything more than vandalism and in the public places that have gone through restructuration, special emphasis has been put on getting rid of such elements. The works are erased by the city council, and if Graffiti artists are caught upon the act they are not only fined, but sometimes even taken in to be “educated”<sup>71</sup> in what is presumably a more civic spirit. Despite the fact this sounds like a line out of *A Clockwork Orange*, this is a relatively new strategy implemented in some locations, which attests to the ways public education has been understood and applied, as discussed above. The true hypocrisy of these regulations can be seen in the fact that they are selectively applied to certain areas of interest, as the laws are decidedly looser in poorer neighborhoods. The authorities are not concerned in the livability of those public places as they do not

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<sup>68</sup> Gert Biesta, “Becoming public”, 691.

<sup>69</sup> Even though a clear distinction is visible between the effect of Graffiti and Street Art practices, the terms are often used interchangeably, noting that “Graffiti” is always used with a negative connotation.

<sup>70</sup> Quentin Stevens, “‘Broken’ Public Spaces”, 371.

<sup>71</sup> Z. Muge Akkar, “Questioning the “Publicness””, 83.

belong to the target population, however as soon as they do start to take interest in them, by imposing more restrictive and orderly rules, they displace the local population, that moves to other ghettos, where they are again to be left alone to their own ways as long as they are contained to a certain area. This shows Graffiti is not in itself an actual crime, unless when done somewhere where it might disrupt the idyllic image the authorities seek to maintain.

Lefebvre is credited with the idea of social space being a product of society<sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> and implementing the demand for the “right to the city” is considered the ultimate purpose of critical urban theory<sup>74</sup> especially as human rights now seem to occupy the central stage in both political and ethical discourse.<sup>75</sup> However what Lefebvre himself consider a core point in his theory, namely the right to the *œuvre*,<sup>76</sup> the right to shape the city, being granted to those who inhabit it is not nearly as popular in practice. It is hard to tell if Graffiti as an action or as an artform would have pleased the author as a affirmation of such rights since he never mentions it directly in any of his writings, except for a passing mention of the colorful murals from the suburbs of Los Angeles, which he considered beautiful.<sup>77</sup> But one cannot help but observe that through Graffiti, the marginalized and disenfranchised youth of the city is announcing their presence and appropriating the urban space, which is what he militates for in his work. Lefebvre is very adamant in the fact that the right to the city should act towards the wishes and the well-being of the citizens who spend their entire time in the city, or as he puts it the “working class”,<sup>78</sup> that despite working in the city in instrumental positions, can no longer afford city life as they are pushed farther and farther away, and the locals should thus be prioritized over newcomers, magnates, and tourists. This is also why Graffiti can be considered a prime representation of this demand to be taken into consideration, by a part of society that was cast aside.

To reach the status of proper enacted rights, a practice first needs to become an accepted custom, which is done with the help of pressure put on by the working class.<sup>79</sup> And even though Graffiti has not been particularly successful in doing this, the Street Art practices that more or less evolved from Graffiti, are well on their way to

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<sup>72</sup> Ed. Jen Jack Giesecking et al. *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 289.

<sup>73</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Vol. I: Introduction, trans. John Moore, (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 92.

<sup>74</sup> Peter Marcuse, “From critical urban theory to the right to the city”, *City*, Vol. 13, No. 2/3 (June-September 2009), 185.

<sup>75</sup> David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, 315.

<sup>76</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 154.

<sup>77</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 208.

<sup>78</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 154.

<sup>79</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 157.

becoming not only very popular, but also legal. The difference between the two types of practices should be discussed at large, but a main reason for the preference of Street Art over Graffiti resides in the fact that the first is much more of a joyous and playful appropriation of the urban area, as compared to Graffiti and its closed aesthetics which is often perceived as brutal by the people outside the culture. Even though Lefebvre considers that public art should not be made in order to fulfill the tourist's expectations,<sup>80</sup> which is something Street Art can be considered guilty of doing, it should however be taken into account that in reality this aspect can boost the local community's pride, which is also important.

The public space has often been perceived as one of clashes between the authority and the citizens, which becomes translated into the opposition between the creators of a certain space and its users, that wish to transform it to better suit their own needs and wishes, often divergent from the initial and official meaning of the space. Again Graffiti is a really good example of this conflict, especially because it is comprised of writing, which is more often than not unintelligible, it offers a sharp contrast to all the other writing and lettering found on the city streets. Aside from Graffiti, all other writing has either a commercial, legal or informational purpose,<sup>81</sup> and it is of course, of great importance for it to be as crisp and clear as possible in order to be understood, by everyone quickly and conveniently and thus Graffiti is subversive in the way it confuses the audiences. Because the majority of the people that encounter it do not understand it and what it stands for, something which was not ameliorated by Graffiti's reputation, instead of being hailed as an empowering action of taking back the city, it is viewed as an anti-social behavior, and the streets where it proliferates are generally considered unsafe.<sup>82</sup> Street Art on the other hand is directed towards the larger audience and its message is often just as clear as an advertisement, offering a solid competition for attracting attention in the urban landscape. Through this it probably comes closest to the concept of participating in creating the city,<sup>83</sup> but in an ironic twist, its degree of success brings once again the displacement of the locals, in order to make room for new-comers that appreciate the lively, artistic neighborhood that was created.

Even though in Lefebvre's writings the difference between strategies and tactics is barely implied,<sup>84</sup> this becomes a crucial issue for Michel de Certeau as he sees them

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<sup>80</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 158.

<sup>81</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 115.

<sup>82</sup> Vikas Mehta and Jennifer K. Bosson, "Third Place and the Social Life of Streets", *Environment and Behavior*, Vol. XX, No. X (2009), 3.

<sup>83</sup> Judith Bodnar, "What's Left of the Right to the City?", 83.

<sup>84</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 154.

in opposition.<sup>85</sup> So while strategies are employed from a position of power by the established authorities who long to keep the public space as their domain, they usually have the luxury of careful planning and support to be put into practice, tactics on the other hand are an attribute of the weak. Using tactics means taking advantage of opportunities, while rarely being able to enjoy the victories which are short-lived, and if one takes into consideration the illegal artistic practices, it becomes quite clear that the characteristics of tactics can be easily attributed to these actions. And if Graffiti is often confrontational, Street Art implements several more successful tactics, namely a tendency for wit, also identified as being typical for the weak and the repressed.<sup>86</sup> Lately the strategies enacted in the public space have brought along a high degree of globalization, rendering the spaces ever more neutral and harder to notice,<sup>87</sup> which not coincidentally, also makes them easier to control. The tactics of Graffiti and Street Art are somewhat successful in doing the opposite while at the same time catering to a different set of needs. Besides creativity and play, Lefebvre also identifies a set of social needs which are opposed and complimentary such as certainty and adventure, security and opening, and predictability and unpredictability, among others<sup>88</sup> and the great achievement of Street Art in particular is to balance out these needs by stepping out of the prescribed strategy and offering an alternative using surprise, humor, and wit as its tactics. At the same time, with its wide array of styles and techniques of appropriation, it offers the viewers the opportunity to access the pleasure of finding art where least expected, and it is this feeling of urban art hunter that was instrumental in creating such a large acceptance towards Street Art, much more than any of its subversive or decorative characteristics. Through this support, Street Art comes much closer to asserting the much desired right to the city, although there is still a long way to go.

## Conclusions

Without wishing to be alarmist, the fact that public space is increasingly controlled is pointing towards the direction of slow but certain loss of democracy. One has to be careful which rights can or should be given away in the name of safety, because a more militarized public space, does not automatically mean the authorities have the best interest of its citizens at heart. The effective segregation that still

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<sup>85</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

<sup>86</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 38.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence A. Herzog, *Return to the Center*, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 147.

takes place is the symptom of a much larger ailment, which cannot be solved through mere ignorance, but has to be fully comprehended. The claims of the right to the city have to be understood as something that will continue to happen if they are not met. Street Art and Graffiti are among the mildest, albeit visible form of claiming one's space in the city, so they should not be ignored or cast aside as the result of bored, artsy teenagers. The fact that more and more research is done on these subjects in a more serious manner in proof that they hold much more subtlety and intricacies that it may seem at first sight.

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## FILM FESTIVAL POLITICS AND SPECTATORSHIP (NETWORK AFFECTS)

PÉTER VIRGINÁS\*

**ABSTRACT. Film Festival Politics and Spectatorship (Network Affects).** The article is highly relevant for the relatively recent field of film festival research, and has a more limited relevance for the fields of film theory and philosophy of film. The originality of the article is that it aims to infuse the field of film festival research with insights regarding the collective experiential-emotional aspects of festival-events, inspired mainly by contemporary affective science and network-theory.

**Keywords:** *festival politics, film, spectator, image, film theory, philosophy of film*

### Festival politics and films

The specific space-time complexes of film festivals may be approached by making use of all-encompassing and familiar concepts: accordingly, as a metonymic expression of ‘culture as articulation’,<sup>1</sup> film festival phenomena articulate social relations, bodies (both participating and represented),<sup>2</sup> and (various types of) narratives. Similarly, film festival research designates its specific object of study as being one of intersecting discourses and practices<sup>3</sup> (– related to aspects including film-making, distribution and consumption). A certain feature does persist or re-appears – which is the ‘discursive’ gluing together or pervading the above listed and more or less tangible elements/components. On the one hand, a cultural studies approach may emphasize the politics of film festivals (be they hegemonical, as, for e.g., related to ranking within the feature film festival circuit; or conversely, their subversive/resisting potentials with regard to, for e.g. American blockbusters). On the other hand, film festival contexts engender different relationalities: film festivals with explicit political agendas/or which serve specific id(entity) politics are cases in

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<sup>1</sup> Fredric Jameson: *On “Cultural Studies”*, p. 30–33.

