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Der „therapeutische Akt“ als singuläre Wahrheit in Lacan'scher Perspektive mit Bezug zur Lebensphänomenologie

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Abstract

The "therapeutic act" as a singular truth in a Lacanian perspective with reference to the phenomenology of life

According to Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis (1901-1981), the uniqueness of the subject realised in the therapeutic act without further alienation from wholeness calls into question any ontological claim to a whole (*tout),* in order to release the subject in this way from a misunderstood "self-knowledge". The discursive implications here contain precisely the transition from *desire* to *enquiry into* the Other (*A*) as this primordial problematic, since the subject's self-recognition is not merely ignored, but forgotten. This is what constitutes the phantasmatic reference of the "object a" as "pleasure" to the desired whole, which at the beginning of each child's existence only represents a "partial object" (Freud) in the form of the mother and her breast. This primal "not everything" (*pas tout*) is obscured insofar as the genesis of the request out of desire determines the structure of all later requests, in which the singular need is temporalised as an entirety through language.

Keywords: Lacan, truth, desire, language, phenomenology of life

1. "Objekt *a*" als Variable diskursiv geprägten Begehrens

Die Spalte oder der Riss (*fissure*) in der Trennung von Aussage/Ausgesagtem bzw. Sein/Denken oder Begehren/Objekt als *jouissance* bewirkt von Beginn an eine unbewusste Wunde im Subjekt, wodurch es in seiner Anstrengung um eine Schließung derselben für immer der allgemeinen sprachlichen) Vermittlung ausgeliefert ist. Denn deren Logik beinhaltet als allererste schicksalhafte Notwendigkeit einen Diskurs, in den sich strukturell seit der griechischen Antike für alle Individuen eine vertrauenswürdige Aussage als *Episteme* einschreiben will, wie vor allem schon die Platonischen Abgrenzungsbemühungen solchen sicheren Wissens von der brüchigen *Doxa* belegen können. Man kann daher sagen, dass die heutigen wissenschaftlich-technischen wie politisch-gesellschaftlichen Anforderungen nach solchem sicheren Wissen immer mehr ansteigen, wodurch sich zusätzlich zum bereits fundamentalen subjektiven Verhältnis von Begehren/*jouissance* für den analytisch-therapeutischen Akt eine Spannung ergibt, insofern er mit diesem kulturellen Gesamtversuch konfrontiert ist, alle Aussagen in ein immer enger gewobenes Netz von prädikativen Sätzen einzufügen, deren rein informativer Wert auch zunehmend die digitale Vernetzung bestimmt.

Tiefenpsychologie wie Lebensphänomenologie tragen nicht nur eine begründete Kritik an einer solch vorherrschenden Auffassung vor (Kühn 2015), sondern für den analytisch-therapeutischen Akt sind sie mit Subjekten konfrontiert, die auch für ihr Selbstverständnis ideologisch voraussetzen, ein solches Wissen prinzipiell von sich zu besitzen, auch wenn sie momentanen Krisen psychologischer oder existentieller Natur unterworfen sein mögen. Denn dass alles "Sinn" machen müsse, widerspricht nicht nur der Freudschen Beobachtung, dass das Unbewusste kein Widerspruchsprinzip kenne, sondern ebenfalls dem radikalphänomenologischen Sachverhalt der beiden unterschiedlichen Phänomenalisierungweisen Leben/Vorstellung sowie der immanenten Umkehrbarkeit von Freude/Schmerz innerhalb der passiblen Modalisierungen des originären Affekts (Henry 2005).. Wissen/Sprache sind demgegenüber tautologische Größen, so dass der analytisch-therapeutische Akt eine gewisse "Aszese" in diesem Zusammenhang einführt, welche das Cartesianische Cogito durch die Reduktion aller Denk- oder Wissensgehalte bereits vorgezeichnet hatte, um diese Ausgangslage jedoch für den Bereich von Analyse/Therapie um eine "Logik des Phantasmas" ergänzen zu müssen. Letztere sieht das Subjekt nicht mehr als *Hypokeimenon* oder Substanz (*res* *cogitans*), sondern vielmehr als prinzipielle Teilung (*division*), welche nach Lacan vom Analysanden/Patienten als für sein "(Nicht-)Sein" in einem prinzipiellen Sinne anzuerkennen bleibt.

