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# PHILOSOPHIA

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## THE LIVED BODY AS PRE-REFLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS: MERLEAU-PONTY ON THE COGITO

LUÍS AGUIAR DE SOUSA\*

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper, I sketch out Merleau-Ponty's theory of subjectivity as it is presented in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. I will start by showing that Merleau-Ponty's theory presupposes Sartre's notion of consciousness as anonymous and pre-reflective. Merleau-Ponty takes up these features and embeds them in the lived body. The result is Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "tacit cogito" as pre-reflective subjectivity, always presupposed in our everyday embodied engagement with the world and in every explicit reflexive grasp of ourselves as such. Further, I show that the outcome of reflection, the "spoken cogito", presupposes linguistic ability and thus the expressive power of the body. In the end I argue that, contrary to Sartre, who viewed pre-reflective consciousness as a nothing, for Merleau-Ponty the lived body or tacit cogito is always something in and of the world.

**Keywords:** Merleau-Ponty, Subjectivity, Embodiment, Pre-Reflective Consciousness, Sartre

1. If there is one central aim in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, it could be said that it consists in formulating a radically new conception of subjectivity. In this regard, Merleau-Ponty's main thesis, as is widely known, can be stated as the idea that all forms of subjectivity may be traced back to the "so-called" lived body. In parallel to this thread, which runs implicitly throughout the *Phenomenology of Perception*, there is a chapter on the notion of the cogito, in which Merleau-Ponty presents his explicit theory of subjectivity. In this paper, I would like to draw a connection between what Merleau-Ponty says about the lived body as the basis of subjectivity and the theory of subjectivity that he presents in the chapter on the cogito. Namely, I will consider the idea that Merleau-Ponty's lived body comes to

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occupy the position of what in Sartre's philosophy is called "pre-reflective consciousness" or the "pre-reflective cogito" (which in Merleau-Ponty appears under the guise of the "tacit cogito"). I will argue that Merleau-Ponty's notion is in fact modelled on Sartre's. However, I will also show that they differ in some respects, the most important of which is the fact that, whereas Sartre conceived of pre-reflective consciousness as nothingness, Merleau-Ponty understands pre-reflective consciousness as rooted in the world.

2. We must first sketch out what the idea of the lived body itself stands for. The concept stems from Husserl's distinction between *Leib* and *Körper*. Whereas my body as seen in the mirror or considered as an object from a natural-scientific perspective is a *Körper*, a material thing, my body as it is lived by me in my first-person experience is a *Leib*, that is, a lived body. Merleau-Ponty uses the lived body as a conceptual tool with a view to treading a middle path between intellectualist and empiricist accounts of subjectivity. In common with intellectualists, Merleau-Ponty thinks that subjectivity cannot be reduced to objective processes occurring in the brain – processes seen from a third-person perspective. Against intellectualists, however, he emphasizes the quasi-transcendental role played by the body in opening us up to the world. In other words, he brings out the fact that our bodies cannot be accounted for in purely mechanistic terms, as if they were mere material things. The (lived) body exhibits and creates sense or meaning. Merleau-Ponty thinks that the body is a subject, or at least a proto-subject. The lived body corresponds to the most elementary form of subjectivity, upon which all other, more complex, forms are built and to which they ultimately trace back. As the most primitive form of awareness, the lived body establishes our most rudimentary contact with being and with the world.

As indicated, the lived body takes the place that was traditionally ascribed to the subject inasmuch as it cannot be fully turned into an object, constantly eluding my efforts to grasp it as such. In fact, although the lived body is in some sense aware of itself – or else it would not be *lived* – it can never become an object for me. It is precisely that through which there can be objects in the first place. To the extent that the lived body is the condition of the possibility of my being aware of anything whatsoever, it fulfils a transcendental role in perception. Unlike objects, whose presence presupposes their possible absence, the lived body is always present for me (PhP 92/119).<sup>1</sup> This permanence of the lived body cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Page numbers refer to the Landes translation of the *Phenomenology of Perception* and are followed by page references to the French edition.

equated with a *de facto* necessity. Merleau-Ponty goes so far as to say that this permanence is a “metaphysical necessity” (PhP 93/120). It is because the lived body always appears to me from the same side that outer objects can show me their successive profiles and preserve their identity in that succession (PhP 95/121-2). The permanence of the lived body functions as an a-thematic background for whatever comes into our perceptive focus (PhP 94/121).

In general, I do not represent my lived body in the same way I am said to “represent” outer objects. This is evident whenever I move my body. In order to move it, I do not need to find it in space as I do other objects. Through what Merleau-Ponty calls the “body schema”, the healthy subject<sup>2</sup> always knows where her body is without this being knowledge of objective spatial relations. The body exhibits a telic capacity by which it projects itself in anticipation of the end of its movement (a movement that cannot be described in geometrical, mechanical terms). The sense of the movement is provided by the practical tasks and daily affairs in which the body is continually engaged.

Even when I try to turn my body into an object by touching it, the body, taken as a lived body, always eludes this transformation. This is visible in the phenomenon of “double sensation”: whenever my left hand attempts to touch my right one, both hands alternate between being the touching one and being the touched one without ever being able to feel the other as the “touching” one, that is, without ever achieving coincidence with one another (PhP 95/122). It is this lack of self-coincidence of the body in the experience of the one hand touching the other that will become the basis for Merleau-Ponty’s later formulation of notions such as the “flesh” and “reversibility” (Dillon 1997: 153ff.). Thus, the illusiveness of the lived body mirrors the illusiveness traditionally ascribed to the subject of knowledge.

Another feature of the lived body is the fact that, even though it possesses some sort of intrinsic reflexivity, it is not closed in on itself, but rather primordially finds itself outside, in the world. The intentionality of the lived body is, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, transcendence towards the world (as was already the case with Sartre’s pre-reflective cogito). As I note above, this does not mean that the lived body completely forgets itself in the world. Although the lived body tends to efface itself in favour of what we may call, for the sake of simplicity, its intentional correlate, it remains aware of itself, even if dimly.

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<sup>2</sup> As is well known, in the chapter on the body’s spatiality and movement (see PhP 100ff/127ff.) Merleau-Ponty gives an extensive analysis of a case (the Schneider case) of what he calls “morbid motricity”.

3. As noted above, Merleau-Ponty's description of the lived body strongly recalls what Sartre says about consciousness, in particular pre-reflective consciousness. However, we still need to determine the extent to which Merleau-Ponty's conception of subjectivity can be assimilated with Sartre's conception. The latter can be very briefly summarized as follows: for Sartre, intentionality—consciousness of something— involves an immediate form of self-awareness. This does not yet imply that consciousness has to reflect upon itself in an explicit manner. Rather, in being directed towards the object, consciousness is implicitly aware of itself as being thus directed to its object (and also, according to Sartre, as not being its object). Explicit consciousness of oneself, or, as Sartre also calls it, reflective consciousness, emerges only on the basis of pre-reflective consciousness of worldly entities.

Sartre first presented the idea of pre-reflective consciousness in his first essay, "The Transcendence of the Ego". In this first version of his theory of subjectivity, Sartre presents pre-reflective consciousness as being impersonal. According to this conception, the ego is a transcendent object generated within the field of impersonal consciousness. According to Gardner (2009), Sartre's theory in the *Transcendence of the Ego* raises several philosophical problems. One of these problems consists in accounting for the self's identity in reflective consciousness (Gardner 2009: 14). If the I of reflective consciousness is the same as the I of reflected consciousness, how does pre-reflective consciousness come to be impersonal and anonymous? Still, according to Gardner (2009: 90), Sartre makes an attempt to solve these problems in *Being and Nothingness*, changing his theory to the effect that pre-reflective consciousness becomes personal and reflective consciousness borrows its reflective structure from pre-reflective consciousness (for more details on the difference between Sartre's theory in his first essay and his theory in *Being and Nothingness*, see Sartre 1945: 139ff. and Gardner 2009: 90ff.).

At face value, we can describe Merleau-Ponty's conception of the lived body as being immediately aware of itself in its opening to the world as involving something very much like Sartre's pre-reflective consciousness. The influence of Sartre's pre-reflective cogito on Merleau-Ponty's account of perception and consciousness has already been noted by commentators like Dillon (1997: 104-5): "Sartre's influence is manifest here. Merleau-Ponty's tacit cogito is modelled upon Sartre's pre-reflective cogito [...]". As a result, Merleau-Ponty's conception of subjectivity may well suffer from some of the problems that affect Sartre's early

theory. For example, not only Dillon (1997: 105f.)<sup>3</sup> but also other commentators (like Barbaras 1991) point out that the notion of the tacit cogito may be incoherent on the grounds that if the tacit cogito is a cogito then it cannot be impersonal, and if it is impersonal it cannot serve as a foundation for reflection. In particular, Barbaras' point is that, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, the pre-reflective domain is defined by being a mere negation of the reflective domain. The pre-reflective is not characterized by itself, and thus Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in the *Phenomenology of Perception* ends up being implicitly intellectualist and even idealist (Barbaras 1991: 24ff., 31ff., 33ff.).<sup>4</sup>

Certain elements of Merleau-Ponty's characterization of the lived body point to the fact that his point of reference here seems to be Sartre's first theory from the *Transcendence of the Ego* more than the later one from *Being and Nothingness*. This is evident, for example, when Merleau-Ponty says that the lived body is an anonymous entity which is best described by the French impersonal pronoun *on*. For example, in order to account for pathological experiences like the sensation of a phantom arm, Merleau-Ponty relies on the idea that the body is not the object of an immediate or instantaneous apprehension. Merleau-Ponty argues that, in addition to this momentary awareness I have of my body, there is the habitual phenomenon of the body, which allows me to be aware of body parts, such as a phantom arm, which is no longer attached to my body: "Correlatively, my body must be grasped not merely in an instantaneous, singular, and full experience, but moreover under an aspect of generality and as an impersonal being" (PhP 85/111-112). Merleau-Ponty relies on Freud's concept of repression (*refoulement*) to explain that the lived body is akin to an innate complex inasmuch as it functions as a primordial past that can never be fully overcome, shaping all of my life's moments and constituting my primordial attachment to the world (PhP 86/112-113). For me to follow a certain personal course of action, I must have previously belonged to a world in general through the anonymous existence of my body (PhP 86/113).

In parallel with the description of our lived body as a pre-personal entity, Merleau-Ponty describes perception itself as an anonymous event.<sup>5</sup> He says that "every perception takes place within an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us as anonymous" (PhP 223/260). If we wanted to put perceptual experience into words, we could say that "*one* perceives in me, and not that I perceive" (*ibidem*). Merleau-Ponty's point here is that perception is not in my command that

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<sup>3</sup> "How can a cogito be pre-reflective, be tacit? There seems to be a contradiction in terms here" (Dillon 1997: 105).

<sup>4</sup> It should be borne in mind that Merleau-Ponty himself later disavowed the notion of a tacit cogito in his working notes for *Visible and Invisible*.

<sup>5</sup> On the anonymous character of perception, see Dillon (1997: 103, 104).

it points to a given situation, whereas personal acts express my choices. I can choose not to open my eyes, but once I have opened them I cannot choose not to see. He even compares sensation to “a birth and a death” in the sense that, although we are all born and die, and birth and death are events that certainly concern us, we can never experience them as such (*ibidem*). In his words, birth and death are “pre-personal horizons of our life” (*ibidem*).

Since sensation comes, as it were, from beneath me, from a region of my being which is not fully under my control, sensation prevents my experience from being transparent to itself (PhP 223-4/261). Although sensation displays intentionality inasmuch as it reaches an outer object, that object is present to me not as a pure consciousness, a disembodied subject, but rather as a lived body that “espouses” the sensible thing (PhP 221/258). Through my “sensibility” I am open to sensible beings, but I do not constitute them as if they were instances of certain abstract notions. The things that strike my senses are not of my creation. In order to perceive them, my body has to let itself be synchronized with them. Merleau-Ponty says that, as a body, I am “born together” with them (PhP 219/256). Sensation implies not only that things outside me strike my senses, but also that my body somehow takes up the proper attitude so as to be able to perceive each of them. I do not create the sensation of blue or red, but in order to perceive those colours, my body must learn to take on the attitude of “seeing blue” or “seeing red” as a response to what up to that point can only be described as a “vague solicitation” (PhP 259/222).

The entities I perceive through the senses require a certain familiarity on the part of my body if I am to perceive them. This means that, before I can take myself as a conscious, thinking subject—that is, before I can perform the Cartesian cogito—the body has always already opened itself to a world where sensible beings can be found. In relation to perception, reflection always comes later. It is true that a synthesis of the manifold aspects of the perceptible thing must be accomplished. Contrary to what intellectualists hold, however, I perform that synthesis not as a reflecting subject but as a lived body. It is a synthesis that I do not have to re-constitute every time I perceive something. Rather, it is much more akin to an ability of the body, to a “know-how”, which must be learned and practiced. Hence the fact that Merleau-Ponty sees perception as akin to a habit: “in fact, every habit is simultaneously motor and perceptual” (PhP 153/188). This performative dimension of perception can also be expressed by the idea that perception is the correlate not of an “I think”, but rather of an “I can” (PhP 139/171). It is this “know-how” that is brought into play whenever I come before things with a view to perceiving them. This know-how, displayed in the perception of particular things, is in turn an instantiation and development of a more general kinship between my body and the world as a whole (“my own body is the primordial habit, the one that

conditions all others and by which they can be understood” [PhP 93/120]). Before I come to perceive this and that, I am always already opened to the world. Merleau-Ponty says that perception “benefits from work already completed, from a general synthesis constituted once and for all. This is what I express by saying that I perceive with my body or with my senses, my body and my senses being precisely this habitual knowledge of the world, this implicit or sedimented science” (PhP 247/285).

The fact that my body makes use of this implicit and sedimented knowledge contributes, as I have already hinted at, to making perceptual knowledge opaque to itself. In the first place, I can never give an adequate account of my body’s perceptual powers, of what is or what it means to perceive red or green (as if it were possible to further analyse this perception into atomic elements). But more than this, I can never give an account of why my body perceives at all – of why my body opens me to the world, to reality, to things; I can never give an account of what Merleau-Ponty later, in the *Visible and Invisible*, calls our “perceptual faith”. (That is, perception, as Merleau-Ponty makes clear in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, should be taken as an ultimate fact or given that is not liable to further analysis, although it can be used as an *explanandum* for other facts.) Contrary to what would happen if pure intellection were possible, sensing entails having to do with inexhaustible things that I did not create or constitute in the manner of a transcendental subject. Every sensation takes place within a field, like that of vision, and implies not only more possibilities of sensing within that field but also other possible fields (hearing, touch, etc.). There is always more to know about the objects we see with our eyes and feel with our hands (for example, their hidden profiles). In sum,

if, as we have said, every perception has something anonymous about it, this is because it takes up an acquisition that it does not question. The *perceiving person* is not spread out before himself in the manner that a consciousness must be: he has an historical thickness, he takes up a perceptual tradition, and he is confronted with a present. (PhP 247-8/285)

If I could be aware of my very first perception, it would appear to me as an iteration of a previous grasp of the world, or, as Merleau-Ponty says, an iteration of a “primary pact with the world” (PhP 168/204). It is not possible for perception *not* to carry a past along with it. It is never possible to bring back and perceptually recreate that “primary pact”. Perception always brings with it this “original past, a past that has never been present” (252/289). The question here is how we should understand this “past”. Is it a past in relation to a reflective consciousness, which necessarily “comes after” and takes pre-reflective consciousness for its theme? Or

is it the past of what was never present in the sense of that which we were never conscious of in the first place, not even in a pre-reflective manner? The latter corresponds to Marrato's interpretation (2012). According to him, perception begins in a contingent movement that is given meaning (that is stylized) by the body only afterwards, a posteriori. The "original past" is said to "haunt" the present of consciousness precisely because it represents the essential contingency of perception. My interpretation here goes in the opposite direction: because I assume that Merleau-Ponty's notion of what precedes reflection is influenced by Sartre, I believe that this "original past" was already conscious, even if in a pre-reflective manner.

4. At least in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty does not relinquish the Cartesian notion of the cogito but rather radically reformulates it. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is some truth in Descartes' return to subjectivity, to the cogito. Perception must, by its nature, be aware of itself as such, but instead of being in full possession of itself or being transparent to itself, it evades itself when it is directed towards the perceived thing (PhP 395-6/435-6). The perceived thing cannot be severed from perception. Seeing is not mere thinking of seeing, as Descartes held (PhP 393-4/433-4). If I doubt the thing perceived, I must put my perception of that thing into question as well (PhP 393-4/433). Therefore, the certainty that accrues to perception is equivalent to the certainty I have of the thing perceived (PhP 394/434). One falls with the other. This does not mean that we have absolute certainty of the thing perceived. We are always liable to illusion. The latter, however, has as its condition of possibility our primary contact with the world, our being in, and openness to, the world. We can only doubt this or that particular perception insofar as we already find ourselves in a world (and this means finding ourselves in a perceptual openness to being). What Merleau-Ponty's version of the cogito ultimately points to is the already-mentioned transcendence of the body towards the world (PhP 396/436).

Merleau-Ponty says that even when it comes to so-called inner feelings like love and will, where it seems that the object is produced by the subject and is entirely contained in its "sphere of immanence", there is the possibility of illusion (PhP 397/436-7). He points out that feelings, too, can be true or false (PhP 397-8/437). He emphasizes in particular the case of "false love" (PhP 397ff./437ff.). In the case of "false feelings", as in "false love", it is not as if we are consciously faking our feelings. His point is instead that our feelings possess an ambiguous quality. When we are under their spell, we cannot really distinguish "false" from "true" feelings. It is only afterwards that we realize that a certain love did not engage "my overall being in the world" (PhP 398/438). We can only realize our deception by

regarding ourselves from the vantage point of a posterior knowledge of ourselves. Of course, this presupposes that we, ourselves, should somehow exceed whatever we are living through at each moment:

Thus, we do not possess our entire reality at each moment, and one has the right to speak of an inner perception, an intimate sense, an “analyzer” between us and ourselves, that at each moment goes more or less the distance toward knowledge of our life and of our being. (PhP 399/439)

Since we are not in possession of ourselves, are not transparent to ourselves, talk of degrees of self-knowledge, of self-transparency, is to a certain extent legitimate (PhP 399/439). This does not mean that what falls short of our self-knowledge is some kind of mysterious unconscious. We are always in a state of being dispossessed to ourselves, even though this openness remains ambiguous, and we can thus fail to properly comprehend ourselves. For example, we can harbour feelings towards someone in a way that is not totally clear to ourselves (PhP 401/441). More importantly, however, as was already the case with our perceptual openness to the world, deception regarding ourselves is certainly possible, but it excludes our being absolutely wrong about ourselves. I can doubt what I know or think I know about myself, in particular what concerns my inner life, my thoughts, volitions and feelings, because I am somehow pre-reflectively certain of my doubting. Absolute doubt is self-contradictory, for, taken to the limit, it implies doubting my own doubt (PhP 402/442).

Contrary to the Cartesian model, for Merleau-Ponty consciousness is more akin to a doing than a knowing or representing. (This was already at stake in the idea that perception is essentially a bodily habit.) I can only be certain that I want something, love someone or perceive something if in fact I accomplish my existence in such a way (PhP 401-2/441). The certainty I have of my thoughts stems from their actual existence (PhP 402/442). For this reason, talk of inner perception is to a certain extent inadequate. At the most fundamental level, I am not an object of observation. I find myself only in the intentional act (in wishing, perceiving, wanting, etc.) (PhP 402/442). Inner perception or reflection – the extent to which Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between these is not clear to me – comes only later and would not be possible if I were not first pre-reflectively aware of my intentional act towards an object – of my act of perceiving, wishing, loving, etc. (PhP 402/442). Just as with Sartre, my pre-reflective consciousness of outer things and of my inner feelings precedes and is the condition of my taking myself as an object, that is, of the explicit reflection upon myself which is expressed in the phrase “I think”:



In the proposition “I think, I am,” the two affirmations are certainly equivalent, otherwise there would be no *Cogito*. But again, we must attempt to understand the sense of this equivalence: it is not the “I think” that eminently contains the “I am,” nor is it my existence that is reduced to the consciousness that I have of it; rather, it is the “I think” that is reintegrated into the movement of transcendence of the “I am,” and consciousness reintegrated into existence. (PhP 403/443)

5. After showing that the subject is pre-reflectively projected into the world, into whatever situation it finds itself, and thus that the subject of reflection is not entirely identical to the pre-reflective one, Merleau-Ponty proceeds to show that self-coincidence or self-possession cannot be found in the realm of pure thought either. He tries to show this by analysing the nature of geometrical truths. I cannot enter into much detail concerning this matter. Suffice to say that, for Merleau-Ponty, the presumed self-coincidence of thought is an illusion that masks the expressive (and creative) nature of all language, and hence the perspectival character of truth. According to Merleau-Ponty, thought cannot exist apart from language, and the latter originates in the lived body’s expressive nature; it is one of the ways the body has of producing sense or meaning. Language in its inception does not have the function of representing a pre-existing thought as if it were its mere garment. Furthermore, language, seen as an expressive phenomenon, transcends pre-established, instituted meanings.

When fully accomplished, the linguistic process of expression has the power to induce new meanings out of the established ones. It is true that language’s expressive and creative power is usually hidden beneath the ordinary, day-to-day use. It is the latter that creates the illusion that language consists in a set of conventional signs designating thoughts that can be grasped independently of them. The ordinary use of language is what Merleau-Ponty calls “spoken language” [*parole parlée*]. We can appreciate what language must have been at its inception, the original phenomenon of language, when we consider, for example, great works of poetry, in which ordinary use and its common meanings (the “spoken language”) are dislocated in order to produce new meanings out of them. This phenomenon is what Merleau-Ponty calls “speaking language” [*parole parlante*]. The illusion that thought pre-exists language, that the latter serves merely to express a pre-existent thought, is a necessary illusion and is tied to the nature of linguistic expression itself. Linguistic expression effaces itself in favour of its result (the thought generated by it), forgets its contingency, and creates the illusion that the latter was pre-given. According to Merleau-Ponty, linguistic expression instils in us the idea of absolute truth and the ideal of thought without language (*pensée sans parole*) (PhP 196/231).

Merleau-Ponty’s conception of language has profound consequences for his conception of the cogito. Since the ability to say “I” or “I think” is essentially

linguistic, we must remain opaque to ourselves. We can never manage to make language totally transparent to us since, by nature, all its meanings are ambiguous, that is, on the one hand they are acquired and inherited, and on the other hand they harbour the possibility of meaning beyond what is established. Thus, as a result of his theory of language, thought and subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty puts into question the unconditioned character of the Cartesian cogito, its supposed lack of presuppositions.

In this regard, Merleau-Ponty points out that the cogito that appears in Descartes' second meditation belongs to every human being capable of reflection. In that sense, it belongs to no one in particular. It is a "second-hand cogito". The Cartesian cogito's true formula, according to Merleau-Ponty, should be "one thinks, one is" (PhP 422/462). (It should be borne in mind that this type of anonymity is different from that which belongs to the lived body.) In fact, Descartes' cogito is already a product of the lived body's expressive power and presupposes the acquisition of language. Descartes, and we who follow his thoughts in the second meditation, tend to overlook this precisely because of language's tendency to efface itself in favour of its outcome, in this case in favour of the "I think". The latter, according to Merleau-Ponty, is merely a "spoken cogito" (PhP 424/463). Not that this is what Descartes wanted to convey. He actually had in view that silent presence of myself to myself, but he missed his target. Whenever we are focused on reading Descartes and we perform the Cartesian cogito by saying "I am, I think", "I am a thinking being", we are leaving out of our account the phenomenon of our innermost subjectivity. In Descartes' hands, the cogito becomes a cultural object like any other. However, this does not mean, as post-structuralism would have it, that the cogito is a product of language and for that reason an illusion. I could not even start to read or understand Descartes if I did not have, in a pre-predicate, pre-reflective manner, an awareness of my own life as mine, if the spoken cogito didn't ultimately refer to a tacit cogito:

In writing his *Méditations*, Descartes was aiming at this silent *Cogito*, which animates and directs all of the expressive operations that, by definition, fail to reach their goal, since they interpose – between Descartes's existence and the knowledge that he gains of this existence – the entire thickness of cultural acquisitions; but, on the other hand, these expressive operations would not even be attempted if Descartes had not, at the outset, had his own existence in sight. (PhP 463/424)

However, Merleau-Ponty does not wish to revert to a Sartrean conception of the cogito, essentially defined as not being the in-itself and thus as nothingness itself (which, of course, accords with the idea that the "silent" cogito precedes and is therefore not conditioned by any cultural acquisition). In order to fully appreciate

Merleau-Ponty's theory of subjectivity, it is necessary to understand its predicament. He wishes to keep the idea of subjectivity as pre-reflective consciousness, which therefore cannot be reductively explained away by objective properties, without falling into the idea that the subject is nothing, or into the transcendental, intellectualist variant of Sartre's thesis – the idea that the subject constitutes reality. The problem, to quote Merleau-Ponty, is the following:

to understand how I can be the one constituting my thought in general, without which it would not be thought by anyone, would pass by unnoticed, and would thus not be a thought – without ever being the one constituting any particular one of my thoughts, since I never see them born in plain view, and since I only know myself through them. We must attempt to understand how subjectivity can be simultaneously dependent and indeclinable. (PhP 461/422)

It is true that language already presupposes consciousness. This is why we are able to learn new languages and translate texts from one to another. Beneath the spoken cogito, there is the silent cogito. However, according to Merleau-Ponty, this indeclinable subjectivity does not constitute the world. It grasps itself only in the most fleeting of ways. According to Merleau-Ponty, the tacit cogito only comes to recognize itself in limit situations: when I perceive a threat to my life, for example, or when I perceive the gaze of the other upon me (PhP 426/465). In order to become a true cogito, it is necessary for the tacit cogito to express itself: “the tacit Cogito is only a Cogito when it has expressed itself” (PhP 426/466), and this not only in speech but presumably also in perception and action, given that the body already manifests and produces meaning at the level of perception and movement and that speech can be seen as being on a continuum with them. Thus, the last quote can also be read as implying that the tacit cogito is nothing by itself apart from its immersion the world, apart from the concrete way in which it is (bodily) manifested and acts within it. Merleau-Ponty, in fact, proceeds to make this point in the last remaining chapters of the *Phenomenology of Perception* (the ones that follow the chapter on the cogito): the chapters on temporality and freedom. In the chapter on temporality, for instance, Merleau-Ponty shows that Husserl's absolute consciousness, or what he also calls, following Husserl, “constituting time”, must of necessity appear to itself in succession, without which it would only be an “inarticulate cry” (PhP 450-1/489-90). This seems to be one of his main points of disagreement with Sartre: whereas the latter conceives of the subject as not being its object, and the for-itself as a nothing, Merleau-Ponty conceives of the subject, cogito or lived body right off the bat as a worldly being, as

he will put it later in *Visible and Invisible*— as something *of* the world, beyond and above the fact that it is someone or something for whom the world is.

Even the tacit cogito's unity stems from the way in which its existence is concretely enacted in the world. It is true that Merleau-Ponty seems to have taken this idea from Sartre. Against a position inspired by certain interpretations of Kant, according to which only reflection is capable of accomplishing the unity of the subject, that is, of unifying all my "representations" in the "I", Sartre (1992: 21, 44), and Merleau-Ponty after him, holds the idea that pre-reflective consciousness is self-unifying.<sup>6</sup> I do not have to unify my experiences in the fashion of the Kantian transcendental subject. I am a single temporality, a "cohesion of life" (PhP 430/469). For Merleau-Ponty, the unity of the tacit cogito is akin to the unity of the world. Just as the latter remains at the horizon of all my explicit perceptions – a horizon that can never be adequately brought into view or itself perceived (Romdehn-Romluc 2011: 125ff.) – the subject taken as tacit cogito remains a general project of a being in and towards the world. As noted above, this unity is truly enacted by perceiving and acting in the world. Contrary to Sartre, however, it is embodied subjectivity, the lived body, in which the unity of the tacit cogito consists for Merleau-Ponty. Just as time displays a unity that at each moment revolves around the present, so too my subjectivity is ultimately centred around the body as its point of view on the world. With the arrival of subjectivity (one could say, with the arrival of my life) begins a "field", an "experience" (PhP 429/468), or, as Merleau-Ponty also puts it, a "new possibility of situations" (*ibidem*). It is not that the subject thinks of itself as embodied, as if the idea of the subject were somehow tied to the idea of the body. Rather, it is the subject itself that exists as embodied, for otherwise it would not be a "possibility of situations" – it couldn't even be in what we call a situation. For Merleau-Ponty, to be in a situation is to be in the world by means of my body and to carve out a perspective on it:

If the subject is in a situation, or even if the subject is nothing other than a possibility of situations, this is because he only achieves his ipseity by actually being a body and by entering into the world through this body. If I find, while reflecting upon the essence of the body, that it is tied to the essence of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is identical with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because, ultimately, the subject that I am, understood concretely, is inseparable from this particular body and from this particular world. (PhP 431/470)

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<sup>6</sup> At the same time, as Sartre himself acknowledges, he took the idea of a self-unifying consciousness from Husserl's lectures on time. On this see, for example, Zahavi (1999).

6. Thus, to summarize and conclude, one can say that Merleau-Ponty's lived body comes to play the same role as Sartre's pre-reflective consciousness. The lived body is intentionally directed towards the world, and in being so directed it is pre-reflectively aware of itself as such. Pre-reflective consciousness is, in turn, designated by Merleau-Ponty as a tacit cogito. Thus, it can be said that the lived body equals pre-reflective consciousness, which in turn equals the tacit cogito. Given that Merleau-Ponty locates Sartre's pre-reflective cogito in the lived body, there remain significant differences between their conceptions of subjectivity. For Merleau-Ponty, what was traditionally conceived as the Cartesian cogito – or in Sartre's terms, the reflective cogito – is essentially tied to language, and the latter in turn to what Merleau-Ponty calls the body's "natural power of expression" (PhP 187/221). The "I" of reflection stems from the body's attempt to express itself. Moreover, located in the lived body, pre-reflective consciousness is also seen as something in and of the world, as opposed to the Sartrean view of pre-reflective consciousness as something essentially non-worldly.

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## IS INTENTIONALITY A BETTER CONCEPT THAN TELEOLOGY TO DESCRIBE BIOLOGICAL INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR?

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**ABSTRACT.** The author proposes that the phenomenological concept of intentionality is consistent with the idea that the living organism is structurally coupled with its environment, as stated by the theory of Autopoiesis of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. This theory affirms that living organisms produce themselves as systems in response to the disturbances they experience in their environments, and takes their responses as primordial cognitive acts. It is argued that their responses are intentional since they are elemental ways of standing in a world. In the first part, it is explained what Autopoiesis is, how cognition works in living organisms, and what structural coupling is. In the second part, it is stated that living organisms cannot be understood in mechanistic terms since they respond to a teleology inherent to intentional beings. In the last part, it is discussed how structural coupling and intentionality are analogous, and why intentionality is more comprehensive concept than teleology to describe the structure of individual organisms.

**Keywords:** Autopoiesis, cognition, intentionality, machine, teleology

During the last decades, there has been a discussion in Cognitive Sciences and Philosophy concerning what theories or models of mind are more convenient to understand cognition<sup>1</sup>. In this context, some theories take cognition as a form of symbol manipulation that can be performed, in principle, by any Turing machine or by some living beings<sup>2</sup>. The Google Neural Machine Translation could be an example of it. This is a neural network for translating based on a deep learning, in an accumulative or progressive way. For some of the current theories, this is a legitimate cognition just as much as human learning is, although a deep learning

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<sup>1</sup> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991, Gallagher and Zahavi, 2008, and Bermudez, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991.

system is not capable to explain how the translation process proceeds while a human being can do it<sup>3</sup>.

In Cognitive Sciences, living processes are usually understood in terms of processing inputs and production of outputs. This statement is very useful for “predicting” behavior by “explaining” the mechanisms of a variety of cognitive processes. However, some of its constraints are evident, because it does not understand Cognition in its holistic, embodied, and embedded character, neither it can explain the first-person character of Cognition since experience seems to be excluded from it.

In the symbolic-manipulation paradigm, some of the core aspects of Cognition are neglected. On the contrary, Enactivism takes cognition as an embodied activity which depends on a know-how acquired in the history of the agent’s interactions with its environment. Cognition goes beyond a function’s execution since it implies the agent’s history and its relation with its environment. In fact, Cognition is what makes the agent to conform a set of possible interactions with its environment, and to make it meaningful (a world).

Cognitive acts can also be traced in the responses that some living beings for adapting to their environment. Cognition could be considered a biological function which is involved in decision making processes and behavior’s regulation. In what follows, it will be suggested that the biological perspective on Cognition could be complemented with some ideas of Phenomenology and Autopoiesis<sup>4</sup> to understand Cognition in its unity.

## 1. Autopoiesis & Cognition

The aim of Santiago’s Theory of Cognition (Maturana and Varela) was to describe how biological individual’s behavior operates. Rather than explain it by focusing in its phylogenetic-evolutionary aspects<sup>5</sup>, it intended to highlight its organization and how it works, proposing that Autopoiesis is at the center of their behavior. In other words, Autopoiesis is what makes an individual a living organism. Autopoiesis has been defined as the self-producing dynamic of an

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Engel, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Originally published in Maturana, H. and Varela, F. (1972) *De máquinas y seres vivos: Una teoría sobre la organización biológica*. Santiago: Lumen.