<sup>2</sup> Bodies thought in the sense that “any perceptible elements can constitute bodies with which we make connections, so all expressions are bodies as they shift from perception as signifying to affecting-relation.” (Patricia MacCormack: *An Ethics of Spectatorship: Love, Death and Cinema*, p. 133).

<sup>3</sup> Marijke deValck – Skadi Loist: *Film Festival Studies: An Overview of a Burgeoning Field*, p. 179–181.



point. As such, we may observe that the highly experiential ‘film festival scape’ is indebted to both ideological and felt, to a certain degree personal aspects. Then, to break away from the circularity of established cultural theory approaches I propose to look at emotion complex(es) which, put in advance, may be conceived as both predispositions and responses to /triggered by festival stimuli including filmviewing and other types of social encounters.

At the outset, we should recall that the primordial role or object of film festivals is the screening and viewing of films in distinctive public settings (movie theaters, event halls, open air etc.). Such a functioning (of film festival politics, which) is significant, for it relates to a certain communality weaving together festival audiences.<sup>4</sup> As most evident in festival programming, film festival politics basically serve as a kind of doubling in relation to films; it is manifested in various forms (mostly linguistic and visual) – depending on agencies and/or specific media, the latter being, as of today, increasingly ‘post-cinematic’<sup>5</sup> in terms of technologies they use. Its main purpose refers to framing and presenting films in certain ways; with regard to spectators or audience, festival politics are affective to the extent that their interest lies in ‘attuning’ the audience to the particular reality of the film festival program.

The relationship between films and festivals has been described in terms of the prestige conferred by prizes received at festivals<sup>6</sup>; this ambiguous connection may be further explored by including the filmviewing or spectatorial dimension as well. In many ways, film festivals undergird what is being termed ‘experiential cinema’ through ‘enhanced’ screening events.<sup>7</sup> For we could be puzzled by the success of films (both in- and outside of festival context) labelled as being provocative – which isn’t irrespective of the fact that, from a psychosocial perspective, they deal with or touch upon uncomfortable or negative themes. As an example, the highlights of the Hungarian and the Romanian film sections of last year’s local international film festival (i.e. Transylvania IFF) may be listed here. I won’t explore the multitude of themes or refer to dominant readings of any but will only mention a few memorable ones: surreal abortion, impurity phobia and the obviously traumatic childhood (*Free Fall* by György Pálfi); deprivation of personal freedom (*Mirage* by Szabolcs Hajdu); savageness and castration

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<sup>4</sup> We might add that film festivals’ historical connection with national cinemas may still bear relevance, since in parallel with film festivals as venues for showcasing local or ‘national’ filmmakers’ works, it is worth noting that, film festival audience is constituted in a way which is similar to how national cinemas address the spectators as historical subjects – in terms of “cinematic identification...as an intersubjective triad ...where the subject constitutes him- or herself as a part of the group in a social context” (Tarja Laine: *Feeling Cinema: Emotional Dynamics in Film Studies*, p. 24).

<sup>5</sup> Steven Shaviro: *Post-cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales*, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Marijke deValck: *Film Festivals From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Atkinson – Helen W. Kennedy: *Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The Rise of Experiential Cinema*, p. 141.

(*Aferim* by Radu Jude), estrangement and the haunting memory of having witnessed a crime (*One floor below* by Radu Muntean). These can be considered *regional* examples of contemporary cinema which through specific narrative and stylistic elements challenge spectators in emotional terms. However, I won't venture into the complexities involving film creation, artistic and marketing choices, or the accelerated reception which is so typical of our present; essentially, what these examples have in common is drawing the attention to the fundamentally asymmetrical relationship of the spectators with the medium of the film, whereby moving pictures or film-images dominate or get hold of their viewers with the latter lacking power to respond on an equal footing.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in my opinion, festival politics – intertwined with the above-mentioned plethora of post-cinematic technology usage – are designed to guide the audience or show a way out for them from the space of the cinema, or from the effect of images which cannot be emptied 'from excess and residue of meaning'.<sup>9</sup> If films/images are treated in such terms, alternative programs and interactive facilities have their place on the analytical map as well (here interaction goes beyond its social science understanding so as to include the potential to interact). In other words, re-balancing is sought outside the screen but still inside a film festival's own ecosystem.

### Spectators and images

The 'ideal spectator' is very much central in any cultural production endeavours; Then, although film reception studies usually deal with real flesh and blood spectators and (their) responses, this hypothetical spectator has implications for both practice and analysis; spectatorship as a concept pays attention to both external or contextual factors and internal or psychological workings,<sup>10</sup> but in a rather important move it brings in the intersubjective perspective.

British film scholar F. Colman concludes that "the spectator is beholden to the spectatorial situation (as a type of spectator, within a spectacle, or as a positioned subject)".<sup>11</sup> Festivals are interested in moulding spectators in their own ways; if so, such an enterprise is not for its own sake but most often gets supplemented with the familiar notion of the 'festival communities', which stems both from spatiality or local-groundedness of any film festival, and from the truism that movies trigger similar emotional responses across diverse audiences. So, consistence of/or uniformity across emotional responses may well support authorial or intended meanings, that is, it draws the attention to viewing/looking and other sensorial perceptions as (acts

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<sup>8</sup> Alexander Galloway – Eugene Thacker: *The Exploit: a Theory of Networks*, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia MacCormack: *Cinesexuality*, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Carl Plantinga: *Spectatorship*, p. 249.

<sup>11</sup> Felicity Colman: *Film Theory: Creating a Cinematic Grammar*, p. 79.

of) ‘infolding’ the conventional qualities of film-image, which seems, however, to be entangled with parallel effects, and namely the *strength(s)* and *duration* of the film images.<sup>12</sup>

Insofar as spectators do respond the same ways, this raises further questions: do (uniform) spectatorial emotions transforming the viewing act have any real-world outputs, that is how do they play out, for e.g. in different festival spaces? While any consistence or a festival crowd seamlessly attuned the same way(s) acknowledges the dichotomy of similarity and difference among film audiences<sup>13</sup>, I want to suggest that similar emotional attunement expose relational/ relating potentials across (the) festival audience of various backgrounds, and in doing so, may eventually point to networking features of film affects.

First, an approach to spectatorship as essentially being about emotional feelings and responses to images/events on screen has been highlighted through examples in the first subchapter; furthermore, film theorist Thomas Elsaesser observes that contemporary, so-called mind-game films appeal to savvy media-consumers (or cinephiles) because the former “(...) are experienced as pleasurable, while also perceived to be relevant.”<sup>14</sup> This observation already hints at the fact that film spectatorship is a complex phenomenological experience in both cognitive and affective terms (i.e. related to both meaning-making and body-level processing of various sensorial inputs); the festival as filmviewing context enlarged in terms of duration contributes to the heightening of senses.

Perceptions are directed to the film images before the eyes (and to pertaining sounds into the ears) but – sticking to the visual for simplicity of the argument – the film image is reflected and mapped together with the memory-parts which it evokes. More precisely, the intensity as a central feature of any image – and identified above in terms of strength and duration – is irrevocably threaded together with both its content as well as with memory-images raised by it to the consciousness,<sup>15</sup> even if the latter are diffuse or conversely, very much articulated. The emphasis here concerns not the interpretation of images, which channels the content always into conventional meanings, but, in concert with philosopher Brian Massumi via Bergson and Deleuze, the immanent potential of the image(s) to bring back immediately that which passed (and is stored in one’s memories), and at the same time, to maintain an expectation of the future so that the very present moment is bracketed. As an effect, according to his theory, the affecting potential as suspense or intensity of beings and things trigger autonomous (that is involuntary/ non-conscious etc.) reactions and these get occasionally captured in the form of conscious emotions.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the unfolding of an

<sup>12</sup> Brian Massumi: *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, p. 24–27.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Plantinga: *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Elsaesser: *The Mind-Game Film*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Brian Massumi, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Brian Massumi, *op. cit.*, p.27–28.

'image/expression-event'<sup>17</sup> is hopelessly partial and unreachable to the senses in its totality, even if 'viewing itself becomes a distribution of intensities',<sup>18</sup> or it is both infolding and emitting – which is presumably the case of festival-attending cinephile audience.<sup>19</sup> Spectatorship as constructed through image perception according to the delezian syntheses has led to the conclusion that "[...] the material subjectivity which experiences cinema's signs is not specifically cinematic";<sup>20</sup> such an extension beyond the screen must take into account varying degrees of intensities feeding subjectivities while also acknowledge a Sartrean understanding of subjectivity as always already intersubjective in that implies relating to the world.<sup>21</sup>

Here I propose turning again to Brian Massumi, who – although having dispensed of psychology's subject-centredness and having kept only the becoming-subject of the delezian event –, emphasizes relationality in the sense of thinking bodies of all sorts as inscribed in the in-between or intersubjective space not in terms of their positioning, or fixedness, but holds that is the relations of the bodies with themselves and one another through movements and changes (and affected both by film images we should add) which define the conditions of their existence.<sup>22</sup> While we are bound by a certain incomprehensibility pertaining to affects (regardless if we take underlying neural processes stressing the bodily felt or unfelt, or their formulation as encounter, and therefore with an emphasis on intersubjectivity), the desire for cinema rests on conventionalized theoretical insights such as that (certain) films make the viewers think, wander, or fill them so that the feeling of expectation before viewing a film betrays a predisposition, an emptying of the self to be occupied by images and sounds. Regular film-festival attendance resonates with a kind of Whiteheadian 'occasions' of showing and experiencing oneself but only to dissipate as an effect of the encounter.