Der analytisch-therapeutische Akt macht daher deutlich, dass das Subjekt nicht seine eigene Erkenntnis verwirklicht, und diese im Sinne einer vollkommenen "Selbsterkenntnis" auch gar nicht möglich ist, wie es das Sokratische "Erkenne Dich selbst!" als bekannte traditionelle Maxime fordert (Lacan 2001, 167-175). Und diese Grenze von Selbsterkenntnis als Wissen über sich selbst ist als Spracheffekt für das Subjekt grundlegend, da für immer vergessen ist, was das Subjekt im ersten Vollzug des *Begehrens* verwirklicht hat. Diese Unkenntnis ist zugleich eine bleibende "Verneinung" (Freud), durch welche die Neurose schlechthin bestimmt werden kann als die Verkennung des eigenen Begehrens in der Anfrage (*demande*), auf die es sich dennoch in allem bezieht. In der Zwangsneurose wird dies beispielsweise gut erkennbar, indem das Subjekt hierbei den entsprechenden Signifikanten im Diskurs als seine Wahrheit setzt. Aber er verschiebt denselben gleichzeitig mit der genannten grundlegenden Verneinung, so dass das, was ausgesagt wird, gerade nicht dem entspricht, was bekannt wird. Das heißt, das Formulierte oder Ausgesagte befindet sich nicht wirklich auf der lebensweltlichen Ebene des symbolischen Prädikats, welches dadurch vorgibt, etwas anderes zu sein. Es wird mithin eine Verkennung zum Ausdruck gebracht, welche in gewisser Weise nur durch jene Verneinung (*dénégation*) angezeigt erscheint, mit der diese Verkennung vornehmlich in der Neurose auftritt (Lacan 2007).

Jedes Subjekt tritt daher nach dem bisher Ausgeführten gewöhnlich mit dem existentiell gebürtigen Anspruch auf, in der Lage zu sein, so etwas wie das "Ganze" (*Tout*) erfassen zu können. Diese Auffassung bildet seinen anfänglichen Status und gleichzeitig sein Trugbild, sich als ein solches Subjekt der Erkenntnis zu denken - mithin als Träger dessen, was eventuell dieses "Ganze" sein könnte. Wenn allerdings in der *Wiederholung* sich nur die erste Teilung des Subjekts zwischen Begehren und *jouissance* je neu innerhalb der Stellvertretung durch Signifikanten ereignet, dann hat sich in der primären Wiederholung ein erster Verlust (*perte*) vollzogen, der das "verlorene Objekt" darstellt. Die anfängliche Operation des Kindes bewegt sich genau um diesen Signifikanten seines zeitlichen Anfangs der Existenz herum, was mithin gleichzeitig die Operation der ersten fundamentalen Wiederholung mit einschließt. Das "verlorene Objekt" ruft mit anderen Worten die Illusion des "Objekts *a*" hervor, nämlich als Illusion zwischen dem ursprünglichen Signifikanten als verdrängtem Signifikanten sowie jenem Signifikanten, der letzteren in einer Substitution darstellt, welche die ihrerseits erste Wiederholung errichtet (Lacan 1991, 11-15).