<sup>5</sup> In a certain sense, this theory complements evolutionary theories since it offers a definition of the living being that is only taken for granted by them.

individual, which is originated in the dynamic of its components, in response to the environmental disturbances<sup>6</sup>. From the components' dynamics, it emerges some patterns that could be considered systemic since they later regulate the low-level components' interactions. For Maturana and Varela (M&V), this behavior is not teleological, and they assumed that can be explained by mechanics because, at the time they proposed the theory of Autopoiesis (1980), only mechanistic explanations were taken seriously by the scientific community. Even if this approach can predict behaviors, it neglects subjective experience. Although it is a matter of discussion whether living beings are subjects or not, they are simply different than predictable machines. However, the aim of this paper is to suggest that they are intentional entities. In the first part, what Autopoiesis is and how Cognition in biological entities operates will be explained. In the second part, it will be introduced the criticism asserted by M&V against Teleology. The last part of argues that this criticism does not affect the phenomenological concept of Intentionality, which is compatible with the current developments of Cognitive Sciences. Let us begin by introducing the definition of Autopoiesis as presented by Maturana and Varela (M&V):

"An autopoietic machine is a machine organized as a system of component production processes that i) generate the processes (relations) of production that produce them through their continuous interactions and transformations, and ii) constitute the machine as a unity in the physical space. Therefore, a continuously specific autopoietic machine produces its own organization through the production of its own components, under conditions of continuous disturbance and compensation of those disturbances (production of components) [...]. An autopoietic machine is a homeostatic system that has its own organization as the variable that keeps constant"<sup>7</sup>.

Autopoietic machines<sup>8</sup> are autonomous in the sense that their behavior does not depend on an external agent that programs their behavior<sup>9</sup>. Instead, they spontaneously and internally produce changes in their environment and in themselves. It should be said that as systems, they possess structures and components. For example, some of the components of the human being are its

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<sup>6</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>7</sup> Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>8</sup> In the next part of this paper, I will discuss the convenience to refer the living organisms as machine.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.



organs, its extremities, and its nervous system, while its structure is the dynamics between its components which allow the system to live (as a human being and not as a sum of parts). In the same way, molecules do not subsist as discrete units, but in molecular dynamics. Their structure is what sets their boundaries, in other words, what elements of the environment can be integrated and which of its components need modifications, subordinating any system's changes to the maintenance of the system's unity<sup>10</sup>.

The limits of a living system are determined by the domain of interactions that it can experience without disintegrating<sup>11</sup>. When a component participates in the system's dynamics, it can be considered a system's part. When an external agent is not integrated to the system's dynamic, it can be considered a perturbation and the system intends to overcome it<sup>12</sup>. The responses the organism gives to external stimuli, by integrating them or excluding them from the dynamics, imply a constant adjustment of their own components' dynamic which is subordinated to the maintenance of their systemic unity. Thus, these systems are homeostatic because they remain as relational unities and not as mere aggregates of components, which are insufficient for Autopoiesis since they lack a structural dynamic that determines which elements belong to the system. In the same respect, if an organism cannot overcome the environmental perturbations<sup>13</sup>, it loses its Autopoiesis, disintegrates and die<sup>14</sup>.

As mentioned above, cognition plays a central role in Autopoiesis. In this regard, M&V were influenced by Bateson, who argued that mental processes are features of all living organisms, as well as unavoidable consequences of primordial life processes prior to the development of brains and nervous systems. In this perspective, the mind is a common pattern in organisms that can be extended to social systems and ecosystems<sup>15</sup>. However, this perspective does not distinguish between living and non-living systems<sup>16</sup>. Following Bateson, M&V affirmed that

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> An external influence can deform an organism only when it is sufficiently strong to force the organism to make a progressive change in its structure. In some instances, the deforming agents can be perceived by the system. In other cases, only an external observer can appreciate them. Since the organism is not able to assume the external agent, neither it can describe them.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. Capra and Luisi, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Both authors avoid using the word "Mind" to refer to this a phenomenon since it is usually associated with a thinking substance, while they refer to a process. Cfr. Capra and Luisi, 2014.

"living systems are cognitive systems, and living is a process of cognition. This statement is accurate for all organisms, having them or not a nervous system<sup>17</sup>. Or that Cognition

"[...] is the activity involved in the self-generation and self-perpetuation of living networks. In other words, cognition is the very process of life. The self-organizing activity of living systems, at all levels of life, is mental activity. The interactions of a living organism — plant, animal or human — with its environment are cognitive interactions. Thus, life and cognition are inseparably connected."<sup>18</sup>

Cognitions are the mechanisms that organisms employ to maintain themselves. They depend on the specific coordination between the various components of organisms' structures, which also determine "all the changes that may occur to compensate for disturbances"<sup>19</sup>, which means that a non-assimilable influence would not be part of the organism. One of these mechanisms is the sensory-motor apparatus of the organism. An example of it is the auditory system of bats, which allows them to coordinate their movements through echoes (echolocation), which help them to capture their preys<sup>20</sup>. The sophistication of the sensitive apparatus influences the way an animal is engaged in its environment. In the same way, cognitive capacities such as consciousness allow unforeseen synchronizations with the environment, although this not implies the domain of possible interactions of a conscious agent is unlimited. Each cognition is specific since depends on how the organism as system behaves, which determines what can or cannot integrate to itself. For this reason, knowledge depends on how the individual is organized and how it is embedded in its environment. Thus, if there is a structural modification of the individual, there is a variation of its cognitive domain<sup>21</sup>.

M&V used the term "Structural coupling" to refer to the cognition of living organism because this structural self-modification the individual produces to

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<sup>17</sup> Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>18</sup> Maturana, 1974. Modern philosophy placed the thinking or spiritual substance, what is called cognition here, as an exclusive property of the human being, unlike other living beings that were interpreted as machines. In contrast, in the theoretical biology of Maturana and Varela, phenomena such as consciousness or subjectivity, modes of the thinking substance, are only particular modes of being of the broader phenomenon of cognition.

<sup>19</sup> Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. Jacobs and Bastian, 2016, chapter 2.

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. Maturana and Varela, 1980.

maintain itself also implies an engagement with its environment. Since the permanent change forces the individual to adapt, this gives rise to adaptive processes of learning and development that occur throughout its existence.

The usual rejections of the employment of terms such as learning or development for referring non-human cognitions do not consider these are analogous behavior patterns in multiple organisms since the structural coupling is the same in its multiple manifestations, not only in humans. Obviously, certain types of interactions, such as linguistic ones, belong only to human beings, and they allow to organize and structurally adapt to a specific environment, the social life. In an analogous way, other living beings adapt their processes of self-production in relation to a specific environment and to the possibilities of variation. One last consequence of this approach is that cognition is not anymore a representation of the world, nor located in brain activity. According to Capra and Luisi,

"Mind and matter do not appear more as belonging to two separate categories, but as representing two complementary aspects of the phenomenon of life - process and structure, which are inseparably connected. For the first time, we have a scientific theory that unifies mind, matter, and life."<sup>22</sup>

We can affirm that cognition is a more primordial phenomenon than consciousness, which supposes a brain and a sophisticated nervous system<sup>23</sup>. Consciousness is the result of the dynamics of the brain with the different sensory-motor organs of the body, and with the environment, and not all these components are needed for other cognitions. As an emerging process, it is the living dynamics, process, and structure of the organism.

## **2. Maturana and Varela on Teleology**

The previous section has pointed out that cognition is a structural coupling with a meaningful world. Nevertheless, M&V have refused to interpret it as teleologically oriented. In what follows, the difference between an extrinsic and intrinsic purpose will be introduced, and M&V' rejection of teleology will be

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<sup>22</sup> Capra and Luisi, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. Capra and Luisi 2014.

discussed. The phenomenological concept of intentionality will be later presented as a theoretical alternative.

Initially, M&V have denied teleological explanation in biology, considering Autopoiesis theory a mechanical explanation to living organisms' behavior, rejecting an immanent purpose behind it. By rejecting that organisms' behavior is goal-directed, Maturana and Varela also deny that Autopoiesis involves teleology, addressing living organisms as autopoietic machines, whose operations are determined by the structures and produce their components while self-produce themselves as systems, which are mechanically driven to homeostasis or balance, and overcoming environmental disturbances. The system itself is not goal-directed to being in homeostasis; in any case, teleology is at most a descriptive notion that an observer employs to make it understandable. This viewpoint is against Kant's position since he claims that mechanics cannot explain some behaviors such as regeneration, growth or reproduction that occurs in the animal world. To make them intelligible one must postulate that their behavior is goal-oriented.

According to Kant, organisms have a structure that seems to have been produced from an idea, this means that their different elements are integrated in such a way that they produce adequate behaviors to live in their specific environments, they seem to pursue a telos. However, the telos is not an extrinsic purpose for the organism, as in the machines, but an intrinsic one, which means that it resides in the organism and not in an external agent. The natural, intrinsic or immanent purpose, as it has been usually called, resides in organisms that are cause and effect of themselves.

Contrary to M&V, Thompson refuses to interpret autopoietic systems as if they were "machines" or "artifacts" by considering their genesis. Living organisms do not depend on an idea that causally determines their production, which is the case of artifacts. For instance, to produce a chair a designer must previously have in his or her mind a model. This idea externally regulates the production of the entity. Contrary, organisms' organization is not separated from them, in other words, their causality is immanent. As Thompson said, "an organism is 'self-producing' (self-producing) and 'self-organizing' (self-organizing) because each of its parts produces the other reciprocally. It follows that we cannot take the idea or concept of the organism as the cause of the organism itself (...)"<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, Weber and Varela consider metabolism as an empirical case of self-organization

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<sup>24</sup> Thompson, 2007.

since it plays the role to keep the organism in a material steady flux<sup>25</sup>. Besides, they address metabolism as an emergent causality which involves two domains of processes, a local and a global, in which organisms' identity is constituted as an emergent causality between these two domains<sup>26</sup>.

A biological individual is defined as, "(...) a locus of sensation and agency, a living impulse always already in relation with its world"<sup>27</sup>. While standing in the world, the organism is intrinsically teleological oriented towards 1) the maintenance of its own identity (self-production), and 2) the sense-creation by which it differentiates to its environment (self-organization)<sup>28</sup>.

As it was mentioned, Artifacts depend on a designer who produces them following an external model and, therefore, their purpose depends on the attribution of an interpreter, someone who use them in respect to its possibilities. Mechanical principles can explain their functioning. In opposition, living organisms have a self-organizing capacity that cannot be grasped by these principles, because their behavior differs from the movement of a matter. Machines respond to an external purpose. For example, a car is a set of assembled parts that need a specific gear to operate. The designer's idea determines how these parts should be assembled for it, in that sense, its structure is not determined in the dynamic of its components<sup>29</sup>. Although artifacts are organized in such a way that they produce coherent movements, as their components are related to each other, they are mere replaceable means integrated by an external agent. On the contrary, the components of living organisms are co-produced or maintained between a reciprocal causality of self-production. This is referred to an immanent purposiveness<sup>30</sup>.

Thompson advocates for a reconciliation between naturalism and teleology and considers that Kant had denied this possibility since the self-organizing causality of organisms was an inexplicable subject for the science of his time. Thompson argues that the development of the sciences on complex self-organizing systems could overcome this gap. The theory of Autopoiesis, for example, offers a detailed scientific characterization of self-production or organization, a subject that Kant banished outside science. Two advances that

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<sup>25</sup> Weber and Varela, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Weber and Varela, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Weber and Varela, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Weber and Varela, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Thompson, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, 2007.

would allow scientific explanation, according to him, would be "the detailed tracking of the molecular systems of self-production in living cells" and "the invention of mathematical concepts and techniques for the analysis of self-organization in dynamic systems non-linear"<sup>31</sup>. To solve this gap, teleology should be considered a constitutive principle of living organisms, as the following quote states:

"Life is an order of emergent nature that results from certain morpho-dynamic principles, specifically those of Autopoiesis. According to this perspective, an autopoietic system is not merely analogous to life, but the minimal instance of life and the elementary (the basis) of every living form known to us"<sup>32</sup>.

Another reason to distinguish living organisms and machines is their non-fractionable character. Rosen affirms that, unlike machines, an organism cannot be preserved if the dynamics of its components or its functioning as a unified whole is fractioned. An organism dies when it is fractionated since its functioning as a whole depends on the low-level interactions of its components. On the contrary, machines' components can be replaced by different ones with similar or equal functions and remain useful<sup>33</sup>. Even if their components are structured, they only depend on a sensory-motor contingency (in the sense of a behavioral autonomy)<sup>34</sup>.

As we have seen, M&V argued that teleology is not essential to the explanation of the behavior of living organisms and that, fundamentally, is an extrapolation of the discourse of the action<sup>35</sup>. Likewise, according to Thompson,

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<sup>31</sup> Thompson, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Thompson, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Thompson, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson, 2007. Rosen notes that other computational models that do not fit under this scheme, such as the Metabolism-Repair System [(M, R) system], could serve to characterize Autopoiesis. In this model, each of the functions is involved with the other functions within a system. This fulfills the previous requirement for a system to not be fractionable without losing its systemic unit. Autopoietic systems are a subclass of (M, R) systems, but the problem with the latter is that they are very general and lack two characteristics of the former: the ability to generate their own limits and delimit their internal topology. Cf. Letelier, Marín, and Mpodoliz, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Thus, purposiveness would belong only to the thoughts made by the interpreter when integrating the machine into a wider network of meanings. For example, we believe that the purpose of the refrigerator is to conserve food, even if it is only a thermally insulated cabinet. If only the operation of the machinery and not the purpose were considered, then the aspects of it that are not linked to the purposes that man attributes to it could be described. Supposedly, when doing

both authors have in mind the intrinsic purpose described above<sup>36</sup>. In addition, they stated that the operational coherence of living organisms is what has led them to interpret their behavior as intentional<sup>37</sup>. Indeed, it is not easy to explain a spontaneous genesis without referring to finalism. However, for M&V living systems do not operate because they are programmed to do so, but for the maintenance of their relational dynamic that excludes and integrates elements from an environment<sup>38</sup>.

Even when living beings could be constrained by their structures but not determined by them since the interactions with their environments can modify this structures. Living beings as open systems are considered social entities since they have the possibility to change by adapting themselves to the challenges that an environment imposes. This does not happen with machines, whose possibilities to change are given in advance by their structural conditioning. They are capable to resist a set of possible disturbances, but no more than that. It follows that it is questionable to understand living beings as machines since they have no purpose and it is living organisms are immanent teleological since they intend to conserve themselves by resisting disturbances or by adapting themselves to them.

Additionally, it is also difficult to consider them as machines because of their spontaneity. Maturana and Varela mistakenly claimed that their spontaneity is a reason to deny their teleological nature. However, as Thompson has pointed out, that could only be correct for an extrinsic purpose, that is, by affirming their spontaneity one neglects that there are externally determined by someone else. However, this is a very narrow sense of purposiveness and their argument cannot deny that there is an immanent purpose that rules their spontaneity. Moreover, Maturana and Varela did not consider that, in a certain way, autonomy is immanent purposiveness. Consequently, they have fallen into a confusion of terms and have forgotten a crucial element in their initial explanation of living beings.

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this type of descriptions one would be being objective. However, this type of description is given in explanatory contexts in which the intention is to highlight certain aspects of a phenomenon for specific purposes, for example, in an engineering class. The rejection of the term of purpose is related to the theoretical interest of the functioning of living organisms.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. Thompson, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Maturana and Varela, 1980.

<sup>38</sup> Maturana and Varela, 1980.

As we have seen, the original formulation of Autopoiesis theory intended to understand living beings as machines, but it has been reviewed some of the difficulties that arise from this viewpoint. They two main points of the argument were that 1) machines' acts are meaningless unless an observer or interpret declares that they have a purpose, 2) living beings are not-fractionable systems, and 3) living beings are also open-systems that can modify their structures in the history of the interactions with their environments. It has been considered that these differences are sufficient reasons to not refer living organisms as machines.

### **3. The intentionality of autopoietic systems**

In what follows, it will be argued that structural coupling, or the capacity that living organisms possess to self-produce as systems in the interactions with their environments, can be understood as their intentionality. First, the concept of phenomenological intentionality considered as the constitution of meaning and being grounded in a meaningful world will be explained. Then, it will be discussed whether it can be pertinent to describe living organisms.

One of the meanings of intentionality is consciousness<sup>39</sup>. Intentional entities are meaning-directed, that is, they transcend themselves. However, not all the mental states are intentional in this senses<sup>40</sup>. For example, Heidegger considers that consciousness is not the most relevant aspect of intentionality. Even if is appropriate to explain the theoretical relationship with an object of reflection, it fails to address the engagement of subjectivity in the world<sup>41</sup>. Instead of it, Heidegger understands subjectivity in its rooting and confrontation with the mundane life: in other words, subjectivity is grounded in a meaningful world which is the horizon<sup>42</sup> of all possible meanings and from which the Dasein interprets itself. Being in a world is different from representing a world since subjectivity is structurally coupled in its environment, and does not represent it. Following this, Levinas points out that

"The transcendental activity does not consist in reflecting a content, nor in the production of a thought being. The constitution of the object is situated in a pre-

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<sup>39</sup> Husserl, 2013, §74.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. Kriegel, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Cfr. Zahavi, 2003a.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. Rizo-Patrón, 2012.



predicative 'world' that, nevertheless, the subject constitutes; conversely, being in the world is nothing other than the spontaneity of a constituent subject, without which being in the world would have been simple belonging of a part to a whole and the simple subject result of an element"<sup>43</sup>.

The world is, then, the horizon of non-conscious meanings that support all activities. About the concept of 'world', Heidegger affirms that "the stone is without world" (Weltlos), "the animal is poor of world" (Weltarm) and "man shapes the world" (Weltbild), that is, that the criterion that distinguishes the living from the non-living is the belongingness to a world<sup>44</sup>. "The stone is without" or "lacks world" is a first-person observation that is made by comparing the relationship of the stone with its environment with respect to the one we as humans have with our world<sup>45</sup>. From another perspective, the stone lacks a world because cannot be irritated or perturbed, that is, it does not configure structural changes based on the influences of its environment. Since it is indistinguishable from its environment, it has no environment. By extension, the animal or the amoeba, in their respective "poverty" do have a relationship with a world that deserves to be discussed. Poverty does not mean the mere absence of the world, which is the case of the rock, nor does it mean that the animal world is less complex than the human one<sup>46</sup>, but in the sense that

"The world of every single animal is not only limited in its scope, but also in the way of penetrability in that which is accessible to the animal. The working bee knows the flowers it visits, its color and aroma, but it does not know the pistils of these flowers as pistils, it does not know the roots of the plants, it does not know such thing as the number of the pistils and the leaves"<sup>47</sup>.

It is interesting that Heidegger has pointed out to the impossibility to recognize an active and conscious intentionality in the animal as the cause of its poverty of the world. Does this make the human world an open horizon of senses and possibilities? Is the animal world static? Is the animal engagement with its environment as much as complex as the human being in the world? In

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<sup>43</sup> Levinas, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. Candiloro, 2012.

<sup>45</sup> It can be said that in the definition of the stone as a wordless, the Dasein is in a certain way presupposed. Cf. Candiloro, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Heidegger, 1995.

<sup>47</sup> Heidegger, 1995.

other words, is the active and conscious intentionality the only one that constitutes meaning? In any case, both humans and other animals live in an environment that is significant to them and with which they maintain an open relationship.

Searle adopted a similar stance when considered intentionality as an explicit awareness of something. He did not take it as the constitution of meaning, as phenomenology does. An objection to his position is that there are intentions that are not explicitly conscious, without being "less intentional" for that reason. In any case, he replies that they should at least be potentially conscious<sup>48</sup>. However, what he is confronting is whether intentionality is the gender or a species of consciousness. If it were species, it could not be extended to living organisms, while, if active consciousness were only a species of consciousness, intentionality would be the gender of it and, then, intentionality should not necessarily mean consciousness.

The problem for accepting Searle's position is there are intentional experiences in which the subject and the object are not easily distinguishable, but rather they behave in a similar way to the structural coupling, the unity between the organism and its environment, thus it does not fit with the species "explicit awareness of something". For instance, when touching a hot object, one does not experience the pain as a propositional awareness of pain, rather, it is experienced as an irritation or bodily pain. Consciousness in its rational significance is not relevant here because pain is experienced whether it is experienced by an adult, by a child who has not learned to speak, or by an animal. In all of them, pain involves an intentional response, the excess of pain motivates the body to evade, a response that does not need reflective self-awareness, which is not possible for most of the animals. The irritation that motivates that embodied response is independent of consciousness shapes both human and non-human interactions with the environment. But it is not extensible, for instance, to a stone, because it cannot be disturbed as it lacks thermal sensations, which are linked with the possession of a nervous system. What is being denied here is that to feel the burning is to form a representation of the heat, even when both in the feeling and in the representation, there is a movement that, in the case of feeling, is directed towards an object.

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<sup>48</sup> Searle, 1983.

Another aspect of intentionality is that living being stands themselves in a world<sup>49</sup>. In "From the Existence to the Existant", one of Levinas's first writings, he employed the term "positioning" to refer to this kind of intentionality situated at the level of the living body. He considers that subjectivity, before taking the form of consciousness or reflective consciousness, means being situated or embedded, that is, "the location of consciousness is not subjective, but the subjectivation of the subject"<sup>50</sup>. The individual acts in a world in which is situated. Being embodied means, then, being grounded in a world. Being part and, at the same time, different from the world that, "before being a geometric space, before being the concrete environment of the Heideggerian world, is a base"<sup>51</sup>. The surrounding Heideggerian world, of what is "at hand", is less original than the environment that supports conscious and non-conscious life. The distinction between the organism and the environment is not situated in the capacity to categorize, rather, on a sensitive level, as in the case of pain shows.

The location or intentional standing is then a property that can be extended to organisms in general. Levinas takes intentionality as the self-referential character of subjectivity, which consists in being open to the possibilities or to transcend itself, for instance, for a transformation of our environment that forces us to modify our behavior is a transcendence. What is transcendent is simply an exteriority which challenges our engagement in the world. To Levinas, subjectivity, regardless the exteriorities, intends to maintain itself as an immanence<sup>52</sup>, that is, as a static system that can overcome external influences. However, Marder has suggested that plant behavior responds to a certain form of intentionality which does not involve consciousness, in the sense that they open themselves to a transcendence by immersing themselves in their environment, "they merge" in it, "proliferating without the intervention of conscious representations"<sup>53</sup>. The transcendence here alluded is directed to the

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<sup>49</sup> The term is used for the first time in "Sur les Idees de M. E. Husserl", to refer to the standing of the active consciousness. However, later Levinas employs it to refer what is presupposed in the active sense of intentionality. In *Totality and Infinity*, the standing no longer means the active consciousness, but the consciousness that "sets" or "merge" in its world, in a similar way than the *Geworfenheit*.

<sup>50</sup> Levinas, 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Levinas, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. Levinas, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Marder, 2013.

alterity of the world, which is different and prior to this distinction between the self and the other<sup>54</sup>. The alterity proper to plants would be the medium in which they emerge as individual organisms. This point is crucial for our argument because even when intentionality is understood as self-reference, intentionality is always a relation to an exteriority. Considering this, the peculiarity of the intentionality of living organisms is that they have their environments as a horizon, those elements that are not part of their internal dynamics and with which, however, they interact.

To conclude, I would like to draw some guidelines for the dialogue between the theory of Autopoiesis and the phenomenological concept of intentionality. In the first place, the concept of intentionality, which supposes an immanent purposiveness, can describe the open nature of the organism and its dynamic with an environment that constrains and supports it. Also, it affirms the spontaneous character of the constitution of meaning. The relationship with an environment, which I have described as structural coupling, cannot be explained only through the concept of intrinsic purposiveness, hence the need for the concept of intentionality as a theoretical alternative. Intentionality, in this respect, reveals that structural coupling is a self- and world constitution. Finally, under the light of this concept, Autopoiesis is exhibited as the idea that all the actions of a living organism are autonomous but context-dependent, spontaneous but constrained by the mechanism that regulates the organism.

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<sup>54</sup> Cfr. Zahavi, 2017.

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## LA MAIN PASSIVE: ABSENCE D'ŒUVRE, RESISTANCE ET DESŒUVREMENT

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**ABSTRACT.** *The Passive Hand: Absence d'œuvre, Resistance and Désœuvrement.* I question the rapport between the "hand" as an aesthetic notion and the value of "passivity", in order to define the dynamic of the relationship between passivity and creation. I, first, examine the Blanchot's metaphor regarding the act of creation as being a privative intervention of the left hand, passive, on the right hand, active, under the light of a critical reading of the Nietzschean concepts of "active force"—"reactive force"; then, I analyse the passivity of the discourse under three types of rapport: the inspiration and the absence of the *œuvre*, the resistance and the *œuvre*, the disobedience and the *désœuvrement*. From the absence of the *œuvre* of the inspired artist to the resistance at the *œuvre*, which creates the *œuvre*, and lastly, to the reactive force which affirms the refusal of the *œuvre* and produces the absence of the *œuvre*, passivity makes a circular movement from the impossibility of the *œuvre* towards the *désœuvrement*, from its genesis to its heterogenesis.

**Keywords:** passivity, active force - reactive force, inspiration, resistance, *désœuvrement*.

### 1. Introduction

La figure de la main est surtout invoquée à la croisée de ses qualités mécaniques (assignées à « prendre ») et de ses valences cognitives et créatrices (« comprendre », « apprendre », « entreprendre », « appréhender »); c'est donc la main en action qui est envisagée dans son rapport avec la création, d'Aristote, pour qui la main atteste de l'intelligence spécifique aux hommes, à Valéry<sup>1</sup>, Focillon<sup>2</sup>, Brun<sup>3</sup>, ou Bergson<sup>4</sup>. Dans son *Discours aux chirurgiens*, prononcé le 17

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<sup>1</sup> Dans ses *Cahiers*, Tomes I et II, édition présentée et annotée par Judith Robinson, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1973 et 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Dans *Eloge de la main*, PUF, Paris, 1934. Dans ses *Cahiers*, Tomes I et II, édition présentée et annotée par Judith Robinson, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1973 et 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Dans *La Main et l'esprit*, PUF, Paris, 1963.

<sup>4</sup> Dans *La pensée et le mouvant*, PUF, Paris, 1969.



octobre 1938 dans l'Amphithéâtre de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris, Valéry conclue de manière abrupte, sans précautions ni explications, sur une double charge modale de la main: „organe de la certitude positive” et „organe du possible”<sup>5</sup>, ce qui nous semble pouvoir esquisser une nouvelle problématique de la main: la main pourrait être autre chose qu’une figure de l’action et de l’affirmation.

C’est justement sur le rapport entre la « main » comme notion esthétique et la valeur de la « passivité » que nous nous interrogeons dans cet article, pour essayer de cerner la dynamique du rapport entre passivité et création. Nous allons partir d’une métaphore de Blanchot autour de l’acte de création comme intervention de la main gauche, passive, sur la main droite, active, pour décliner le discours de la passivité sous trois rapports: *l’inspiration et l’absence d’œuvre, la résistance et l’œuvre, l’insoumission et le désœuvrement*.

Pour Blanchot, l’intervention de la main gauche sur la main droite qui souffrirait de la « préhension persécutrice » (le besoin impératif de saisir le crayon) soumet l’écriture au forces de l’instant et la libère ainsi de la fausse maîtrise de la main qui écrit, l’assignant au pouvoir de cesser d’écrire : « La maîtrise est toujours le fait de l’autre main, celle qui n’écrit pas, capable d’intervenir au moment où il faut, de saisir le crayon et de l’écarter ».<sup>6</sup> Ce renoncement au pouvoir, au pouvoir qu’est nommer, et à toute autorité sur l’œuvre, s’articule, chez Blanchot, nous semble-t-il, par deux thèmes: *l’inspiration* qui paralyse l’intention créatrice et, frôlant ainsi le manque d’inspiration, empêche l’œuvre de commencer, et *l’insoumission* imprudente de celui dont le désir démesuré et impatient de posséder l’œuvre réussit à désœuvrer: entre *l’écoute* du « chant des Sirènes » par Ulysse, qui réduit l’œuvre à l’impossibilité de commencer, et *le regard* imprudent d’Orphée vers Eurydice, qui ruine nécessairement l’œuvre, on plonge au cœur du problème de la création, qui traverse toute la réflexion blanchotienne, de *L’Espace littéraire* (1955) jusqu’à *L’Ecriture du désastre* (1980). A côté de l’inspiration vouée à *l’absence d’œuvre* et de l’insoumission qui produit *l’absence de l’œuvre*, nous ajouterons entre ces deux hypostases de la passivité, une troisième: la *résistance*, que nous entendons comme *œuvrer par la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire*, à l’instar de Deleuze et Agamben - pour repenser ces trois rapports par le biais d’une lecture critique de la théorie de Nietzsche sur la force active et la force réactive.

## 2. L’inspiration: l’absence d’œuvre

Pour Blanchot, maîtriser un texte c’est en interrompre l’écriture, soumettre le pouvoir auctorial au pouvoir de cesser d’écrire : la maîtrise est une

<sup>5</sup> Paul Valéry, « Discours aux chirurgiens » [1938] dans *Œuvres*, t. I, éd. Jean Hythier, Paris, Gallimard, « Bibliothèque de la Pléiade », 1957, p. 909.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1988, p. 18.

affaire de la main qui n'écrit pas, capable d'intervenir au moment convenable pour écarter le crayon, voilà comment il entend l'intervention rédemptrice de la main gauche sur la main droite dite « malade » de l'impératif d'agir:

Il arrive qu'un homme qui tient un crayon, même s'il veut fortement le lâcher, sa main ne le lâche pas cependant : au contraire, elle se resserre, loin de s'ouvrir. L'autre main intervient avec plus de succès, mais l'on voit alors la main que l'on peut dire malade esquisser un lent mouvement et essayer de rattraper l'objet qui s'éloigne. Ce qui est étrange, c'est la lenteur de ce mouvement. (...) Cette main éprouve, à certains moments, un besoin très grand de saisir : elle doit prendre le crayon, il le faut, c'est un ordre, une exigence impérieuse. Phénomène connu sous le nom de préhension persécutrice.<sup>7</sup>

Cette force intrusive de la main gauche qui sépare la main droite de son crayon est une force réactive, c'est-à-dire une force qui n'est victorieuse que par une *volonté de puissance* - au sens de Nietzsche dans le recueil homonyme<sup>8</sup> - négative. Cette volonté de puissance est le complément généalogique de la force - sans lequel la force resterait indéterminée et non-victorieuse -, son moteur à la fois différentiel (en tant qu' « élément de production de la différence de quantité entre deux ou plusieurs forces supposées en rapport ») et génétique (comme « élément de production de la qualité qui revient à chaque force dans ce rapport »)<sup>9</sup>.

Le triomphe de cette force réactive, régie par une volonté de puissance nihiliste qui consiste, pour Nietzsche, à *séparer la force active de ce qu'elle peut*, s'exprime par le devenir-réactif de la force active ; en enlevant à la force active ce qu'elle peut, la force réactive rend réactive la force active. En quoi consiste la volonté de puissance de la force réactive qu'est la main gauche ? Ce qui la fait triompher sur la volonté de puissance affirmative alliée à la main active c'est sa volonté de néant : c'est par cette voie négative qu'a lieu le triomphe du réactif ou le devenir-réactif de la force active. Cette volonté nihiliste qui assure la victoire de la force réactive déstabilisant l'action de la main droite, en la séparant de l'instrument de son pouvoir (le crayon) et donc de ce qu'elle peut (écrire), empêche la manœuvre. Pour revenir à Blanchot, la main gauche qui s'approprie le pouvoir de la main droite, agissante, dominante, en lui ôtant l'instrument du

<sup>7</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>8</sup> Projetée en 1888, *La Volonté de puissance. Essai d'inversion de toutes les valeurs* est restée inachevée. Les compilations publiées sous le titre *La Volonté de puissance* par la sœur de Nietzsche, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, déforment gravement, semble-t-il, la pensée originale. C'est de *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, de Gilles Deleuze, PUF, Paris, 1962, chapitre II, „Actif et réactif” (surtout pp. 56-82), que nous citerons désormais les concepts de Nietzsche et leurs rapports.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

pouvoir opère donc un devenir-réactif de la main droite : la main droite, agissante, dominante devient une main soumise à la main gauche, obéissante.

Le triomphe de la main gauche sur la main droite s'exprime-t-il seulement par le devenir-réactif de la main droite, ou peut-on envisager aussi un devenir actif de la main gauche ? Plus précisément encore, si la main gauche ôte à la main droite ce qu'elle peut, c'est-à-dire son pouvoir d'affirmer, est-ce pour conserver pour elle ce pouvoir ou pour empêcher l'affirmation ? Dans un premier temps, on pourrait répondre, avec Nietzsche, qu'il ne peut pas y avoir un devenir actif des forces réactives, puisque le moteur de la réaction est la négation et le devenir actif n'est envisageable que par l'affirmation. Dans ce sens, la main gauche qui enlève le crayon à la main droite ne pourrait pas se mettre elle-même à écrire, puisque si elle prive la main droite de son pouvoir affirmatif, c'est justement pour empêcher qu'il y ait affirmation, action d'écrire. Donc, pour que les forces réactives deviennent actives, il faudrait que leur alliance avec la volonté de néant soit brisée. Il faudrait donc que *le renversement de valeur* de la FA soit doublé de ce Nietzsche appelle une *transmutation de valeur*, par la transformation de la puissance de néant en puissance d'affirmation ; ce n'est donc qu'une négation transmuée, passée du côté de l'affirmation, niant les forces réactives elles-mêmes qui peut véritablement affirmer et ainsi exprimer le devenir-actif du réactif. Si dans leur alliance avec les forces réactives la volonté de néant sépare la force active de ce qu'elle peut, c'est-à-dire de l'affirmation, produisant ainsi un devenir-réactif de la force active, la rupture de cette alliance même, par l'autonégation des forces réactives, donnerait lieu au devenir-actif des forces réactives, une opération destructive active ; ce n'est que lorsque les forces réactives triomphent non pas sur les forces actives, mais sur elles-mêmes, par leur « autodestruction », qu'elles deviennent actives. Nous y reviendrons dans la dernière section de cet article.

En ôtant le pouvoir à la FA, la FR (jusqu'alors seulement obéissante, résistante) ne triomphe pas en composant une force supérieure, mais en décomposant la force active ; possédée par l'esprit du négatif, elle ne triomphe pas par addition, mais par soustraction. Séparant la force active de son pouvoir, la FR ne devient pas elle-même réactive, mais rend réactive la FA: c'est ce que Nietzsche appelle « le devenir réactif de la force active » (que nous notons comme F(A)r dans le schéma ci-joint).