### Emotions and networks

Cinema is affective in itself to the point that cinematic experience becomes an emotional dialogue. Film theorists have been referring to theories of emotions;<sup>23</sup> as of today, we are most certain that audio- and visual elements and main characters

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<sup>17</sup> Brian Massumi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Patricia MacCormack: *op. cit.*, p. 1

<sup>19</sup> Dubbed as 'cinesexuals', see Patricia MacCormack: *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Joe Hughes: *Schizoanalysis and the Phenomenology of Cinema*, p. 26

<sup>21</sup> See Tarja Lane, *op. cit.* 17.

<sup>22</sup> Brian Massumi, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> See for e.g. Carl Plantiga – Greg M Smith.: *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999; for a review see various chapters by Carl Plantiga in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film*. Routledge, 2009.

of films elicit so-called cinematic or fictional emotions (but which are similar to their occurrence in real-life). It can be presumed that they involve both automatic and conscious levels – meaning that they qualify as meta-emotions in the sense that filmviewers are conscious of the ‘staged’ circumstance and of themselves as watching. While one may even find or list so-called universalistic emotions coded by film genes and/or types of narratives, any seamless accept of how filmic emotional rescues might occur across the auditorium must, however, deal with a contextual understanding of emotional feelings.

The common ground of contemporary psychologies and affective neurosciences is helpful here: accordingly, feelings and emotions are subpersonally determined; moreover one cannot draw a distinctive line between the intrapersonal processes reaching cognition and those which go on less consciously. Presently, affect may be termed as that which is felt, experienced as feeling, and interpreted as emotion.<sup>24</sup> So there is a processual understanding with an evident concern for emotion components; stimuli are processed and that the output of this process is somehow translated into motivational, cognitive, somatic, motor and subjective components of an emotion.<sup>25</sup> Current psychological theories rank emotions somewhat differently with regard to their functionalities; along individually adaptive functions/evolutionary claims the evolved human ‘environment’ (i.e. the social field) gained importance by acknowledging that the interpersonal occurrence of emotions may be just as relevant as the intrapersonal level.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, going to films in a festival setting or plain movie-watching might not differ significantly in terms of either underlying emotional motivations (like joy-seeking) or emotion elicitation including the above listed subcomponents; however I suggest that that spectatorial emotions are linked to the fact that film festivals occupy tangible places temporarily, only to vanish later on.

We relate to films as we watch them or we might be distracted as well; that is what film festival crowds usually do. While spectatorial diversity is a fact, what festival politics do in effect is to tap into these relations based on differences and similarities, and connect the spectators through cinematic spaces of a festival; the

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<sup>24</sup> As an attempt to sum up diverging approaches, an emotional episode could be described as having at its origins the interest or concern of the (human) organism triggered by an event (on a positive-negative scale, or in relation with the Spinozan joy-sadness poles), that is processed and assessed/appraised along the way in a recursive manner (meaning depending on whether the stimuli is known or new for the memory of that organism, see previous subchapter); as a result emotional reaction may rise, that may be experienced consciously; furthermore, it may have a valence and also hold a tendency for action; of course a host of other factors such as motivation, functionality, personality, situation and context play into it as well. See Gerald Clore – Andrew Ortony: *Appraisal Theories: How Cognition Shapes Affect into Emotion*, 2008; Agnes Moors: *Comparison of Affect Program Theories, Appraisal Theories, and Psychological Construction Theories*, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Agnes Moors: *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> See for e.g. Nico Frijda: *The Psychologists’ Point of View*, 2008.

latter would refer to any physical and virtual environment constructed by and around film-images, including the technologies mentioned at the beginning and labelled 'post-cinematic'. The view resonates with what contemporary technology-infused social theories advocate – namely, the preference for the networked character of living/beings and bypassing the social group as the basic unit of the social, with the latter being an apparently painful reminder of the physical world/reality now left behind thanks to connectivity.<sup>27</sup> Obviously network -formations gained currency in all sorts of theoretical approaches; another pair of theorists (Alex Galloway & Eugene Thacker) who although think networks to different ends (i.e. to explain contemporary movements of subversion in relation to global regimes of power and control) their network-concept consisting figuratively of nodes and edges is inspiring because of a delezian insight, according to which "People are lines [...] threading together social, political, and cultural elements".<sup>28</sup> In our case, spectators who are already parts of various (sociocultural etc.) networks are drawn to film festival events; while it may seem the particular films (to be) screened at the live film festival event would constitute the nodes I believe that such construct fails in taking into account the experiential component. Thus I would argue that such nodes are constituted by affectively charged image moments which trigger and attract lines of feelings and emotions; the latter eventually 'die out' but may be re-activated/mutated by or toward other films or cultural products as movements of similar or opposing desires. That is, in my view, the emotionally affective feature serves to understand that communal events of film spectatorship thought as one-of-a-kind, ephemeral in fact fuel further engagements/relationships with human and non-human bodies/film objects. And, we may add that, on their turn, film festivals are intended not as singular or one-time series of events, but congeal through annual *repetition*, that is attempting coherence within the proliferating potential that is the global film industry.

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<sup>27</sup> Lee Rainie – Barry Wellman: *Networked: The New Social Operating System*, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Galloway – Eugene Thacker: *op. cit.*, p. 35.

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## THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE OF THE EVERYDAY AND THE “LIFE-WORLD”

DAN EUGEN RAȚIU\*

**ABSTRACT.** *The Aesthetic Experience of the Everyday and the “Life-World”.* This article critically reviews the recent attempts for setting a better theoretical grounding for the new sub-discipline called “Everyday Aesthetics” (EA). I contend that: 1) many attempts are impeded by shortcomings rooted in inappropriate conceptualizations of the *aesthetic experience* and the *everyday*; and 2) it is possible to improve the analytical framework for approaching everyday aesthetic life by clarifying EA’s underpinning assumptions and open questions, such as the nature of everyday aesthetic experience, the dialectic of continuity and discontinuity in the flux of one’s experiences, and the relation between the subjective-private and inter subjective dimensions of everyday life. This claim will be supported by some insights on the characteristics of the *experience*, *life*, and *life-world* provided by practical-hermeneutical or pragmatic philosophy and phenomenology.

**Keywords:** *aesthetic experience, everyday aesthetics, everyday life, life, life-world*

### Introduction: a brief overview of Everyday Aesthetics

This article<sup>1</sup> critically reviews the recent attempts for setting a better theoretical grounding for the new research area called “Everyday Aesthetics” (hereafter, EA) or “Aesthetics of Everyday Life” (hereafter AEL). Given the persistent weaknesses in the theoretical foundation of this new sub-discipline, a philosophical reflection is crucial for such endeavor. I contend that: 1) many of these attempts are

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<sup>1</sup> The article is the English version of the Keynote lecture („Experiența estetică a cotidianului și lumea-vieții”) presented at the Conference of Doctoral School in Philosophy *Aspecte teoretice și practice ale cercetărilor filosofice doctorale*, Center for Applied Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, April 22, 2016. This was a revised version of a section in the Chapter: Dan Eugen Ratiu, “Everyday Aesthetic Experience: Explorations by a Practical Aesthetics”, in *Experiencing the Everyday*, edited by Carsten Friberg and Raine Vasquez (Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, forthcoming 2016).



impeded by shortcomings rooted in inappropriate conceptualizations of the *aesthetic experience* and the *everyday*, among other key notions of EA; and 2) it is possible to improve the analytical framework for approaching everyday aesthetic life by clarifying EA's underpinning assumptions and open questions, such as the nature of everyday aesthetic experience, the dialectic of continuity and discontinuity in the flux of one's experiences, and the relation between the subjective-private and inter subjective dimensions of everyday life. This claim will be supported by means of some insights on the characteristics of the *experience*, *life*, and *life-world* provided by practical-hermeneutical or pragmatic philosophy, philosophy of life and phenomenology.