Lacans "Logik des Phantasmas" (2004) wendet sich demzufolge kategorisch gegen alle Mythen von Ganzheit (einschließlich eines entsprechenden Unbewussten, insbesondere etwa bei C.G. Jung), bei denen vorgegeben wird, sich authentisch nur wieder zu erkennen, indem man sich vergisst, bzw. sich nur dann wirklich zu erkennen, indem man sich verkennt. Nach dem bereits Gesagten ist einsichtig, dass es unter Vorgabe des Primats der Sprache keine Anfrage gibt, welche sich nicht an die Mutter wenden würde. Das Kind entwickelt sich als *infans* im Bereich der Mutter, wo sich die darin gestellten Anfragen zu Beginn in der Tat auf die Mutterbrust beziehen, wodurch die Wirklichkeit der Mutter nur - mit Freud - als das *Partialobjekt* bezeichnet werden kann. Jedoch bleibt letzteres das Prinzip der imaginären Einbildung des *Ganzen*, denn innerhalb der Ausrichtung auf die Mutterbrust als erste Anfrage gibt es zwischen dem Angefragten und der sich darbietenden Erfüllung durch die Brustwarze für das Kind als Antwort auf seinen ursprünglichen leiblichen Affekt einen irreduziblen *Verlust*. Genau letzterer ist als die anfängliche *Wunde* in jeder Subjektexistenz zugleich als solche Brust der einzige Träger oder die Ursache des Begehrens, welches Lacan das "Objekt *a*" in seiner "variablen" (logisch phantasmatischen) Funktion für alles weitere Begehren nannte. Er bezeichnet dies als ein "quantifiziertes Allgemeines", das heißt das "Objekt *a*" ist eine Konstante für jegliches Objekt, welches für einen Augenblick - wie die Mutterbrust - das Begehren stützen kann. Dadurch wird die Psychoanalyse von jeder biologischen oder organischen Vorgabe (wie noch bei Freud) selbst abgelöst und folgt vorrangig einer "Logik der Quantifikatoren", auf die Lacan sich in seiner

Auseinandersetzung mit dem Unterschied zwischen Grammatik, Logik und Mathematik vornehmlich beruft (Finkelde 2015).

Wenn der therapeutische Akt folglich die Besonderheit der Praxis des Analytikers/Therapeuten funktional über die Bedingung des "Objekts *a*" bestimmt, dann impliziert ein solcher Akt eine *Autorisierung*, welche die Frage nach dem epistemologischen Status oder der spezifischen Identität des Analytikers/Therapeuten selbst stellt, ohne sich eben aus einem allgemeinen Wissen ableiten zu können, sei es Psychoanalyse oder Psychotherapie (Petzold 2012). Der Patient/Analysand verwirklicht am Ende des therapeutischen Aktes eine *Kastration*, die ihn auf die singuläre *Wahrheit* seines Anfangspunktes zurückwirft, nämlich auf die entfremdende Wahl zwischen: "Entweder *bin* ich nicht oder *denke* ich nicht". Er weiß sich nunmehr nach Lacan als "geteiltes Subjekt", wobei der therapeutische Akt ihn erkennen lässt, dass er sich auch niemals vollkommen als ganzes bzw. identisches Subjekt verwirklichen wird. Dieser Akt wird über den Analytiker/Therapeuten eingeleitet, wobei der Akt als *signitive* Tatsache, die jedem Akt zukommt, diese "Einsicht" über die Sprache als Effekt des "geteilten Subjekts" herbeiführt. Dass dieser Effekt eine Teilung (*division*) des Subjekts darstellt, macht das Singuläre einer solchen Analyse/Therapie aus, denn selbst wenn solcher Akt als "Sprung" sich "transmissibel" auf die weiteren Akte des Subjekts auswirken sollte (Badiou u. Cassin 2012, 97-109), so ist dennoch keinerlei "Programm" daraus für die Analyse/Therapie als allgemeines Wissen abzuleiten.