Nietzsche note également, en suivant Spinoza, que la FR *dote*<sup>10</sup> la FA d'un nouveau pouvoir – un pouvoir « étrange », « inquiétant », « intéressant », dit Deleuze –, et que cette FR n'est pas la même que celle qui ôte le pouvoir, de même que la FA qui reçoit un nouveau pouvoir n'est pas la même que celle qui se trouve séparée

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<sup>10</sup> Le terme appartient à Deleuze, dans *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, op. cit., p. 75.

de son pouvoir. Pour rendre ces dédoublements plus clairs, nous préciserions que, d'une part, c'est la FA devenue réactive, c'est-à-dire obéissante et donc réceptive (nous la notons  $F(A)r$  dans le schéma ci-joint) - après l'enlèvement de son pouvoir par la FR - qui reçoit le nouveau pouvoir, et que, d'autre part, cette FR qui dote la FA ce nouveau pouvoir est une force réactive qui devient agissante (nous la notons  $F(R)a$  dans le schéma ci-joint). La question qui se pose est de savoir comment se constitue cette nouvelle force réactive qui suspend son réactif et dote la  $F(A)r$  de pouvoir, sans pour autant que cela lui vaille une transmutation de sa valeur réactive. Ce qui génère sa nécessité c'est, nous semble-t-il, le devenir-réactif même de la FA : lorsque la FA est séparée de ce qu'elle peut, elle se livre à un état d'obéissance, de passivité, de contemplation et d'attente ; le sujet plein du pouvoir d'énoncer se trouve désormais plongé dans l'impuissance et l'inaction et en tant que sujet évidé, ou plutôt en tant que place vide de sujet, position réceptive, passive, il « adresse » alors à la FR une demande de pouvoir, d'un pouvoir-autre : « Tu m'as pris mon pouvoir. Me voilà sans pouvoir, me voilà prêt à recevoir un pouvoir-autre. Mais je ne saurais te le demander moi-même, puisque je n'ai plus de pouvoir. C'est donc l'état de réaction auquel tu m'as livré qui le fera pour moi. ».

A cette demande impersonnelle, de la réceptivité de la  $F(A)r$ , la FR répondrait quelque chose comme : « Je suis celui qui t'a séparé de ton pouvoir. Je suis en même temps celui qui, en ayant ôté ton pouvoir, t'a rendu obéissante et réceptive. Je ne peux pas être en même temps celui qui te désarme et celui qui t'arme. Je ne pourrais donc pas annuler et mon être réactif, et ton devenir réactif, en acceptant de colmater ton attente. Je ne pourrais répondre à cette demande que par dédoublement, et je dois le faire parce que ta demande est dans l'ordre de la nécessité : c'est ta réceptivité qui m'oblige nécessairement à changer de nature pour que tu puisses avoir une réponse. Je vais donc suspendre le réactif en moi, sans pour autant devenir actif, et te donner un nouveau pouvoir. Je me transforme donc en une  $F(R)a$ , pour agir sur le réactif que je t'ai moi-même procuré, pour te donner ce que je t'ai fait me demander. »

Si la FA qui, une fois dépossédée de ce qu'elle peut par la FR, devient par cela-même réactive, l'acte par lequel la FR dote cette FA devenue réactive d'un nouveau pouvoir n'assure pourtant pas un devenir-actif à la force réactive, puisque cette acte « généreux » s'inscrit toujours dans une volonté de puissance nihiliste ; certes, cette FR nouvelle qui dote la FA d'un nouveau pouvoir agit, elle agit par *dotation*, ce qui met entre parenthèses sa réaction, mais ceci sans la transmuter véritablement en action, puisque cette dotation continue de s'inscrire dans la volonté nihiliste qui a séparé la FA de ce qu'elle pouvait. En d'autres termes, c'est à une FA subjuguée, devenue réactive par la perte du pouvoir, donc à une force soumise à (et transformée par) la volonté de puissance négative de la

FR, que cette nouvelle FR s'adresse à travers cet acte de dotation ; qui plus est, ce don de l'affirmation que FR fait à la FA nous semble être l'expression même du refus d'affirmation de la FR. Or, pour revenir aux propos de Nietzsche, tant que la volonté nihiliste triomphe sur quelque chose d'autre qu'elle-même, le réactif est maintenu et il ne peut pas y avoir de devenir-actif du réactif. Ce sur quoi la négation devrait triompher pour devenir affirmative c'est elle-même; pour que la réaction devienne active, il faudrait qu'elle se nie au nom du principe même qui la rendait victorieuse devant la FA : il faudrait que la volonté de néant nie la FR elle-même. Ce serait une « destruction active », par une négation transmuée qui exprimerait l'affirmation, le devenir-actif comme puissance affirmative.

En revenant à la métaphore blanchotienne, on pourrait penser la FA comme une main qui écrit puisqu'elle peut écrire, et la FA devenue réactive (la F(A)r) - comme une main qui n'écrit pas puisqu'elle ne peut pas écrire (le pouvoir lui ayant été ôté par la FR). Si la FR (ou la main gauche) sépare la FA (ou la main droite) de ce qu'elle peut, c'est pour empêcher que l'affirmation (l'œuvre) réside dans un rapport tautologique entre une volonté de puissance affirmative et une force active: (« écriture par une main qui peut écrire ») qui articulerait l'écriture de celui qui ne peut pas s'abstenir de faire et que rien n'empêche de faire. Mais le devenir-réactif de la force active, ou une force qui obéit à la FR et suspend son pouvoir d'action, n'est pourtant pas moins tautologique, quoique contradictoire. Cette FA qui suspend son action et devient réactive – cette F(A) r – est une force soumise qui ne peut pas affirmer sa différence, qu'est celle d'*affirmer*, tant qu'elle ne fait que réagir ; suspendue dans son devenir-réactif, elle reste une pure pesanteur dialectique, une contradiction suffoquée tautologiquement : « Je n'écris pas puisque je ne peux pas écrire ».

Il convient de préciser que cette FA sur laquelle intervient la FR c'est le non-inspiré mais en tant qu'*inspirable*, c'est-à-dire, tel que nous le verrons plus rigoureusement dans la sous-section suivante, quelqu'un de déjà faible, de déjà passif, dans une hyper-disponibilité d'une douloureuse jouissance. Quand FR intervient pour séparer la FA de ce qu'elle peut, ce n'est pas sur la volonté de puissance affirmative du sujet plein et invulnérable qu'elle intervient, d'un sujet qui peut seulement écrire, qui ne saurait ni s'abstenir d'écrire, ni se laisser empêcher d'écrire, et qui donc ne saurait être qu'une FA imperturbable; elle ne saurait intervenir que sur une volonté de puissance affirmative capable de l'accueillir et de s'y soumettre. Cette FR qui ne peut intervenir que sur la volonté de puissance affirmative d'un sujet vulnérable, déjà faible, en attente, et non sur la volonté de puissance affirmative d'un sujet-maître de lui-même et de son œuvre – cette FR, c'est l'inspiration, ou ce que Blanchot appelait « le chant des Sirènes ».

Si la FR vient bousculer la FA, lui ôter la puissance-de-faire, c'est pour la conduire à exhiber son autre puissance, la puissance de sa faiblesse, de sa passivité, une puissance qui, déplacée dans l'acte, formerait avec lui une alliance non-tautologique. Mais le passage de la puissance-de-faire (de la FA non-inspirée) à la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire inscrite dans l'œuvre (ce que nous appellerons « la résistance ») ne saurait avoir lieu que par l'impuissance et par la découverte de l'impuissance comme puissance-autre: la FR ôte à la FA sa puissance-de-faire, pour la laisser en proie à une pure impuissance: le faible devient ainsi encore plus faible, c'est-à-dire désormais apte à recevoir une puissance-autre. Cela revient à dire que la FR intervient sur la FA pour empêcher une œuvre résultée facilement de la faiblesse de la puissance, et non de la puissance de la faiblesse. Cette puissance-autre, cette puissance nouvelle, n'est pourtant pas une nouvelle puissance: c'est l'ancienne impuissance-de-faire révélée en tant que puissance-de-ne-pas faire. Voilà peut-être pourquoi Blanchot qualifie d'*illusoire* la puissance de l'inspiré: parce que c'est l'impuissance en tant que puissance de ne pas œuvrer. Le non-inspiré crée par sa puissance-de-faire, et s'il arrive à créer, c'est parce que cette puissance-de-faire ne lui vient pas du chant illusoire des Sirènes: il n'est pas apte à avoir cette puissance de ne pas créer tant que son identité lui est unitaire et invulnérable, tant qu'il ne peut pas être faible et s'exposer à l'inspiration; ratant l'inspiration, il rate l'*illusion* de sa puissance-de-faire, il maintient cette puissance dans la *vérité* mineure d'un sujet incapable de se destituer. L'inspiré a la puissance de s'exposer dans toute sa vulnérabilité à l'appel des Sirènes et de se vouer ainsi à l'impossibilité de la parole et à l'absence d'œuvre. Cette F(A)r, ou l'inspiré, devient, de celui qui ne peut pas faire (par le devenir réactif de la FA, processus que nous notons par // dans notre schéma), celui qui peut ne pas faire (à la suite de sa dotation par un "nouveau pouvoir" par la F(R)a, processus que nous notons par V dans notre schéma). Sa puissance de ne pas pouvoir faire et l'éclatement du noyau de sa substantialité subjective se manifestent dans l'absence d'œuvre.

### 2.1. L'inspiration, puissance de la passivité

De Keats, Hölderlin, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Mallarmé à Kafka et Artaud, pour ne donner que quelques exemples, l'appel de l'inspiration semble lié à une intervention étrangère, à une voix attirante et énigmatique qui, entendue, disparaît aussitôt et précipite dans la passivité celui qui l'a entendue. Cet appel de l'inspiration, Blanchot l'entend à la lumière du *chant de Sirènes* vers lequel navigue Ulysse : celui qui s'approche trop de ce point originaire du chant ne peut que le rater, et l'inspiration atteint alors une intensité qui la destitue.

Dans un chapitre de *L'Espace littéraire*, consacré justement à l'inspiration comme manque d'inspiration<sup>11</sup>, Maurice Blanchot semble se poser deux questions essentielles : qui est celui qui peut entendre cette voix de l'inspiration et que devient-il, une fois qu'il entend cette voix ? Et il semble y répondre par une seule sentence: quelqu'un de passif. Celui qui a le privilège d'entendre cette voix est quelqu'un qui se sent visé par tout, torturé par la proximité extrême de tout en même temps qu'il en jouit, tel Van Gogh qui se sent regardé par les choses, ou Hugo von Hofmannsthal qui se dit exposé aux mots, attiré et regardé par les mots : „Les mots isolés nageaient autour de moi; ils se congelaient et devenaient des yeux qui se fixaient sur moi, et sur lesquels à mon tour j'étais forcé de fixer les miens, des tourbillons qui donnaient le vertige quand le regard s'y plongeait, qui tournoyaient sans arrêt et au-delà desquels il y avait le vide.”<sup>12</sup>. Nous voudrions préciser que ce „point” de l'inspiration n'est pas, pour ainsi dire, ponctuel, unique, mais diffuse, multiple. L'inspiré se sent alors visé par toutes choses, indistinctement – tout *le regarde*, tout *le touche*, sans critère ni choix, il est dans une disponibilité totale qui lui vaut une douloureuse jouissance:

Il est là, changeant silencieusement de place, n'étant rien qu'œil, oreille, et ne recevant sa couleur que des choses sur lesquelles il repose. Il est spectateur, non, il est le compagnon caché, le frère silencieux de toute chose, et le changement de ses couleurs lui est un intime tourment, car il souffre de toute chose, et il en jouit en même temps qu'il en souffre. Ce pouvoir de douleur jouissance, c'est là tout le contenu de sa vie. Il souffre de tant sentir les choses, il souffre de chacune et de toutes ensemble, il souffre de ce qu'elles ont de singulier et de la cohérence qui les unit, il souffre de ce qui en elles est élevé, sans valeur, sublime, vulgaire, il souffre de leurs états et de leurs pensées... Il ne peut rien négliger. Sur aucun être, sur aucune chose, aucun fantôme, aucun fantasma né d'un cerveau humain, il n'a permission de fermer les yeux. C'est comme si ces yeux n'avaient pas de paupières. Il n'a le droit de chasser aucune des pensées qui le pressent en prétendant qu'il appartient à un autre ordre, car, dans l'ordre qui est le sien, chaque chose doit trouver sa place. En lui tout doit et tout veut se rencontrer... Telle est l'unique loi à laquelle il est soumis : à nulle chose n'interdire l'accès de son âme.<sup>13</sup>

A écouter Keats, cette disponibilité à la multiplicité serait donné à un être lui-même morcelé et démuné de tout pouvoir de décision sélective:

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<sup>11</sup> Chapitre intitulé justement « L'inspiration, le manque d'inspiration » (Maurice Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire*, op. cit., pp. 233-249).

<sup>12</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *La Lettre de lord Chandos*, 1902, -, apud Maurice Blanchot, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>13</sup> *Idem*, *Le Poète et le temps*, 1907, -, apud Maurice Blanchot, *ibidem*, pp. 237-238.

Quant au caractère poétique, je pense à cette espèce d'hommes à laquelle j'appartiens : il n'a pas de moi, il est toute chose et il n'est rien. Il n'a pas de caractère... il se réjouit aussi bien du côté sombre des choses que de leur côté brillant. Et finalement le poète est ce qu'il y a de moins poétique, parce qu'il n'a pas d'identité. Il se remplit continuellement d'autres corps que le sien, soleil, lune, mer. Les hommes, les femmes qui sont des créatures d'impulsion, sont poétiques. Ils ont un attribut immuable. Le poète n'a pas d'attribut, il n'a pas d'identité. De toutes les créatures de Dieu, il est la moins poétique. (...) Si donc le poète n'a pas de moi, et si je suis poète, pourquoi s'étonner que je dise que je ne vais plus écrire ?<sup>14</sup>

Un tel *pathos* de l'extrême disponibilité, un affaiblissement de l'édifice identitaire, une multiplicité indistinctement ouverte seraient donc les conditions pour accueillir la puissance de l'inspiration et pour s'y soumettre. Que devient celui *se laisse* ainsi inspiré ? Blanchot dit que celui qui est en proie de l'inspiration a l'*illusion* d'avoir la « clé de tous les mots » et de disposer intégralement du langage : « l'illusion qu'il peut disposer de l'indisponible et, en cette parole originelle, tout dire et donner voix et parole à tout »<sup>15</sup>; cette illusion serait justement l'enchantement des Sirènes qui entraînent l'inspiré vers le désastre. Celui qui, dans sa passivité et sa disponibilité extrêmes, entend cet appel, ne peut donc y répondre que par la passivité, qui le confronte à l'impossibilité de la parole. Lord Chandos, personnage fictif créé par Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, avoue avoir renoncé à toute préoccupation littéraire parce que le pouvoir lui aurait été supprimé et qu'il aurait été ainsi voué à la stérilité: « j'ai perdu complètement la faculté de traiter avec suite, par la pensée ou la parole, un sujet quelconque »<sup>16</sup>.

Selon Blanchot, ce chant enchanteur des Sirènes, chant étranger à l'homme mais chanté comme par l'homme, n'est pas trompeur, mais, au contraire, étant insatisfaisant, insuffisant („ il semble bien qu'elles chantaient, mais d'une manière qui ne satisfaisait pas"<sup>17</sup>), dit Blanchot, conduirait le navigateur vers le lieu où commencerait le chant. Ce lieu n'est pas le chant, mais la direction vers le lieu de l'origine du chant, une distance: „ (...) et ce qu'il révélait, c'était la possibilité de parcourir cette distance, de faire du chant le mouvement vers le chant et de ce mouvement l'expression du plus grand désir"<sup>18</sup>; ce serait un

<sup>14</sup> Apud Maurice Blanchot, *ibidem*, p. 238.

<sup>15</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>16</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *apud* Maurice Blanchot, *ibidem*, p. 241.

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*, *Le livre à venir*, Gallimard, Paris, 1959, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.



parcours soit vers un but considéré, imprudemment, comme atteint, par les navigateurs qui sont morts de l'impatience d'avoir affirmé trop tôt „C'est ici”, soit vers un but déjà dépassé. Ce lieu originaire, une fois atteint, devient le lieu de la disparition du chant („ comme si la région-mère de la musique eût été le seul endroit tout à fait privé de musique, un lieu d'aridité et de sécheresse où le silence, comme le bruit, brûlait, en celui qui avait en avait eu la disposition, toute voie d'accès au chant”) et de celui qui l'aura écouté: „chant de l'abîme qui, une fois entendu, ouvrait dans chaque parole une abyme et invitait fortement à y disparaître”<sup>19</sup>

Ce point inconnu qu'est pour le navigateur (l'écrivain) le chant des Sirènes (l'appel de l'inspiration) ne préexiste pas à la navigation (au récit), mais c'est justement cette navigation adirectionnelle qui l'esquisse, de sorte que le récit est un mouvement indéterminé, vers un lieu pourtant familier, déjà atteint: „il (le récit, *n.n.*) ne peut même commencer avant de l'avoir atteint”<sup>20</sup>; “Pour écrire, il faut déjà écrire”<sup>21</sup>. Blanchot retrouve le symptôme de ce point déjà atteint dans la simplicité complète d'une phrase de Kafka: „Quand Kafka écrit au hasard la phrase « Il regardait par la fenêtre », il se trouve, dit-il, dans un genre d'inspiration telle que cette phrase est déjà parfaite. (...) Quoiqu'il puisse écrire, « la phrase est déjà parfaite »”<sup>22</sup>.

Lévinas, préoccupé par cette interruption de la causalité efficiente entre auteur et œuvre par les „voix mystérieuses” de l'inspiration, des appels qui „dévorent”, se demande si le langage, plutôt que d'être acte, activité originelle, pouvoir de commencer, n'est pas, au contraire, une pure passivité, un mouvement impersonnel<sup>23</sup>. Cette dénucléation du sujet, par cette ex-position comme seule réponse à l'appel de l'autre – „cette revendication du Même par l'autre au cœur de ce moi-même”, pose pour Lévinas le problème de l'inspiration en termes de *responsabilité*. Le repos en lui-même du sujet est une passivité irresponsable, maintenant l'adversité entre le Même et l'Autre, tandis que l'inquiétude qui expulse le sujet du noyau de sa substantialité, la passivité de la réponse à l'appel de l'Autre est un acte responsable qui le constitue véritablement comme sujet. C'est par ce *dés-inter-esse-ment*<sup>24</sup> (le sujet arraché à l'esse) que le pouvoir se déplace du sujet à la parole, pour Lévinas comme pour Blanchot.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> Maurice Blanchot, , *Le livre à venir*, *op. cit.*, p. 14

<sup>21</sup> *Idem*, *L'Espace littéraire*, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem*, *La Part du Feu*, Gallimard, Paris, 1949, p. 297.

<sup>23</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Sur Maurice Blanchot*, Fata Morgana, coll. « Essais », 2004 [Fata Morgana, 1976], p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Au sens de Lévinas: le sujet arraché à l'esse, sorti du noyau de sa substantialité pour s'exposer à l'appel de l'Autre, comme acte de *responsabilité* qui constituerait véritablement le sujet, dans Emmanuel Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*, Librairie générale française (Le livre de poche), Paris, 2001 (1974), pp. 13-39.

### 3. La résistance : l'œuvre

Pour échapper à la stérilité de la tautologie de l'inspiré, au « Je n'écris pas puisque je ne peux pas écrire. » et viser la création, il faudrait que la conclusion de Nietzsche sur « le devenir réactif de la force active » soit continuée par quelque chose qui ramène l'affirmation : il faudrait, autrement dit, que la contradiction soit annulée par la cristallisation d'une différence. L'affirmation suspendue dans la F(A)r devrait réapparaître en tant que différence interne d'une force active devenue réactive pour que ce *vouloir* affirmatif puisse devenir *créer*. Or, ce retour de l'affirmation au sein de la F(A)r est produit justement par ce fameux « nouveau pouvoir » que reçoit cette F(A)r de la force réactive dédoublée (c'est-à-dire, rappelons-le, de la F(R)a, agissante mais pas encore véritablement active, puisque régie encore par la volonté nihiliste). La F(A)r, donc la force active qui suspend son action et devient réactive sous l'emprise séparatrice de la FR, devient, par le biais de ce nouveau pouvoir, *affirmative* : c'est précisément dans la force active devenue réactive – c'est-à-dire obéissante et contemplant son impuissance, qui, ainsi réceptive, acquiert un nouveau pouvoir – que se joue l'arrêt de la tautologie et la production de la différence en dehors de toute dialectique: la volonté de puissance affirmative revient et ceci comme différence dans une force active devenue réactive. Cela pourrait s'exprimer par « J'écris, puisque je ne peux pas ne pas écrire ».

Ce changement de valeur de la FR qui agit sur la force active devenue réactive en la dotant d'un nouveau pouvoir, ce dédoublement de la FR ne lui vaut pas encore un devenir actif, puisque cette FR agissante fonctionne encore au nom de sa puissance négative. Nous nous permettrions de considérer que ce qui déclencherait le processus du devenir-actif de la FR, ou la transmutation de la FR, serait quelque chose du même ordre de la transmutation, mais du côté de la FA. Dans sa réflexion sur les forces actives, Nietzsche s'arrête sur (et surtout à!) leur devenir obéissant et par cela-même réactif. Néanmoins, il suffit de mettre en rapport avec la création ces échanges entre les deux forces et leurs métamorphoses, par le truchement de la métaphore blanchotienne autour de la main gauche et la main droite, pour s'apercevoir que le devenir-réactif de la force active n'est pas un *renversement de valeurs* complet et que ce triomphe du réactif sur l'actif donne lieu à un devenir plus profond que celui par lequel il s'exprime.

Ce qui entraîne le devenir-actif de la FR, ou la transmutation de valeur FR, serait ce que nous envisageons comme étant un deuxième devenir de la FA. Rappelons trois points : Nietzsche s'était arrêté au devenir-réactif de la FA, c'est-à-dire à une force active devenue seulement soumise et inactive sous l'intervention privative de la FR. Il envisage également la dotation de la FA par la FR d'un

nouveau pouvoir, et une lecture attentive nous a conduit à considérer que c'est sans doute la F(A)r qui reçoit ce nouveau pouvoir. Enfin, il dit qu'un devenir actif du réactif ne serait envisageable que par une négation du réactif lui-même. Mais il laisse en suspens deux points cruciaux : le mécanisme même de cette autonégation du réactif et le devenir de la F(A)r dotée d'un nouveau pouvoir ; or, il nous semble que c'est justement sur ce deuxième point que se fonde le premier. La force active devenue réactive, ou la main droite inactivée et obéissante, ou un homme en plein forme devenu fatigué ou ennuyé, donc une entité pleine de pouvoir et d'initiative devenue soumise, passive, en attente et contemplative qui reçoit un nouveau pouvoir suspendra le réactif en elle et deviendra active en un nouveau sens. Le devenir réactif de la force active proposé par Nietzsche devient donc lui-même actif (c'est ce que nous notons par  $F(r)A$ ). Ce n'est qu'avec ce deuxième devenir que le rapport tautologique entre force et volonté de puissance qui coagulait et la FA (*J'écris, puisque je peux écrire*), et le devenir réactif de celle-ci (*Je n'écris pas, puisque je ne peux pas écrire*. et, après la réception d'un pouvoir nouveau, *Je n'écris pas, puisque je peux ne pas écrire*.) donne lieu au geste autoréactif du *J'écris puisque je peux ne pas écrire*.

On pourrait penser cette autoréactivité en termes de *résistance* : *J'écris puisque je peux y résister*, au sens deleuzien de l'acte de création en tant qu'acte de résistance<sup>25</sup>. Ce devenir actif de la F(A)r s'exprime comme une libération du réactif au cœur même du triomphe de l'affirmation : dans cette  $F(r)A$ , l'action émerge de la puissance de se résister à elle-même. Le *J'écris puisque je peux y résister* pose l'action comme ayant lieu par la libération du réactif en elle. Cette libération n'est pas de l'ordre de l'expulsion, mais de la conservation, puisque : 1. tout d'abord, l'expulsion a lieu par des critères organiques d'appartenance (une force ne peut expulser ou se faire expulser que ce qui lui appartient, et ce qui lui est organiquement sien – un peu à la manière d'un fœtus avorté), alors que la conservation peut avoir lieu par les critères inorganiques de l'impossible appartenance et de *l'impossible* lui-même. Tant que la force active se maintient dans son devenir réactif, tel qu'il est décrit par Nietzsche, c'est-à-dire dans une simple position d'obéissance par rapport au réactif, et tant que la force active résiste par obéissance à la force réactive, il n'y a pas de véritable résistance, donc pas d'acte créateur non plus : dans la F(A)r, le réactif est obéissance, allié

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<sup>25</sup> Dans sa conférence « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création » prononcée le 17 mai 1987 dans le cadre des *Mardis de la Fondation FEMIS*, Gilles Deleuze assimile l'acte de création à un acte de résistance, sans expliquer rigoureusement en quoi le pouvoir de l'information des „sociétés disciplinaires”, la mort et la répartition du profane et du sacré à laquelle résisterait la musique de Bach, seraient pour lui des forces auxquelles l'art pourrait résister. (La transcription de cette conférence est disponible sur le site [www.webdeleuze.com](http://www.webdeleuze.com), dans la rubrique *Conférences*.)

docilement à la suspension de l'actif, or, l'obéissance n'est qu'une réaction suffoquée, emprisonnée. Ce n'est qu'avec le deuxième devenir, la F(R)A, que le réactif est libéré, et ceci par et dans l'action même : ce n'est qu'avec ce deuxième devenir de la force active que la force active ne résiste plus à une force réactive extérieure, mais à elle-même. Le réactif n'est plus une contrainte extérieure, qui empêche l'affirmation, mais intérieure, ouvrant la possibilité d'une affirmation autoréactive, qui ne se désiste plus d'elle-même mais résiste à elle-même.

En l'absence de ce deuxième devenir, le devenir réactif de la force active tel qu'il est proposé par Nietzsche serait un devenir tautologique, dont la configuration dialectique maintiendrait l'affirmation dans une stérilité « basse » (car atteinte naturellement, et non poursuivie pour elle-même et créée) qui est, en fait, non seulement l'impuissance d'affirmer, mais surtout l'impuissance de ne pas affirmer.

On voit maintenant plus clairement pourquoi cette libération du réactif, ayant lieu comme une implosion, au cœur même de l'actif, en tant que puissance de l'action de se résister à elle-même, ne saurait être que la conservation précieuse de ce qui lie un *acte* à la *création* et qui constitue donc véritablement un *acte-de-création*.

La F(r)A est un devenir insuffisant mais nécessaire de la FA, ou, en d'autres termes, la FA doit devenir réactive, ne plus *être* active, seulement pour pouvoir ainsi *devenir* active, c'est-à-dire pour agir par sa puissance de-ne-pas-faire, par sa puissance d'être ce qu'elle est devenue : réactive.

Dans son *Abécédaire*<sup>26</sup>, Deleuze dit dans quelques phrases que l'art est la libération d'une vie que l'homme a emprisonnée et dont la puissance résiderait dans l'impersonnalité (« une vie plus que personnelle..., c'est pas sa vie »). Quelle est donc cette puissance sur-personnelle qui se doit libérée dans un acte de création, sinon une puissance de résistance à la puissance édifiante, une puissance de ne pas faire, emprisonnée dans la puissance de faire, une puissance qui libérerait l'*autre* dans le *je*? Pour Blanchot lui-même, la littérature est engagée justement dans un renoncement au pouvoir, dans la lignée de ce que Mallarmé appelait la « disparition élocutoire du poète » : dans cette perte de pouvoir et ce défaut d'autorité se joue la puissance de la parole littéraire, devenue expression de la perte du pouvoir, espace de l'affirmation du néant: « Le livre est sans auteur, parce qu'il s'écrit à partir de la disparition parlante de l'auteur. Il a besoin de l'écrivain, en tant que celui-ci est absence et lieu de l'absent. »<sup>27</sup>

Cette puissance qui maintient en elle de la possibilité de son non-exercice, s'exprimant par la possibilité de sa suspension, de sa présence négative, Agamben

<sup>26</sup> *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* est un téléfilm tourné entre 1988 et 1989 et composé de presque huit heures de conversation entre Deleuze et son ancienne élève et amie Claire Parnet.

<sup>27</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir*, op. cit., p. 310.

l'entend comme définitoire de l'homme, dans son petit essai intitulé « Sur ce que nous pouvons ne pas faire »<sup>28</sup>. Il repense la théorie aristotélicienne de l'impuissance (*adynamia*) co-originaire à la puissance (*dynamia*), d'une impuissance qui bouscule le dispositif *dynamia* (puissance) – *energeia* (acte), pour assigner ensuite cette puissance de ne pas faire à l'homme-artiste: dans *Le Feu et le récit*, dans le chapitre « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création? », il dit que seule la *maestria*, seul le geste artistique qui n'est pas tant habile et talentueux qu'*inspiré*, arrête la transition de la puissance à l'acte, par la puissance de ne pas créer que l'artiste fait passer dans l'acte même: « (...) Glenn Gould (...) joue, pour ainsi dire, avec sa puissance-de-ne-pas-jouer »<sup>29</sup>. Cette instance critique qui arrête le déplacement de la puissance vers l'acte et empêche ainsi l'épuisement de la puissance dans l'acte, c'est ce que Agamben nomme *résistance* dans l'acte de création<sup>30</sup>.

Cette puissance de ne pas œuvrer qui est précisément la conservation de la puissance d'œuvrer, s'inscrivant dans l'œuvre, maintient l'œuvre dans l'imperfection; l'œuvre qui naît de cette tension entre la puissance de faire et la résistance au faire porte en elle et exhibe des éléments de puissance et de perfection et des éléments de résistance et d'imperfection. Ce sont ces derniers, échos de la puissance de ne pas faire, qui relèvent de ce que, dans une œuvre, brise sa solidité, fait osciller sa construction et interroge sa perfection. Ce qui résulte de la puissance de ne pas faire c'est, dans une œuvre, ce qui relève d'un tremblement, d'une oscillation qui refléterait cette tension même entre la puissance de faire et la puissance de ne pas faire; ces éléments qui « tremblent » dans une œuvre sont, pour Agamben, ceux qui pourraient ne pas y être ou y être autrement, et dont cette contingence même fondrait le caractère *nécessaire* d'une œuvre :

Ce qui imprime sur l'œuvre le sceau de la nécessité est donc, précisément, ce qui pouvait ne pas être ou être autrement : sa contingence. Il ne s'agit pas ici, des repentirs que la radiographie des tableaux fait voir sous les couches de couleur, ni des premières versions ou des variantes attestées par les manuscrits : il s'agit bien plutôt, de ce « léger tremblement, imperceptible » dans l'immobilité de la forme, qui constitue pour Focillon, la marque distinctive du style classique.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Giorgio Agamben, « Sur ce que nous pouvons ne pas faire », dans *Nudités*, traduit par Martin Rueff, Editions Rivages, collection «Bibliothèques rivages», Paris, 2009, p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Le Feu et le récit*, traduit par Martin Rueff, Editions Payot et Rivages, Paris, 2015 (2014), p. 51. Agamben précise que ce chapitre se veut un éclaircissement de la question de l'art comme acte de résistance, que Deleuze aurait insuffisamment expliqué vingt-sept ans auparavant dans la conférence homonyme.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

Agamben entend la résistance dans un rapport de fidélité avec l'inspiration, qu'elle préserverait : « (...) la résistance de la puissance-de-ne-pas (...) reste fidèle à l'inspiration au point presque de lui interdire de se réifier dans l'œuvre : l'artiste inspiré est sans œuvre »<sup>32</sup>. Tout cela nous semble très pertinent, mais insuffisant et aporétique : si l'artiste inspiré est sans œuvre, comment peut Agamben (et comment pourrait-on) envisager et décrire positivement cette œuvre, c'est-à-dire comment postuler en même temps l'existence d'une œuvre de l'inspiration? Il y a entre l'inspiration et la résistance, nous semble-t-il, au-delà d'un rapport de fidélité, un rapport de trahison. Mais il faudrait essayer de voir, avant toutes choses, en quoi résiderait la fidélité de la résistance envers l'inspiration, pour pouvoir démêler, tout d'abord, la contradiction d'Agamben, et ensuite essayer de penser le rapport entre inspiration et résistance.

Cette fidélité de la résistance envers l'inspiration reviendrait donc à envisager une fidélité de la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire envers l'impuissance-de-faire et donc l'œuvre résistante comme acte par lequel la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire préserverait par cette fidélité l'impuissance-de-faire. Mais comment peut-il y avoir œuvre de l'impuissance d'œuvrer ? L'artiste inspiré est sans œuvre, disent, et à juste titre, Agamben et Blanchot<sup>33</sup>. Mais, en même temps, il y a œuvre inspirée : comment Rilke ou Kafka ou Mallarmé ou Blanchot peuvent déplacer le puissance-de-ne-pas-faire dans l'acte ? Le rapport de fidélité de la résistance envers l'inspiration, qu'évoquait Agamben, semble être doublé d'un certain rapport de trahison qui empêcherait l'absence d'œuvre.

Pour mieux cerner ces deux rapports, reconsidérons la FA, la F(A)r et la F(r)A : la FA revient à rendre compte du créateur non-inspiré, qui ne peut s'abstenir de faire, que rien n'empêche de faire et qui donc fait, la F(A)r est le créateur inspiré, qui se laisse en proie de son impuissance de faire et qui ne fait pas, d'où donc son « absence d'œuvre », et la F(r)A est le créateur résistant qui fait par sa puissance de-ne-pas-faire. La résistance serait donc fidèle à l'inspiration par la préservation du réactif, mais en même temps elle trahirait la valeur de ce réactif: elle ferait de l'impuissance nihiliste de l'inspiré une impuissance affirmative et de cette impuissance affirmative la possibilité de l'acte de création. Si l'inspiré

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>33</sup> Dans *Le livre à venir*, Blanchot consacre un chapitre intitulé „Auteur sans livre, écrivain sans écrit” à une figure littéraire dont il se dit proche: Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), qui n'a laissé aucune œuvre publiable, mais seulement des notes livrés au hasard et au fragmentaire, dans ses carnets de presque vingt mille pages et dans une soixantaine de lettres et de brouillons épars. Blanchot voit dans Joubert l'une des premières figures littéraires modernes: « sacrifiant les résultats à la découverte de leurs conditions et n'écrivant pas pour ajouter un livre à autre, mais pour se rendre maître du point d'où lui semblaient sortir tous les livres et qui, une fois trouvé, le dispenserait d'en écrire. » ( Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1959, p. 71).