In brief, Everyday Aesthetics has developed as a new research area interested in the aesthetic character of ordinary daily life or experience, as against its neglect by the art-centered aesthetic theory, particularly within the Anglo-American tradition. Instead, the scope and realm of aesthetics are expanded to incorporate various phenomena, objects and practices of everyday life (see Arnold Berleant 2005, 2010; Thomas Leddy 2005, 2012; Katia Mandoki 2007), and to include not only reflective contemplation and states of mind but also sensual and bodily pleasures, the so-called "lower" senses of smell, taste, and touch, as well as negative or seemingly insignificant reactions and minor moments and behaviours of our private life (see Yuriko Saito 2007; Sherri Irvin 2008; Kevin Melchionne 2011, 2013). Yet this sub-disciplines heterogeneous, since it follows different traditions (continental, pragmatist, and analytical) and defends contradictory accounts of some core practical and theoretical issues.<sup>2</sup> Among these, Yuriko Saito recently counts the defining characteristics of the "everyday" and "aesthetics" – tinted by tensions or oppositions between daily and rare, familiarity and strangeness, ordinary and extraordinary, private-subjective and public-inter subjective –, the "aesthetic credential" of some daily, ordinary qualities or experiences, and the blurring line between art and life.<sup>3</sup>

There is nonetheless an increasing awareness of the importance of theoretical stances, and vigorous demands for conceptual clarification also occur in this research area. The question of what is actually the nature of the „everyday“, as contrasted with the „non-everyday“, is freshly raised by Ossi Naukkarinen in the article "What is 'Everyday' in Everyday Aesthetics?" (2013). He provides an

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed presentation of these issues, see Dan Eugen Rațiu, "Remapping the Realm of Aesthetics: On Recent Controversies about the Aesthetic and Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life", *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* Vol L/VI, No. 1, 2013, pp. 5–8.

<sup>3</sup> Yuriko Saito, "Aesthetics of the Everyday", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2015, pp. 1–22.

interesting description and a figure which summarizes the central aspects of "my everyday now" with "its positive and negative breaks, sudden or slow", and explores how they affect some key points of EA.<sup>4</sup>

The lively debate on the nature of everyday aesthetic experience and the proper definition and scope of EA itself is carried on in other recent issues of *Contemporary Aesthetics* (2014, 2015). Some theorists, in line with John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934), defend the continuity hypothesis and an "expansive" approach to EA – including the entire range of experiences from the ordinary to extraordinary and arguing for continuities and the dynamic interaction between the aesthetics of everyday life and the aesthetics of art and nature – over a "restrictive" one that focuses on some core ordinary activities which are ongoing, common or widely shared, and mostly pursued in private (see Leddy 2015 vs. Melchionne 2014);<sup>5</sup> or defend a pragmatist view of everyday aesthetic experience – attentive to the "aesthetic rhythm of the everyday" which makes an aesthetic experience not quite an exception to the quotidian flow of experiences – over the theories that build an EA on the "ordinariness" of the everyday and see its aesthetic character as constituted by a particular feeling of "familiarity" (see Puolakka 2014, 2015, vs. Haapala 2005 and Saito 2007).<sup>6</sup>

More recently, in the latest overview of developments in the "Aesthetics of the Everyday" (2015) published in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Yuriko Saito has critically revisited EA's approach to the features of the *everyday* and the *aesthetic*. She suggests that the best way to capture "everyday" is to locate its defining characteristics not so much in specific kinds of objects and activities but rather in attitude and experience. The typical attitude we take toward them is full with pragmatic considerations while their experience is generally regarded as familiar, ordinary, commonplace, and routine. She also advocates the inclusion of bodily sensations into the realm of the "aesthetic" and the return to its classificatory use or root meaning as "experience gained through sensibility, whatever its evaluative valence may be".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ossi Naukkarinen, "What is 'Everyday' in Everyday Aesthetics?" *Contemporary Aesthetics* Vol. 11, 2013, pp. 1–2.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Leddy, "Experience of Awe: An Expansive Approach to Everyday Aesthetics", *Contemporary Aesthetics* Vol. 13, 2015, pp. 1–12; Kevin Melchionne, "The Point of Everyday Aesthetics", *Contemporary Aesthetics* Vol. 12, 2014, pp. 1–6.

<sup>6</sup> Kalle Puolakka, "Dewey and Everyday Aesthetics - A New Look," *Contemporary Aesthetics* Vol. 12, 2014, pp. 1–12; Kalle Puolakka, "The Aesthetic Pulse of the Everyday: Defending Dewey". *Contemporary Aesthetics* Vol. 13, 2015, pp. 1–12; Arto Haapala, "On the Aesthetics of the Everyday. Familiarity, Strangeness, and the Meaning of Place", in *Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, edited by Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 39–55; Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Yuriko Saito, "Aesthetics of the Everyday", in *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5.

The reference to a subject intentionality, sensibility, affect and corporeality or bodily engagement is indeed necessary when characterizing everyday aesthetic experience. However, it is not sufficient to entirely capture the complex, twofold nature of the experience (as suggested by German terms *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*) which is crucial to an understanding of ordinary life.<sup>8</sup> Such shift in focus firstly requests a revision of the concept of experience itself, like that supported by practical-hermeneutical philosophy (Hans-Georg Gadamer) and the pragmatic or “soma-aesthetic” (Richard Shusterman) approach. Then new claims should be made about the ontology of everyday life, notably its inter subjective aspect and the dialectic of fragmentation-and-continuity, highlighted by phenomenological-sociological research on *life* (Georg Simmel) and *life-world* (Edmund Husserl, Alfred Schutz).

### **The Aesthetic Experience of the Everyday**

The major point I wish to emphasize here, drawing on Shusterman’s analysis, is the twofold nature of experience in general. That is, every experience has both an objective and a subjective dimension: it “can denote both the object of experience (what is experienced) and the way (or ‘the how’) that object is experienced by a subject.” Recognizing this phenomenological character of experience is crucial for any adequate conception of aesthetic experience,<sup>9</sup> including experiencing aesthetically the everyday.

Acknowledging this central feature has significant implications for Everyday Aesthetics. First, it drives attention to the corporeality or *embodied* dimension of aesthetic experience, which always involves objective physiological aspects, as mentioned by Shusterman:

In some aesthetic experiences, notably those with strong emotions (evoking noticeable bodily reactions) or vivid proprioception, these bodily responses can be conspicuously present to consciousness and can form a significant part of the aesthetic experience.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives*. Studies in the Everyday, London, Routledge, 2011, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Shusterman, “Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. 64, No. 2, 2006, pp. 217, 227.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

Likewise, it allows maintaining the phenomenological character of subjective feeling and object-directed intentionality: aesthetic experience "cannot be a mere subjective state; it always has an intentional object of some kind, even if that object is only imaginary".<sup>11</sup> EA's proponents seem tempted to discard the latter dimension once facing the lack of clear delineation of its object-hood, especially when having to account for ambience and activities or actions.<sup>12</sup> By approaching experience as intentional this difficulty is overcome, since its "object" is an ideal unity as correlative of this intentionality, not because it is a clearly delineated physical object.

Moreover, the object-directed intentionality and thus the "aboutness" of aesthetic experience imply a meaningful character that cannot be overlooked: aesthetic experience "is not a blind sensation devoid of signification but, rather, a meaningful perception".<sup>13</sup> Some proponents of EA (Berleant, Leddy) also hold this idea of perception as always including meaning which in fact is largely shared, from constructivist epistemology to visual studies from hermeneutics to phenomenology. One of its chief bases is to be found in Husserl's concept of the "intentionality of consciousness", according to which there is no empty subjective consciousness; this is always consciousness-of-something and constitutes meaning: "perceiving phenomena in our daily world is thus not just perception; much of it is about meaning".<sup>14</sup> This explains the possibility of inter-subjective communication and meaningful discussion also when experiencing aesthetically frameless "objects" or phenomena of daily world.

Another core feature of experience is the intricate connection between its processual character as "general flow of conscious life" and its fragmentation in discrete unities that can be singled out from this continuum, as "a heightened moment of living that is reflectively appreciated as such" or "an experience" in Dewey's terms.<sup>15</sup> It is this peculiar characteristic which elicited the core disagreement among EA scholars, on how to distinguish everyday aesthetic experience from the stream of humdrum-ordinary experience, on the one side, and the "standing-out" art-related experience, on the other.

In order to clarify this mix of continuity and discreteness it is useful to call in firstly Gadamer's practical-hermeneutical account of experience in *Truth and Method* (1960/1988). His critique of the one-sidedness of concepts of "lived-experience"

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 219.

<sup>12</sup> See Yuriko Saito, "Aesthetics of the Everyday", in *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros", p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Thomas S. Eberle, "Photographing as Creative and Communicative Action", in *Communication, Culture, and Creativity*, edited by H. Knoblauch, M. Jacobs, and R. Tuma, Berlin, Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 137–38.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros", p. 217.

(*Erlebnis*), the “aesthetic consciousness” and “differentiation”, and further inquiry into the essential structure of experience (*Erfahrung*) is crucial: this critique not only bring into attention the historical and dialectical or transformative elements of the experience (since as a hermeneutic process it includes a living relationship to tradition and does not leave the experiencing self-unchanged), it also offers powerful arguments against the idea of aesthetic experience as “discontinuity of experiences” by showing how this is integrated into the hermeneutic continuity of one’s experience, through the unity and continuity of self-understanding and its element of self-knowledge.<sup>16</sup> Within this theoretical framework, the discreteness of one’s aesthetic experiences – as correlated with daily phenomena and with art or as distinct from moral ones – is not absolute, since all these are integrated into the unity and continuity of the flow of experience, hence into the whole of one’s life.