Wendet man diese spezifisch epistemologische Konstellation auf das Verhältnis von Analyse/Therapie und Wissenschaft heute an, dann ist deutlich, dass letztere über die mathematische und logische Systematisierung ihres Wissens alle Subjekteffekte ausschließen will, was letztlich zu einem riesigen Feld an technischen Erfolgen geführt hat. Dies schließt jedoch ein, dass die Wissenschaft als solche nichts über den subjektiven *Akt* selbst zu sagen vermag, was des Weiteren beinhaltet, dass sie in diesem Bereich nichts Neues motiviert, sondern selbst nur den ständigen Versuch darstellt, ein unaufhaltsames "Machen" heute globalisierend zu verbreiten (Pirard 2010, 159-168). Ob jemals ein erneuernder oder verändernder Akt die Wissenschaft in Zukunft ergreifen kann, ist eine Frage für den therapeutischen Akt selbst, insofern er einem Effekt des Subjekts unterliegt, das an diesem subjektiven Akt teilhat, ohne seine Selbstreferenz im Vollzug dabei aus einem Wissen schöpfen zu können. In diesem Sinne ist ebenfalls das "universitäre Wissen" ein totes Wissen, denn es isoliert seinen begehrenden Akt vom vergangenen Wissen, um es neutral und abstrakt zu tradieren (Kühn 2016, 46-58). Im therapeutischen Akt ist hingegen der Effekt des Subjekts im Vollzug oder Können dieses Aktes als Verteilung von Signifikanten selbst präsent - nämlich am Ende dieses Aktes als "geteiltes Subjekt" vom vorgängigen Wissen. Für jedes Subjekt ist daher die singuläre Wahrheit ohne Wissen dergestalt, dass es etwas Irreduktibles in der Position des Subjekts als solchem gibt: *die Ohnmacht, nicht alles wissen zu können* (Lacan 2005).

Wenn mithin die gesamte analytisch-therapeutische Erprobung um das "Objekt *a*" kreist, welches strukturell die Ursache für die Teilung des Subjekts ist und bleiben wird, so war seine signitive Verteilung (Symbolik) als Bedeutung (Signifikation) durch die *Übertragung* zugänglich geworden. Denn immer schon war das Subjekt in seinen diskursiven Effekten durch seine Anfrage geprägt, welche mit dem ursprünglichen Begehren anhebt und in der analytisch-therapeutischen Durcharbeitung in seiner funktionalen Abhängigkeit vom Oralen und Analen sowie von Blick und Stimme festgehalten wurde (Till 2013). Diese libidinös-phantasmatischen Funktionen wurden dem Analytiker/ Therapeuten als Träger, Drehachse und Instrument des Übertragungsgeschehens zugespielt, damit das Subjekt sein "Wesen" (Sein als "Nicht-Sein") zu erkennen vermag. Das heißt, die Ohnmacht dieses Wissens in all diesen imaginären Bereichen vom Oralen bis zur Stimme, die stets mit Erwartungen von lebensweltlicher Anerkennung durch Begehren/Anfrage verbunden sind (Thiberge 2018, 259-272).

2. Begehren und Nicht-Wissen des Analytikers/ Therapeuten

Dies wäre nicht nur ein Anlass, genauer über die Verwendung von theoriefundierenden Mythen in Freuds Werk überhaupt nachzudenken (Wondracek 2013, 134-140), sondern die Differenz von Begehren/Wissen führt uns hier auf die grammatikalische wie ontologische Strukturgegebenheit des Bezugs zwischen Allgemeinem und Singulärem zurück, dass nämlich in der Tat *kein* Signifikant das Subjekt jemals darzustellen vermag. Damit ist auch jede Identifikation des erwähnten Status von Analytiker/Therapeut problematisch, denn das "Objekt *a*" entfremdet hier nicht nur jede "Komplementarität" (wie ebenfalls zwischen Mann und Frau), sondern es gibt auch kein Prädikat für das Subjekt im Feld des Anderen (*A*). Folglich existiert keine Anerkennung des "Ganzen" (was jedes Subjekt anstrebt), denn wir können uns in nichts einschreiben, was sich im Feld des Anderen (*A*) befände - mithin auch nicht in das spezifische Wissen des Analytikers/ Therapeuten. Das gesuchte Ganze einer Identifikation wirft uns immer nur die Leere oder den Mangel innerhalb der versuchten Selbstbegründung zurück, weshalb das Allgemeine, welches ein Wissen um das Ganze prätendiert, nur die Unmöglichkeit verbirgt, ein solches Ganzes erreichen zu können. Hierdurch reduziert sich auch die früher oft vorgetragene Kritik am "Pansexualismus Freuds" auf die für die Psychoanalyse zentrale Erkenntnis, dass die Sexualität gerade nicht "alles" ist, da sie keine letzte Komplementarität zwischen den Geschlechtern bieten kann. Die Einheit des Ganzen usurpiert einen Platz, der stets vorgibt, das Ganze zu sein, und daraus ergibt sich die Illusion, die Sexualität biete das "Ganze" eigener und zwischenpersonaler Erfahrung als Einheit.