*peut* ne pas pouvoir faire et ne pas libérer cette puissance dans un acte, cela revient à dire que, justement, il ne préserve pas son inspiration, mais l'enferme dans la stérilité. Le résistant serait, au contraire, l'inspiré qui n'enferme pas son impuissance de faire dans une absence d'œuvre, mais qui déplace et expose cette impuissance dans l'acte créateur, en résistant doublement: au faire et au ne-pas-faire; l'inspiration est alors préservée.

Seul le résistant, qui peut à la fois ne pas faire (à la différence du créateur non-inspiré) et ne pas pouvoir faire (à la différence de l'inspiré), déplace et exhibe cette double puissance dans un *acte de création* au sens fort du syntagme. Une phrase de Blanchot nous semble particulièrement révélatrice pour une définition du résistant en tant qu'inspiré qui crée par sa passivité et son *dés-inter-esse-ment*: „Nommer n'a été donné qu'à un être capable de ne pas être, capable de faire de ce néant un pouvoir”<sup>34</sup>.

#### 4. L'insoumission: le désœuvrement

L'inspiré, dont l'impuissance de faire ne peut que rester claustrée dans une absence d'œuvre - une absence qu'il accepte, et non qu'il affirme -, soumis à cette puissance négative, reste dans une pure passivité qui non seulement le voue à l'impossibilité de la parole et à l'absence d'œuvre, mais qui condamne cette impossible et cette absence à un rapport dialectique avec la parole et avec l'œuvre. Le résistant suspend la transition paisible et linéaire de la puissance affirmative à l'acte, par une puissance nihiliste intérieure à l'action: cette puissance-de-ne-pas empêche l'épuisement de la puissance dans l'acte: elle « la pousse à se retourner vers elle-même, à se faire *potentia potentiae*, à pouvoir sa propre impuissance. »<sup>35</sup>

L'œuvre comme acte de résistance, c'est à dire l'œuvre issue d'une puissance de ne pas œuvrer, qui ne résiste plus qu'à elle-même, déjoue par son réactif interne le réactif externe: la F(r)A déjoue la F(R)a (voir le processus VII). Une fois que la F(A)r, ou l'inspiré, n'enferme pas dans l'absence d'œuvre la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire dont la F(R)a la dote, mais déplace cette puissance-de-ne-pas-faire dans l'œuvre, la F(R)a est aussitôt délégitimée. La délégitimation de la F(R) annule la FR elle-même: la FR, la force qui sépare la FA de ce qu'elle peut, ne peut plus fonctionner désormais, puisqu'elle ne peut plus rien ôter à une force **dont tout ce qu'elle a** est justement la puissance de ne pas faire. La FR oriente désormais sa volonté de puissance nihiliste vers elle-même: c'est ce que Nietzsche entendait par « le devenir-actif des forces réactives ». Ce devenir actif du réactif,

<sup>34</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir*, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>35</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Le Feu et le récit*, op. cit., p. 58.

la F(a)R, est, nous semble-t-il, l'intégration d'une volonté de puissance affirmative dans le réactif, ou l'affirmation du *désœuvrement*.

Si la résistance à œuvrer, ou la F(r)A, par la puissance-de-ne-pas, revient à être une force active qui résiste en même temps à l'œuvre et à l'absence de l'œuvre et qui fait de cette double résistance un acte de création, la F(a)R revient à être une force réactive qui empêche la présence de l'œuvre, c'est-à-dire qui met en marche toute sa puissance affirmative pour créer l'absence de l'œuvre. Selon Blanchot, écrire, c'est justement produire « l'absence d'œuvre »<sup>36</sup>.

Cette poétique (au sens étymologique) du désœuvrement se revendique de quelque chose d'autre que d'une résistance à œuvrer. Puisque ce à quoi on résiste est un désir, et que ce qu'on refuse par la résistance est ce qu'on désire, il serait inadéquat et absurde de dire « Je résiste à quelque chose qui ne m'intéresse pas ». Seule une force active peut résister, autrement dit seul celui qui convoite l'œuvre peut y résister, et alors l'acte de résistance n'est qu'un moyen détourné pour qu'il y ait œuvre. Le désœuvrement ne saurait pas avoir la résistance comme ressort, puisque son exigence ultime est tout le contraire du désir de l'œuvre : ce qu'elle poursuit, c'est l'absence d'œuvre ; ce qu'elle veut réussir, c'est l'échec de l'œuvre. Les ressorts du désœuvrement sont plutôt de l'ordre d'une enfreinte à la loi. La lecture du mythe d'Orphée et Eurydice par Blanchot nous semble offrir les éléments révélateurs de cette enfreinte et de cette loi: Orphée (le poète) viole la loi qui lui interdit de regarder Eurydice (l'œuvre) en face; en se retournant imprudemment et impatientement vers elle, il oublie qu'il ne peut descendre aux Enfers vers elle qu'en s'en détournant et que le regard le vouerait à la ruine de l'œuvre:

L'erreur d'Orphée semble être alors dans le désir qui le porte à voir et à posséder Eurydice, lui dont le seul destin est de la chanter. (...) En ce moment, l'œuvre est perdue. C'est le seul moment où elle se perde absolument, où quelque chose de plus important que l'œuvre, de plus dénué d'importance qu'elle, s'annonce et s'affirme. L'œuvre est tout pour Orphée, à l'exception de ce regard désiré où elle se perd, de sorte que c'est aussi seulement dans ce regard qu'elle peut se dépasser, s'unir à son origine et se consacrer dans l'impossibilité<sup>37</sup>.

Ce « quelque chose de plus important que l'œuvre » et « de plus dénuée d'importance qu'elle » c'est l'œuvre morte:

Mais ne pas se tourner vers Eurydice, ce ne serait pas moins trahir, être infidèle à la force sans mesure et sans prudence de son mouvement, qui ne veut pas Eurydice dans sa vérité diurne et dans son agrément quotidien, qui la veut dans son *obscurité*

<sup>36</sup> Maurice Blanchot, dans le chapitre « L'Absence de livre », dans *L'Entretien infini*, Gallimard, Paris, 1969.

<sup>37</sup> *Idem*, *L'Espace littéraire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1955, pp. 229-230.



*nocturne, dans son éloignement, avec son corps fermé et son visage scellé, qui veut la voir, non quand elle est visible, mais quand elle est invisible, et non comme l'intimité d'une vie familière, mais comme l'étrangeté de ce qui exclut toute intimité, non pas la faire vivre, mais avoir vivante en elle la plénitude de la mort.*<sup>38</sup>

Dans son désir de l'avoir au-delà de son chant, Orphée oublie que pour la garder, il doit respecter l'interdiction, mais il l'oublie « nécessairement », dit Blanchot, car l'exigence ultime du poète est le désœuvrement: « Il perd Eurydice, parce qu'il la désire par-delà les limites mesurées du chant, et il se perd lui-même, mais ce désir et Eurydice perdue et Orphée dispersé sont nécessaires au chant, comme est nécessaire à l'œuvre l'épreuve du désœuvrement éternel.»<sup>39</sup> et ce sacrifice est "le don ultime (...) à l'œuvre" <sup>40</sup>.

De l'absence d'œuvre de l'inspiré à la résistance à l'œuvre, qui fait l'œuvre, et, enfin, à une force réactive qui affirme le refus de l'œuvre et produit l'absence d'œuvre, la passivité effectue un mouvement circulaire, de l'impossibilité de l'œuvre au désœuvrement, d'une genèse de l'œuvre à une hétérogenèse de l'œuvre.

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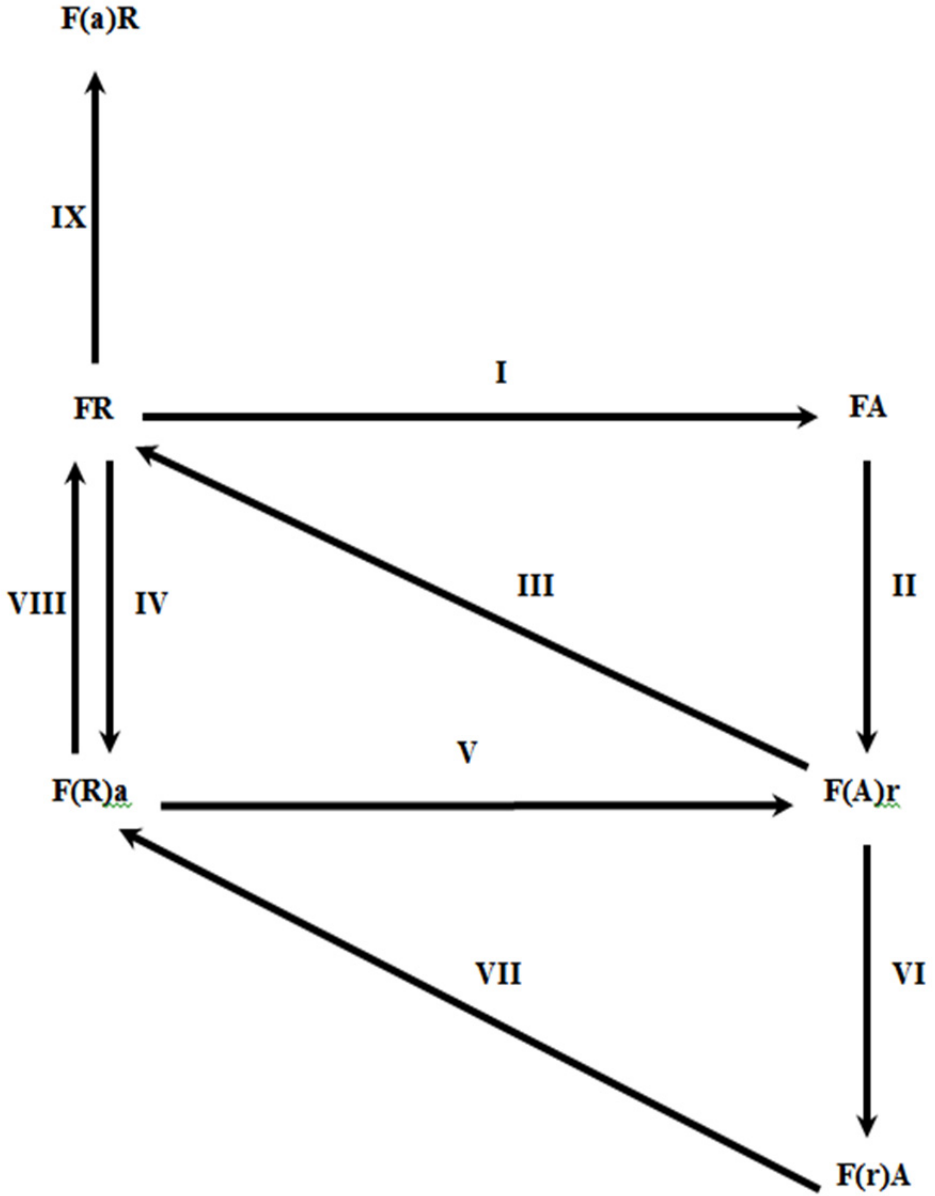
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<sup>38</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *op. cit.*, p. 226, notre soulignement.

<sup>39</sup> *Idem*, p. 228.

<sup>40</sup> *Idem*, p. 230.

Annexe



## Légende

### ● Les forces

**FR** = force réactive (le *chant des Sirènes* ou l'inspiration qui ôte le pouvoir à la FA )

**FA** = force active (**le non-inspiré**)

**F(A)r** = force active devenue réactive (impuissance : **l'inspiré** et son **absence d'œuvre**)

**F(R)a** = force réactive dédoublée comme active (le *chant des Sirènes* ou l'inspiration donne un pouvoir nouveau à la FA : la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire)

**F(r)A** = F(A)r devenue active : **le résistant** et son **œuvre** résultée de la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire

**F(a)R** = FR devenue active : **l'insoumis** et le **désœuvrement** ou *le regard d'Orphée*

### ● Les rapports entre les forces

**I** = la FR ôte le pouvoir à la FA

**II** = le devenir-réactif de la force active (I<sup>er</sup> devenir de la force active) : l'impuissance

**III** = disponibilité de la F(A)r de recevoir un pouvoir nouveau

**IV** = dédoublement actif de la force réactive

**V** = la F(R) a doté la F(A)r d'un pouvoir nouveau: elle lui révèle l'impuissance comme puissance nouvelle

**VI** = devenir-actif de la F(A)r : faire par la puissance-de-ne-pas-faire (II<sup>ième</sup> devenir de la force active)

**VII** = délégitimation de la F(R)a

**VIII** = annulation de la force réactive

**IX** = devenir-actif de la force réactive

## PHENOMENOLOGY AND IMAGINATION IN HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION OF KANT\*

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**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of my contribution is to provide an overview of development of Heidegger's account of imagination with a special focus to the affinity between phenomenology and psychology. (I.) Firstly, I reconstruct how – by his reading Husserl and Aristotle – the early Heidegger got to know the function of imagination as it can open the realm of the things themselves. (II.) Secondly, I investigate that in his Kant-book, Heidegger gave up his plan to further think the viewpoints envisioned by Husserl and the Neo-Kantians, and he entirely transformed his previous concept of imagination by the chapter on *Schematism*. My core thesis is that Heidegger's account of imagination is concerned with the emergence of schemes of our thinking, that is to say, Heidegger went beyond the psychological Kant-interpretation, and at the same time he turned to discover the field of phenomenological unconscious.

**Keywords:** imagination, schemes, thought, understanding, Kant, Heidegger, phenomenology, unconscious

### I. Phenomenology and Imagination in the Early Heidegger

#### *Husserl's Affinity to the early Heidegger: Human Imagination and Phenomenal Horizon*

At the very beginning Heidegger still focused on Plato's account of imagination along the notion of *phantasia* and *eikasia* in his 1924/25 lecture course on Plato's *Sophist*.<sup>2</sup> In that time Heidegger more or less followed the

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (Plato: Sophists), Ed. Ingeborg Schüßler. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, 58 §, 399–341.; 276. [hereafter: GA 19] Bibliographical note: Heidegger's complete works are cited with the abbreviation GA (*Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, from 1975 onwards) followed by volume number, comma and page numbers. Other works published outside of the *Gesamtausgabe* are cited with full bibliographical data at their first occurrence, then with abbreviations. All emphasis is original unless to quotations otherwise specified.

Husserlian viewpoint in which this issue was thought within the problem of intentionality (directedness-toward; *Ausgerichtetsein-auf*). 1. For Husserl, imagination firstly appeared by analogy with the *image* consciousness based on the *model of perception* (1895–1905), and later 2. in parallel with the *reproductive time* consciousness based on the *model of memory* (from 1909 onwards). As already quite young thinker, by reading Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and his *Lectures on Internal Time Consciousness*,<sup>3</sup> Heidegger got to know the problem how imagination can become a subject matter of philosophical analysis.<sup>4</sup> Although Plato did not discuss directly the imagination itself, he introduced its concept in contexts of his various dialogues (e.g. in *Timaeus*, *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Sophist*).

It is important for Heidegger that at this point Plato distinguished the noun *eikasia* as imagination from the *phantasia*. The word *eikasia* stems from the Greek *eikon* (icon), and in Heidegger's view it may be translated with the word "imagination". In the four levels of human knowledge Plato regarded *eikasia* as the lowest level of knowledge, yet it means the foundation of all understanding. *Eikasia* is a thinking activity which is capable of seeing an image as an image, namely, the soul possesses a human ability to ascend from sensation to intellectual knowing, from perception to contemplation. Plato attempted to clear the being of non-beings in the case of poetry as mimetic acts (*μίμησις*), in this sense he was interested here only in the relation of mode of being of image (as image) to what is presented (imaged thing), but Plato was not interested in the phenomenon of "image-ness" or "pictoriality" (*Bildlichkeit*).

According to Heidegger it is impossible to clear the phenomenon of knowledge through the phenomenon of image. This is what Husserl has already demonstrated in his critique of the classical image-theory and of the doctrine of the immanent objects in *Logical Investigations*. As Heidegger mentioned, Husserl had made a distinction between image object (*Bildobjekt*) and image subject (*Bildsujet*) with regard to „the critique of image-theory“ in Appendix to §11 and §20 in the Investigation V in *Logical Investigations*.<sup>5</sup> 1. The *image object* (*Bildobjekt*) means the appearing or photographic image itself which can be seen e. g. as an image hanging on the wall. 2. The real thing or person who is represented and depicted by the image (or photograph, picture) is the *image subject* (*Bildsujet*). 3. Finally, the

<sup>3</sup> See Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*. Bd. I., Bd. II/1., Bd. II/2. (Logical investigations). Ed. Ursula Panzer. Halle, 1901; 7th reprint ed. Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1993, (henceforth: LI) Bd. II/1, V. § 19. § 21, § 23, § 28 and see further Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen Ergänzungsband II.*, Ed Ursula Melle. Springer, Dordrecht, 2005, 131–178.

<sup>4</sup> See John Sallis, *Einbildungskraft – der Sinn von Sein* ("Imagination – The Sense of Being"). In: *Heidegger und der Sinn von Wahrheit*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2012, 131–152. Here: 131. ff.

<sup>5</sup> Husserl, LI II/1. V, 421–425. (= Hua XIX/1, 436ff.)

experience of the *image-thing* (*Bildding*) i. e., the physical thing (*das physische Bild*) involves the materials (paper, canvas etc.) from which a thing is made.

According to Husserl, imagining is a non-derivative act of the consciousness, awareness that itself is unmediated by images and constitutes any kind of awareness of objects. In fact, Husserl devoted his attention to the question whether the operation of imagination can open the realm of *the things themselves*. At least Husserl saw an essential connection between the imagination and the opening of phenomenological horizon in which the things present themselves to us so they are. So to say, imagination is a crucial point for answering the fundamental questions concerning consciousness. The purpose of Heidegger is to grasp the imagination in terms of the opening up and 'constitution' of the basic horizon to human experience and understanding.

### ***Imagination from Aristotle's Ontology of Thing***

After this starting point, in his 1927 summer semester course on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (see especially in §11, and 61, 107ff, 151.) Heidegger worked out the imagination from Aristotle's ontology of thing as well. Heidegger argued that in medieval metaphysics a regress to the subjectivity had pertained to the understanding of Being, and this regress to the subjectivity had been centred on the *poiesis* as producing (*Herstellen*). Naturally, the word *phantasia* can be regarded as imagination but instead of connoting something like imitation, likeness and image, it is associated with a process of bringing something into light. According to Heidegger, one of the most original meanings of the term *phantasia* comes from the verb *phainetai* (to appear or to be appeared). Aristotle treated the nature of imagination and its role in various aspects of human life (e. g. in rhetoric, memory, dreams and reminiscence) in his work on *The Soul* (*De Anima*). Insofar as the *logos* is to bring something into light so that something can be non-perceptively accessible, the *logos* is considered to contain a *phantasia*. *Phantasia* is a possibility for presenting something, together with the possibility to distinguish something (*krinein*). *Krinein* is the possibility that we can make a division between the one and the others for the *logos*. Consequently, both *phantasia* and *krinein* are fundamental to the way that the human being lives in *logos*.

In this poetic production (*Herstellen*) the people already always look ahead to an image, and based on this anticipating image we can form the thing to be produced. This pre-image (*Vorbild*) or proto-typical image is even what the Greeks called *eidos* and *idea*. In this way the *eidos* as an image is connected with the imagination. As Heidegger claims: "The anticipated look, the proto-typical image,

shows the thing as what it is before the production and how it is supported to look as a product. The anticipated look has not yet been externalized as something formed, actual, but is the image of imagination, of fantasy, *phantasia*”.<sup>6</sup>

John Sallis points out that this pictorial foreseeing or prevision (the image of imagination) in the event of producing is no accidental from a Heideggerian viewpoint but belongs to the structure of production, so to say, it forms its centre. Sallis formulates simply that the event of production is dominated by imagination.<sup>7</sup> For Heidegger, however, this structure becomes important insofar as not only the production but – by analogy with this – the sense of Being is also determined by a relatedness to fore-seeing. Imagination which forms the horizon of the ontological understanding of Being in Heidegger, operates as a looking ahead to the *eidōs* (the essence) from Aristotle’s viewpoint. What Husserl regarded as seeing of essences (*Wesensschau*) or as a way how essences show themselves to us, it is due to the work of imagination, since it is the Being as *eidōs* what is pre-cepted (*vorgenommen*) and anticipated in imagination. The anticipating imagination is to render the thing (the Being) in a way – first of all in its actualization how a being already was before all really production. This pictorial sight differs from the sight by any producing. The *eidōs* means the factual thing only as it was before all production, this is an absolute a priori one what is former than all temporal. Aristotle speaks of the soul’s eye that sees the being, that is, in the process of producing, that which the thing was is already sighted beforehand. Firstly, the production takes this image temporal and real through the imagination. According to Heidegger, this close relation between time and imagination has already been involved in the ancient Hellenistic ontology.

In his Kant-book of 1929, Heidegger gave up the idea of thinking further the neo-Kantian and Husserlian viewpoints, and he reviews the imagination from an entirely new direction: from the direction of the chapter on Schematism and of the problem of Temporality. Heidegger believes that Kant was the first who revealed a fundamental idea, namely the interrelatedness between *time and imagination*.

## **II. On Imagination in Heidegger’s Kant appropriation of 1929 and phenomenological unconscious**

As Matthias Wunsch notices, the reason why Heidegger’s Kant-book of 1929 (*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*) is an important volume is that he

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<sup>6</sup> „Das vorweggenommene Aussehen, das Vor-bild, zeigt das Ding, was es vor der Herstellung ist und wie es als Herstelltes aussehen soll. Das vorweggenommene Aussehen ist noch nicht Geprägtes, Wirkliches entäußert, sondern es ist das Bild der Ein-bildung, der φαντασία”. (Heidegger, GA 24. *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. Ed. F.-W. von Herrmann. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1975, 150.)

<sup>7</sup> Sallis, „Einbildungskraft – der Sinn von Sein”, 135.

could firstly overwrite the psychological understanding of the Kantian notion of imagination by means of his criticism of the Neo-Kantians.<sup>8</sup> Kant did not elaborate a unique theory on the power of imagination, at the same time he articulated it in his several works (such as for example in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment* of 1790, the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* of 1766 and the *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* of 1798). He first succeeded in setting out the conceptual foundations of question and its decisive philosophical function, thus, his reflection always remains a reference point for other philosophical approaches. Kant writes in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: “Imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] is a faculty for representing an object even *without its presence* in intuition.”<sup>9</sup>

In his *Anthropology* as well as in the first *Critique* Kant distinguishes the ways of the poetical, mathematical and transcendental imaginations, however, transcendental imagination has only pivotal, absolute philosophical relevance, for it is the condition of the possibility of finite human knowledge. Imagination as “*Einbildungskraft*” serves cognition because it is regulated by understanding, but Kant refers to another form, too, when he uses the word *Phantasie* (fantasy or fancy in English). Imagination becomes mere fantasy only if cognition lost its dominance over it and so it leads to involuntary or unintended visions and visualizations. Fantasy, for Kant, is “our good genius”,<sup>10</sup> at the same time it cannot avoid to be a wishful thinking which is dangerous, and it takes no place in the field of philosophy but psychology has a great deal to do with it, therefore Kant distanced himself from fantasy as “*Schwärmerei*”, as dreamy enthusiasm. To fantasize when we are awake means that man confuses his fantasies with real experiences and he lives as a visionary (*Phantast*), that is, for Kant, fantasy approaches madness.

The word “*Schwärmerei*” describes a transgression, a pseudo-transcendence of the boundaries of human reason. In the chapter *Doctrine of Dialectics* concerning the traditional realm of *metaphysica specialis* (psychological, cosmological and theological ideas), Kant revealed transcendental illusions through which we let ourselves to divert from the use of reason based on experience and it holds out hopes to us that we can expand the scope of our pure reason beyond the limits of all possible experiences. The metaphysician who claims that he has received immediate inspiration and been familiar with divine powers is a fantast, a dreamer.

<sup>8</sup> Matthias Wunsch, *Einbildungskraft und Erfahrung bei Kant*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2007, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer – Allen W. Wood. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, 256. B151 and cf. B233 (hereafter: CPR both in notes and main text body)

<sup>10</sup> “Phantasie ist unser guter Genius oder Daemon” (See AA XV., 144., in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*. Hrsg. von der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (later: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin) [= Akademie-Ausgabe]. Reimer Verlag (later: De Gruyter), Berlin, from 1900 onwards.)



However, Kant is also aware of that understanding needs imagination and the liberation of imagination from this service, but from a philosophical sight Kant is better interested in „imagination without fantasy” with two types of which he has explicitly dealt: these are the reproductive and productive imaginations. With the words of Dorthe Jørgensen, “the point was ...that cognition, morality, taste are all lost if imagination does not play together with understanding”.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Kant attributed a decisive role to the power of imagination in favour of clearing the objectivity of knowledge.

In his famous Kant-book of 1929, Heidegger focused on the theoretical philosophy Kants and the Schematism chapter in his critique of reason. Heidegger explored how far Kant had reached in the field of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in this respect, the humanness of reason, i. e., the finitude became essential. He saw the very core of Kant’s ontological sight in the chapter on Schematism. The task of Schematism is to describe how knowledge of being is generated by the interplay of two complementary faculties of understanding and sensibility (*Verstand, Sinnlichkeit*) or concept and intuition (*Begriff, Anschauung*). While the synthesis of knowledge clearly traces back to the activity of understanding in the chapter on Transcendental Deduction of Kant; on Heidegger’s view, synthesis only emerges from the operation of schematism by dissolving the intuition and thinking in a “common root”. It is the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) that is responsible for this schematism operating in experience as a „common root”. Imagination appears as not an accidental activity but as a fundamental form of our relation to being, and as such it proves more decisive for life than rationality.

Schematism would not be without the operation of imagination, in other words: we can think at all, because the emerging and forming of Schemes become possible by imagination. What Kant called schematism is the process of *world-forming* (*Weltbildung*) in Heidegger. By means of imagination operating in schematism Heidegger described the *world-forming* character of our finite human being, which was nothing else than uncovering the transcendence. For Heidegger, the operating of imagination was neither just another name of the human subjectivity nor a new human skill, but the way of avoiding the subjectivity itself. Heidegger’s account of imagination is located on a meta-level, i. e. within the framework of imagination he turned to apriori levels beyond all consciousness and unconsciousness of human.

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<sup>11</sup> Dorthe Jørgensen: “The philosophy of imagination”, in *Handbook of Imagination and Culture*, Eds. Tania Zittoun – Vlad Glaveanu. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017, 30.

### ***Transcendental Imagination as a "Formative Center" (die bildende Mitte)***

According to Richardson, the transcendental imagination (*transzendentele Einbildungskraft*) is a crucial operative factor in Heidegger to such a degree that the acceptance or rejection of his Kant-interpretation depends on this alone.<sup>12</sup> This conception was critically called a "root-thesis" by Wunsch and a "monism of imagination" by Cassirer.<sup>13</sup>

Kant noted that imagination is to be an "indispensable function of the soul" (*unentbehrliche Funktion der Seele*),<sup>14</sup> but „to us unknown root" (*uns unbekannte Wurzel*),<sup>15</sup> "the disquieting unknown" (*das beunruhigende Unbekannte*),<sup>16</sup> "without which we would have no cognition at all but of which we are seldom even conscious".<sup>17</sup> Heidegger added that while the place of each other component is properly arranged in Kant's system, "the transcendental power of imagination is homeless (*heimatlos*)".<sup>18</sup> There is no fixed taxonomic place of the imagination in the system. Heidegger gave two arguments by way of illustration:

#### *Argument 1*

In the first ("A") edition of CPR (1781) Kant thought that the three original capacities or sources of the soul are no other than the "sense, imagination and apperception" which contain the conditions for all possible experience and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty.<sup>19</sup> After that, in the second ("B") edition (1787) Kant changed the imagination's location within the faculties of cognition,<sup>20</sup> and he thus located the imagination within the sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) which is distinguished as a lower faculty of cognition from the higher faculties like understanding, judgment and reason. Consequently, Kant eliminated the new role of imagination, and it was no longer the *faculty for synthesis* but only the *faculty for representing* an object without its presence, so to speak, the faculty for producing images from oneself where images are not borrowed from experience.

<sup>12</sup> William J. Richardson, *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 4th Ed. Fordham University Press, New York, 2003, 121 f.

<sup>13</sup> Wunsch, *Einbildungskraft und Erfahrung bei Kant*, 31. ff.; Ernst Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik: Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation" (Rezension), in *Kant-Studien XXXVI/1931*: 1–26. Here: 16.

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, GA 3. *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, ed. F.-W. von Hermann. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1991, 160.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 161.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 162.

<sup>17</sup> Kant, CPR A78, B103

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 136.

<sup>19</sup> Kant, CPR A94, A123

<sup>20</sup> Kant, CPR B151–152

## Argument 2

Similarly to Schopenhauer, Heidegger accepted the A edition of CPR. Here, on the one hand, the *Transcendental Aesthetics* did not discuss imagination, in spite of the fact that it belongs to the side of sensibility, on the other hand the *Transcendental Logic* has already dealt with it, but the imagination would be no place in *Logic* in a strictly sense. It is no accidental for Heidegger that imagination came to be a crucial point of the system in the chapter of *Deduction* where it turned out to have an operative-systematic function in the first *Critique*, but Kant only later analysed the actual process of imagination in the chapter on *Schematism*.

For Kant, the role of A-Deduction lies in justifying the fact that there is a valid objective experience of the things, in Heidegger's formulation, an inner possibility of transcendence. The two ways of justification run as follows:

The first way begins "from above" with the understanding and leads down to the intuition by exploration of imagination with regard to the pure apperception. The second way proceeds "from below", from intuition to pure understanding when beginning from intuition the role of imagination is revealed to us.<sup>21</sup> The justification cannot be conducted by way of logical deduction, rather it is by discovering the united whole as a *pure synthesis* between the two sources of experience. On both ways of Deduction it turns out that either transcendental apperception or intuition can never be the final point, because both they presuppose the pure synthesis,<sup>22</sup> so the opposition of two sources of knowledge gives place to a trichotomy. Kant spoke of something hidden *productivity* beyond both understanding and intuition that would be the foundation of all synthesis. Transcendental imagination is not simply a faculty of mediality which would make contact between the two sources of experience as an external factor, but the source and foundation of both, it is, for Heidegger, the formative center (*die bildende Mitte*) of the critique of pure reason, i.e., a common root („gemeinschaftlichen [...] Wurzel"),<sup>23</sup> a basic faculty (*Grundvermögen*).<sup>24</sup>

It does not mean that the pure thinking and the pure intuition would be a product of mere imagination or only merely something imaginary, but it means that the synthetizing power of imagination is necessary for the inner possibility of ontological knowledge and transcendence. It would be "merely imaginary" what is not real in a factual-empirical sense, but the transcendental imagination is not directed toward the beings at all. It cannot become fantasies and dissolve into

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<sup>21</sup> For more detail about both the first (Kant, CPR A 116–120) and the second way (Kant, CPR A 120–128).

<sup>22</sup> See Kant, CPR A 118

<sup>23</sup> Kant, CPR A15 /B29, see further Heidegger, GA 3, 137.

<sup>24</sup> Kant, CPR A 124

appearances (*Schein*), insofar as the transcendental imagination is never at work in the field of the empirical ability of fantasy. Kant called the transcendental imagination *synthesis speciosa* in order to distinguish it from each other function of the “*Einbildungskraft*”, so it what is formed by transcendental imagination can never “merely imaginary” against reality, the operation of imagination has in fact nothing to do with the ontic appearance (*Schein*). The transcendental imagination has no role in forming (*bilden, einbilden*) any adequacy or non-adequacy to the reality (fiction, illusion, mere appearance, etc.), but it moves in the dimension of the “possibilities” and of the possibility of making-possible.<sup>25</sup>

The decline of the faculty of transcendental imagination necessarily entails the decline of the human ability to experience (or transcend in Heidegger's view) and its malfunction. However, we can never lose our transcendental faculty, because Kant spoke about no accidental human activity working sometimes but about a basic faculty (*Grundvermögen*) whose entire collapse cannot happen unless human nature changes. It raises the even more worrying question whether this faculty may be overstimulated in direction of an excessive-hyper activity, and if so, what kind of consequences or dangers this may have. At this degree of difficulties Kant stopped to discuss the problem. Kant's astonishment is mirrored in his re-writing the *Deduction* in the second edition of the *Critique* (1787), while no longer regarding the transcendental imagination as a basic faculty but only as a medial stage which is of secondary significance in comparison with the faculty of understanding. The B-Deduction culminated in the synthetic unity of the apperception rather than the transcendental imagination. It only happened later by the experience of the *sublime* in the *Critique of Judgement* that Kant returned to the difficulties being in the field of imagination. Heidegger himself spoke of the higher level of imaginative work where the transcendental imagination “is broken up into more original »possibilities«”,<sup>26</sup> at the same time its „strangeness... cannot disappear. Rather, it will increase with the growing originality”.<sup>27</sup> Heidegger agreed with Kant that in this realm there is something “excessive”,<sup>28</sup> in a later formulation by Heidegger, “overwhelming forces” (*Übermächtigen*) manifest themselves.<sup>29</sup>

The German term “*Einbildungskraft*” signs that the task of the high-level operation of this faculty is to educate, to become a self-formation and the process

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<sup>25</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 140.

<sup>26</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 140.