A brief analysis of the German terms *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, both employed to designate experience but from different angles, is helpful for further clarification of this idea. The basic differentiation from a phenomenological viewpoint is, as noted by Thomas Eberle, that in lived experience, *Erleben*, “our consciousness is intentionally directed to the phenomena that are perceived”. Instead *Erfahrung* involves a time perspective: it is “looking back, reflecting on past lived experiences”; in this, “we use interpretative, typifying schemes to make sense of our past lived experience and thereby constitute ‘experiences’”. In other words, these are not opposite but complementary modes in which our consciousness constitutes experiences: “in a monothetic mode, as a unity in a single grasp, or in a polythetic mode, as they have incrementally developed, step by step”.<sup>17</sup>

The complementarity of the two modes of experience was also emphasized in a different line of thought, the life-philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey who was the first to give a conceptual function to the word *Erlebnis* in his famous work *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (1922, translated as *Poetry and Experience*, 1985). This complementarity is expressed as a distinction between the immediacy with which something real is grasped, or what is directly given in consciousness as its ultimate unit, *Erlebnis*,<sup>18</sup> and “experience as accumulated knowledge”, *Erfahrung*, which suggests a stock-taking of accumulated experiences, while the former suggests the

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<sup>16</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* [1960], Second Edition, London, Sheed and Ward, 1988, pp. 55–63, 85–89, 320–24.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas S. Eberle, “Photographing as Creative and Communicative Action”, in op. cit. pp. 137.

<sup>18</sup> Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Poetry and Experience* [1922], in Vol. V, in *Selected Works*, R.A. Makkreel and F. Rodi (eds.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1985; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 55–59.

on-goingness of experience.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as Highmore further notes in his book *Ordinary Lives* (2011), in Dilthey's view Erlebnis is not simply a sentient experience but it is foundational to a sense of self precisely because it can be singled out from the continuum of everyday life as a meaningful unit.<sup>20</sup>

These basic delineations could be further tainted with affective or contrasted colors as, for example, in case of Walter Benjamin's twofold notion of experience in his essays on Paris and some literary motifs in Baudelaire, collected in *Illuminations* (1969). In Benjamin's essays, Erfahrung suggests "the reassuring familiarity and continuity of a coherently assimilated past", since it is "fully integrated by the subject into a meaningfully and coherently organized experience". Instead Erlebnis means for him the "shock of the new", and is criticized as "sensational experience that is lived through and registered as shock or fleeting fragments of information and feeling".<sup>21</sup> This "intense lived experience" is described by Benjamin in terms of a fusing unity between subject and object, which seems to overcome a clear distinction between the two. Yet, as Shusterman notes, although such theory of fusion may suggest the idea of experience without a clear sense of substantive subjecthood (allegedly dissolved in the fusion), it still maintains the phenomenological character of aesthetic experience,<sup>22</sup> already exposed.

Even in case of such contrasted modes of experience, it is not difficult for Everyday Aesthetics to fully take them over, since it already addresses aesthetic experience as also including the negative – unpleasant emotional states, such as boredom, ambivalence, confusion, and so on (see, for example, Saito 2007; Berleant 2010; Highmore 2011; Melchionne 2011). As Saito recently remarks, this focus on negative aesthetics is important because it leads to EA's activist dimension, insofar "the action we undertake motivated by negative aesthetics in daily life has a direct impact on life". This is also seen as a means to differentiate EA discourse from the prevailing mode of aesthetic analysis (of art and nature) from the spectator's point of view.<sup>23</sup> However, neither of the two modes of experience, Erlebnis and Erfahrung, is reducible to a spectator's contemplation. Nor do they impede the discourse of an action-oriented aesthetics.

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<sup>19</sup> Ben Highmore, *Ordinary Lives*. Studies in the Everyday, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 41–42.

<sup>21</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken, 1969, pp. 156–59, 162–64; Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros", p. 217.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

<sup>23</sup> Yuriko Saito, "Aesthetics of the Everyday", in *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8.

### The everyday and the “Life-World”

Next, for better conceptualizing everyday life, it is useful to call in the phenomenological analysis (Husserl, Schutz) of the inter subjective aspect of the *Lebenswelt*, “life-world” or “world of lived experiences”. This offers powerful lines of argument in defending a conception of the everyday as inter-subjectively shared with others and thus allows us to outline a coherent ontology of everyday aesthetic life.

The concept of “life-world” introduced by Edmund Husserl in his *Ideas II* and largely analyzed in the third part of *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936/1970) enfolds a rich, multi-faceted sense. It can be understood as: a dynamic “horizon” in which a person lives; a pre-given basis of all shared human experiences; and a communal “world” of socially, historically and culturally constituted meanings. Hence it includes both personal and inter subjective dimensions, and constitutes the unity of the flow of one’s experience which is anterior to discreteness of experiences and necessary to it.<sup>24</sup>

Within the EA accounts of the everyday, the concept of “life-world” was already referred by Naukkarinen (2013), in the sense of a basis on which other layers of life and culture are built, when developing his idea of everyday (life) around the kernel of “my everyday now”,<sup>25</sup> thus stressing the personal dimension of the everyday. Other authors have mostly considered its inter subjective aspect, the “everyday” being qualified as the common ground of experience which connects individuals, activities, and histories.<sup>26</sup> Of course, the two dimensions of the everyday do not oppose each other, but suppose each other. Likewise, the everyday should not be thought of as absolutely one and the same for all. In fact, as evidenced by the phenomenological analysis (Copoeru 2011), “the world of everyday life is neither unique nor uniform; there are always private worlds in which we find ourselves always-already immersed”. Yet, even if “everyday life vanishes in a changing plurality of objective contexts or symbolic formations that hardly could be brought together under one clear-cut name”,<sup>27</sup> philosophy can search for the common features that emerge from the background of such multiple particularities.

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<sup>24</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* [1935/54], translated by David Carr, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, pp.102–268; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 217–21.

<sup>25</sup> Ossi Naukkarinen, “What is ‘Everyday’ in Everyday Aesthetics?”, pp. 2, 7.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, the anthology by Stephen Johnstone, *The Everyday: Documents of Contemporary Art*, London, Whitechapel Gallery, and Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2008, and the review by Jennifer Dyer, in *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal of Visual Culture* Vol. 13, 2008, p. 63.

<sup>27</sup> Ion Copoeru, “Vie quotidienne et normativité”, in: *La phénoménologie comme philosophie première. Mémoires des Annales de Phénoménologie*, edited by Karel Novotny, Alexander Schnell and László Tengelyi, Prague, Filosofia, 2011, p. 281.

The inter subjective dimension of the everyday is even strongly emphasized in the seminal analysis of the life-world by Alfred Schutz (1962) in the context of the problem of social reality. According to this phenomenological-sociological viewpoint (summarized by Eberle 2014), the world of everyday life is our paramount reality; it is the inter-subjectively shared reality of pragmatic action, where we are awake and working in standard time. The everyday world of working is the archetype of our everyday experience of reality, as distinct from other realities experienced as "finite provinces of meaning", such as the personal worlds of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, as well as the worlds of art, of religious experience, of scientific contemplation and so on.<sup>28</sup> Thus the everyday world is experienced as meaningful, as pre-interpreted, and as inter-subjectively shared with others. Within such conception of the mundane world, which includes the aesthetic, the aesthetics of everyday does not constitute a separate, finite province of meaning.<sup>29</sup>

Among the Everyday Aesthetics proponents, Kevin Melchionne has devoted a particular interest in developing an appropriate ontology of everyday life to ground EA. As he notes about daily life, its "ordinariness" and "everydayness" mean a flow of experiences and actions, in which the aesthetic ones should not be taken as isolated, cut off slices, nor as lacking aesthetic value or significance, since "what matters is the routine, habit, or practice, the cumulative rather than individual effect", and "how each discrete aesthetic experience is rooted in the pattern of everyday life". The pervasiveness of "the aesthetic", built into the fabric of everyday life, and the on-goingness of its experience are, in his view, foundational for a properly construed EA.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, these features are then employed to support the idea of the radically distinctiveness of everyday aesthetic experience, which would be mostly private, from the art's standing-out, public experience and "world". Hence the radical distinctiveness of Everyday Aesthetics' concepts too, which are reassessed beyond the strictures of art.<sup>31</sup>

The interesting analysis by Melchionne of the ongoing nature of the aesthetic experience in daily, ordinary occurrences (yet in them alone) is impeded by the way in which this is thereafter subordinated to the idea of the overall

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<sup>28</sup> Schutz, Alfred, *Collected Papers Vol. 1 – The Problem of Social Reality*, edited by M. Natanson and H. L. van Breda, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, pp. 213–32; Thomas S. Eberle, "Photographing as Creative and Communicative Action", in op. cit., pp. 139.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 140.

<sup>30</sup> Melchionne, Kevin, "Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life: A Reply to Dowling", *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 51, No. 4, 2011, pp. 438–40.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 441–22. For an analysis of this "monadic-isolation premise of EA" and its theoretical impact, see Dan Eugen Rațiu, "Remapping the Realm of Aesthetics: On Recent Controversies about the Aesthetic and Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life", pp. 12–13, 23.



discontinuous nature of one's aesthetic experience (in everyday context vs. art world contexts): in his view, any break in the on-going daily, private aesthetic experience is also a radical change in nature for the experience itself, as "everydayness substantially changes how we value our experiences".<sup>32</sup> This is because he fails to recognize the full dialectic of continuity-and-discreteness of experience in the *unity or totality of one's life*. It is therefore important to consider the everyday aesthetic experience as being both distinct and integrated into the continuous flux of one's experiences, as well as related to one's *whole life*.