Diese Logik verfolgt Lacan als eine "Logik des Unentscheidbaren" insofern weiter, indem er nach dem Verhältnis von Allen/Einigen (*tous*, *quelques*) fragt, wie dies bereits bei der Frage nach dem konzeptuellen Unterschied von Subjekt/Mensch anklang. Wäre eine vollständige Logik von wahren und falschen Sätzen (Propositionen) möglich, dann böte dies eine Vollständigkeit oder Schließung allen Wissens, welche ein Unentscheidbares (*indécidable*) nicht mehr zuließen. Die analytisch-therapeutische Wahrheit über die Singularität des Subjekts gibt aber gerade das Problematische an den prätendierten allgemeinen Auffassungen des Subjekts zu erkennen. Jedes Subjekt glaubt, alles zu sein; es sieht sich als

Ganzes seiner selbst; dadurch macht es sich zum Subjekt des Ganzen und nimmt an, von Allem (*tout*) reden zu können. Im therapeutischen Akt tritt folglich deutlich die Illusion zu Tage, das Subjekt sei eine solche Ganzheit oder Totalität, wie es durch das schließlich "niedergelegte Objekt *a*" erkennbar wird. In diesem Sinne kann die Analyse/Therapie ebenfalls festhalten, dass nicht jedes Wissen bewusst ist, was mit anderen Worten heißt, dass durch die Negation des Allgemeinen (Alles) ein Singuläres (Etwas) hervortritt. Dass eine vom Allgemeinen isolierte Singularität wahr sein kann, indem eine einzelne positive Existenz durch solche Verneinung hervortritt, unterstreicht nicht nur die logische Klippe zwischen dem Allgemeinen/Singulären, sondern ebenfalls, dass das Wissen prinzipiell nicht alles weiß - es mithin "Unbewusstes" in ihm gibt (Lacan 1966, 845-860). Die Analyse/Therapie kann also nicht epistemologisch vorgeben, dass das "Therapeutische" in ihr sich selbst kenne, denn kein Analytiker oder Therapeut kann seine Erfahrung der "Fälle" totalisieren, da jede theoretische Substantialität des Subjekts auch für ihn ausgeschaltet ist. Die operative oder praktische Abhängigkeit jeglichen Wissens vom "Objekt *a*" beinhaltet vielmehr, dass keinerlei Totalisierung jemals möglich ist, weshalb auch am Ende der Kur der Analytiker/Therapeut nicht die Summe daraus ziehen kann, insofern die Singularität der Wahrheit dieses Aktes dem Patienten/Analysanden allein zukommt (Langlitz 2005, 252-261).

Jede Theorie, die daraufhin das Unbewusste oder das Wissen des Analytikers/Therapeuten in einer logischen Gesamtkonstruktion zusammenfassen möchte, endet wiederum nur in einer subjektiven Vermutung, bei der sich die Verallgemeinerung als eine Illusion erweist. Denn das "Für-sich" des "An-sich" des Analytikers oder Therapeuten widerspräche nicht nur dem Unbewussten als Teilung des Subjekts, sondern das Denken holt das "Ich bin" nicht ein, weshalb jeder Signifikant als Repräsentant des "Für-sich" als Selbstbewusstsein im Sinne Hegels nur seine Ungenügsamkeit erweist. Das Einzige, was gesagt werden kann, besteht darin, dass der Analytiker/Therapeut über seine Erfahrung mit dem "Objekt *a*" ein gewisses "gewitztes Subjekt" (*sujet averti*) ist, und wo immer ein entsprechender Akt ansteht, wiederholt sich die