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2007, (§ 27) 87 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, GA 26. *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, Ed. K. Held. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, 13.,cf. in note 211, and see further Heidegger, GA 27, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Ed. Otto Saame–Ina Saame-Speidel. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, 383.

of human forming (*Bildung, Einbildung*). A peculiar non-connectedness to the beings can be found in the power of imagination, therefore it participates in the formation of no reality, but only in the *look-forming (Anblickbilden)*, in this respect the imagination is named as ability to give intuitive and present (*subjection sub aspectum*). The problem of look (*Spezies*) leads to the core of the possibility of making-possible in Heidegger, while to the core of symbol in Cassirer. According to Kant, the danger of transcendental illusion (*Schein*) cannot be excluded in the field of transcendental imagination either, and even Kant interrupts his discussion, after having worried about being illusions not only in the field of phenomenal experiences (the immanence) but in the transcendental logics as well, and here they are more threatening, as in the best case we can just unveil the illusions and determine their place, but they cannot be soluble. Illusion remains in the place of illusion (now already recognized as a real illusion), but the reality may hardly be visible. Transcendental imagination is a *productive* power, but can never be an ontically creative one, because it conducts (a priori) independently of all experience, no creating any objective reality.

### ***Transcendental Imagination and Pure Intuition (Anschauung)***

For Heidegger, intuition (*Anschauung*) constitutes the authentic essence of knowledge what has priority. “The knowing – as he writes – is primarily intuiting.”<sup>30</sup> It is fundamental for this account of intuition that Kant’s metaphysical ground-laying must be determined by the thought of finitude. Following Kant, Heidegger also assumed a basic difference between the divine and the human nature that is accompanied by two modes of intuition. He proposed that, beyond the finite human intuition (*intuitus derivativus*), another mode of consciousness called *intuitus originarius* may be possible what differs from humans, although it is inaccessible for us. The presenting of finite intuition is no “creative” flow like a divine intuition at all which creates the beings themselves in the intuition, but it only forms the look of the objects, thus it is here about nothing intuition which allows the being itself to stand forth (*Ent-stand*) but only about intuition which means the presentation of the same being as object (*Gegen-stand*) in its objectiveness (*Gegenständlichkeit*).<sup>31</sup> The significance of intuition lies in the fact that the finite intuition must be affected by objects, and hence we have need of it as the ability to be receptivity without it excluded the possibility of knowledge.

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<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 21., 27.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 31–36.

Intuition means the immediate encounter with a singular, by contrast, the result of thinking is a concept which is always universal.<sup>32</sup> According to Heidegger, this „general”, conceptual presentation serves the intuiting itself and is a *mediate knowledge* of the object, i.e., the representation of a representation of it. All thinking is only service which itself is more finite than the intuition, because in that it lacks the immediacy of finite intuition. “Its representing requires the indirection [*Umweg*] of a reference to a universal...This circuitousness [*Umwegigkeit*] (discursiveness)... is the sharpest index of its finitude.”<sup>33</sup> Divine knowing is always intuition which first creates the being as such in intuiting, but it cannot require thinking. Of course, only through the unity of intuition and thought can human knowledge spring forth, namely finite knowing has its essence precisely in the original synthesis of the basic sources. In spite of differences there is a common denominator, if both are a presentation (*Vorstellung*) in their nature and can be described as modes of the representing of something (*Weisen des Vorstellens von...*).<sup>34</sup>

However, Kant did not speak of the intuition in a conventional sense which would be directed to the objectiveness, namely, he conceived of the intuition neither empirically nor psychologically, but his attention returned to its innermost transcendental characteristic. Intuition is not “sensible”, because it would be in its nature empirical, but rather, because our human being is finite, Kant was the first who attained the ontological concept of sensibility which is not sensualistic, in this respect Kant left us open the possibility of a non-empirical sensibility. There is an original mode of the human intuition which is prior to any possible experience and never refers to the forming of the objects themselves, but refers to the pure look of objectivity in general instead, its essential role lies in the original institution (the forming) of transcendence. The two types of pure intuition for Kant are Space and Time. Their nature are the “*exhibitio originaria*”.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to the divine intuition, human intuition is a faculty of formative power whose unity is a sight caught in the image-giving imagining (*im Bild-gebenden Einbilden*),<sup>36</sup> in other words, Space and Time what are intuited in the pure intuition have an *imaginative character*.<sup>37</sup> What kind of faculty is pure intuition? Or, what means this imaginative character of the forming (*die imaginative Bildung*). According to Heidegger, we receive a response only if we ask about the character of *what is intuited* in pure intuition. Some interpreters deny that anything

<sup>32</sup> Kant, CPR A51, B75 and see Richardson, *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 116 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 29. f.

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 148.

<sup>35</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 28) 141.

<sup>36</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 28) 142.

<sup>37</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 28) 143.

is intuited in pure intuition, insofar as it what is intuited may only be the “form of intuition”. As forms to be intuited, Space and Time are indeed intuitions without objects, but yet there are something what is only intuited in them. Forms of intuition are “Something”, but certainly not “objects”. In description by Kant, what is intuited in pure intuition is an *ens imaginarium*.<sup>38</sup> As things, “Nothing” can be intuited, but rather, Space and Time are the forms (*Formen*) of the pre-forming (*Vorbildung*), they form the pure look (*reine Anblick*) which serves as horizon for the empirically intuitable things.<sup>39</sup> The pure look what is intuited is not real (in the sense of objective reality) but “the formative self-giving of that which gives itself” (*das bildende Sichselbstgeben des sich Gebenden*).<sup>40</sup>

Pure intuitions are formative powers in the sense that “they pro-pose (*vorstellen*) the look of Space and Time in advance *as totalities* which are in themselves manifold”.<sup>41</sup> Pure imagination itself formatively gives the looks (the images) from out of itself. Heidegger highlights that this pure look formed in intuition cannot be mere illusion (*Schein*), this imaginative character of Space and Time has nothing to do with the negative meanings of the Hegelian term *Schein* (as illusion, fiction and appearance). It is important that Kant treated the relation of pure intuition and imagination in the ground-laying of metaphysics, not in aesthetics. Pure intuition must catch a sight of the whole, however it is a special whole, therefore this *unified whole* must allow itself to be seen in advance *in* this togetherness of *its manifoldness*, therefore Kant here spoke about no synthesis but rather a “Synopsis” in pure intuition in which this unified whole is not the universality of a concept.<sup>42</sup> The *pure syn-opsis* refers to the real phenomenal character of pure intuition, namely that, even if we only focus on the things, as pure looks, Space and Time simultaneously manifest for us. It means a limit-experience on the limits of phenomenological consciousness and unconscious.

“[Only] the pure intuition, as preliminary forming of an unthematic, pure look, makes it possible that the empirical intuiting of spatio-temporal things... does not first need to intuit space and time in the sense of an apprehension”.<sup>43</sup>

As a matter of fact, Heidegger’s conception was not an isolated event, in retrospect at this point, he continued Paul Natorp’ and Edmund Husserl’s controversy which had burst out at the turn-of-the-century after the publication

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<sup>38</sup> Kant, *CPR* A291/B347

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, *GA 3*, (§28) 143.

<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, *GA 3*, 141.

<sup>41</sup> Heidegger, *GA 3*, 141.

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, *GA 3*, (§ 28) 142.

<sup>43</sup> Heidegger, *GA 3*, (§ 28) 145.

of the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*. This debate arose together with the problematization of being and possibility of *intuition*: with the concept of “viewing” (*Anschauung*). Natorp and the Neo-Kantians rejected the possibility of intuition, by contrast, at the root of Husserl’s investigations, the intuition appears as a source of knowledge. As a new finding, Husserl distinguished between two kinds of intuition: (1) *categorial intuition* involves seeing the essence (*Wesenschau*), and (2) *sensuous intuition* belongs to the perceiving of external things. While in seeing the essence, the mode of the givenness of conscious experience is given to our consciousness in its completeness as a whole; the perceiving of external things is only given fragmentarily. For Husserl, the fragmentality of perceiving the things — the fact that the things’ perception is unable to provide a whole, unmediated and intuitive knowledge of the things — shifts the focus to the limits of phenomenality. Thus at this point, on the limits of phenomenality, Kant assumed the difference between divine and human experience, and Heidegger basically adopted the insight from Husserl’s legacy that the intuition does not play a fundamental role in viewing of the reality for the Neo-Kantians, but rather, the concepts turn into productive forces by which objective reality is organized.

### ***Transcendental Imagination and Theoretical Reason***

The Neo-Kantians understood Space and Time as logical „categories”, and consequently dissolved the Aesthetics in Transcendental Logic, thus the synthesis of knowing was traced back to the activity of understanding. Following the chapters on *Schematism* and *Deduction* against the Neo-Kantians, Heidegger tried to explore that both pure thinking and theoretical reason originated from the transcendental power of imagination. If imagination belongs to the Sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*), then according to the followers of modernity, it seems to be unacceptable how a lower faculty of cognition could be an “origin” – not only a “substratum” – for the higher faculty of reason. According to Heidegger’s counter-argument, it is here about neither lower nor higher faculties but about an alive dynamics of experience and transcendence without isolation.

The weak point of the above-cited argument is no other than Heidegger avoided to make a difference between the understanding and the reason, the categories and the ideas which Kant carefully differentiated. (1) The pure concepts of *understanding*, the categories are analysed in *Deduction* by Kant, and Kant’s aim is to justify the objectivity of experience in direction of the things. As a result of this discussion, the unity of self-consciousness makes all experience possible. (2) By contrast, the pure concepts of *reason* (the psychological, cosmological and theological ideas) which goes beyond the field of all possible experiences are articulated in *Dialectics* by Kant. In *Dialectics* concerning the



traditional realm of *metaphysica specialis* (the psychological, cosmological and theological ideas), Kant revealed the transcendental illusions through which we let ourselves to divert from the use of reason based on experience and it holds out hopes to us that we can expand the scope of our pure reason beyond the limits of all possible experiences.

Heidegger distanced himself from the transcendental logics where the opposition of two spheres (*phenomena and noumena*) meant solution in Kant's system, and hence he neglected these distinctions, in his view the foundation of *Deduction* is rooted in the *Schematism*. Heidegger surely followed Kant against Spinoza, because Kant never regarded philosophy as a sphere that could open access to a *mundus intelligibilis* (to a reality beyond all experiences). In Kant's view, it has become emphatic that the categories as the pure concepts of understanding are *notios* (i.e., with the help of them we think of concepts [such as God, immortality and freedom] which extend over our all experiences). The reason why Kant's *notios* are problematic to him is because they do not imply the schemes of time, that is, any factual or concrete relations of time that are concerned with the knower. The chasm between the world of appearance (*phenomena*) and "being-in-itself" (*noumena*) is in fact unbridgeable.<sup>44</sup> Instead, for Heidegger the solution means that the categories are inherently schematized, and hence include the concepts of time as well from which can be dissociated only through abstraction.<sup>45</sup> On Heidegger's view, the event of ontological understanding may be considered only if we understand how time and change are built into our schemes, and how schemes of our thinking can be broken into pieces or modified by temporality. This is a happening which, from a Heideggerian perspective, can never be evoked by the subject. Accordingly, the notion of the truth is, of course, not eliminated but preserved its validity in Heidegger. Truth exists, but Heidegger was more interested in the experience of truth *regarding its relation to the reality*. Instead of absolute (indisputable, transcendent) truths, he asked how transcendence (the emergence of the meaning of Being) can be involved in human being. Heidegger explored how far Kant had reached in the field of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in this respect, the humanness of reason, i. e., the finitude has become essential for him.

Kant specified the traditional problems of metaphysics in his moral philosophy, nevertheless in his second *Critique*, Kant's *notio* is no longer the knowledge of the theoretical reason but a *postulatum* (*Heischeurtheile*) of the practical reason, and thus it does not extend the realm of our knowledge, but it serves as a regulative function for our morality (i.e. for how knowledge should be used).

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<sup>44</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 53.

<sup>45</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 86.

According to Heidegger, such a distinction of understanding and reason ought not to be phenomenologically allowed, because Kant himself also suggested that we should regard the human understanding and the reason not as separated faculties but as various (*noumenal* and *phenomenal*) uses of the same activity. Pure understanding and pure reason never exist in themselves, both only provide form together the essence of the human thinking. The pure understanding would be in itself the figure of the “*I think*”, but its essence lies in the reason, in the “faculty of ideas”, for “without reason we have »no coherent employment of the understanding«”.<sup>46</sup> Heidegger still added the argument that Kant was even who dissolved or precisely absorbed the traditional-formal logic into his *Transcendental Logic*.<sup>47</sup> This is the reason why Heidegger saw to be necessary for examining *the full essence of thinking (das volle Wesen des Denkens)* in regard to the power of imagination. We can recognize the true role of the imagination in our thinking only if we try to thematize whether “this logic can delimit the full essence of thinking or can even approach it”.<sup>48</sup> In Kant's system, the logic was regarded as a starting point. Within the realm of the logic, imagination has not truly place or essential function, therefore he has given up the role of the transcendental power of imagination in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787).

Heidegger maintained that we should have thought the essence of thinking from itself rather than from out of the logic. For Kant, the essence of thinking can be found in the judgement (*Urteil*) what is the real form of the objective knowledge. The thinking (*Denken*) is the process of the activity of judging in which conducts the understanding (*Verstand*).<sup>49</sup> Instead of the activity of judging, Heidegger called the thinking as a “faculty of rules” (*Vermögen der Regeln*).<sup>50</sup> This definition sheds light on the way that the rules can be *the function of the unity* of understanding, in this respect, the essence of the pure thinking lies in the “pure self-consciousness”, compared to which the judgment is already – for Heidegger – a derivative form as the part of the formal logic. The place of the event of pure thinking is in the transcendental *Schematism*. It depends on the unified horizon of our schemes how we used to think and on what we can think. Heidegger points out that “the understanding does not bring forth the schemata, but [only] »works with them«,”<sup>51</sup> that is, the origin of *Schematism* cannot be

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<sup>46</sup> Kant, *CPR* A651/B679; see further Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 29) 152.

<sup>47</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 29) 149.

<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 29) 149.

<sup>49</sup> Kant, *CPRA* 51, B75

<sup>50</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, (§ 29) 149.

<sup>51</sup> Heidegger: GA 3, (§ 29) 151.

found in pure reason. Naturally, Heidegger is also aware of that Kant entirely excluded the power of imagination and their interrelation as well from the field of theoretical reason.<sup>52</sup> But, after Kant had distinguished the transcendental function of imagination from its other (e. g. poetical, mathematical) functions beforehand, Heidegger missed with good reason the consequent development of this viewpoint.

However, for Kant the „judgement” had more significance than what is later permitted by Heidegger. Kant intended not only to absorb the general logic into *Transcendental Logic* but to lead from out of it to the field of a new “logic”. We today would be able to name Kant’s *Transcendental Logic* as a heuristic logic, and in fact, Kant discovered something what might be revelation for his contemporaries. The judgement, which stands by itself, has its own operating field in the *Transcendental Logic*. While Heidegger criticized the Kantian logic, Kant went beyond a merely formal logic in both the power of judgement and his *Transcendental Logic*.

To do the formal logic is to do everything by rules, but in the field of *Transcendental Logic* we need judgement, namely the faculty of applying rules. According to Kant: “General logic contains, and can contain, no rules for the faculty of judgement”.<sup>53</sup> Any logic cannot give prescriptions as to how to operate the subsumption under rules, and hence the general logic can only recognize *in abstracto* the generality, but cannot refer to the field of experience, finally the logic is reduced to the analysis of the empty form of knowledge. By contrast, the faculty of judgement is a peculiar talent that cannot be taught but only practiced.<sup>54</sup> It is possible that a ruler who might very well know the universal rules yet might still not to be able to apply them correctly to concrete cases. The judgement *in concreto* belongs to the universality expressed by rules, it means the multiplicity of knowledge rather than a synthetic knowing, in other words: this is a faculty of new experiences (or discoveries). The activity of the faculty of judgement is described in the *Analytic of Principles*. The principles are a priori synthetic judgements which make all sciences and experiences possible. This chapter goes beyond the logical process of understanding. Heidegger claimed that the power of *Transcendental Logic* did not truly reveal itself, because Kant adopted the laws of formal logic in the new realm of *Transcendental Logic* too. As a matter of fact, the proceeding of *Transcendental Logic* was similar to the general logic, it seems “to have as its peculiar task to correct and secure the faculty of judgement by means of determine rules in the use of pure understanding”.<sup>55</sup> After this outcome of the *Transcendental Logic*, the chapter on *Schematism* also lost its *in concreto* relations.

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<sup>52</sup> Kant, *CPR* A 570/B598

<sup>53</sup> Kant, *CPR* A 132/B171

<sup>54</sup> Kant, *CPR* B172–173/A133–134

<sup>55</sup> Kant, *CPR* B 174/A135

In Heidegger's reading, a serious problem of the critique of reason follows from this logical viewpoint:

In Kant's system, we cannot give account of the Schematism of our thinking, i.e., of how schemes come into being and how the horizons of thinking are transformed. Kant's aim was to justify the objectivity of experience, at the same time he failed to think about the *inner historicity of experience* and the concept of a *historical a priori*. In experience, it is the always repetitive factor (the *a priori*) what can be described and comprehend by schemes, thus we can derivate everything from the understanding as Kant did. However, the chapter on *Schematism* did not deal with the essential question how the schemes can change in our mind and how the emergence of new schemes is possible. Any experience may be considered only if we understand how time and changes are built into our schemes. Historicity remains hidden in the *Schematism* written by Kant. The justification of objectivity and the logical processes of experience are never enough to explore the real (life-) experience (the past, the history or the narrative identity etc.). This Schematism of thinking is rooted in deeper than the rules or the laws, according to Heidegger, it can be regarded as an event of *world-forming* (*Weltbildung*), hence, due to this in fact that we can see the reality *as a world*, not only as a chaos and we have a world-intuition. In this respect Heidegger spoke of a "temporal Schematism" in which he intended to have access to *the historicity of understanding* and the *thinking of a historical a priori*. Kant finally returned to the empirical viewpoint of the period before his *Critiques* when the power of imagination was discussed as a process of *Vorstellung* (abstract representation or idea-forming), in this aspect, it has already been put at the heart of interest in the Cartesian tradition. In other words, it was conceived as a mode of perception derived from „seeing“, thus, imagination was a secondary skill which depended upon the sensory perceptions.

However, Kant had a good reason for the elimination of the role of transcendental imagination: all operative functions of the imagination involve the serious danger that the problems of empirical imagination will also generate themselves again and again in the field of transcendental imagination. Kant wrote about these dangers in his *Critique of Judgement*: in experience of the *sublime*. The problem may be written as follows:

If the transcendental imagination becomes a centre, i.e., a common root of the knowing faculties, the cognitive faculties lose their power over imagination, and there is no longer form, figure, concept, therefore it remains no more "imagination without fantasy" what had a philosophical significance for Kant, but rather this imagination itself also turns into fantasy. It means that the insight into

infinity is a kind of gap for the transcendental imagination, and the whole enterprise of the *Critique* may be collapsed because of the imagination. There is no antiserum (*pharmakon*) against falling back on dogmatism and the doctrine of errant metaphysics. In the first *Critique*, the prolongation of imagination led to mere dreamy enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) or *wishful thinking* against which the young Kant had already struggled as well, and had regarded the critique of reason as the most effective antiserum.

Kant was aware of the fact that in the field of the schematism, imagination can lose not only concepts and cognitions but also the schemes themselves, if it has run over everything in its schematization without concepts. Kant re-defined the imagination, but this revision serves the establishment of the limits of knowledge in order to make room for faith. Naturally, Heidegger rejected any notion of the unconscious, however, as it may be seen, it doesn't mean that there would not be any place for a phenomenological unconscious in Heidegger's thinking on imagination.

### ***Imagination and Respect for the Law/Moral Feeling– Critique of Pure Reason***

In the Davos debate Cassirer argued that imagination was considered as belonging to the *Schematism* within the theoretical philosophy and *expelled from the ethics*. Cassirer says in the *Davos Disputation*:

In the ethical, however, he [Kant] forbids the Schematism. ...There is a Schematism of theoretical knowledge, but not of practical reason. There is in any event something else, namely, what Kant calls the Typic of practical reason. And he makes a distinction between Schematism and Typic.<sup>56</sup>

According to Cassirer, Kant kept the imagination out of ethics. By contrast, according to Heidegger's main counter-argument, imagination cannot be reduced to the *Schematism* if imagination has no fixed taxonomic place in the Kantian system. Against Cassirer, Heidegger added that while the place of each other component is properly arranged in Kant's system, "the transcendental power of imagination is homeless (*heimatlos*)".<sup>57</sup> It is most important that the chapters of both *Schematism* and *Deduction* centering around the imagination point forward at the *Critique of Practical Reason*, by leading to the problem of freedom which

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<sup>56</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 277.

<sup>57</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 136.

allows us to see an interference between the first and the second *Critiques*, therefore imagination contributes to the emergence or the origin of practical reason. Transcendental imagination cannot be excluded from the field of *practical reason and pure morality*, because the possibility of practical reason can be traced back to the theoretical reason where transcendental imagination is a foundation for all knowing, not only a vehicle of that. Kant's thesis is that the practical reason is not another, peculiar faculty in relationship to the theoretical reason but a practical use of that in any moral activities. The theoretical reason is related to the sciences, to what can be known, while the practical one is related to what ought to be done (*Sollen*).

For Heidegger in the field of *the practical reason* there will be the phenomenon of *respect (Achtung)* where, in a constitutive manner, the imagination participates in forming the emergence of practical reason. Respect means a sensibility for the moral law, i.e., it is even that in which the law first becomes accessible to us. *This respect, however, depends on the imagination.* It happened within imagination that Heidegger basically developed the phenomenological analysis of "the respect for laws" as a moral feeling (*Gefühl*). Both (in his book *Delimitation*) John Sallis and (in his article *Tense*) Jacques Derrida investigated the role of imagination in the field of practical reason. Kant, however, opened an entirely new perspective in this field, insofar as the practical reason is the sphere of pure morality (*personalitas moralis*) where himself-concept gains its own fulfilment, neither in empirical self (*personalitas psychologica*), nor in the original synthetic unity of apperception (*personalitas transcendentalis*). The freedom of self-consciousness is more than the individuality or the Self-constancy, an individual self will be free only if this self can be regarded as a self-determination or as a "giving oneself the law" (*Selbst-ständigkeit als Selbstbestimmung*).

For Kant, the self as a moral self-consciousness lives its freedom not in the absence of dependence on something, but in undertaking the moral binding, that is, in commitment to the law. It is this core-structure of the moral "I" what Kant also calls the *person(ality)*. This moral self-consciousness does not exist from the beginning, but springs from self-education and -cultivation through freedom, while ascending from sensuous to pneumatic sphere. This means the same that one can leave behind the world of particularities and ascend to the general principles of humanity. "Kant places this freedom as autonomy exclusively in man's pure reason."<sup>58</sup> In Heidegger's formulation: "susceptibility" to the moral law, that is,

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<sup>58</sup> Heidegger, GA 42. *Schelling: Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809)*, Ed. I. von Schuler. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1988, 145.

“respect constitutes the essence of the person as the moral self”,<sup>59</sup> only this respect makes possible that we can recognize the moral laws, in other words, the respect will be the way how moral laws will be first accessible to us. Of course, this respect does not serve to the foundation of the laws, respect cannot create laws, the law as such is a law in itself as well, at the same time the respect as a pure feeling is a mode of Being-self-consciousness, namely the mode of that for which the law as such can manifest itself. As a feeling the respect belongs to the side of sensibility opposed to the categories, but the formative center of both goes beyond both of them toward the imagination and the temporality. They in themselves can never become ontological knowledge but only through the time and the imagination. The pure feeling of respect is the way we experience the law itself as a law and first share in it, on the one hand; but having a feeling of respect is a kind of “Self-feeling”, too, so it always also refers to how “the feeling I” simultaneously feels itself herein, on the other. In respect before the laws, therefore, the respecting I itself must also become manifest in a determinate way. In this respect before the law, both the law and, at the same time, myself as acting self also must become manifest.

“In respect before the law, I subordinate myself to the law”, in a way that “in submitting to the law, I submit to myself as pure reason. In this submitting-to-myself, I elevate myself to myself as the free creature which determines itself. This peculiar, submitting, self-elevating of itself to itself manifests *the I in its »dignity«*. Negatively stated: In respect before the law, ...*I cannot despise myself.*”<sup>60</sup> Heidegger’s aim was to radicalize Kant’s enterprise when having linked the feeling of respect to the imagination, and his question went beyond the *subjectivity* of our moral self toward the *finite transcendence* of our moral self and toward the place of its origin.

### ***Heidegger, Imagination and the Unconscious***

After a Swiss physician and psychiatrist Medard Boss had introduced him to Freud’s insights, in his *Zollikon Seminars* between 1959 and 1969, Heidegger explicitly first dealt with the problem what Freud called the “Unbewusst” (unconscious) and “Repression” (repression). Unlike Husserl and Freud, Heidegger avoided appealing to the term “consciousness” or “unconsciousness”, saying that both of them are derivative, not primary component in our human existence. According to Heidegger, Freud’s thinking was one of the victims of the positivist scientific

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<sup>59</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 157. in § 30

<sup>60</sup> Heidegger, GA 3, 159. in § 30 [Italics added – L. Zs. M.]

world of view. For example, it is no accidental that consciousness “has been in use only since the eighteenth century”.<sup>61</sup> Then, he adds:

Consciousness always presupposes Dasein, not conversely. Knowledge and consciousness are always already moving in the openness of the Da. Without this, they would not be possible at all.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, Heidegger writes in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*:

[The aim is] *not to describe the consciousness of man but to evoke the Dasein in man...*<sup>63</sup>

Heidegger denied the existence of the classical Freudian opposition, instead of that, he focuses on Brentano's concept of intentionality. Of course, this does not probably mean that it would be no room for a kind of notion of “unconscious” and “conscious” in Heidegger's thinking. No referring to the consciousness, Heidegger spoke of a basic human awareness (*Besinnung*) or the wholeness (*Ganzheit, Einheit*) of our human being. Similarly, he rejected the Freudian concept of the unconscious, however, he maintained that there is something “unspoken” or “unthematical” aspect in our understanding, that is, human understanding always contains a kind of hiddenness, of incompleteness, in this respect, Dasein not only can but has to have an unconscious. Naturally, it is about a phenomenological unconscious rather than a Freudian unconscious in Heidegger's account of Dasein. In classical Freudian psychoanalysis, the unconscious is not accessible in itself through conscious reflections, but it only manifests itself in dreams, associations, fixations, repetitive actions and so on. For Freud, the unconscious is not a second form of consciousness, but a separate system governed by different rules. Against Freud, phenomenology attributes the “unconscious” to the structure of consciousness itself, more precisely to the structure of intentionality, therefore the “unconscious” is an inferior form of consciousness. For this reason, a phenomenological hidden aspect is always different from a Freudian conception of the unconscious.

Undoubtedly, Dasein has indeed a part that is un-conscious, but Heidegger has to do with a *preconscious* (*Vorbewusst*) that is not repressed, but is simply not conscious at a given moment. This non-conscious has two levels:

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<sup>61</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols—Conversations—Letters*, ed. Medard Boss, trans. with notes and afterwords Franz Mayr and Richard Askay. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001, pp. 225–226.

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikone Seminars. op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, GA 29/30, 258.



(1) The first level is ontological. According to Richardson,<sup>64</sup> the *apriori structures* of our human being, or in other words, the horizontal schemes of our thinking always include an unconscious as a part of the givenness of the human condition. Imagination belongs to that notion of the ‘unconscious’ which is not identified with the Freudian unconscious contra consciousness but makes these modes of being possible.

(2) The second level is the everydayness where Heidegger’s discussion has explicitly turned to explicate an *inadequate/inauthentic* relationship with the Self through the notion of *das Man* and the possibility of its failure to stand by itself. Appearances involve concealment what Heidegger presented as an inauthentic denial or distortion performed by *das Man*. As a negative side of the being-with-others Heidegger identified the dictatorship of the *They* (the *Anyone*) and a mass-media-instituted public sphere in which the “subject” of everyday world is called the neuter (the *They*) and the human *Dasein* loses himself.<sup>65</sup> In this everydayness, as Heidegger says, “the other can become one who is dependent and dominated even if this domination is a tacit one and remains hidden from him.”<sup>66</sup> It doesn’t mean so much that we grow up thrown into our own historicity and never begin to think of the world with *tabula rasa*. Rather, this critique by Heidegger focused on how prevailing fore-meanings and prejudices had a serious impact on our life *beyond all personal morality (conscience) or against our morality* too. Our life can be determined by the dictatorship of publicness in a way that in this everydayness no one is himself, in the impersonal world of *They-self*, “Da-sein is dispersed in the they and must first find itself”.<sup>67</sup> The young Heidegger criticized the public sphere what is the *They-world* from the side of language. The rootlessness of language (the idle talk and the public interpretedness) generates a human relation to the world which is prone to miss the access to the phenomenon and to lead to the unspoken dictatorship of publicness over the things, but the problem of language would already be the matter of a further investigation.

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<sup>64</sup> Richardson, W. J., “The Place of the Unconscious in Heidegger”, In *Heidegger and Psychology. Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, Ed. K. Hoeller, (special issue), 1988, 176–198. Here: 180.

<sup>65</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 17<sup>th</sup> ed., Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1993, 169. Translation: Idem, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y., 1996, 27 §, 119. (hereafter: SZ, 169 (In English: 119.))

<sup>66</sup> Heidegger, SZ, (§ 26) 122. (In English: 114.)

<sup>67</sup> Heidegger, SZ, (§ 27) 129. (In English: 121.)

## SUBJECT BODY AND EXPERIENCE IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

CODRUȚA HAINIC\*

**ABSTRACT.** Applying phenomenological philosophy to psychology means to focus on people's perception of the world. Ultimately, this revolves around people's lived experiences. My aim is to identify how philosophical phenomenology can contribute to the development of empirical and hermeneutical methods regarding psychological phenomena. I submit that it does so by analysing the existential dimension and the meaning of human experiences, as they spontaneously occur in the flow of daily life. The first step is to think the body in a subjective way, as a phenomenal, lived body, and to see in what way individual experiences can be linked. Subsequently, I investigate how experiencers occur in space, and show that, unlike things, they must obtain access to space and to self-localization in space in order to be experientially in it.

**Keywords:** phenomenology, experience, body, Husserl.

### Introduction: phenomenology and psychology

Starting with early 1990s, we can see an increasing interest of psychologists regarding the phenomenological research methods concerning human awareness, description and the meaning of a reflective analysis of *life-world* experience. As a result, the phenomenological approach continued to grow, as Ron Valle claimed, and "has taken its place in the philosophical, theoretical, research, and applied clinical circles in contemporary psychology"<sup>1</sup>. The phenomenological methods became plausible alternatives to some of the behavioural methods, and the outcome of this manner of understanding the meaning of human experience can be visible now in many phenomenological inquiries proposed in psychology.

The starting point of this investigation is to analyse everyday experience, not in the manner specific to natural sciences interested in classifying, quantifying,

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<sup>1</sup>Ron Valle ed., *Phenomenological Inquiry in Psychology* (New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 1998), see Preface.

abstracting and the like, but in a philosophical exertion, that is, to observe and reflect both on our own and on other's experiences and actions. For day to day experiences and actions, Husserl proposed in his phenomenological approach the metaphor of *life-world*<sup>2</sup>, which is the place of interaction between us, our perceptual environments and the world within which we meaningfully dwell together. In other words, from this perspective, the world appears to us through our stream of consciousness as a configuration of meaning. Husserl's idea of phenomenology examines the description and structural analysis of consciousness, that is to say, the ways in which things appear to us in different forms of conscious experience. In this sense, his phenomenology is a philosophy of the concrete. Consciousness itself is understood as being *intentional*, namely it is always directed toward something, and is responsible of creating the meaning that inheres in the world as experienced.

In *Cartesian Meditations*, consciousness is presented as transcendental, which means that it is constituted in relation to all types of objects. Since our attention is turned away from the objects pertaining to the external world and focused on the mental aspects in virtue of which a world appears to us, we can say that Husserl's project is similar, in some way, to a psychologist one. In fact, Husserl writes that his transcendental phenomenology is closer to psychology than to any other discipline, and the difference between them is a seemingly trivial *nuance*<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, Husserl was preoccupied to distinguish his transcendental phenomenology from psychology, particularly from that kind of psychology which shares a belief concerning psychological phenomena, namely that it should focus purely on consciousness:

"Every experience and every other way we are consciously involved with objects clearly allows a *phenomenological turn* (...). In simple perception we are directed toward perceived matters, in memory toward remembered matters, (...). Thus, every such pursuit has its own theme"<sup>4</sup>.

In this point, Husserl introduces the concept of a psychological reduction because, as he declares, we can effect a change of focus that shifts our concern away from the current matters and directs our gaze toward the subjective ways in which they appear. However, this inquiry belongs to a phenomenological psychology and not to a transcendental one, because the natural perspective that presupposes the reality of the world is not abandoned. From Husserl's point of view, the psychological I is still really embodied and very worldly, while the transcendental I is purely in itself and not only constitutes the external objects but also its very own self as worldly.

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<sup>2</sup>Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: North-western University Press, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> See de beginning of the *Second Meditation* in E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, (Springer Science + Business Media, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> E. Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927 – 1931)* (Springer Science + Business Media Dordrecht, 1997), 237.

### **Intentionality and dynamics of life. The hermeneutical component of phenomenology**

The major themes of Husserl's phenomenology, such as *epoche*, imaginative variation, intentionality, the importance of the role of the horizon, the intuition of the essence etc., were continued in a revelatory manner by philosophical hermeneutics. In this regard, John D. Caputo argues that transcendental phenomenology is not opposed to hermeneutic phenomenology and that Husserl's phenomenology has an essentially hermeneutic component, because "it shows how we make our way through the flow experience by means of a certain anticipatory cuts which adumbrate its structure and predict its course, which gave us a reading or interpretation of things"<sup>5</sup>.

Is the essence of hermeneutics, as John Caputo states, inseparable from Husserl's phenomenology? What we refer to as the "dynamics of life" is, in hermeneutics, the continuous flux on which we draw upon when interpreting phenomena. This idea is readily taken up by Husserl as a shield against the uninterpreted world. Since all interpretation presupposes a manner of ordering and regularizing the flow of experience, be it every day or in some way special experience, hermeneutics is actually quite helpful in figuring out how worldly phenomena is constituted. Husserl's merit in all this was first and foremost his noetic – one might say epistemological – attempt to shed light on phenomena constitution. The present section deals with the hermeneutical aspects of conscious experiences and advocates the close relationship between Husserl's phenomenology and some of the later forms of hermeneutics, most notably Heidegger's.