The philosophical background on which this makes sense can be sketched by drawing on Simmel's analysis of the "fragmentary character of life" (written in 1916, republished in 2012), which could help us to understand the dialectic of continuity-and-fragmentation of life-worlds.

Simmel conceptualizes human "life" in a dynamic, holistic manner as an embodied stream of consciousness directed toward "contents" of experience. The matter of experience is shaped by "forms", evolved in life's higher stages of self-reflection, and in that process life constitutes for itself a world of mental contents. Thus the "world", which according to him is a formal concept, primarily designates a discrete "totality of contents of mind and experience".<sup>33</sup> By "world", is also meant "the sum and order of possible things and events that can be arranged into a continuum of some kind according to any kind of overarching principle".<sup>34</sup> Hence there exist for the human mind multiple discrete and self-subsistent worlds of value and meaning: not only a "real" world in a practical sense of the term but also a religious, a scientific, and an artistic world which fundamentally share the same and all content of experience, but articulated into very different forms. As mental contents, these worlds are distinct from their historical realizations, which as worlds within historical life remain particular and one-sided, and do not achieve any full and ideal completeness.<sup>35</sup>

Within this framework and considering the thesis of the parallelism of categorial worlds, the idea of life as fragmentary in character is a matter of perspective on life, in other words, of different views of life's contents. Specifically, this idea results from a view of life from the perspective of these particular-discrete categorial worlds, which is a view of life's contents "from the outside", as things and events, as works and bodies of knowledge, as regularities and values. According to Simmel, life is fragmentary in the sense of a unique relationship that an individual led life takes up to these

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<sup>32</sup> Kevin Melchionne, "Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life: A Reply to Dowling", p. 440.

<sup>33</sup> Georg Simmel, "The Fragmentary Character of Life", *Theory, Culture and Society* Vol.29, No. 7/8, 2012, pp. 237–39.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 242.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 241, 243–44.

various worlds, that is, acting at the "intersection", "in-between", or "oscillating" constantly between these worlds seen as different layers of existence, and from each of them taking away only a fragment. However a different perspective, from within life as life and its dynamic process, shows life as making up a whole, a self-sufficient flow of occurrences, present in all its moments in all its entirety: "Always only one life pulses through these particles as beats of the same life, inseparable from it and therefore also inseparable from each-other".<sup>36</sup> From this perspective, then, life's character is not fragmentary.

Thus Simmel emphasizes the constant movement of life moments and fragments and its overcoming in the unity and continuity of one's life. He offers a wonderful synthetic formulation of this theory in the concluding lines of his text:

Insofar as our contents of life exist more or less in between life per se, on the one hand, and life's ideal totality of worlds, on the other hand, they become fragments. Though they are not fragments when seen from life's own standpoint but are instead more like wave-forms of life's inherent unity and continuity, they nevertheless *are* fragments as soon as we think of contents as having a unity and continuity of their own within particular categorial worlds. Then life appears to be something lived always at the intersection of multiple worlds [...] Life makes up a whole, yet so too does each categorial world. Where life and worlds intersect, they create fragments – fragments of life, fragments of worlds.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, the fragmentary aspect or discontinuity of experiencing the everyday and the art as distinct life-worlds, backed by Melchionne (2011), is not a final, single ontological feature of experience or life as such. Rather it is a matter of analytic perspective which has to be complemented, from a broader perspective of life as a whole, by the continuity of experiencing in one's life. Moreover, the apparent paradox of completeness-and-fragmentation is overcome or solved when backing the idea of the inherent unity and continuity of life, made clear in this essay by Simmel's idea of life as a flow of experience shaped by "form", and developed later in his theory of life as a limitlessly creative flow of embodied will, feeling and understanding.<sup>38</sup> To sum up, this theory helps us to understand the essential structure of the everyday life-world and its experiencing as constituted by the dialectic of continuity-and-discreteness and unity-and-differentiation.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 246–47.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 247.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 247; see also the "Editorial Note" by Austin Harrington to Simmel (2012), p. 237.

## Conclusion

This article aimed at fostering a theoretical framework in order to adequately address the aesthetic experience of the everyday. I argued that an improved analytical framework for the new research area or sub-discipline called “Everyday Aesthetics” can be fostered by drawing on some insights on the essential structure of aesthetic experience and the characteristics of everyday life and life-world supported by practical-hermeneutic (Gadamer) or pragmatic philosophy (Shusterman) and transcendental of sociological phenomenology (Husserl, Schutz, Simmel). The network of concepts provided by this novel account of the everyday aesthetic experience is effective in clarifying EA’s underpinning assumptions and in exploring properly the different layers of experience that are integrated in the deployment of one’s everyday aesthetic life. Basically, this account helps us to formulate a coherent ontology of everyday aesthetic life, by emphasizing: 1) the phenomenological-intentional, embodied, meaningful and transformative character of the aesthetic experience, its contextual embeddedness as well as its continuity in the unity of the self; 2) the inter subjective nature of a subject’s experience as well as of the everyday life. Therefore, the structure of everyday aesthetic experience and the life-world appears as essentially constituted by the dialectic of continuity-and-discreteness, and unity-and-differentiation, similar to the structure of the experiencing self.

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## THE NECESSITY AND POSSIBILITIES OF A HERMENEUTICAL ATTITUDE IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL CULTURE\*

KÁROLY VERESS\*\*

**ABSTRACT.** *The Necessity and Possibilities of the Hermeneutical Attitude in Contemporary Philosophical Culture.* Philosophical preoccupations (as the scientific research of philosophy, its creative cultivation, and the process of philosophical training) are confronted nowadays with rapid changes in existential circumstances, the radical restructuring of the social, political, and cultural context, and the challenges of new experiences. Contemporary society and culture show signs of a comprehensive change of perspective and attitude, and for the active participation in this change, a “living”, efficient, and practical philosophy is needed. However, in order to achieve this participation, philosophical preoccupations themselves also have to go through a change of perspective and attitude. In this spirit, I investigate the conditions under which the subject-centred research on philosophy and the cultivation of philosophy can give place to philosophizing according to dialogical principles, and the possibilities, chances, and obstacles of the hermeneutical attitude in the institution-building processes, organisation of activities, and communication related to philosophy.

**Keywords:** *hermeneutical attitude, change of perspective and attitude, active participation, practical philosophy, philosophical culture*

### 1.

In the concluding remarks of the preface to the second edition of his major work, *Truth and Method*, Hans-Georg Gadamer specifically mentions the situation of the person who deals with philosophy. “What man needs is not just the persistent posing of ultimate questions, but the sense of what is feasible, what is

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\* This text is a revised version of a Hungarian-language study published in no. 54 (2014) of the philosophy journal *Kellék* (p. 41–52).

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possible, what is correct, here and now. The philosopher, of all people, must, I think, be aware of the tension between what he claims to achieve and the reality in which he finds himself.”<sup>1</sup>

This quote claims that those who deal with philosophy, must not necessarily relate in all their manifestations to other thinkers, theories, or established problems, and must not necessarily do it with the intention of answering the “ultimate questions”. For it is just as important for the abstract and general ideas to be coupled with a *sense of correctness* of the action performed “here and now”, and the *ability to become aware* of the tension between “one’s own need” of philosophizing and the “surrounding reality”. Gadamer’s idea is comprehensively *valid* for the cultivation of philosophy at all times, and most obviously *timely* for all those whose lives are “here and now” connected to philosophy. This timeliness opens up several questions.

Undoubtedly, the “reality” surrounding philosophy in its true “flesh and blood” is not perceived best through various scientific descriptions, surveys, polls, nor in the “reality” products of media industry, but in *experiences*. The basic question is nothing different even today: how can we have philosophical access to our own experiences and the experiences of other people in our environment? For, if I wish to treat philosophical questions seriously, I can hardly withdraw myself from the horizon of questions such as: what happens to me when I notice a problem, interpret a text, write a study or deliver a lecture? What happens to me when I understand an idea, a connection? And what happens when I do not understand? What happens to us when we *collectively* try to do so? When we include one another into such experiments of ours? What happens to us when we agree with each other in a discussion on a philosophical problem? And what happens when we do not agree?

Our experiences renewing under the influence of the circumstances place ourselves in the open horizon of these questions much rather than in the illusory certainty of ready-made answers. We *have no* ultimate answers to these questions and this is precisely what makes us think. The experiences opening up in the horizon of these questions are *fundamental!* These are in fact the most important *happenings!* At a first sight they seem banal, like important experiences in general. But if such an experience *stops us* and we *dwell on* it, we may discover that it is perhaps the most important for the cultivation of philosophy! For this very reason it is the most *problematic* question *what happens* while we, so to say, “deal with philosophy”?

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Truth and Method. Foreword to the second edition*. Continuum, London, New York, 2004. xxxiv. [*Hermeneutik II. Wahrheit und Methode. Vorwort zur 2. Auflage*. GW. Bd. 2. J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). Tübingen 1993. 448.]