Kastration als Übergang zum *Akt*. In dieser Hinsicht ist die Analyse/Therapie nicht als Wissenschaft im herkömmlichen Sinne anwendbar, denn sie hätte kein allgemeines Wissen vom "Objekt *a*" vorzuweisen, welches der therapeutische Akt rein praktisch in der Übertragung singuläre Gegenwart werden lässt. So ist die Übertragung keine Frage der Person des Analytikers/Therapeuten als solchem, sondern sie existiert bereits strukturell, weshalb jeder Fall anders ist (Lacan 2001). Das in Blick genommene "Objekt *a*" lässt erkennen, was an nicht zu Leugnendem desselben gegeben ist, wenn es oftmals in der Kur heißt: "Ich nehme nicht" - es ist die Brust, die nicht genommen wird, woraus die mentale Anorexie resultiert. Heißt es "Ich lasse nicht los", dann offenbart sich darin der strukturierende Geiz des Begehrens. Und beim "Ich sage es nicht" ist leicht festzuhalten: "Ich sage kein Nein".

Der therapeutische Akt orientiert sich mithin an den Effekten, die in allen Registern des neurotischen, hysterischen oder perversen Diskurses stattfinden, und diese Beständigkeit der anhaftenden Effekte erlaubt über deren Artikulierung zu ermessen, was sich in den Bereich der *realen* Kräfte hinüberbewegt. Es gibt daher "Knoten der Konsequenz" aufgrund signitiver Artikulierungen, wobei die Folgen einer analytisch-logischen (phantasmatischen) Bearbeitung unterliegen, welche den Zusammenhang von Worten (*mots*) und Folgen (*effets*) sichtbar machen soll (Lacan 1969, Sitzung 27.3.1968). Dabei kann man voraussetzen, dass sich die singuläre Wahrheit irgendwo befindet, wenn das *SSS* (*sujet supposé savoir*) als Voraussetzung der Analyse/Kur gegeben ist, denn die Sprache (*langue*) selbst ist kein Akt des Subjekts. Vielmehr ist ein solcher nur der Diskurs (*parole* als Rede), indem dieses Subjekt sein geglaubtes Wissen als "Ganzes" äußert und mit dem "Ab-Sinnigen" (*a-sens*) des Symptoms zu konfrontieren hat, welches an den Bezug seiner Wahrheit zum Realen erinnert, der in der Tat nur singulär oder subjektiv zu sein vermag (Schindler 2017). Das Subjektverständnis innerhalb der Analyse/Therapie kann daher nicht mit anderen diesbezüglichen Auffassungen gleichgestellt werden, wie sie in den übrigen Wissenschaften oder Praxisbereichen gegeben sind. In diesem Sinne lässt sich vom Analytiker/Therapeuten ebenfalls nicht sagen, er wisse mehr als die anderen Individuen von der Aggressivität oder Sexualität, ob sie beispielsweise natürlich oder nicht natürlich sei. Vielmehr kann er nur versuchen, innerhalb der Beziehung des therapeutischen Aktes jenes dritte Element auszumachen, welches im "Objekt *a*" besteht, um dessen Funktion in der erotischen, narzisstischen, aggressiven Struktur etc. von Begehren/*jouissance* zu bestimmen.