Acknowledging an interpretative stratum to world phenomena has a twofold consequence for philosophy. On the one hand, it provides the necessary prime matter for phenomenology (what to study). On the other hand, it can be approached only by applying a proper framework which structures it (it being continuous and, a realist might add, unaffected by our reflective thoughts and actions). The latter implies that we might never actually have the proof of concept required to say that phenomenology has, indeed, finally provided a constitutive account of phenomena. However, this is a perpetual risk in philosophy in general.

Husserl's "weapon of choice" was to explain phenomena constitution by anticipatory movement. In short, the world is constituted by a series of expectations or anticipations.<sup>6</sup> Although seemingly reductionist, we might sum up Husserl's anticipatory approach as defining experience through anticipatory patterns. Still, there is quite a large gap to bridge between phenomenology and hermeneutics.

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<sup>5</sup> John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics. Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987) 38.

<sup>6</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pages 44 et sq.

Husserl's search was one of unbiased and pure introspection of phenomena, whereas, in hermeneutics, it is taken as given that interpretation supersedes objectivity and pure intuitions are of a utopian nature.

Does this opposition between phenomenology and hermeneutics still hold today? If we see Husserl as the promoter of surpassing the world as the product of continuous interpretation of phenomena, we might answer this question positively. Is it not, after all, the historical goal of metaphysics to elevate one's viewpoint to certainty beyond interpretation?

However, since any approach to hermeneutics is, at its core, an attempt to structure and predict the flow of worldly experience (bring hazardous interpretation to unity and make some sense out of it), phenomenology may be considered, in spite of the above-mentioned differences, some sort of hermeneutics. To back up this idea, let us put forth two arguments: (1) making intentionality explicit is an interpretative act and (2) objects are the result of a constitutional act. Inasmuch as that act differs from subject to subject, that act *per se* may be considered an interpretative act. Let us argue in favour of these two ideas.

The phenomenological exercise of making explicit the implicitness of intentional life implies what would later be called by Heidegger a "pre-understanding" of that life. For the sake of brevity, let us define the pre-understanding of an object as the set of conditions which need to be fulfilled in order to have an experience of that object. This differs from regular scientific analysis of the object (e.g., its chemical composition), inasmuch as potentialities of the object are accounted for in phenomenology: how does the object appear to us in its actuality? How might the object appear to us in its potentiality? Since an object's actuality can never exhaust its potential determinations, phenomenology safely assumes that an object's entirety is always more than what is given in the here and now.

Consequently, there is always an unperceived facet accompanying the present (or present-at-hand, as Heidegger would later put it) object. What is more, the facets of an object differ according to each and every one's pre-understanding of worldly phenomena. For example, a cow is a regular animal to which most Westerners are accustomed; it is nothing surprising in itself. But if we were to all of a sudden see a herd of cows in the central streets of a metropolis such as Bucharest, we would most surely be surprised. Such a banal example becomes even more revelatory when considering the different contexts in which a common mammal such as a cow is perceived by different people, ranging from animal rights activists to farmers and industrialists. An immense wealth of viewpoints (or potentialities) and feelings appears with regard to what seems to be the same object. But it is not the wonder before the countless possibilities of an object's manifestation that is at stake here. Rather, of interest to us should be how the potentialities we are accustomed to most provide our pre-understanding of phenomena.

In short, intentionality depends on pre-understanding the object. To the extent in which the intentional object is predetermined by our pre-understanding of it, the continuous negotiation between expectation and surprise (revisions of expectations) is what lifts objects from the never ending flux of experience and makes intentionality possible. But how is this negotiation *not* hermeneutics? On the contrary, I would argue it very much is. The corollary of this condition of possibility for intentionality is that phenomena which fall beyond *any* possible interpretation (i.e., fall neither in expectations, nor in our reassessment of expectations) do not exist for us. Luckily, it is quite hard to imagine a situation in which conscious encounters with phenomena (and, thus, with intentional objects lifted from the mere flux of experience) do not require at least some sort of interpretation. Were it not for the hermeneutical aspect of phenomenology, surprising acts, such as biting a chunk of plastic when mistaking it for meat (because it looked like real meat, although it wasn't) would leave our consciousness in chaos. Interpretation intervenes to re-assess our expectations and bring under control the troubling event of biting plastic.

All previous remarks revolve around re-construing the nature of phenomenological objects: the bottom line would be that they are not given as such to intuition<sup>7</sup>, but rather come to being through a process of interpretation. From here stems the hermeneutical component of phenomenology.

### Experience and the phenomenological method

The first step in my research was to articulate the notion of intentionality in providing us with a conception of human experience. In this section I want to see in which way individual experiences can be linked together in one shared experience, especially because Husserl's phenomenology never seemed to go around this question.<sup>8</sup>

The phenomenology elaborated by Husserl and his followers, especially the French ones, remains based on the grounds of experience, more precisely, on what can be experienced as reality. Intentional objects bear a special meaning in Husserl. Although these can be both authentic (actual, real, objects) and inauthentic (something that does not really exist, but of which we have a manner of perceiving or imagining it), the latter mode of "objects" still commands intent. So the dispute regarding an internal or external existence of the intentional object is superseded.<sup>9</sup> What remains

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<sup>7</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy (1)*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983, page 44.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Keller, *Husserl and Heidegger on Human Experience*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pages 39 et sq.

<sup>9</sup> E. Husserl, *Logical Investigations*. New York: Humanities Press, 1970, section 11.

to be examined, however, is whether the experience of an intentional object can be a shared experience or not, given that Husserl's account is eminently solipsistic. His methodological solipsism does, indeed, acknowledge the existence of an exterior world and of other minds, but requires that we suspend our belief in them, as this is a subsequent task for each and every mind adhering to the phenomenological *epoché*.

Even though Husserl admits to some sort of a "we-intentionality", i.e., the intentionality allowing us to consider groups of people as objects, he still submits that the latter is ultimately based upon the "I-intentionality" as the individual consciousness directed at an object. Be that as it may, is it feasible that the external, intersubjective world is accessible via the "I-intentionality"? How can intersubjectivity be encapsulated in a private sphere of consciousness? Husserl suggested regarding this encapsulation in analogy with encapsulating both a notion of the past and of the future in the present moment. However, accepting this idea would only bring forth and accentuate the dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic intentional objects: are the past and the future the same thing as *our thoughts* on the past and the future in the present? It is only with Heidegger that this dichotomy would finally be undermined conceptually, by acknowledging that our present-at-hand thoughts and perceptions of the past, future, or any other object, would never exhaust the ready-to-hand nature of that object.

Another attempt to bridge the experiences of intentional objects between multiple "I"s rests in experiences "bearing their individuation in themselves"<sup>10</sup>. This is often an overlooked idea, and Husserl's statement might lead readers to presuppose some sort of realist essentialism conflicting the general solipsism of phenomenology. That is to say, an experience of an object bears its own essential characteristics, no matter of the person experiencing the object; consequently, objects may be experienced intersubjectively, in the sense that they do not rely upon the person experiencing them. But such a realism falls beyond Husserl's intent in *Ideas*. Rather, the "essential" individuation of experiences Husserl refers to forms a unique (non-repeatable) history due to the individual motivation with which the object to be experienced is approached. Therefore, the point Husserl is trying to make is that the experience of an intentional object is not derived from the latter's position in time and space, but from the I experiencing it.

An ever more difficult situation from Husserl's phenomenological standpoint is explaining the experience of other persons. This experience is not only physically mediated by properties pertaining to colour, weight, temperature etc., but also by bodily experience. I submit that, in Husserl, what we can experience of another

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<sup>10</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideas* (2), page 300.

person *at most* is actually our own apperception of their representation of the world. Apperception here designates being conscious of one's awareness of the spatial properties of the experienced objects. So, all in all, apperception is still quite one-sided. Husserl does not yet manage to provide sufficient proof that the other from my apperception is nothing more than an apparent projection of the I.

### The Body

Is there a programmatic (and phenomenological) manner in which the intentional elucidation of the other and of the objective world can be achieved? Our starting point for answering this question is, again, the concept of experience. Experience in Husserl is quite embedded in the flesh. Even if an object or the other is not given to me in itself, it is still incarnated in my body. So what this would firstly mean is that the other is given to myself as I myself am given. Hence an essential problem of constitutive phenomenology: if we cannot constitute the other objectively, neither can we constitute objective world in general.

Husserl makes use of "appresentation" in an attempt to clarify this matter<sup>11</sup>. Appresentation stems from incarnate experience and, Husserl claims, is what makes it possible to differentiate between impressional presentations and "compresentations", i.e., between original and non-original perceptions. In short, another body given to me is being perceived by myself as a mere *face* and not at all in its full originality. Even though this would later represent the basis for Heidegger's difference between the availability of a thing and its "mere presence", it still does not completely solve the problem. For, what is to assure us that the experience of my own body is not a "mere face" as well? Is it truly possible that an object be given in its full originality? Our own flesh seems to be incompletely constituted in apprehending the world.

The important thing to notice here is that not being fully accessible to ourselves does not constitute a problem for appresentation, which holds that the other is never given to us in its full originality. The true "power" of appresentation rests in its temporal character, that is, in the idea that, alongside ourselves, we can co-constitute others *in the same time*. Appresentation co-presents, one would say. It is of no interest here that appresentation does not present objects in their originality or that it does not exhaustively represent them. What is at stake here is its temporal constitutive dimension. Let us provide our own view as to how the other is co-constituted in section 5 of the *Cartesian Meditations*.

First of all, the moment in which another steps into my field of perception coincides with admitting that the other could not or may have also not been there.

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<sup>11</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, section 50.



My experience, therefore, implies both the presence and the absence of the other. *A priori*, nothing can precede this state of my experiencing the other. Therefore, the moment the ego is constituted, so is the possibility of its experiencing the other, even if the other is not given immediately into the ego's field of perception. As a corollary, egological temporality cannot be reduced to the perception of the actual present. Egological temporality presupposes a "primordial sphere" which allows for modal explications of phenomena.

Secondly, the ego has a primordial sphere and in which the other is constituted as a transcendence in immanence. The other's transcendence in immanence appears as a body. A "weak" argument for this is very similar to the ontological argument in a sense: I have at least a mental idea of a spatial "there", which I oppose to a spatial "here". If I can grasp a transcendence in immanence as a "body over there", then it is necessary that my grasping occurs only *after* the body of that transcendence is given, and not before.

Finally, if we admit that "the body over there" acquires meaning from my ownness, this is because it resembles my body. What is the purpose of two bodies resembling each other, other than being two different instantiations of Descartes' *res extensa*? The constitution of the alter ego presupposes the ego; this issue seems insurmountable. But why should this bother us in any way, if the alter ego *is*, after all, constituted? One shouldn't lose sight of the fact that reconstruing phenomena beginning from a phenomenological reduction was actually the whole purpose behind using *epoché* as a conceptual tool by Husserl. As long as it leads us to a satisfactory concept of other phenomena than our own consciousness, it has played its part quite well.

### Closing Remarks

At the very least, this paper must have shed more light into the psychological component of Husserl's constitutive phenomenology. In short, there are two aspects we discussed, together with their afferent conclusions to be drawn: (1) intentional consciousness rests upon interpretative acts, even when it attempts to unveil pure phenomena, and (2) exiting solipsism when referring to "outside" phenomena is possible, although it was argued that Husserl never actually managed to surpass the issue. In arguing this point, we chose to refer to the body of the other and how it is constituted in consciousness. We hope to have shown that a corporeal substance, other than my own, has no point in being conceived if it had not existed before being given to my consciousness. The fact that an argument similar to the ontological one is used to prove this idea may provoke criticism, but, all in all, we believe we have brought enough to the table to maintain debates open as to the phenomenological constitution of the other.

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## JUNG AND EXISTENTIALISM

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**ABSTRACT.** In the following paper I will argue that there are interesting connections between the founder of analytical psychology, Carl Gustav Jung, and the school of existentialism. Analytical psychology and existentialism share almost the same Zeitgeist (becoming influential between the 1930's and 1960's) and are both interested in the concept of individuality. I would like to follow the liaison between Jung and existentialism regarding authenticity and death. First of all, the concept of authenticity deserves extensive treatment. Heidegger's *das Man* and Sartre's *mauvaise foi* have an interesting companion in Jung's notion of the *persona*, the psychological concept of "the mask". Second of all, existentialist authenticity can be compared to the Jungian integration of the shadow. Moreover, the concept of death (Heidegger's *Sein-zum-Tode*) can be compared with Jung's understanding of death from *The Red Book*.

**Keywords:** individuation, persona, authenticity, integration of the shadow, existential death

### The Inauthenticity of the Persona<sup>1</sup>

According to Jung, the persona is "the mask of the actor"<sup>2</sup>. The persona refers to both „the mask of the actor and the actor,“ signifying “the part that someone plays, due to his features, aspect and abilities”<sup>3</sup>. According to the Jungian psychologist Jolande Jacobi, persona could derive from Persu, the Etruscan masked God of the Inferno<sup>4</sup>. One could schematically reconstruct

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<sup>1</sup> The first section of my article is based on my previous research concerning *The Persona and the Shadow in Analytic Psychology and Existentialist Philosophy*, published in *Philobiblon*, 21 (1), 2016, pp. 84-94.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 9/1 §43, edited by Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2014, (henceforth CW).

<sup>3</sup> Lutz Müller, Anette Müller (Hg.), *Wörterbuch des Analytischen Psychologie*, Düsseldorf, Zürich, Patmos Verlag, 2003, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *Die Seelenmaske. Einblicke in die Psychologie des Alltags*, Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, Walter-Verlag, 1971, pp. 44-5.

persona as: “individual” + “world”, or “individual” + “other.” “The persona ... is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be”<sup>5</sup> or “the individual’s system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world”<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, “the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is”<sup>7</sup>.

The persona mediates between the unconscious impressions and the stimuli from the external world<sup>8</sup>. However, the stimuli from the external world are more powerful than our inner incentives. This is why we don’t need a persona when we are alone<sup>9</sup> or we even lose it, if we are completely isolated from the world<sup>10</sup>. The persona was defined as a *social* archetype to explain the weight of the “world” and the “other” from its constitution. Long before Jung, Schopenhauer observed that the persona is „paid in cash”<sup>11</sup> or, in other words, that we put on a mask in order to protect our interests (or that we are rewarded for identifying with the professional persona). One can almost say that life is a pure desire for profit, disguised under the mask of nobleness, friendship our selflessness.

Our civilized world ... is only a great masquerade; here we meet knights, parsons, soldiers, doctors, barristers, priests, philosophers, and the rest. But they are not what they represent themselves to be; they are mere masks beneath which as a rule money-makers are hidden. One man dons the mask of the law which he has borrowed for the purpose from his barrister, merely in order to be able to come to blows with another. Again, for the same purpose, a second chooses the mask of public welfare and patriotism; a third that of religion or religious reform .... It is very important for us to learn early in youth that we are living in a masquerade, otherwise we shall be unable to grasp and get at many things but shall stand before them quite puzzled...<sup>12</sup>

The Jungian conception of the persona is also anticipated by Friedrich Nietzsche. In *The Gay Science*, the German philosopher warns against the danger of identification with the professional persona, which is most of the times arbitrary and contingent, and not the result of an authentic existential choice:

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<sup>5</sup> CW 7 §246.

<sup>6</sup> CW 9/I §221.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> June Singer, *Boundaries of the Soul. The Practice of Jung’s Psychology*, New York, Anchor Books, 1994, pp. 159-164.

<sup>9</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *op. cit.* p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Hannah, *The Inner Journey. Lectures and Essays on Jungian Psychology*, Toronto, Inner City Books, 2000, p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> CW 9/1 §221.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. 2, translated by E. F. J. Payne, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 210-1.

Even today ... the need to make a living still forces nearly all European men to adopt a particular role – their so-called profession ... Almost all Europeans, at an advanced age, confuse themselves with their role ... Upon deeper consideration, the role has actually *become* character; and artifice, nature ... Every time man starts to discover the extent to which he is playing a role and the extent to which he *can* be an actor, he *becomes* an actor.<sup>13</sup>

Our nowadays situation is not much different: we confuse ourselves with our roles because the identification with them is rewarded just as breaking character is swiftly penalized. Nietzsche is not concerned with the socio-anthropological developments of the falsity of the persona (something that Jean Paul Sartre will look into), being preoccupied with the psychological dimension of the person who lies to himself or herself. “Are you for real? Or only an actor? A representative? Or the represented? – In the end, you really are only an imitation of an actor...”<sup>14</sup> writes the philosopher in *The Twilight of the Idols*. Nietzsche seems to infer that the one who puts on the mask will sooner or later arrive to a sort of inner contradiction. In other words, once persona takes over your face, the Ego will also suffer. Nietzsche refers to “a labyrinth of masks behind masks which makes it difficult to discover the true person behind them”<sup>15</sup>.

Jung uses these insights from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche building his conception of identification with the persona: “Identification with one’s office or one’s title is very attractive indeed, which is precisely why so many men are nothing more than the decorum accorded to them by society. In vain would one look for a personality behind the husk. Underneath all the padding one would find a very pitiable little creature.”<sup>16</sup> “The mask of the soul” can grow “into our flesh”<sup>17</sup>, and it is difficult to distinguish between the Ego and it. “Only, the danger is that they become identical with their personas – the professor with his text-book, the tenor with his voice. Then the damage is done ... The garment of Deianeira has grown fast to his skin.”<sup>18</sup> Individuality “degenerates,” being stifled by a rigid persona.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, edited by Bernard Williams, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, poems translated by Adrian del Caro, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 215-6.

<sup>14</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 161.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Dixon, *Nietzsche and Jung. Sailing a Deeper Night*, New York, Peter Lang, 1999, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup> CW 7 §230.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Hannah, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> CW 9/I §221.

<sup>19</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *Die Psychologie von C. G. Jung. Eine Einführung in das Gesamtwerk*, Mannheim, Patmos Verlag, 2012, p. 40.

Jung shows – in a Nietzschean vein – that society pressures us into identifying with our professional persona: “Society expects ... every individual to play the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible...Society demands this as a kind of surety; each must stand at his post, here a cobbler, there a poet ... Society is persuaded that only the cobbler who is not a poet can supply workmanlike shoes.”<sup>20</sup> Jung’s argument from *The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious* resonates with Sartre’s description of the functional identity from *Being and Nothingness*:

There is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to his function as a grocer, just as the soldier at attention makes himself into a soldier-thing with a direct regard which does not see at all, which is no longer meant to see ... There are indeed many precautions to imprison a man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition.<sup>21</sup>

According to many authors (Baudouin<sup>22</sup>, Zamfirescu<sup>23</sup>, Vogel<sup>24</sup>), the persona can be compared with the Heideggerian the “they” [*das Man*]. The persona shares with the “they” at least four of its characteristics: distanciality [*Abständigkeit*], averageness [*Durchschnittlichkeit*], levelling down [*Einebnung*], and disburdenment of being [*Seinsentlastung*]. *Abständigkeit* brings along a sort of obsession of differentiation for the *Dasein* who does not feel comfortable of recognizing the same essence in the “other,” who values separation over the acknowledgement of identity, and is, therefore, unable to utter the Sanskrit *tat twam asi*. “In one’s concern with what one has taken hold of, whether with, for, or against, the Others, there is constant care as to the way one differs from them.”<sup>25</sup>

*Durchschnittlichkeit* aspires to a sort of normative “mediocrity”: everything that doesn’t fit its pattern is marginalized or re-educated. “In this averageness with which it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps

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<sup>20</sup> CW 7 §305.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, New York, Washington Square Press, 1993, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Baudouin, *L’œuvre de Jung*, Paris, Éditions Payot, 1993, p. 354.

<sup>23</sup> Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu, *Filosofia inconștientului*, București, Ed. Trei, 2009, p. 445.

<sup>24</sup> Ralf T. Vogel, *C. G. Jung für die Praxis. Zur Integration jungianischer Methoden in psychotherapeutische Behandlungen*, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2016, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, §27, p. 163, henceforth BT.

watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore."<sup>26</sup> Heidegger's *Einebnung* (levelling down) reminds us of the Nietzschean notion of *Ausgleichung*, also translated with "levelling"<sup>27</sup>: "Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed.

Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known."<sup>28</sup> The fourth Heideggerian feature makes mention of *Seinsentlastung* or disburdenment: "It 'was' always the 'they' who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been 'no one' ... Thus the particular Dasein in its everydayness is disburdened by the "they" ... Everyone is the other, and no one is himself ... The 'they'... is the "nobody" [*das Man ... ist das Niemand*]."<sup>29</sup> The disburdenment required by the "they" is not unlike depersonalization: it is like moving backwards on the Ego-Self axis, the devolution towards persona and *das Man*.

It is obvious that persona, as a mechanism of adjustment to the "dictates" of society, shares with *das Man* its inconspicuousness and unascertainability [*Unauffälligkeit und Nichtfeststellbarkeit*]<sup>30</sup>: "We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, we should investigate the relationship between persona and Jean Paul Sartre's version of inauthenticity: *mauvaise foi* or bad faith. Bad faith was defined as an internal lie, a manner of lying to ourselves. "Bad faith ... is ... a lie to oneself. To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth."<sup>32</sup>

As several existentialist commentators show (see for instance Cooper<sup>33</sup>), bad faith has a paradoxical feature: I have to know the truth and lie to myself at the same time, I have to simultaneously know and not know, because the deceiver and the deceived are the same person. However, if we examined ourselves, we would observe that bad faith is a widespread phenomenon in our daily existence: rather the rule and not the exception. We tend to refuse to acknowledge the truth and accept the convenient lie, to adjust and make things

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<sup>26</sup> BT §27, p. 165.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, edited by Rolf-Peter Horstman and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> BT, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> BT §27, p. 165-6.

<sup>30</sup> BT §27, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> David E. Cooper, *Existentialism. A Reconstruction*, Malden, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1999, p. 117.

easier. As Nietzsche wrote in one of his posthumous fragments, we can be described as “self-actors” or “actors before ourselves” [*Schauspieler vor euch selber*]<sup>34</sup>.

Therefore, one could redefine bad faith as an internalized Jungian persona: through it I mask for myself some features of my personality. I don’t want to know that I know certain things. The conception of an internalized persona which conceals from me certain aspects of my ego and shadow brings us to the aspect of the *half-truth* (this peculiar combination of lie and truth). The half-truth of bad faith (as inner mask) is a greater enemy of truth than the lie because the disclosed lie gives the chance of an ontic reconstruction, “a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted”<sup>35</sup>. But an existence entirely established upon an undiscovered half-truth is a castle built on sand, a poisonous and subtle form of inauthenticity.

### **Authenticity as “Ownedness” and Integration of the Shadow**

Many researchers of existential philosophy (Flynn<sup>36</sup>, Michelman<sup>37</sup>, Guignon<sup>38</sup>, Carman<sup>39</sup>) claim that Heideggerian “authenticity” must be understood as “ownedness”.

***Eigentlichkeit = eigen (own) + tlichkeit***

***Authenticity = own + edness***

**Αύθεντης = one who does things for himself (αυτός)**

(Macquarrie<sup>40</sup>).

“Heidegger’s account of authenticity exploits the etymology of the German term *Eigentlichkeit*, derived from the word *eigen*, ‘own’— in the sense of ‘a room of one’s own’— similar to how the English word *authentic* derives from the Greek word *autentes*, ‘author or originator of an action,’ one who does something on his or her own authority.”<sup>41</sup> Authenticity can also be understood, in a more general meaning, as “the project of becoming the person you are”<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, Bd. 9, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1880-1882*, Hg. von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1999, p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 70 n.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas R. Flynn, *Existentialism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Michelman, *Historical Dictionary of Existentialism*, Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2008, p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, London, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 68-9.

<sup>39</sup> Taylor Carman, “Authenticity” in Hubert L. Dreyfus, Mark A. Wrathall (Eds.), *A Companion to Heidegger*, Malden, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 285.

<sup>40</sup> John Macquarrie, *Existentialism. An Introduction, Guide and Assessment*, London, Penguin Books, 1972, p. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Michelman, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *op. cit.*, p. 2.



The existential maxim “werde was du bist” [*become who you are*], adapted from Pindar by Nietzsche, urges a person to become the author of his or her own life. “To be authentic means to invent one’s *own* way and pattern of life”<sup>43</sup>, to realize a “potentiality that is properly my own”<sup>44</sup>. Authenticity has this distinctive feature of originality, nonconformism and rebellion against convention, because the dictatorship of *das Man* shall always impose a pattern that must be followed automatically and without amendments, otherwise one would be banished and even excluded from society. Moreover, the quest for authenticity could be defined as an awakening from the robotic slumber of *das Man*. The Emersonian “law” of “self-reliance” could provide inspiration for an individual who wants to become who he is, in his progression towards authenticity: “Nothing is sacred but the integrity of your own mind ... No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it.”<sup>45</sup>

According to a recent Jungian scholar<sup>46</sup>, existentialist authenticity can be compared to the Jungian process of individuation. The becoming unto being takes place on the *Ego-Self [Ich – Selbst]* axis. We are born in a state of inflation and as the Ego advances as the unconscious ocean of the Self is retreating. According to Jung, in the first half of our life we have to develop a strong and socially responsible sense of Ego. Just around midlife or *Lebenswende*, the Self begins to lead the Ego, guiding him sometimes against his will. One could say that every step towards Self is a step beyond Ego and somehow against him. The relationship between Ego and the Self is similar to the connection between *passive* or *active*, or Earth and Sun. This relationship can be internalized, as the one supposed between Goethe and Faust, or Nietzsche and Zarathustra. “I ... distinguish between the ego and the self ..., since the ego is only the subject of my consciousness, while the self is the subject of my total psyche, which also includes the unconscious... In unconscious fantasies ... the self often appears as supraordinate or ideal personality, having somewhat the relationship of Faust to Goethe or Zarathustra to Nietzsche.”<sup>47</sup>

If, in a general fashion, authenticity can be compared with individuation, we can also add, that the progression towards authenticity is particularly similar

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<sup>43</sup> Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity. From Kierkegaard to Camus*, London, New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Taylor, 1991: *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance and Other Essays*, New York, Dover Publications, 1993, pp. 21-2.

<sup>46</sup> Sanford L. Drob, *Reading the Red Book. An Interpretative Guide to C. G. Jung’s Liber Novus*, New Orleans, Spring Journal, 2012, pp. 121-5.

<sup>47</sup> CW 6 §706.

with the process of the integration of the shadow. For a number of times in his *Collected Works*<sup>48</sup>, Jung defines the shadow as an *inferior personality*. The shadow must be understood as a personal inferiority which contrasts with the superiority of the ideal of the Ego, represented by the persona<sup>49</sup>. We display the persona and repress the shadow. According to a Jungian commentator<sup>50</sup>, there are five steps of the phenomenology of the shadow: projection, recognition, dissociation, identification, and integration. Three of them are especially interesting for our argument: projection, identification, and integration.

The projection of unconscious content into our surroundings alters the individual's perception of his or her world. One can say that projection leads to a sort of autism, transforming the world into a dream through the externalization of our inner fantasy. It is not meaningless that Jung adapted the mechanism of projection from the Freudian research concerning paranoia. Therefore, we find on the outside what is hidden on the inside: most of the time, the sense of hostility from our surroundings might be a projection of our own hostility. The evil we mostly find outside ("l'enfer c'est les autres") might be a reflection of our inner negativity ("l'enfer c'est moi"). However, projection is so seductive because it maintains "Ego's monarchy." "Projection causes the least amount of distress to the ego, which can observe its twin but at a safe enough distance as to allow for the illusory sense of separation"<sup>51</sup>. One could say that shadow projection is completely inauthentic: it is almost a form of bad faith, a way of running away from the truth and from ourselves. To move in the direction of individuation, we have to practice "the path of attention"<sup>52</sup>, and retreat some of our projections in order to observe some aspects from our shadow. We have to realize that when we despise someone deeply and irrationally, we repress contempt for ourselves. The projection is only a detour through which we hide our dissatisfaction for ourselves.

The identification with the shadow (a phenomenon used by Jung to diagnose Nietzsche's inflation) is a manner of "collision with the unconscious" transforming the affected individual "into a hero or into a godlike being, a superhuman entity."<sup>53</sup> More exactly, this identification refers to "the taking over of our shadow contents in our own identity. The destructive actions are no longer

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<sup>48</sup> CW 7 §78, CW 9/I §513, CW 9/II §15, CW 16 §134.

<sup>49</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>50</sup> Mario Trevi, „Sul problema dell'ombra nella psicologia analitica”, in Mario Trevi, Augusto Romano, *Studi sull'ombra*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2009, pp. 18-26.

<sup>51</sup> D. J. Moores, "Oh Gigantic Paradox: Poe's William Wilson and the Jungian Self", *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 7 (1), 2006, p. 34.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, edited by William Booth, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1988, p. 47.

<sup>53</sup> CW 7§40.

perceived as foreign by Ego, being accepted as 'normal' and natural parts of our personality"<sup>54</sup>. If the unconscious seems to overpower consciousness in the process of the identification with the shadow, integration of the shadow intends, conversely, to make us aware of our unconsciousness: to pull out the primitive and infantile content from the abyss of the id and build a sort of *Lichtung* in the *tenebrositas* of the shadow. Integration of the shadow is "the beginning of the *objective attitude* regarding our personality"<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, if we were able to integrate our shadow, we would gain access to the immense energy repressed by the shadow<sup>56</sup> and advance towards individuation and wholeness.

Just as persona (a mask devised to deal with the outer world) was considered an equivalent of the Heideggerian *das Man*, the integration of the shadow through the particular movement towards individuation on the Ego-Self axis could be regarded as a version of Heideggerian authenticity. The integration of the shadow is a transgression and transformation of the shadow (understood as the "other" in ourselves), a way of becoming aware of our unconsciousness (or of illuminating the darkness), and also a manner of becoming who we are. The integration of the shadow is a kind of exploitation of "ownedness," which "carries with it a connotation of owning oneself, owning up to what one is becoming, and taking responsibility for being one's own"<sup>57</sup>.

If the final, heroic moment of the integration of the shadow is the epitome of authenticity, the preceding moment of the identification with the shadow is a mode of failing to realize our progression towards authenticity. However, we must note that both individuation and authenticity are continuous processes, in which Becoming takes precedence over Being: we cannot completely unburden ourselves from our shadow and it is a symptom of inauthenticity to brag about our authenticity. In other words, both integration of the shadow and authenticity are "metastable"<sup>58</sup> conditions: only a completely enlightened being could "burn" his shadow integrally or become attain a sort of pure authenticity. This is why one Jungian therapist emphasizes that at a mundane level, one should not speak of total integration of the shadow: one should aspire to acknowledge it and take responsibility for it<sup>59</sup> (Kast 1999: 21).

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<sup>54</sup> Ralf T. Vogel, *Das Dunkle im Menschen. Das Schattenkonzept der Analytischen Psychologie*, Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2015, p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> Toni Wolff, *Studien zu C. G. Jungs Psychologie*, Zürich, Rhein-Verlag, 1959, p. 153.

<sup>56</sup> Mario Trevi, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>57</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>58</sup> Gary Cox, *How to Be an Existentialist or How to Get real, get a Grip and Stop Making Excuses*, London, New York, Continuum, 2009, p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> Verena Kast, *Der Schatten in uns. Die subversive Lebenskraft*, Mannheim, Patmos Verlag, 1999, p. 21.

### **Existential Death in *Being and Time* and the *Red Book***

The existentialist revolution regarding the understanding of “death” refers to avoidance of the thematisation of “our modes of existence ... in a transcendent, post-mortem life,” emphasizing instead “the presence of death in actual life and the consciousness of the existent being”<sup>60</sup>. “For existentialists, death is not a physical event or biological process but the awareness that one is going to die.”<sup>61</sup> For the purpose of this paper we can reconstruct the Heideggerian Being-towards-death with this simplified scheme:

***Angst* → *Vereinzelung* → *eigenste Möglichkeit*  
(anxiety → individualization → ownmost possibility)**

“Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about - its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its own most Being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities. Therefore, with that which it is anxious about, *anxiety discloses Dasein as Being-possible ...*”<sup>62</sup> Anxiety, as *Grundbefindlichkeit* or basic state-of-mind cuts us off from the circuit of *das Man*, offering us a radical access path from the vicious circle of inauthenticity: anxiety is an invitation to “selfhood,” to individualization, to finding a personal modality of existence. We further see that death is fundamentally mine, being connected with *Jemeinigkeit* or “mineness”: “Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time. By its very essence, death is in every case mine, in so far as it 'is' at all. And indeed death signifies a peculiar possibility-of-Being in which the very Being of one's own Dasein is an issue. In dying, it is shown that mineness and existence are ontologically constitutive for death.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, “*Dasein* has a *Jemeinigkeit*, and, because it has a *Jemeinigkeit*, it is *I[Ich]*”<sup>64</sup>.

Only because I have direct and unmediated access to my death, I have the possibility of building an authentic existence: “Only by realizing that he is the wholly unique possibility of his own death does a person cease to treat himself as

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<sup>60</sup> Anton Hügli, „Tod” in Urs Thurnherr, Anton Hügli, *Lexikon Existenzialismus und Existenzphilosophie*, Darmstadt, WBG, Darmstadt, 2007, p. 253.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Michelman, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>62</sup> BT §40, p. 232.

<sup>63</sup> BT §47, p. 284.

<sup>64</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, translated by Bettina Bergo, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 24.

though he is a copy of the next man and of all men ...”<sup>65</sup> Moreover, “death is a possibility-of-Being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its own most potentiality-for-Being ... Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein”<sup>66</sup>. This possibility of impossibility is my own [*eigen*] and it is constitutive of my subject, which has to deal with finitude. The possibility of not-Being extracts me from the somnambulism of *das Man*, and makes me face the inevitability of my disappearance.