I wonder whether those who deal with philosophy as a profession for decades do indeed face at times their *own* pertaining experiences. Do they think about these questions too? How often? In one word: how do they understand *the experience of their relationship with philosophy?*

## 2.

It is not perchance that the idea quoted above came up in a hermeneutical “environment”. Hermeneutics is for many people, especially those who come in contact with it fleetingly and tangentially, is nothing else than a perspective, a standpoint, a way of approach, a methodological procedure, a comprehensive theoretical concept, a conviction, a belief, etc. A deeper scrutiny may reveal that, in addition to all of the above, hermeneutics is essentially: an *attitude*. And also that the attitude is – *essentially – hermeneutical*.

One cannot actually analyse an attitude without identifying hermeneutical characteristics as its ingredients. The attitude is *not* an external, objective relation, *nor* a passive orientation, *nor* a neutral being-together, but also *not* a self-losing immersion. The attitude is a step forward from external contemplation to the thing, a progress towards its happening, and positioning within this happening: the state of *being within*. Man *stands-within* something, positions himself into the concretization of a situation, a system of connections, a horizon of a problem, the “here and now” of circumstances. But the attitude is not merely (self)positioning, but *inclination* to stopping and dwelling on that what stops us; active turn towards things, attention to what draws to itself, raises awareness, addresses us. Although the attitude does not necessarily involve a concrete, definitive action, it is still a mode, an active possibility of *partaking*.

Consequently the hermeneutical attitude is more than the *disposition* in a Heideggerian sense, because, going beyond the subject and the object being drawn into a common horizon, the attitude is actually achieved through opening up to and mutually accepting each other. The hermeneutical attitude naturally has openness-structure and *dialogical nature*, which always presupposes the activation of *in-betweenness*: standing *in the middle between* subjects, things and experiences, where the meaning relations are achieved and revealed in the play of multifold interactions. It does not tolerate adherence to usual prejudices, nor the subjective partiality towards certain things, but it rather intends to *bring* all of these *into play* in the forcefield of in-betweenness. It presupposes being *drawn into* the logic of the situation, which compels to *leave behind* the *unsituatedness* of our own prejudices and step into a perspective which allows to understand the situation from one’s own viewpoint, which also reveals the possibilities of understanding our own judgments



differently. The hermeneutical attitude is therefore a twofold (or manifold) *response relationship*. It can be said thus that the true essence and meaning of the attitude is realized and manifested as hermeneutical attitude.

### 3.

In relation to philosophy, the hermeneutical attitude means that those who embark on dealing with it, do not only prepare for it informatively, based on knowledge and information, but also attune themselves in mind, emotion, and in the formation of their life conduct, developing an affinity – a *sense* – for it. They let philosophy into their daily lives, and thus let through their own thoughts, experiences and emotions to philosophy. They bring into play all the experiences in the field of philosophy which come from the surrounding world, while they adjust themselves and their circumstances to dealing with it. The authentic cultivation of philosophy lies precisely in this *philosophical sense* which grasps the abstract and general meaning relations formed on conceptual and theoretical levels in their relationship with concrete state of facts and experiences, unfolding the understanding of both the one and the other from the interplay of horizons. This way the theoretical constructions may gain experiential relevance along the same response relationships that reveal the meaning content of experiences of reality.

In relation to the cultivation of philosophy, one must also reveal an important aspect of hermeneutical attitude. Actually no kind of attitude can be learnt or acquired merely consciously, but gradually formed by *individual practice, guidance*. There is no recipe with prescriptions, no strict methodology for learning. Every attitude is essentially *practical*, and this is especially valid for the hermeneutic attitude which by nature is never a merely theoretical, interpretive attitude, but *application* in the actual sense of the word. This means that any empathy, self-surrender in the play of meaning creation happens *with myself*. The *need* for it draws my *whole* being into the happening, in which my ability of be aware of situations and my sense for actions which are possible and correct in a given situation are formed simultaneously and interconnectedly, and I also train myself for accepting the ensuing responsibility as well. The hermeneutical attitude is an active *life practice* because taking part in the free play of the happening of meaning enforces the response relationships of the need and sense for truth and correctness, and the freedom and responsibility needed for their practice.

If everything we called here hermeneutical would be achieved as philosophical attitude, it cannot essentially be anything else than a practical *philosophical* attitude; this is one of the possible and valid ways of practical philosophy today.

## 4.

Why do we discuss right now the question of hermeneutical attitude in relation to philosophical culture?

Those outlined before reveal that it is not merely the personality, approach and behaviour of those who deal with philosophy that manifests in one's attitude, but through our attitude to it, philosophy itself also *manifests* through approaches, behaviours, actions, in one word, through culture. The cultural presence of philosophy, besides being regarded as a kind of institutional component of a given culture, also raises the question of the nature of *philosophical culture* that prevails in the attitude to philosophy of those who deal with the cultivation of philosophy within culturally created institutions and spiritual-practical space.

Thinking in this context about experiences formed in contemporary Hungarian philosophical culture, I consider the need for hermeneutical attitude a *timely* question. It seems that both the external challenges of philosophy and the processes within philosophy support this consideration. Even more so, as their effects also expand to all three territories of contemporary philosophy: the scholarly research of philosophy, training in philosophy, and creative cultivation of philosophy.

## 5.

Today we definitely live in the age of great *changes* which fundamentally transform the surrounding world, the existential experiences and the quality of human life. Among these, there are some which are obvious and the discourse on these has even become a trend in certain contexts. The "crisis" of recent years, the quick spreading of new communication technology and their role in shaping reality, the transformation of environmental conditions and learning processes, the experience of cultural differences, the political changes, the phenomena of complexity and globalization together are some of the most important. But in parallel to these, or even in relation to these, there are also changes which *are not conspicuous*, which remain almost unnoticed, which are hardly spoken about, but are still *happening*, and it is worth asking whether these, much rather than the ones previously mentioned, are the real determiners of the present conditions and future possibilities. Were the decisive events of the past almost ten years indeed a continuously maintained and referenced "crisis"? Or is it, rather, that novel phenomena are the truly decisive ones, such as the naturalization or forced expansion of the process of *generation change*, or various singularities, cultural closures and incompatibilities, reality-generating discourses

and manipulative technologies? Such phenomena and experiences – besides having a provocative effect on philosophical approach in themselves, through their often hidden mechanisms – primarily reveal a change in the fundamental approach to life, and a new form of the *need* for the truth, which goes hand in hand with conditions and qualities of freedom *different* from the traditional ones, and exploits the previously unseen modes and techniques of taking responsibility.

The question raises whether everything that happens in our circles as preoccupation with philosophy is in connection with these processes. These days we see the *professionalization* of a scholarly and creative preoccupation with philosophy. This tendency meets at the same time the inner logic of the “profession” and the institutional requirements of professional advancement, the norms of a career in research or academia. However, the “individualism” of the latter often overpowers the problem-oriented nature of the former. This tendency maintains, or even permanently fixes the *subject-centred* (researcher-centred) cultivation of philosophy, which leads to *fragmentation*, closed discourses, closing up into disparate trends, schools, interest groups. These closures lead to inbreeding and the insufficiency of professional debate, of attention to and recognition of problems and results, of the criticism that keeps an eye on “the thing itself”. Of course, this does not favour the hermeneutical opening, but generates dislike and a dismissive behaviour.

The world of *in-betweenness* – the response relationships of philosophy education, research and creation with each other and with the environment – sends ever more forceful signals that there is a need for *change in approach and attitude* also in the preoccupations with philosophy. The often belittling, questioning, rejecting manifestations against philosophical preoccupations appearing on the level of everyday awareness do not necessarily mean that philosophy is unnecessary and meaningless but rather they refer to the *lack* of a culture of philosophy, and also that the present attitude cannot produce a fertile culture of philosophy. The horizon of this lack is actually the need for a dialogical cultivation of philosophy, for an efficient, practical, “living” philosophy, and this requires a different kind of attitude, *turning away* from the cultivation of closures.

## 6.

Philosophy’s ways of accomplishment and manifestation in culture are not necessarily merely philosophical, and not necessarily coming from within philosophy. The *possibility* of hermeneutical attitude is connected with the positive response of questions such as: is it possible that philosophical training may not only mean to acquire knowledge, values and education, but the formation of an attitude? Is it possible to

take philosophy out of the magic circle of *pure theory*? The state of *affirmativity*? Is it possible for philosophy not only to manifest itself on the level of spiritual training but as a practical approach to current questions? And finally, is it possible for philosophy not to take part in culture just in the form of theoretical accomplishments but as an attitude?

I think that the hermeneutical attitude brings out the naturally inherent philosophical dimensions of our lives: openness to meaning, the ability and possibility of taking part in the creation of our own meaningful life; it presents philosophy as a content naturally inherent in human life. But this question cannot be avoided in relation to attitude: is it *meaningful* to think or speak about this today?