Diese "Relativität" beim Analytiker/Therapeuten ist nicht leicht zu handhaben, denn sie ergibt sich nicht aus ihm als Subjekt der Erkenntnis, sondern als Instrument der Offenbarung des "Objekts *a*". Anders gesagt, sind Gegenstand im therapeutischen Akt alle mit dem Realen unvereinbaren Fiktionen, die sich in der diskursiven Erfahrung mit dem Patienten als strukturelle Entfremdung innerhalb des "Selbstwissens" des Subjekts erweisen. Dass die Bezüge zwischen Wissen und Begehren in Frage zu stellen sind, macht sicher im Zusammenhang mit dem Symptom, dem Realen und dem "Objekt *a*" als einer besonderen subjektiven Gegebenheit das Spezifische dieses Aktes aus. Der therapeutische Akt und seine interne Logik sollen folglich das Gewicht ermessen lassen, welches die Paradoxien, Antinomien und Phantasien beim Analysanden/Patienten ausmachen, um ihnen auf der Ebene von Effekten der Sprache und des Realen gerecht zu werden (Lacan 1969, Sitzung 19.6.1968). Bestimmte traditionelle Begriffe wie "Mensch" und "Erkenntnis" werden dabei von Lacan in gewisser Weise verabschiedet, um eine andere Konzeptualisierung von Analyse/Therapie voranzustellen, die durch die Terme von *Wissen*, *Wahrheit*, *Subjekt* und *Anderer (A)* gekennzeichnet sind. Die letzteren vier Begriffe umschreiben ein neues, rein praktisches Feld (Kühn 2015, 232-254), das in Zukunft für den therapeutischen Akt ohne Zweifel noch weiterzuentwickeln ist, wozu wir unsererseits auch die möglichen Überschneidungen mit einer radikalen Phänomenologie in Anspruch nehmen, die sich besonders für die *originäre* Gegebenheit von Begehren/*jouissance* ausmachen lassen. Kann man Lacan seine kritischen Rückfragen an Allgemeines, Ganzes, Ontologie, Substanz etc. heuristisch zugestehen, so wird nämlich radikalphänomenologisch zu überlegen bleiben, ob der *Ursprungsgedanke* als solcher gänzlich in den Bereich des Phantasmas gehört, falls der *selbstaffektive* "Lebensursprung" kein metaphysisches Prinzip mehr darstellt, sondern eine je aktuelle Selbstmanifestation des Affektven *als* Leiblichkeit meint, der wir uns auch durch die biographisch oder existentiell gegebene "Geteiltheit des Subjekts" in keinerlei Weise entziehen können (Henry 2005, 13-25). Denn die ursprüngliche Passibilität oder Affektabilität kann als effektiv "Reales" nicht geleugnet werden, ohne eine kausale oder ontologische Vorstellung des "Ursprungs" zu bilden, wobei auch weitere Diskussionen mit der Ursprungsanalyse von Laplance/Pontalis (1992) sowie dem Verhältnis von Psychoanalyse und Phänomenologie einschließlich strukturaler Hermeneutik bei Hermann Lang möglich sind (Weiß 2019).

Die dargestellte Dimension der subjektiven Wahrheit, an die keinerlei abstraktes Wissen des Subjekts heranreicht, sondern nur Phantasmen des "Objekts *a*" produziert, ist von vornherein mit dem Anderen (*A*) verbunden, wie wir über die Problematik von erster Anfrage an die Mutter durch das Kind oben schon festhielten. Der "Andere" im Lacan'schen Sinne ist kein bestimmtes anderes Subjekt zunächst, sondern der "Ort" schlechthin, "wo das Wort (*parole*) seinen Platz einnimmt". Aus dieser Konstellation ergeben sich auf der Ebene der singulären Logik des therapeutischen Aktes gewisse Topologien, die in der Spätphase von Lacan unter dem Begriff der "Borromäischen Knoten" präzisiert wurden und das Subjekt als Ordnung eines allgegenwärtigen Spiegels in Bezug auf Welt- und Selbsterkenntnis ersetzen sollen (Lacan 2005; Godebski 2009, 29-36). Wenn die Psychoanalyse auch nicht unbedingt eine grundlegende "Revolution" der Wissenschaften darstellt, so kann sie doch deutlicher als letztere unterstreichen, dass jegliches Wissen vom Anderen (*A*) herkommt, an dessen Stelle in metaphysischer oder theologischer Perspektive auch Gott (als Garant des Ganzen, der Schöpfung, Geschichte etc.) gesetzt wurde. Das Neue für Analyse/Therapie gegenüber solcher Metaphysik wie "objektiven" Wissenschaften in Bezug auf den Anderen (*A*) besteht darin, dass letztlich *kein* Wissen (*SSS: sujet suposé savoir*) die Wahrheit enthält, sondern die "Wahrheit" nur der Singularität des Sprechens des Subjekts entspricht: "Ich die Wahrheit, ich spreche" (*Moi la vérité je parle*)" (Lacan 1966, 401 u. 855).