One cannot transcend the grim possibility because sooner or later I have to confront death. A life deprived of its *memento mori* is a tranquil existence as long as we are immersed in *das Man* and are able to quiet the distinctive voice of anxiety. Conversely, the embrace of mortality or the courage to respond to anxiety *essentializes* the Dasein, according to his or her inner rigor and its resistance to the dictatorship of *das Man*. Heidegger adds that death “does not just 'belong' to one's own Dasein in an undifferentiated way; death *lays claim* to it as an *individual* Dasein. The non-relational character of death, as understood in anticipation, individualizes Dasein down to itself”<sup>67</sup>. This connection of the *Dasein* to his or her self (between the self as *Dasein* and the self as Being-towards-death) presupposes a sort of destruction of the network of *Mit-Sein*: the individualization of the *Dasein* brings along isolation from the “seductive” totalitarian system of *das Man*.

These seminal thoughts presented by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) are anticipated by Jung in *The Red Book* (1913-17/2009). In the chapter *One of the Lowly*, the description of the death of a tramp (an episode reminiscent of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) leads the narrator to a philosophical understanding of death:

The knowledge of death came to me that night, from the dying that engulfs the world. I saw how we live toward death, how the swaying golden wheat sinks together under the scythe of the reaper, / like a smooth wave on the sea-beach. He who abides in common life becomes aware of death with fear. Thus the fear of death drives him toward singleness. He does not live there, but he becomes aware of life and is happy; since in singleness he is one who becomes, and has overcome death.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Gary Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>66</sup> BT §50, p. 285-294.

<sup>67</sup> BT §53, p. 308.

<sup>68</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Red Book. Liber Novus*, edited by Sonu Shamdasani, preface by Ulrich Hoerni, translated by Mark Kyburz, John Peck and Sonu Shamdasani, New York, London, W. W. Norton & Company, 2009, p. 267a.

The relationships between fear and death, on one hand, and fear of death and singleness, on the other echo with the Heideggerian description of anxiety of “authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world” and individualization [*Vereinzellung*]. Regarding individualisation or individuation, Jung adds: “To attain individuality, we need a large share of death.”<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the phrase “we live toward death” anticipates almost verbatim the expression *Sein-zum-Tode* or Being-towards-death. In the chapter *Death*, we find the most substantial description of existential death from *The Red Book*:

We need the coldness of death to see clearly. Life wants to live and to die, to begin and to end ... If I accept death, then my tree greens, since dying increases life ... Joy at the smallest things comes to you only when you have accepted death ... Therefore I behold death, since it teaches me how to live. If you accept death, it is altogether like a frosty night and an anxious misgiving, but a frosty night in a vineyard full of sweet grapes. You will soon take pleasure in your wealth. Death ripens. One needs death to be able to harvest the fruit. Without death, life would be meaningless, since the long-lasting rises again and denies its own meaning. To be, and to enjoy your being, you need death, and limitation enables you to fulfil your being.<sup>70</sup>

“The coldness of death” resonates with the Schopenhauerian description of the *passio* of life understood as endless striving and sufferance and to the detachment of death understood as a cure to the passionate and painful will to be. Moreover, this “coldness” relates to the elegant, almost mathematic necessity of death, which brings an end to illness, sadness or distress. “Life is a task to be worked off; in this sense *defunctus* is a fine expression.”<sup>71</sup> The fruit that must be harvested with the assistance of death could be “the fruit of knowledge,” or of consciousness. In existentialist terms, anxiety of death leads to authenticity understood of “ownedness,” cutting us off from the tranquillity and security of *das Man*. The ontological fruit of anxiety wakes us up from everyday slumber of imitation, conformism and mechanical response.

“Death ... teaches me how to live” reminds of the famous principle μελέτη θανάτου (*Phaedo* 81a), which describes philosophy as the “care” or “solicitude” for death<sup>72</sup>. This ancient tradition is implicitly presupposed in the Jungian phrase

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<sup>69</sup> C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 307b.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274b-275a.

<sup>71</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>72</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, translated by David Wills, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 12-5; Jean Greisch, *Ontologie et temporalité. Esquisse d'une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 280.

but also in the Heideggerian concept of *Vorlaufen in den Tod*<sup>73</sup>, anticipation or rather *forerunning to death*. *Vorlaufen* acts as a *memento mori* disguised as *memento vivere*. “What my anticipation of my death as a possibility reveals to me is my life,” writes a Heidegger exegete<sup>74</sup>. Or, in Gabriel Liiceanu’s words: “It doesn’t matter that I will die someday, what matters is that death influenced my way of life”<sup>75</sup>. “Death ripens” could refer to the authentic focus of those who manage to overcome the dispersion and *acedia* of *das Man*<sup>76</sup> (Pieper 1986: 54-5). My death is a treasure if I am able to integrate it into my life. The slumber of inauthentic existence resembles to a sort of death in life, while the authentic acceptance of finitude adds meaning and value to existence.

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<sup>73</sup> BT §53.

<sup>74</sup> William Large, *Heidegger’s Being and Time*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p. 79.

<sup>75</sup> Gabriel Liiceanu, „Excurs asupra câtorva termeni heideggerieni din *Ființă și timp*”, in Martin Heidegger, *Ființă și timp*, translated by Gabriel Liiceanu and Cătălin Cioabă, București, Humanitas, 2003, p. 618.

<sup>76</sup> Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, translated by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, pp. 54-5.

## COLLABORATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL PRACTICES

ALEXANDRU COSMESCU\*

**ABSTRACT.** In the present paper, I examine the possibility of doing phenomenology in a collaborative manner. Faced with the fading of the ethos of “seeing for oneself” and the predominance of “meta-phenomenology” passing for “phenomenological work”, Herbert Spiegelberg proposed the organization of “phenomenology workshops”. After offering an analysis of the method of philosophical workshops exemplified by a contemporary proponent of “philosophical practice”, Oscar Brenifier, I identify several problems such a workshop can face and several commitments that can help create the co-subjectivity necessary for sym-phenomenologizing.

**Keywords:** Phenomenological attitude, Philosophical practice, Philosophy workshop, Dialogical phenomenology, Herbert Spiegelberg

### 1. The “Practical Turn”

One of the ways of beginning to talk about phenomenology is by examining its *ethos*: the attitude it embodies and uses as a guide for reaching the phenomena it seeks to grasp intuitively, analyse, and describe.

From its early days, phenomenology presented itself as a radical return to experience, taking experience as its starting point and touchstone –as *talk anchored in experience*, a form of talking that attempts to remain faithful to it.

One can quote various ways of expressing this commitment to experience by various phenomenologists, starting from Husserl’s “back to the things themselves”. One of the most poignant expressions is Wilhelm Schapp’s formula at the end of the preface of his dissertation on the phenomenology of perception:

Ich hoffe nur, dass ich nichts schrieb, was ich nicht selbst sah.<sup>1</sup>

“I hope just that I did not write anything that I did not see myself”, writes Schapp, right after recognizing his debt to Husserl and his “idea circle”. It is an

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<sup>1</sup> W. Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, Goettingen, 1910.



ethos of radical autonomy underlying even the acknowledgment of a master-disciple relation.

Schapp emphasizes this is a *hope*. Therefore, it goes hand in hand with anxiety, uncertainty and desire. The basic methodological orientation is toward *writing what you see and only what you see*, even if you see *based on* what the master – or colleagues in a circle – showed you. Phenomenological discourse is personal. Not just written in the first person, but also *legitimized* by personal seeing. It is seeing – the essential insight – that legitimizes what I write. If what I write is not based on what I see, even if it is true, it is not legitimate. Notice that Schapp did not write “I hope just that I did not write anything untrue”.

There are two possibilities here. The first is that one *takes as true* something that has been told by someone else, without seeing for himself or herself – or seeing partially, unclearly, vaguely – and writes it down, without being able to anchor it in his or her own experience. The second is to write down something that one just thinks he or she has seen, without actually seeing it – of writing something while being confused about its way of givenness.

In both these cases, phenomenological discourse loses its legitimation – because it gains it not from the truth value of its propositions, but from the fact of actually having “seen” the thing you are talking about. In this sense, we can characterize phenomenological ethos as an obsession with the legitimacy of your discourse. Either what you write when you do phenomenology *should* be justified by your own seeing – or you are not “doing phenomenology”, but something else. Commenting on a text. Interpreting what someone might have possibly meant. Or speculating.

Phenomenological discourse is thus haunted both by a certain *confidence* – “seeing is believing”, the correlate of evidence is truth – and by a *doubt* about itself, by a suspicion that, upon closer examination, things might appear otherwise, that you, as the phenomenological writer, have neglected something that would have led you to a clearer insight.

The second aspect I would like to emphasize regarding Schapp’s sentence is his use of the verb *to write*. Of course, he might be referring just to the fact that his dissertation is a written text, but the greatest part of phenomenological discourse seems to be linked to writing.

The paradigm is, of course, Husserl’s *Nachlass*. For Husserl, the practice itself of phenomenology seemed to consist, first of all, in “monological meditations”, in daily writing of page after page of description of what shows itself when the phenomenologist reflects on what was given. Husserl’s stenography is a way of *capturing as fast as possible* what was immediately seen in phenomenological reflection, *writing it down while it is still retained*, at the speed of thought. We can

speak here of a similar anxiety –the fear of “not losing” what was seen, the desire of “fixating” the fleeting insight and making it available for a renewed making-intuitive. Solitary writing, that may be published, shown to others, used as a starting point for lectures, or left in the drawer because it has already generated the insight the phenomenologist was seeking.

This ethos of phenomenology, some of its practitioners claim<sup>2</sup>, was lost when scholarship and exegesis of previous phenomenological text became the dominant mode of phenomenological discourse. An exegete is not anxious about this process of personal seeing-writing (did I see well enough? did I express well enough what I have seen? have I really seen?). She is concerned rather with the coherence of the text she is studying and the layers of meaning that can be discerned there. The anxiety of the exegete seems to be not overlooking an influence on the author she is studying or a factor of the author’s immediate context – an anxiety of *not having enough information* (or having too much to process), rather than of *not seeing clearly enough*.

Accordingly, an apprenticeship in phenomenology conceived as a practice is more akin to a learning how to see than to a learning how to read (philosophy). To use an analogy of the same W. Schapp (which was also an insight of Merleau-Ponty), the phenomenologist must go to school with painters.<sup>3</sup> Or with psychologists and biologists, as the more recent work of Natalie Depraz, Francisco Varela, and Pierre Vermersch shows.<sup>4</sup> The “basic cycle” described by Depraz, Varela and Vermersch, for example, aims at offering a method of “seeing” that can be learned and used to produce phenomenological work. It consists of three phases: suspension of judgment – conceived as a break with the natural attitude – followed by the conversion from the object to its way of givenness and to the act in which the object is given, and by a “letting-go” that waits for the revelation of meaning. Varela<sup>5</sup> has also proposed a different three-step model: reduction (suspending habitual theories about the phenomenon), intuition (gaining familiarity and

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<sup>2</sup> For example, three former graduate students of Dorion Cairns at New School for Social Research – Richard Zaner, Fred Kersten, and Lester Embree. Each of them wrote an “introduction to phenomenology” as a *practical* approach, as something that can be *done*, not just talked about, and the mode of doing it is more urgent and preferable at the same time. A similar tone is expressed by Robert Sokolowski’s well-known introduction to phenomenology – and also by Herbert Spiegelberg, to whom I will refer in the next section.

<sup>3</sup> W. Schapp, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> N. Depraz, F. Varela, P. Vermersch, *On Becoming Aware: A Pragmatics of Experiencing*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> F. Varela, “Dasein’s brain: Phenomenology meets cognitive science”, in D. Aerts (ed.), *Einstein meets Magritte: The white book*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999, pp. 185–197. Available at <http://cepa.info/2030>

intimacy with it in experience), and description (presenting the invariants for intersubjective validation).

These models attempt to “operationalize” phenomenological practice – to make it possible that various researchers/practitioners “do the same thing” and gain phenomenological insights that can be compared and validated. In a way, this fulfils Husserl’s old dream of a phenomenological research community – a community dedicated to the study of “the things themselves”, that would work together, using the same approach, and gradually achieve consensus. One variant of accomplishing this is teaching phenomenology *from the start* as a practical discipline of seeing / writing – before dealing with its classic texts – in order to be able to *use* phenomenology on one’s own, eventually *checking with understanding* the insights of Husserl or Heidegger when one starts reading them already having a *working knowledge* of phenomenology as a method / practice. Such was the approach of the late Lester Embree – learning phenomenology by doing it while discussing with peers about intentional processes, reflectively observed.<sup>6</sup>

Usually, we learn a new discursive practice in dialogue with those who are already familiar with it. In conversation and experimentation. I would argue this is, also, the best way of learning phenomenology: as part of a community which is already doing it – talking about the ways things appear. A community that is doing phenomenology *dialogically*: not just by solitarily writing and then reading each other’s texts, but by *thinking together while talking together*. This is the *workshop approach to phenomenology*, proposed by Herbert Spiegelberg in the sixties. A way of doing phenomenology that is constitutively open for intersubjectivity, because it is done in common. And after dialogue is learned, one can monologue privately on one’s own – but always nostalgic for the possibility of dialogue.

## 2. The phenomenological workshop: Herbert Spiegelberg

Herbert Spiegelberg, known at that time mostly for his historical work on phenomenology, but also as a “living, breathing phenomenological philosopher”<sup>7</sup> that interacted with its founding figures, seems to be the first author that proposed, in the sixties, the idea of a phenomenological workshop. According to his own account of it, he developed it based on two main concerns. One was to “revive phenomenology as a fresh approach directly to phenomena in opposition to mere meta-phenomenology through textual and historical studies”<sup>8</sup>, reawakening

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<sup>6</sup> L. Embree, *Reflective Analysis: A First Introduction Into Phenomenological Investigation*, Zeta Books, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> G. Psathas, “In Memory of Herbert Spiegelberg and the Phenomenological Workshops”, in *Human Studies*, no. 15(4) / 1992, p. 399.

<sup>8</sup> H. Spiegelberg, *Doing Phenomenology: Essays on and in Phenomenology*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, pp. 24-25.

the ethos (or “spirit”) of the first generation of phenomenologists. The second was “to free phenomenology from the seemingly utter privacy and subjectivity, if not solipism, to which according to certain interpretations of the Husserlian conception it is doomed”<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, Spiegelberg designed an environment in which phenomenology can be practiced from the start 1) *as phenomenology* and 2) *in collaboration, intersubjectively*. According to him, it was working in groups that is “particularly suited to the doing of first-hand phenomenology”.<sup>10</sup> He held five such two-week workshops, at Washington University, St. Louis, between 1965 and 1972<sup>11</sup>. In what did they consist? We have his own account<sup>12</sup> and also the accounts of several participants<sup>13</sup> that can help us reconstitute what was happening during these intensive workshops.

During the morning sessions, the group gathered for examining together a phenomenon, proposed at first by Spiegelberg, later by the participants themselves. One favourite strategy to start the first session of a workshop – giving the participants a first hands-on training in phenomenological attending, describing and questioning – was to have them plug their ears and listen to “silence”. They were supposed to write a short description, using a questionnaire prepared by Spiegelberg, which helped them focus on certain aspects of the experience. Afterwards, they read their texts, in turn. After each text, its author was subjected to a questioning session by the members of the group, before passing to the next participant. The rule for this type of session was “to the things first, then to the books”: no book was to be consulted before writing the account of the phenomenon and discussing it. After the session was finished, the participants were allowed to study in Spiegelberg’s personal library, have more informal discussions, revise the texts they wrote during the first session in the light of the questioning, others’ contributions and subsequent reading. Sometimes, in the afternoon, the participants were invited to field trips during which they examined particular phenomena. In the evenings, invited lecturers gave talks and led discussions.

Among them were Eugene Gendlin, Erwin Straus, Richard Zaner, etc. The next day, the process started again by presenting the supplementary insights on the phenomenon, followed by the common examination of a different topic, assigned to the participants the day before. The participant had to examine by himself and

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24-34.

<sup>13</sup> G. Psathas, *op. cit.*; E. Casey, “Sym-Phenomenologizing: Talking Shop”, in *Human Studies*, No. 20(2) / 1997, pp. 169-180.

prepare a text for the next group session (thus, a mix of solitary and group work for the whole period of the workshop) on topics like phenomenology of spatial perception, the phenomenon of air, perceptual perspective in impressionist painting, etc.<sup>14</sup>

Sometimes, the second week focused on a single topic, explored in depth. What can be accomplished, phenomenologically, in a workshop of this type? In doing phenomenology, we attempt to find invariant structures of experience. In solitary work, we do this by variation in imagination until an invariant is found. Intersubjectivity is implied even in this solitary phenomenological work – we take our own mental life as just an example of a possible subjectivity, and the account we produce is intended as intelligible in principle. In Spiegelberg’s phenomenology workshop, though, intersubjectivity is present and operative from the start in the nature itself of a common session. More than that, the variation is not *in imagination*, but in the plurality of *concrete accounts* of the participants. The examples are not invented by the same phenomenologist that examines them one by one; every account differs, either in detail or radically, from the others, and stems from each subject’s concrete, lived experience. The invariant is the direct product of intersubjective collaboration.

This can help with the anxiety of “not seeing enough” that haunts solitary work. The burden of seeing the invariants is not on the solitary subjectivity, afraid of not having had enough experience or of bringing her own bias, but on the group as a whole: the group sees *more* than the individual member can, because it is not stuck to a single perspective. Another aspect of group work that helps deal with this anxiety is the process of questioning, right after reading your initial description. According to Spiegelberg’s injunction, when asking questions the questioner should avoid, as much as possible, referring to her own parallel experience of the same phenomenon. The questions are strictly based on *the other’s experience* and aim at clarifying it or bringing her attention to aspects of her experience that are presented in a too sketchy or misleading fashion. This kind of questioning is helpful both for the questioner and for the author of the description. From the perspective of the questioner, it means training in empathy – in being able to enter the other’s expression – and attentive examination of the phenomenon *as presented by the other*, which are important requirements for *reading phenomenology in an understanding manner*. For the author of the description, the other’s questions lead her back to her own experience, make her reflect, purify, and question again what was seen and whether it was actually seen.

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<sup>14</sup> G. Psathas, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

The members of the group rely on each other in order to avoid “becoming stuck in their own subjectivity”, as the leading contemporary proponent of philosophical workshops, Oscar Brenifier, uses to say. By paying attention in a critical fashion to their own subjectivity and presenting it to the others, by listening to the others and questioning them, one becomes aware of one’s own habits of thinking *as habits* and of one’s own perspective *as a perspective*, while still seeking to intuit and describe the phenomenon *as experienced* in its essential structure. In this “co-subjectivity”, as Spiegelberg finally calls it, the subject is decentered and “thinking together” can happen without the usual friction between opposing points of view to which the persons entering dialogue are attached. Instead of trying to convince the other of “one’s own “idea, the structure of this kind of workshop allows exploring ways of seeing *the same thing* that can help the participants experience that thing in a more complete fashion – a practice particularly suited for finding invariants. As one of the participants to the workshop puts it,

By doing phenomenology together in this way we began to understand the phenomenological and the eidetic reductions much better and see that Plato and the Scholastics had been doing exactly this with their philosophical methods all along. As we went to the things themselves we began to see that there could be many perspectives of them as Nietzsche would say. Once these several perspectives were described in a phenomenological reduction we could begin to hunt for the essence. We could try to see how the perspectives were perspectives of a common essence which perhaps we could not fully know. As a result of doing phenomenology together and seeing how differently we might each experience the same thing I began to really appreciate not only the dialogical nature of Plato’s philosophy and of the Scholastics but I saw this in other philosophers.<sup>15</sup>

The effect of this dialogical practice was transformative on the participants. Among the consequences of the practice of phenomenological workshops, such as the constant control of the subjectivity and the intersubjective checking and extension of each member’s perspective, Spiegelberg also counts a certain kind of attunement:

Co-operative phenomenology is not merely a matter of exchanging views, of “swapping” reports, as it has been called, or even of registering and, as far as possible, understanding one another’s different perspectives. Such an outcome need not be the

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<sup>15</sup> D. Goicoechea, *Agape and Bhakti with Bataille and Mark at Loyola and St. Francis: From the Hindus to Today*, Pickwick, 2016. The quoted passage is present in the google books preview of the book, that was not accessible to me in full:  
<https://books.google.md/books?id=2BRoDQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro#v=onepage&q&f=false>

"end of the story," it can be the beginning of a new one, the attempt to attune dissonances... Mutual exploration may reveal that the instruments of description are out of tune, i.e., that the disagreements among the describers are merely verbal, and that a readjustment of the linguistic tools can clear up some discrepancies. But "attunement" is also possible at a deeper level if the dissonances should be in the prelinguistic experiences. Here it is possible to direct and redirect our viewing by "drawing attention" to factors previously overlooked, by pointing out unconscious preconceptions and the like. In the pursuit of such attempts at attunement one of the most meaningful and revealing occurrences may be when one of the partners suddenly exclaims "aha" in a tone of voice indicating that he has not only just become aware of something new but also realizes that he has discovered what the other partner meant all along. Such episodes were among the most rewarding of the workshop experiences. The phenomenology of what is going on in such experiences may throw important light on the process involved in genuine attunement<sup>16</sup>.

According to the participants' testimonies, the workshop experience influenced their perception of philosophy in general and their way of *doing* it, leaking into their habitual teaching. But no one did what Spiegelberg expected them to do: take up the same approach and organize workshops in their own institutions.<sup>17</sup> There seems to be, still, little to no *sym-phenomenologizing*.

### 3. The workshop approach in "Philosophical Practice": Oscar Brenifier

Oscar Brenifier is a contemporary French philosopher, active in the field commonly called "philosophical practice". According to his views<sup>18</sup>, philosophizing, as an activity, is anchored in a set of attitudes – learned ignorance, availability, openness, distance, etc. – and expresses itself by the means of three sets of competencies, in "deepening", "problematization", and "conceptualization". The fundamental source of inspiration for his work is the model of Socrates: his practice is carried by the means of relentless, radical questioning, done at first *live* and later internalized for written work that reproduces the same dialogical model.

As with Spiegelberg's approach, with whom, as far as I know, Brenifier is not familiar, but would regard as a kindred spirit, the presence of the other facilitates the co-subjectivity needed in order to avoid becoming stuck in oneself and to take

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<sup>16</sup> H. Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 32-33.

<sup>17</sup> E. Casey, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>18</sup> For an extended account, v. O. Brenifier, *La pratique philosophique*, 2015. Available at <http://www.pratiques-philosophiques.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/La-pratique-philosophique-last-version.pdf>

the distance necessary for exploring the phenomenon. It is done in the format of one-on-one dialogue, reminiscent of the classical approach of Socrates, but also in group workshops, with adults of children. Brenifier's workshops have the same dual function envisioned by Spiegelberg. They are both a training environment for "doing philosophy" *and themselves already* a collective *practice* of philosophy.

Along with workshops and lectures in various universities, Brenifier organizes, for more than a decade, at least two international intensive one-week seminars in philosophical practice per year. I had the opportunity to participate in two of them, so my account is based on what I experienced there.

The ethos that infuses itself in the community that participates in these seminars is similar to the phenomenologist's desire to "see for himself" the things talked about, but the practice is dialogical from the start. Socratic questioning is taken as the default mode of examining a topic – usually starting from a question – but Brenifier offers various "skilful means", to use the Buddhist term, for accomplishing the task of making the participants think: working on a text, writing a story, talking about a physical object, etc. The usual format of a group session is taking a short written output by a participant as a starting point – as short as a sentence or two, sometimes even a word – and subjecting it to a process of problematisation, of questioning and objecting, extending this process to the questions and objections that are raised themselves.

Brenifier's process has definite analogies with phenomenology, although he does not present himself as a phenomenologist (still using, sometimes, phenomenological tools such as the reduction). The main task of the participants is to be able to examine thinking *as thinking*, looking for the presuppositions of a thought, questioning its general applicability (or eidetic necessity, as we would say), finding concrete examples for a general idea or the essential in an example. Brenifier's style of doing philosophy involves a slow process of step-by-step questioning the other about an initial idea he or she proposes. The answers are as short as possible. The questioner continues to question every answer, regarding its presuppositions, consequences, and grounds, and to problematize the other's ideas in order to become able to formulate eidetic necessities and conceptualize the aspects of the examined phenomenon. The other aspect of the questioning process is guiding the personal reflection of the other, making him or her aware of their own habits of thinking, of the way their subjectivity colours the way they are looking at a certain topic and the topics themselves that appears as interesting. Thus, the practice is complex, involving a set of interdependent aspects: a reflective examination of the participant's being-in-the-world, accomplished by the means of conceptual clarification of her thoughts and the



examination of her thinking process, creating at the same time tools for further conceptual clarification.

Every day, from early morning to almost midnight, participants attend a series of workshops, on various topics, with small breaks between them. They also spend time in informal mutual questioning even during these breaks – the discourse and attitudes exemplified in the formal session infuse themselves in the everyday manner of interacting. Usually, the last session of the evening is a public “philosophical consultation”, with Brenifier questioning a volunteer and the whole group observing the process. Brenifier himself leads most sessions, but any participant is welcome to lead a workshop, in Brenifier’s manner of working or using an approach with which she is more familiar. So, beside the *implicit* phenomenological aspect of Brenifier’s practice, there are moments of sym-phenomenologizing becoming *explicit*. I would argue that the teaching – and doing – of phenomenology can only benefit from this format.

The limits of the present paper allow me just a short analysis of a segment of one such workshop. The leader of one of the sessions, M.G., a Russian professional dancer and philosophical practitioner trained by Brenifier, announced it as dealing with “phenomenological reduction”. The first task we were proposed was to observe attentively as she performed a couple of times a series of dance movements, and then to repeat it. Most of us were especially tense and anxious – doing complex movements while seeing them for the first time tends to absorb most of the attention and create performance anxiety.

The first step of the workshop was thus already something that we *performed* or *enacted* bodily: performing a set of movements while being attentive to what we were doing. This fits nicely with a suggestion of Natalie Depraz about the initial phase of the *epoche*:

an external or existential event may play the role of triggering the suspending attitude, e.g. aesthetic surprise the mediation of others can also be decisive.<sup>19</sup>

The sheer uncanniness of performing dance movements at the start of a philosophical exercise was also a factor in suspending the natural attitude: we were taking what was appearing to us *as it was appearing*, as the requirement itself of watching in order to perform was taking us out of our habitual expectations.

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<sup>19</sup> N. Depraz, “What about the praxis of reduction? Between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty”, in T. Toadvine and L. Embree (eds.), *Merleau-Ponty’s Reading of Husserl*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p. 123.

After returning to our places, the facilitator offered a short presentation – literally a couple of sentences – of what phenomenological reduction can accomplish. The type of reduction that she proposed us can be described, in more technical terms, as “empirical transcendental reduction” – a reflection on what is actually lived through in the moment of living it through. We were to write three sentences about “what was going on in our minds” during the performance of the dance movements.

The practice seems to accord well with the model proposed by Depraz and with the intrinsic tendency of Husserlian phenomenology: to start from observing an object, to suspend the habitual preconceptions regarding its existence and your previous convictions about it, then to reflect on the mental process in which it was given – “turn the gaze inward”. The formulation “what is going on in your mind” seems intentionally vague: especially in the context of a workshop of this type, where “missing the mark” seems to be as useful a learning experience as “hitting” it, as the course of the workshop has shown. We can also notice that the facilitator’s proposal resonates well with Spiegelberg’s practice: creating an experience, observing it, minimally guided by another, and writing shortly about it.

After (again literally) a couple of minutes of writing, the first text that was read (and transcribed on a flip-chart) was:

I looked at [the facilitator’s name]. I memorized the steps. And I repeated what I memorized.

One of the specific aspects of Brenifier’s method of conducting a philosophy workshop is that the facilitator does a minimal job in evaluating the participant’s output. Rather, he or she guides them, by his or her questioning, to evaluate by themselves the relevance of what they are writing or saying. This was what the facilitator did, faced with this minimal description: turn to the group. After an initial discussion about whether the text counts as three sentences or one, she asked the most typical starting question in Brenifier-style workshops: “Who sees any problem in what [the participant] has written?” The main purpose of this question is to stimulate problematisation, anchored in the critical attitude of “not taking for granted” what is presented to the attention of the group, and not being afraid to question or object to it.

The answer one of the participants offered was “The problem is that you did not describe what was happening in your mind.” I.e., that the output did not fit the task. Commonly, this is one of the first evaluation criteria in Brenifier’s workshops. The facilitator passed to another typical move in Brenifier’s method of

philosophizing: conceptualization. The question she asked was “Can you name the problem?” and the answer was “irrelevance”. The next question was “Do you have an argument for that?” – another basic ingredient of the style of questioning practiced by Brenifier and his disciples: each statement a participant expresses that is not immediately obvious should be grounded by an “argument”, taken in a wide enough sense to include distinctions. The answer was “[The participant] described an activity, but that’s not saying what was going on in her mind” – so, an answer by making a distinction, which is one of the basic tools in doing philosophy in general and phenomenology in particular.

This is part of the philosophical dialogue culture promoted in Brenifier’s workshops: looking in a detached manner at a statement – initially by the other, later at one’s own “monological meditations” – and learning to see what is problematic about it. In the workshop framework, this is done in a co-subjective mode, with clearly defined roles: the facilitator asks questions that help deepen, problematize, and conceptualize, the participants providing the “content” by thinking together about each other’s contributions. The dominant conversational culture is one of fearless objecting, of not hiding behind “I understand the point, it can also be taken in this way, this is one of the possible perspectives” – the typical relativism of our times – and at the same time *trust* in the group and in the process, that can show an objection as grounded or not. The answers are kept short and to the point, in order to make the connections between ideas more clear to follow and to avoid “shifting” as a defensive strategy.

The facilitator then turned to the author of the description: “[Participant’s name,] is it true that this is actions?” (another typical move in the dialogic game of a philosophy workshop: continuous intersubjective checking with one participant if the other’s proposal is acceptable). After an affirmative answer, the facilitator concluded “so you didn’t do the task”. After the statement was accepted by the participant, the facilitator continued with another intersubjective check: “Ok, do you agree that what you did is irrelevant?” This is another common aspect of the workshops conducted in the style of Brenifier: the insistence of admitting the problematic character of one’s own statements – a habit that seems especially useful for philosophers.

The inquiry then shifted in a personal reflection mode, the facilitator asking “Do you know why it is difficult for you to distinguish what you did and what you think?” After a long pause and a negative answer of the participant, she asked “Do you want to know?” and, when the proposal was accepted, she turned to the group, in order to ask for hypotheses about the reasons of this difficulty. This is also typical for the dynamic of Brenifier’s workshops: a continuous shift between the individual subjected to questioning and the co-subjectivity of the group, with its detachment and distance that put each individual perspective in a

larger context. The first hypothesis, proposed by another participant, was “She has difficulties to conceptualize.” After a demand for explanation, the participant clarified his statement in the following fashion: “Well, there’s a question about what’s happening in the mind, that’s a concept, and then you have to give an example of that concept, and you didn’t make a good relationship between the concept and what you wrote.” After a follow-up question, the facilitator turned again to the author of the description, checking whether the other participant’s explanation made sense for her.

#### 4. Final remarks

The analysis in the previous section can be used to justify several general statements about the functioning of a philosophical workshop, and its implicit and explicit phenomenological aspects.

1) A dialectical observation: any initial starting point is problematic, and the movement of philosophizing consists in transcending it. This is consistent both with Husserl’s description of progress in phenomenology as a zig-zag motion<sup>20</sup> and with Strasser’s remarks about dialectical phenomenology<sup>21</sup> and, as well, with Brenifier’s intrinsically dialectical conception of philosophy. Working in a group makes this dialectical character of thinking obvious.

2) The main difficulty in transcending a given starting point is the perception of it as “one’s own”, the fact of being stuck in a perspective that is taken as legitimate because it corresponds to the immediate, impressionistic account we would give of what we experience in the natural attitude. Phenomenological thinking attempts to go beyond natural attitude and its convictions, questioning the things it takes for granted and struggling to gain access to a more originary dimension of the phenomena. Still, the solitary phenomenologist risks remaining stuck in a perspective taken for granted because it is based only on his or her own experience, prematurely generalized and taken as “valid for everyone”. The workshop model prevents this by anchoring discourse in co-subjectivity, rather than subjectivity. The participant learns to take distance from himself or herself and recognize the intrinsic limitations of his or her philosophical expressions.

3) A language game is learned in interaction. As a language game, it is more natural that philosophical discourse be learned in this way, rather than in solitary struggle with texts, both others’ and one’s own. In saying this, I do not attempt to diminish the value of solitary work in philosophy, of “monological

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<sup>20</sup> E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> S. Strasser, *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences: A Contribution to a New Scientific Ideal*. Duquesne University Press, 1963, p. 270-275.

meditation”, but to propose that it is both better anchored and learned in a dialogical context.

4) A quality and a skill needed for accomplishing the work of thinking together is the availability to question. In a truly Socratic (and phenomenological) fashion, this comes together with a certain *naïveté* and trust in the capacity of a thinker to make sense, either in dialogue or by himself, of the phenomenon that he or she is trying to make an account of. Another quality required for this is the relentless availability to see the problematic aspect of both one’s own and others’ expressions.

5) The workshop model is an equal playing ground both for accomplished philosophers and for novices. They make do with what they have: their presence together and mutual exploration of ideas, in a spirit of friendly challenge, without reference to authorities or to erudition: *hic Rhodos, hic salta*.

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## FATHERHOOD'S SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADOLESCENT CHILDREN' DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMATOLOGY AND SUICIDE ATTEMPT

MILAGROS ROCÍO SALDAÑA TUMBAY\*

**ABSTRACT.** "Fatherhood's subjective experience in the face of adolescent children' depressive symptomatology and suicide attempt". The fatherhood's experience of living with a teenage son or daughter who presents depressive symptomatology and has tried to commit suicide constitutes a subjective experience in and of itself. For the father, these adverse conditions represent a challenge in his constituted role and cause an emotional impact which must be analysed by considering his subjective constitution. The aim of this research is to explore this experience by using a phenomenological qualitative approach. To do that, semi-structured interviews and the application of a test of incomplete sentences were applied to parents whose adolescent children received ambulatory care after a first suicide attempt in a psychiatric hospital in Peru. The results show that participants experience various emotions that involve impotence, anger, sadness, guilt, and relief around three stages: the onset of symptoms, attendance at a psychiatric hospital and the perception of remission of the symptoms. It was found that although at the beginning the fathers find it difficult to get involved with affection with their younger children, they are able to recover the bond through of the reconstitution and reorganization of their role.