The problem of attitude has been presented as if it were exclusively a matter of philosophy (within philosophy). This coincides with the habit to regard the problems which also include in their horizon the issue of philosophy as if they were specific problems of philosophy. However, the problem devolved to philosophy, presented as *philosophical* never only depends exclusively on philosophy and the method of dealing with it. It is stereotypical today to refer, in order to exclude such distortions, to the inner, inherent *philosophical nature* of life, the organic relationship of philosophy and life, and to the fact that in every age philosophy reveals, elaborates in categories this organic philosophical nature of life. Therefore philosophy is, by its essence, coming-forth, unfolding, emergence, expression; the theoretical manifestation in categorial relations of something which is already there in life processes, in the individual and collective experiences. However, the also seemingly stereotypical conclusion – authentic philosophy can only come into being where this original, fundamental philosophical nature is produced – ends today in a question that no stereotypical voice can make us not take seriously: what happens to philosophy if life loses its “original” philosophical nature? This question only refers to philosophy in its rhetorical motivation. However, it actually places in the foreground precisely that turn which makes us notice that it is not a problem of philosophy but of *life*; and the philosophy which is scrutinized this way is none other than a part, accessory of a real-life process problematic in its philosophical nature.

The proponents of that renewing critical attitude who traditionally always talk about the “crisis” of philosophy, finding the solution that philosophy must be returned to life, to the basics, the things, etc., the renewal coming from these, are prisoners of a permanently reproduced illusion. The illusion that *there is* something to return to.

But what happens when the problem is that *there is nothing* to return to? When the “problem” is not philosophy, but “life” itself? When our everyday and cultural experiences confront us with the *un-philosophicality* of life? In cases like this the life-

and world-experiences are precisely those which require the change of the philosophical attitude. And this may not happen otherwise than as an open, understanding turn towards life's basic lack of philosophy. The critical confrontation of our life's lack of philosophy, the research of the possibilities and methods of acceptance and experience, or this chances of transcending this mode of being is probably the task and duty of philosophy today.

The novel possibilities of philosophy created in this *paradox* situation can open up precisely in the turn towards the hermeneutical attitude. This is where all the questions can be asked that break the resistance of closures and open ways to recognize the connections of the present situation. This horizon outlines new insights, presuppositions, conceptual junctions through which the existential and practical problems can break into the spaces of philosophical thinking. The great accomplishments of contemporary and traditional philosophy can also reach *close* to being addressed by our own life experiences, to be lengthily considered by ourselves, and reaching to their understanding also happens via the ways opening up from this attitude.

All these together do not narrow down, but on the contrary, extend the possibilities of dealing with philosophy today and may reveal/offer new modes of philosophical creation.

## 7.

What are the possibilities for a turn towards a hermeneutical attitude in contemporary philosophy?

Those who deal with philosophy usually notice that there is a great need for living and practical philosophy amidst quickly changing circumstances. There are several instances in the establishment of institutions and organization of activity which seemingly or actually suggest such a turn. New communication techniques and technologies have their effects on the modes of philosophical training and creation, probing the possibilities of a new type, dynamic, fast responding philosophical culture. The motto: take out philosophy into the public space, make it visible in the media. In this context the *marketing* of philosophy, its *staging* (but not in the Husserlian, Heideggerian or Derridaian sense) appears as one of the possible vehicles of the turn and the opening, but it may not be joined with a deep and efficient transformation of the attitude which would result in the actual and practical cultivation of philosophy. It rather only bears the marks of adjustment to new communication technologies and media. We often find that those who deal with philosophy make public statements, say "clever" things, and this may easily create the impression that they are open and interested in the problems of various fields and the problems of daily life, and they have

a philosophical message about these. It is not easy, however, to find the borderline between a philosophy ritual meant to fulfil new communication needs and an authentic endeavour to exploit the possibilities of philosophy.

Meanwhile, in the public mood connected to philosophy the need for hermeneutical attitude is often there, almost palpably and vocalized, for those who are concerned or part of it. The accomplishment of this is usually seen as being in the expansion and revitalization of philosophical discussion, debate and criticism, the acceptance of the behaviour to let the thing itself come to surface. Which means that letting the problem close to our thinking, we also let our thinking in the horizon of the problem. This is a need which focuses on the *centralization* of real problems and the lengthy dwelling on them. But this ambition does not exempt from the difficulties of the question: which are the *real* problems?

In this context the continuous renegotiation of the conditions of agreement is just as urgent. However, not even in this case can we withdraw ourselves from the difficulties of the question: what are the conditions of *agreement*?

## 8.

In addition to those said above, we also cannot avoid the questions why, despite the obvious need for a hermeneutic approach and attitude, the need for this turn remains just a nice topic of discussion, a trendy reference in contemporary Hungarian philosophical culture, safe for the narrow circle of those who are professionally committed to hermeneutics? For the impeccably trained and well informed representatives of various contemporary philosophical trends, why does this expertise and activity not *show* in their attitude? The experiences (of lack) connected to these refer to several *obstacles* of learning the hermeneutical attitude. These obstacles can be found equally in the subjective conditions of dealing with philosophy and the objective, structural circumstances.

Subjectively, it can often be seen that those who deal with philosophy are inclined to separate in their own lives their philosophical (professional) training and their human attitude. While they deal with philosophy respecting the institutional and professional norms, in their “spare” time they try to live their daily lives. This way the philosophical profession is far from being a decisive and consciously undertaken form of life for them. But it can become a way of self-accomplishment or sometimes even a determined career choice. A special feature of philosophy’s mode of being also has a say in it. We often find that a philosophical idea is *voiced* but it is not *shown*, putting itself forth in its response relationships. That is, it is inclined to *conceal* itself, *hold itself back* in its texts or statements. This gives the opportunity for the cultivator of philosophy to accomplish themselves through their philosophical output, to place

the importance of his person in the forefront. Therefore dealing with philosophy often proves to be an *egological* production and becomes a field for personal and professional *rivalry*.

Such experiences confront us not only with the general lack of philosophy of life, but directly with the conspicuous lack of philosophy of the life and attitude of those who deal with philosophy. The probably most important subjective obstacle of the hermeneutical attitude is precisely its *hermeneutical* nature, namely that every essential change starts with *ourselves*, our ability to change *ourselves*. This need is often resisted by our inability to change. This needs the mobilization of other kinds of energies than what we are used to, and we usually try to avoid extra efforts. The acceptance of the hermeneutical attitude is first of all an attempt to exceed the deep, organic, fundamental *lack of philosophy of one's own life* and these efforts confront us not only with the situation of philosophy but also with ourselves. Also, the often mentioned *provincialism* of our philosophy – similarly to other manifestations of provincialism – is also rooted in the same resistance to one's own changing.

## 9.

In addition to the aforementioned problems, the hermeneutical attitude can also have *structural* obstacles which do not necessarily derive from the subjective attitude of those involved but depend on forms of conduct influenced by institutional conditions, life conditions, various motivational factors and career possibilities. Amongst the conditions of accelerated processes and strong bureaucratisation, there is a great increase of the “naturalism” of “mutual” *lack of attention to real accomplishments*, scientific and philosophical results, the practice of *structural inattentiveness*, and in connection to that the impossibility of *lengthy dwelling on* any kind of understanding, recognition and acknowledgement. Such *manifestations of lack* are often coupled with *pseudo-hermeneutical* ambitions, such as the aggressive practice of *questioning* believed to be hermeneutical. To “place in the centre” in itself is not necessarily a hermeneutical attitude, a “wrong placement in the centre” is also possible. The activity of a subject biased towards itself – the abovementioned egological orientation – when instead of the analysed thing, the researched problem, the researcher places him/herself in the centre and his/her own thoughts, opinions in the place of real analysis, often results in the formation of a destructive “centre” that holds back the real evolvment.

As a structural frame of those said above, and also as a symptomatic addition to the presented situation, one must emphasise the *standoff from participation*, in two respects. The first – staying away from immersion into creation, from using one's own (head, life) – is achieved as the avoidance, the non-acceptance of the efforts of

philosophical creativity, such as the need for scientific objectivity and impartiality, the *lack of productivity* hidden under the veil of an artificial contemplative resignation, which results in spiritual improvisation, and is manifested in pseudo-creations, stuck with affirmativity and superficial connections, “interesting” and “conspicuous”, which only superficially connect to philosophical trends. The second – staying away from events, from everything that could *happen* to us as participants – is carried by the projections of the first in an institutional framework, where it is actually achieved as an uninterested *inactivity* behind a reserved state of an outsider, an energy-saving disinvolvement. The increasing expansion of this attitude is in a certain kind of negative response relationship with the experience of *eventlessness*, that state that *there are no* events where the new idea may step into the world, and may be accepted and welcomed. However, instead of events there are *programmes*, more and more, which bear the marks of rituality, self-affirmation, role-centredness.

The lack of results of the ambitions to introduce the hermeneutical attitude do not prove to be an *aleatory* lack of success. The failure in this respect is also most certainly *structural*.

## 10.

Is it possible to transcend the state of structural inattentiveness, lack, staying away, which leads to unsuccessful change of approach and attitude? From the perspective of dealing with philosophy, it certainly is. The new way of attitude is offered by philosophy itself – as soon as it meets that “sense” for it. Instead of a concrete answer, let me quote Gadamer again, another *Preface*, where he refers to what singularly ensures for him his dealing with philosophy. And this is none other than the speculative dimension equally present at Plato, Aristotle and Hegel opening up to continuing philosophical discussions, which is maintained by the conviction that “philosophy” remains an event-like astonishing experience of man, which honours man as man, and which is not a step forward, only partaking.<sup>2</sup>

(Translated from the Hungarian by **Emese Czintos**)

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles. Vorrede*. In GW. Bd. 7. Griechische Philosophie III. Plato in Dialog. J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). Tübingen 1991. 130.