**Keywords:** subjective experience, subjective constitution, fatherhood, depressive symptomatology, suicide attempt, adolescence

### INTRODUCTION

Fatherhood is a process that is being built along a series of situations, experiences, expectations and social norms (Figueroa, 2000; Fuller, 2000; Jimenez, 2001; Salguero&Frías, 2001). This process begins with the decision to have and take care of a child (Olavarría, 2000). In this sense, it represents not only a biological achievement but also its correct or incorrect development has an impact on the

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different areas of the development of its descendants (Amato, 1994; Biller, 1993; Gottfried, 2013), such as to improve or hinder the development of skills such as independence and pleasure in exploring the external world (Chodorow 1989; Dienhart 1998; Oiberman 1998).

From a sociocultural perspective, fatherhood is closely linked to male identity (Bardinter, 2000), so the paternal role is related to be a "strong man", which means being the image of authority and being away from household chores (Fuller, 2000; Fuller, 2001; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Salguero, 2006). However, due to important social and cultural changes such as the entry of women into the labour, political and economic fields (Fuller, 2001; Oiberman, 1998), we can observe a resignification in the masculine identity and, consequently, in the fatherhood. In assuming a role in the domestic sphere, fatherhood is resignified and it implies new forms of childcare and parenting that are currently being considered as the existence of "new fatherhood", which contemplates the role played by the father in and out of the house, as well as the physical and emotional relationship with the descendants (Carvalho & Pereira, 2009; Teixeira & Nascimento, 2014).

Following the above, fatherhood is modified according to social and cultural changes (Fuller, 2001; Oiberman, 1998) giving rise to an inhomogeneous process and forming part of the subjective constitution of each individual, which it simultaneously contemplates the internal and the external, the intrapsychic and the interactive, since in both moments are occurring significations and senses (González-Rey, 2002). When speaking of subjectivity it is necessary to stop thinking in isolated terms and begin to understand the experience in terms of relationships. In addition, it does not refer to fixed entities, but too complex processes (Elías, 1994 cited in González Rey, 2002) as is fatherhood. For Volnovich (2000) fatherhood performing by a man is associated with daily subjectivity in a process that has no starting point, and which lacks a point of arrival, so it is not known when the person begins and ends up being constituted as a father.

Under this conception, fatherhood is a continuous process (Leff, 1995) in which the desires and expectations of parents come together with the psychic possibilities they have to play this role. Despite this aspect, fatherhood has been investigated quantitatively under the father involvement construct, which is measured by quantitative indicators such as the number of hours the father spends with his child and what activities he does with him/her (Day & Lam, 2004; Marsiglio, 1991). However, these researchers showed inconsistent results in relating the variables of the father to the psychological development of the children (Cabrera, 1999 quoted in Janto, 2015). In addition, these researchers do not consider the qualitative dimension of fatherhood; which raises the need to study the subjectivity of fathers in themselves (Cabrera, 1999).

The practice and assessment of the role of the father will vary, among others, according to the child's age, sex and health condition (McBride, Schoppe, Ho & Rane, 2004; Palkovitz, 2002). Thus, for example, the subjective experience of fatherhood in the face of the depressive symptoms and suicidal attempt of his adolescent children is unique because it varies according to the personality, the attachment with the children and his coping skills, giving rise to a variety of feelings, emotions, sensations, interpretations, and senses, which constitutes his subjective experience (Ángeles, 2003; Dedios, 2010).

Depression is characterized by a change in the patient's usual mood (Shaffer & Waslick, 2003). The habitual humour will be replaced by a state of predominant sadness, disinterest, displeasure and other symptoms (American Psychological Association, 2005). Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2008) reports that depression is currently the disorder that produces the greatest number of disabilities and is the most common cause in the case of suicides. For parents, living with a child who has some "disability" represents a conflictive, stressful and difficult situation to face, which generates fear, impotence, uncertainty as men and as parents (Ortega et al., 2005).

Other authors such as Vázquez, Hervás, Hernangómez, and Romero (2010) and Shaffer and Waslick (2003) mention that there is no single cause for depression and that there are several theoretical models that try to explain it; however, the term "cause" is currently rejected and rather refers to "risk factors" (Paz & Bermúdez, 2006). When the fathers face with the depressive symptoms of their children, they think over the reasons why their children show certain behaviours and they question themselves about their personal responsibility and they feel frustrated about the expectation of having a child in that condition (Ortega et al., 2005).

On the other hand, Freeman and Reinecke (1995) assert that the suicide would not have to do with an introjected hostility or aggression towards the environment, but with a negative predisposition towards itself and its future predictions. In the same vein, these authors point out that the suicide attempt occurs because of feelings of hopelessness, as well as the idea that the difficulties experienced are unbearable; so that ending with one's life is conceived as the solution to psychic pain.

As mentioned earlier, the health condition of the child is a factor that affects the performance of fatherhood, as it affects the way parents provide care, affection, and attention to their children (McBride, Schoppe, Ho & Rane, 2004; Palkovitz, 2002). When you have a child with a disability or illness, the expectations of paternity change and they go through an adaptation process that can be difficult, because it involves the assumption of an unplanned process, as well as the loss of expectations of the child to not be according to the expectations (Ortega, Torres, Garrido & Reyes, 2012).



In this particular coexistence, the fathers are confronted daily with children who show a risk condition that could mean their definitive deterioration or death. It causes an impact on his interaction with them; as well as in his forms of care, since by their condition demand more time and affection from the father. Thus, a serious or chronic illness- such as a mental disorder- can cause a considerable psychological and emotional upheaval not only in the child but also in the parent or primary caregiver (Hovey, 2003; Quispe, 2014).

The emotional experience can only be narrated by those who have experienced it because it belongs to the field of the subjectivity of each individual that includes behavioural, cognitive and affective aspects (Ángeles, 2003). For this reason, emotional experience includes the personal perception of the object or situation from which the emotion process is performed and with which the individual is kept interacting and influenced by his / her personal, social and cultural characteristics (Birdsong, 1993; Christakis and Iwashyna, 2003; Kalikztein, 2000).

In order to be able to explain this subjective dimension it is necessary to explore it from a qualitative approach that allows explaining cognitive and affective processes based on (i) personal experience; (ii) the diversity and complexity of the experiences of parents in relation to their children; (iii) the unique characteristics of the fathers and his children; and (iv) the specific family context in which the father-child relationship is situated (Carvalho and Pereira, 2009, Salguero 2006). These factors constitute the subjective experience of the father and allow to understand it without falling into generalizations that undermine the understanding of it (González-Rey, 2007).

In this line, the present research aims to explore the subjective experience of the fatherhood of five male parents whose adolescent children present depressive symptomatology and suicidal attempt. For this, a semi-structured interview and a test of incomplete sentences were formulated, whose purpose was to approach the subjective psychological dimension of the processes that touch the parents because of the adverse situation around their fatherhood and the demands of their children, as well as to the answers they give to these demands and their appreciation of them.

Finally, the material collected in the interviews has been worked through a thematic analysis based on what is significant. In this line, the results allow to understand and give meaning and sense to the subjective experience of each participant. This research contributes to the fatherhood studies because it produces knowledge from a dialogical and relational approach with the participants (González Rey, 2003, 2007).

## **METHOD**

The present research has a qualitative approach of dialogical, communicational and progressive character (Márquez, 2007). The communicative processes are highly significant for psychology because the data collected in the interactional dynamics between the observer and the observed are as legitimate as those provided by quantitative instruments (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003). Qualitative methods start from the basic assumption that the world is constructed of meanings and symbols. In this way, they understand that human beings do not relate linearly to their world, but in a changing way (Márquez, 2007).

For the purpose of the present study, the phenomenological approach has been used, which by definition includes the experiences from the perspective of the actor, examining the way in which he experiences his world (Taylor & Bogdan, 2000).

### **Participants**

Participants in the present research were five parents with no psychiatric history between 36 and 53 years of age ( $M = 45$ ;  $SD = 7.17$ ), they live with their adolescent children who are 14 and 15 ( $M = 14.8$ ;  $SD = 0.44$ ) years in the same house, and they have a low socioeconomic level. On the other hand, the adolescent children were hospitalized at the Emergency Service of a psychiatric hospital for a first suicide attempt and present depressive symptomatology diagnosed by the same hospital. After the crisis was controlled, the children were discharged and were admitted to the Department of External Consultation to be treated by specialists in psychiatry and psychology. The sample does not seek statistical representativeness, but rather structural representativeness (Flick, 2015). In this line, the number of respondents was defined on the basis of the saturation criteria (Flick, 2014) because of the redundancy in the information expressed by the participants.

### **Techniques of data collection**

As part of the phenomenological model, the techniques used served to provide information at a descriptive level in order to understand the phenomena from the point of view of each participant. From a semi-structured interview, the perceptions, feelings, and knowledge of the fathers were interpreted (Patton, 1990). This interview allowed access to the subjective experience from the type of questions that Patton

(1990) describes as "questions about feelings". The interview guide addressed the following dimensions: family context, emotional experience around depressive symptomatology and the relationship with the adolescent children with depressive symptomatology.

In order to deepen the subjective experience, a list of incomplete sentences was created and they were completed by the participants. This activity facilitated free association by expressing itself spontaneously, creatively and personally (González Rey, 2007).

### **Procedure**

At first, the supervisor in charge of the Department of External Consultation of Children and Adolescents of the psychiatric hospital was asked for authorization. When the permission was obtained, the prospective parents who attended family counselling sessions were contacted after their children attended a four-session evaluation process conducted by the researcher. In these sessions, the Kovacs Infant Depression Questionnaire (1992) was applied, which elucidated indicators of depressive symptomatology. Subsequently, a pilot interview was conducted in order to verify the relevance and comprehension of the questions. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were audio recorded in order that the transcript is faithful to what was expressed verbally by both the participating parents and the researcher.

The data analysis was thematic and it allowed to identify, organize and analyse the recurrent themes in the participants' discourses in order to know the meanings of their particular experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The Taylor and Bodgan approach (2000) is based on three stages: (1) the discovery phase, which consists of reading data, searching for emerging issues, developing typologies and developing a guide to history. Once this was done, (2) the coding phase was carried out, which consisted of the gathering and analysis of all the data referring to themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations and positions and later codifying and categorizing said data, to 7. Finally, (3) the relativisation phase of the data consisted of interpreting the data in the context in which they were collected, that is, under the particular situation and dynamics of each of the participating parents concerned. Finally, the results were returned to the parents.

### **Research Quality Criteria**

*Dependence or logical consistency* (Salgado, 2007) is the degree to which different researchers who collect similar data in the field and carry out the same

analyses, generate equivalent results. For this, the researcher had intersubjective validation made from the comparison of the results of related research (Ortega et al., 2005), and the thesis advisor corroborated these results, which were structured and analysed, avoiding incurring in biases of any research.

*Credibility* (Salgado, 2007) is the result of the collection of information that the participants recognize as a reliable approximation to their beliefs and emotions. In order to achieve this purpose, textual transcripts of the interviews were done in order to avoid altering the interpretation object. Likewise, the results were returned to the participants who validated the conclusions and these are equivalent to other studies (Ortega et al., 2005).

*Auditability* (Marquez, 2007) refers to another researcher or consultant monitoring what the main researcher is doing as well as the examination of the data collected and reach similar conclusions. For this, the main researcher presented to the consultant the data collected for further analysis.

*Transferability* (Flick, 2014) refers to the possibility of extending the results of the study to other populations. For this, the research described the place of study of the phenomenon and the specific characteristics of the participants. In this particular case, the location was the psychiatric hospital with patients have low socioeconomic status.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following will present the results according to the objectives set out from the analysis of the interviews and the test of incomplete sentences. The presentation of these findings has been organized around three stages: the appearance of symptoms, attendance at a psychiatric hospital and the perception of remission of symptoms.

### **First stage: Appearance of symptoms**

#### **Feeling of perplexity**

The appearance of depressive symptoms generates a feeling of perplexity because fathers do not understand what happens to their children. This lack of understanding of the situation leads them to perceive themselves as incapable of responding to the demands of their children. The testimony of Juan (53 years, Father of Javier, 14 years) says:

He (his youngest son) always came annoyed, did not even say hello, he went into his room and he had a face of annoying, annoying. Sometimes there was a visit and

he could not even say hello, just like someone who was annoying, not even a look. I said to myself: what is wrong?

For many connected reasons, for example, that they spend most of their time at work or away from home, parents who are perceived as unable to respond to the demands of their children, limit their role to that of observers. This implies a loss of physical and emotional involvement with their children and reinforces the fact that they do not know how to approach them in the depressive situation and suicidal attempt.

### **Difficulty responding to demand**

Incomprehension of the situation and perplexity can also give rise to violent responses caused by feelings of anger, frustration, impotence to meet the demands of the children as can be seen in the following fragment of Walter (36 years old, father of Helena, 15 years):

I got to use a belt in my hand to tell her what's wrong with her, why she is behaving like that and she did not want to, 'kill me,' she said, but she did not want to. I even pressed the wounds on her wrists to tell me why she did it, I was desperate. It was a terrible situation.

About that, Ortega, et al. (2005) mention that feelings of impotence do not allow reflective evaluation of what is happening so that everything related to the child is seen in a highly negative perspective. On the other hand, feelings of guilt give rise to the questioning of their ability to be parents, because they realize that they do not have an emotional proximity to their children. In this line, Fuller (2005) points out that the increasing generalization of the discourse that censures authoritarianism and preaches the importance of the father's proximity is contradicted by the real difficulties that men face in implementing new demands such as emotional involvement with the adolescent children.

Faced with these difficulties, the parents' response translates into an apparent underestimation of the magnitude of their children's depressive symptoms. Thus, in the early stages of this disorder parents assumed that such unusual behaviours in their youngest children were age-specific; thus diminishing the understanding of the disease.

### **Pursue proximity**

In this context of guilt, parents try to understand the condition of their children. For this purpose, they identified stages of their own lives in which they behaved

and felt in a similar way and it facilitated father-child proximity. However, it was not easy for the fathers to approach their children because they usually rejected the proximity, which generated sadness and impotence. When the father is rejected, he feels that he is not a father figure for the child and unable to fulfil his paternal role, which is experienced with frustration and as a result devalued, as shown in the following fragment:

Then I went to his room, I sit with him and I tell him: Javiercito, tell me, what is going on? And he does not want to tell me. [...] One feels bad. One feels helpless, what is the matter with your child? You wait for your child to be different and one like dad cannot do anything for it at that moment you do not feel like a father, you feel like anything, because if you were a father, your son would listen to you and he would not listen to me, it makes you feel bad (Juan, 53, Javier's father, 15 years old).

In addition, fathers believe that their children are not able to perceive the love they feel for them, even claiming that they would feel better if they knew how much they love them. Thus, fathers conceive the affection that they can give to their children as a good predictor of development and, in that sense when observing the symptoms of their children, feel guilty for not having given or demonstrated enough the love they feel for them.

Although the fathers recognize the lack of proximity, they are not able to understand why this is the case. This is related to the lack of understanding and knowledge of the peculiarities of the adolescent, as well as to the fact that they do not recognize that children tend to underestimate paternal influence (Toro, 2010). Adolescents, in their quest for independence, tend to avoid contact with their parents in conflict situations, rather than going to their caregiver as they did in childhood (Gottfried, 2013). In this scenario, there is a progressive desidealization of the father, as the adolescent children are able to recognize faults in the former caregiver, in addition to questioning his way of life (Carvajal, 1999). This transformation, in which the father-child bond is broken, causes in the parent's feelings of frustration and impotence. Thus, the children and the fathers are placed in an ambivalent state between the longing for autonomy and the desires for protection; and authority with care respectively (Flouri, 2008, Laursen, Coy & Collins, 1998; Steinberg, 2001)

### **Role confrontation**

As noted earlier, the psychological and emotional impact makes the fathers ask himself how he plays his role, but also questions the role of his own parents,

through memories of their experiences as a child in which the union or separation of the family, the inference or warmth of the father (Marcos, 2010). Thus, although the participants stated that they did not hold a grudge against their own parents, they did express a desire to act with their children differently than how they were treated.

This role confrontation also extends to the couple; because the parents spend most of their time away from home and the mother is the one who is most of the day with the children, they are given more responsibility for the conflictive events of the home. This affects the relationship because the father perceives that his partner fails in his role, generating anger and impotence in the couple; however, the questioning that generates feelings of guilt is greater towards themselves as expressed by Juan (53 years, father of Javier, 15 years):

I feel guilty, he (his son) told me and yes, I feel guilty for not supporting him. Suddenly when he needs me I'm not there, suddenly he has wanted to walk with me, sit with me and I have not been there. I have not given him that support.

## **Second stage: Assistance to a Psychiatric Hospital**

### **The first separation**

This stage is characterized by the intensification of the depressive symptomatology in which the first suicide attempt of children occurs; which is the reason why they are transferred to the Emergency Service of a Psychiatric Hospital. It was found that this event was the most emotionally shocking to the fathers who expressed a deep sadness and pain, not only because of the medical condition of their children, but also because the hospitalization brings a physical and emotional separation at the time the fathers feel that their children need their affective proximity more than ever, as can be seen in the following fragment:

"Then we took her to the hospital, we interned her for the first time and that internment to me broke my soul because to take away my daughter in those circumstances" (Jorge, 41, father of Carla, 15 years).

### **Psychotherapeutic process**

During the appointments at the External Consultation Service of the psychiatric hospital, children carry out a psychotherapeutic process after they are discharged by the Emergency Service. For fathers, depressive symptomatology is a "state" or "passing

phase," and they express that belief to their own children. Such transmission of tranquillity could respond to their desire not to see their expectations regarding the development of their children broken (Nurmi, 2004).

Although the parents assume that the state of their children is temporary, they recognize the suffering that this condition brings, as well as their implications in daily life inside and outside the family environment. Later, the fathers stated that they understand better the process their younger children are going through, especially when similar situations are remembered in which they felt a deep sadness. Thus their conception of their children's depressive symptoms is influenced by their past and present experience, as Walter (36 years, Helena's father, 15 years) mentioned:

For me, it was very sad, it was too sad that. It made me remember a lot when I was little when I was suffering ... It reminded me of the action of seeing her cry, of seeing her in so much sadness.

### **Empowering the fatherhood role**

It is evident that the identification with the condition of their children allows a better understanding and commitment to their role, which involves the physical and emotional dimensions. There is also a change in the play of the roles within the family since the figure of the father who provides sustenance outside the home is complemented by that of the father who stays at home and is an emotional support. In sum, fathers assume that the current situation of their children requires care and vigilance, as is evident in the following fragment:

That is why I do not leave her, that is why I support her. My schedule at work has changed, I do not have a fixed schedule, my family is more involved, I am with my children. (Walter, 36, Helena's father, 15 years old).

In relation to the emotions generated by the fact that their children go to a psychiatric consultation, the parents said they feel relieved that a specialist evaluates the case of their children; even stating that "everyone needs a psychologist". This may be due to the fact that the family counselling sessions had a positive effect on a reflexive process in which they identified some variables that influenced the performance of their role. On this, Geenen and Corveleyn (2014) affirm that in the construction of the father identity, the man makes a revision of his first identification figures and, if he rescues positive aspects of his paternal identification, he will be able to get involved in a healthier way, as well as being more prepared to perform as a father and to bond with their child more effectively (Mantilla, 2014).



However, fathers prefer to keep this topic in the family and in private, they argue that having a child in psychiatric consultation generates "a pain that is better to carry on the inside". In this line, Ortega et al. (2005) found that the perception of a "disability" in the child implies prejudices and myths about it, which generates feelings of shame that not only affect the personal but also the social environment.

### **Third stage: Remission of depressive symptomatology**

#### **Re-thinking the disease**

In the course of family counselling sessions, fathers perceive that there is some remission of the depressive symptomatology presented by their adolescent children, which gives them relief and reduces feelings of frustration. Regarding this emotion, the participants report that the positive development of the disease is due to two factors: first, the adequate attention by the health staff of the psychiatric hospital and, secondly, the reorganization of their role. In this way, a sense of tranquillity with oneself arises that could be due to the return of the confidence about their paternal role and, therefore, their self-perception is positive (Ugarte, 2000).

However, fathers express feelings of concern and fear of relapse and suicide attempt; which may be due to the fact that their knowledge about the disease has expanded and they recognize that it is not a transient condition as previously believed, but that it needs constant care and vigilance in order not to intensify the symptoms and to reduce the probability of presenting another episode.

Subsequently, parents begin to approach their children more affectionately and they find a positive response from their children unlike before; also they show a higher level of understanding of the disease. In addition, there is a greater commitment to the paternal role as a participant mentioned: it is a disease that must be taken with care, because otherwise, it may eventually lead you to a more chronic state that can create more problems for you (Manuel, 51, father of Maria, 15 years old).

#### **Expectations**

The perception that the depressive symptomatology is in remission makes the fathers return the expectations that they have about their adolescent children. It is very important for parents that their children develop as professionals, pointing out that it is what every parent wants for their children. These expectations have to do with what the father expects of his son or her daughter in the public field,

which represents an important dimension for the male identity (Fuller, 2000). They felt responsible for training their children as people of value to society and, therefore, this recognition is for both the children and their parents.

For them, to have these expectations again on their children represents a joy and a relief; this may be because they reaffirm that their role of forming people with value for society is more likely to be fulfilled and, thus, to a better self-perception of themselves as fathers and as men (Ugarte, 2000).

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, from the beginning, fathers play a conflicted role; this is because, although they understand that fatherhood involves the material, physical and emotional dimensions in the relationship with their children, its performance is hampered by a variety of social and normative demands that influence how fathers represent and play their role. Among these, the present research has highlighted the following: (1) fathers accomplish a social demand that restricts them to be outside the home or, what is the same, to not fully realize the emotional and physical dimensions of their fatherhood. Therefore, (2) certain dimensions that also correspond to the fatherhood, like the raising of the children, are assumed as exclusive tasks of the mother. In addition, the representation of masculine identity in fatherhood (3) is experienced in fulfilling the family's economic function (the figure of the provider), and (4) represses the expression of emotions and affections. Finally, (5) the situation of having a child with a psychiatric condition is perceived with guilt and shame because it entails prejudices on the part of the environment which affects the self-perception of the father.

The depressive symptomatology and the first suicide attempt of the adolescents were a turning point in the performance of fatherhood. The initial response to this critical condition was the questioning of the tools and resources with which the fathers dealt with this situation, as well as the denial of the seriousness of the health condition, which has repercussions on the father and his children relationship characterized by a distance or a hostile and inappropriate approach.

Being the responsibility or obligation to take care of their own, and realizing that the situation is not good for them, fathers feel it as a direct *hit* to self-esteem (Ugarte, 2000). In this line, Seidler (2005) mentions that an important part of the construction of stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity is to assume that a man- and father- must have the correct answer to all situations; in that sense, part of his role includes the maintenance of control in the problems of everyday life.

Despite this, fathers are able to take on the relationship with their children being affectionate linked and giving rise to a father more committed to his role. To this end, a reorganization of the family dynamics where support is mutual is necessary, and in which expressions of affection, physical and emotional closeness are incorporated, without neglecting concerns about the formation, integration and social adaptation of their children.

This research has allowed deepening in the subjective experience of the fatherhood; we consider that its contribution consists in studying a construct, which unlike maternity, has not been exhaustively investigated. In addition, their results can show the difficulties that fathers have to face in fulfilling a role whose social and normative demands exceed their own capacities in some cases.

Finally, it should be noted that future research on this topic should take into account the cross-cutting variables used in this study: socioeconomic level and the representation of masculinity as keys for interpreting the theme in different scenarios. On the other hand, although this research and the existing bibliography on the subject comprehensively include fatherhood in relation to a repressive masculinity and a society that does not generate spaces of interaction between father and son/daughter, these variables do not necessarily exhaust the understanding of the subjective experience of fatherhood, which - in so far as experience - is always singular.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Ștefan Afloroaei, *Privind altfel lumea celor absurde. Experiențe ce descoperă o altă libertatea și deopotrivă, limitele înțelegerii noastre*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2013**

Lev Șestov does not appear in any page of Ștefan Afloroaei's latest book, *Privind altfel lumea celor absurde (Taking a Different Glance at the Absurd)*<sup>1</sup>, but it seems to me that his approach stands under the same logic as the one of the Russian philosopher. Precisely, the revelations in front of death are similar to the ones of thought towards his own limitations; similar in the sense of the method (approach), not of the conclusion (the end result): something completely different happens when facing death; something completely different happens when thought meets its limitations. I would stop the analogy between Șestov and Afloroaei<sup>2</sup> here, especially due to the ultimatum-like feature which the thought of death brings with itself, but I would keep the similarity of the approach: Șestov shows us how thinking, with its limitations, cannot

reflect on death, and it demands other frameworks from itself (it does not matter, here, what kinds of frameworks are in question), as long as Afloroaei shows us how the limitations of thought (the non-sense, the lack of sense, the paradox and the absurd) transmit something different, completely different, to us, than what they usually seem to tell us.

However, there is also another reason why I dared the present analogy. On page 187 from the last section, in the penultimate subdivision, there is a sentence that discusses a sequence from a short story written by Kafka<sup>3</sup>. Here, Afloroaei states

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<sup>1</sup> Ștefan Afloroaei (*Privind altfel lumea celor absurde*). *Taking a Different Glance at the Absurd. Experiences which discover another type of freedom and, at the same time, the limitations of our comprehension*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> In fact it is Afloroaei who stops it when stating: "speaking of the absurd, I do not consider some terrible things happening in people's lives." *Taking a Different Glance at the Absurd*, ed. cit., p. 16. See entire fragment, pp.16-17.

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<sup>3</sup> A brief summary of the said story: a common country man wants to meet the Law (in itself). Thus, he decides to pay it a visit. Yet in front of it there is a guardian who dismisses him for the moment and tells him that he might be received later. The man keeps insisting; the guardian keeps dismissing him. The man understands that everyone can be received by the Law, yet there are several gates, all guarded, which lead into several halls; nobody knows how many gates or halls there are. The man waits, asks, bribes the guardian (who takes the bribe only to humor the man and make him believe he has done everything possible to get to the Law), he keeps waiting, his eyesight weakens, he dotes and dies. Yet, with his poor eyesight he glimpses "an unwithered glow shining through the door of the Law" and be-

the following: "if I were not afraid of words, I would say that it is almost *revelatory* (my emphasis)". What exactly is revelatory? The fact that the common individual lives an experience that is outside the "common sphere of the sense and the nonsense", outside the "area" of the metaphysical and religious experiences, even outside the sphere of absurd experiences (as they are theorized by the existential philosophers), but not entirely meaningless.

I will revisit this example, but now it is necessary to establish that, in this sense, the limitations of thought are revelatory, and, in fact, it is in this sense that Stefan Afloarei's entire book is written: everything that at the first glance may seem as lacking any sense, apart from the sense, the nonsense, the paradoxical or the absurd, has a sense or, if we want, it has a *different* sense. Obviously, a sense against the Aristotelian logic, yet a sense which remains very close to that which we could call, maybe a little bit pretentious, the perfectly human logic of the absurd (or the perfectly human logic of the nonsense, of the lack of sense, of the paradox etc.). It is about this *different* kind of logic that Stefan Afloarei writes.

Yet this other kind of logic which we usually call lack of sense, nonsense, absurd, paradox etc., gives the individual

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fore he draws his last breath he manages to ask the guardian why no one else has ever tried to enter, "especially, he says, since every man is trying to find out what is the Law". The guardian answers: "No one else was meant to enter through here, because this entrance was meant only for you. Now I am going to shut the door." Kafka, *Before the Law*, apud Ștefan Afloarei, *op. cit.*, Section four. *Paradox and nonsense*. 23. *The Law – a name of the nonsense (Kafka)*, pp.182-187.

"essential" experiences – and it is here that Stefan Afloarei's book stands out. The human's "own" experiences which cannot be comprehended but as nonsense, absurd etc. Because of this reason does Afloarei rehabilitate the whole "pantheon" of fallen concepts. In other words, Stefan Afloarei tries to reconstruct the sense of those without sense and show that these belong to the individual's life. But how is it possible that such a reconstruction can prove that those without a sense, the paradoxical, the absurd involves a second sense, or another kind of sense, which fully belong to the individual and at the same time deeply marks his life?

I think that we can identify two reasons that work together, and they function as one. First, it is never very clear what has a sense and what lacks sense,<sup>4</sup> or in fewer words, between the two (sense and nonsense) there exists "a forever unstable border". And it is unstable due to our own positioning within the registers of our own life: if a statement such as, "that which is everywhere, is nowhere"<sup>5</sup> lacks sense within our pragmatic life, it is filled with sense, as we may all infer, within our life projects (we infer that being everywhere, like we usually are, we are in fact nowhere); or an entirely absurd gesture like that of Erostrates (who, "considered to be alone and unknown", "wishing to escape the anonymity which brought him on the verge of despair and made him unhappy",

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<sup>4</sup> "For, taking a slight risk, that which seems to have sense in a certain sense of the word "sense" can prove to be devoid of sense in another sense of the word "sense". Afloarei, *op. cit.*, p.23.

<sup>5</sup> Ștefan Afloarei, *op. cit.*, p. 21.



is said “to have set fire to the wonderful temple of Artemis of Efes”<sup>6</sup>) which loses from the very beginning its quality of real fact (but, Afloroaei says, it is precisely because of this that it is so real), says something extremely concrete in each an everyone’s life: who amongst us, “considered to be alone and unknown”, is “alien” to the “hubris” such a gesture brings along<sup>7</sup>; or pundit Nagarjuna’s “tetralemma which was considered to be negative”, “One should not say void./One should not say non-void./One should neither say both, nor none./These are mere designations”, and which seems complete devoid of sense, actually proves “the limitations of expression itself, at the same time with those of the human desire to express oneself”<sup>8</sup>; etc. etc. etc. Examples, in the same register, are present throughout the book, and it seems like all are trying to prove something decisive, something which belongs only to man, in terms which defy the logics of the four principles. But all these examples (and it is here, I repeat, the entire thesis of Afloroaei’s book) consider a certain register of human life which cannot be understood/explained but in this manner which usually we call absurd, paradoxical. In other words, both nonsense and the absurd and the paradox (literary, religious, philosophical) have a particular intentionality: they express something which cannot otherwise be expressed, or, in other words, indicate towards something which cannot otherwise be indicated. And, maybe, there is nothing more important than these glimpses that cannot be expressed and

cannot be indicated but this way - completely *different*.

I would stay for a while in the sphere of the intentionality of the absurd as we find it in literary, religious or philosophical examples, which Afloroaei uses.

This is about an intentionality which somehow escapes the subject, with a sense above it (or, if we want, on its edge), which can be comprised in the registers mentioned above, only because other registers deny it. Here, however, through these examples, Afloroaei shows the limitations of reason (I would say epistemological ones), in trying to understand what happens to us there, where no answer is possible any longer. Of course, it is about experiences built on the edge of reason, or at the limit of our comprehension, but – and this is the second fact that Ștefan Afloroaei points out– there are certain things that are beyond humans’ comprehension. A little more clearly: when faced with these situations, human thought recognizes exactly what is recognizable, that nothing is possible any longer, and that *something else* expressed in *another way*<sup>9</sup> takes its place. And with this *something else* built by means of nonsense, of the paradox, the absurd, situated at the limit of comprehension, intrinsically human experiences are revealed.

Actually (and let us return to the example of the common man), Afloroaei

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<sup>6</sup> Ștefan Afloroaei, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Ștefan Afloroaei, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Ștefan Afloroaei, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

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<sup>9</sup> One might understand that here we might be referring to a plan which belongs to the religious. Yet Afloroaei doesn’t slide in this direction. In simple words, here it is all about admitting a common fact: not all things are within the grasp of man. Here in *Differently about...*, one can find some of the motifs Ștefan Afloroaei develops in *Our metaphysics...*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2008.

wants to respond to those situations that cannot be comprised in a philosophical, literary or religious register. In other words, it seems to me that, Afloroaei asks what kind of intentionality life situations have, those that do not get an answer in the philosophical, literary or religious registers. Is it not here the most appropriate time to discuss about nonsense, the paradox and the absurd? But of course, yet it is difficult to imagine experiences that lack sense (in the common sense), are metaphysically neutral and outside religion.

Only the aesthetic ones remain. Yet Afloroaei, in the example of “the common man”, does not count in any way on these ones. It is not even about an ethical experience that the “common man” might have felt. Despite all these, the experience he goes through is revelatory. In what way revelatory? If we accept the logic of neither/nor to the end, we are left with two answers: (1) “a religious-like experience” (yet with the important observation that religious-like does not mean religious) or (2) an experience which observes “the idea that the man choose in life that which is given to him”. Afloroaei leans towards the former, yet in fact it makes no difference which interpretative variant we accept, or what other variants we might consider; what counts is the fact that the said experience reveals a “religious-like experience” or something like “man becomes that which he is”. How could one name these experiences more precisely?

Or, in other words, how could one explain them perfectly clear? Exactly in the absurd manner in which they occur: perfectly precise and perfectly clear in their specific opaqueness (against all logic) (as sometimes it happens that we can see

everything at once - especially in real life situations – without a particular reason, without any methodology, and against any indictment). Yet as we easily understand by now, this is precisely why they are filled with sense, revelatory. A marginal sense, or more clearly a sense outside thought, at its edge, yet no less of a sense.

One final remark: this book is, somehow, at the limit. How can one recognize something that goes beyond the limits of sense or the limitations of human comprehension (here, the two seem to be perfect synonyms) besides a rudimentary finding? And, if one does so, how one restores those beyond the limitations of thought in forms with sense? It feels as if it were a surgery in vivo in which you can no longer tell who the doctor is and who the patient. I would call it a frozen whirlpool<sup>10</sup>, at the limit of breath; it pesters you; and if it were not excessive, I would sometimes compare it (as a reading experience), dramatically speaking, to *Notes from the Underground*; other times, speaking slightly more freely, to *Dead Souls*. It is just that the natural effect is that Ștefan Afloroaei shows that which cannot be shown and proves that which cannot be proven.

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<sup>10</sup> And “the starlit sky” on the cover of the book is, in this sense, I think, revelatory.