Was die Analyse/Therapie in ihrem Akt interessiert, ist folglich die Weise, *wie* das "Unbewusste" das Subjekt über die Spracheffekte hervorbringt, damit dieses Subjekt in der Freisetzung von diesen Effekten als Anfrage an den Anderen (*A*) seine singuläre Wahrheit (über das Symptom/Sinthom) ergreifen kann. Das Subjekt ist also nicht Grund oder Ursprung dieses Wissens (*SSS*), sondern selbst eine Bestimmung durch dasselbe, denn es bewegt sich nicht frei darin, sondern reibt sich an den vielfältigen Widersprüchen und sonstigen Schwierigkeiten im Verhältnis zu Begehren/Diskurs. Mit ihnen hat es der therapeutische Akt zu tun, nicht mit dem Wissen als Theorie, Glaube, Ideologie etc. des Einzelnen, denn sonst wäre die Analyse/Therapie eine neuerliche Mystifikation. Dieses Subjekt als Bestimmung durch sein Wissen sagt nämlich einerseits nicht alles, was es *weiß*, und andererseits weiß es nicht alles, was es *sagt*. Die Wahrheit des therapeutischen Aktes ruht daher in jenem singulären Punkt, wo all das, was vom Symbolischen abgewiesen wird, im Realen wiedererscheint. Denn hierin besteht gerade die Funktion des Symptoms, welches jenen realen Knoten bildet, wo sich die Wahrheit des Subjekts befindet. In diesem Sinne besitzt jeder "Mensch" (Individuum) immer schon *seine* Wahrheit, was aber keineswegs heißt, dass er sie auch sagen kann. Genau aus diesem Grund nimmt das Symptom diesen ab-sinnigen Körper (*corps*) von *lalangue* als *sinthome* an, um zu offenbaren, wo die Wahrheit ruht. Ohne Zweifel weiß der "gewitzte" Analytiker/Therapeut praktisch etwas über diese Zusammenhänge, aber jenes Wissen, das der Patient weitgehend nicht hat, ist keineswegs im Wissen des Analytikers/ Therapeuten abstrakt gegeben. Er weiß etwas über die Wahrheit des therapeutischen Aktes nur als "Effekt der Sprache" und als "Logik des Begehrens" im jeweiligen Sagen als Vollzug innerhalb der Kur.

Das Einzige, was hier festgehalten werden kann, besteht darin, dass das vom Patienten Mitgeteilte nur *sein* "Wissen" auf dem Weg über den Analytiker/Therapeuten als den Anderen (*A*) zu werden vermag, denn gerade in der Neurose - wie Übertragung - wird das Begehren nur über eine Fiktion aufrecht erhalten. Mit anderen Worten heißt dies, dass die Wahrheit dieses Begehrens von einem Anderen erwartet wird, der als

Autorität für das gilt, was gesagt werden kann oder nicht (Kühn 2016, 210-223). Der Analytiker/Therapeut als "Anderer" unterliegt in der Kur allerdings nicht dieser ausschließlichen lebensweltlichen Diskursivität, Zensur und Fiktion für das Begehren des Patienten zu sein. Denn er weiß durch seine eigene analytische Erfahrung, dass Wissen und Wahrheit gerade nicht gleich sind, sondern die singuläre Wahrheit vom Wissen des Anderen (*A*) gelöst werden muss, um singuläre Wahrheit des Subjekts zu werden. Das allgemeine Wissen kennt als Regel nur die Dichotomie von *Wahr* und *Falsch*, aber diese prädikative Logik als grammatikalischer Bezug zwischen Subjekt/Anderem wird aufgebrochen durch ein "Wissen", welches den "transmissiblen Einbruch des Realen" erfährt - und dadurch die Wahrheit, wie sie im Symptom in dessen Verhältnis zum singulären Begehren angezeigt war. Deshalb ist die Analyse/ Therapie niemals eine allgemeine Interpretation der Welt im philosophischen, ideologischen oder dogmatischen Sinne, sondern sie bringt jenes überraschende "Etwas" zum Erscheinen, das bereits immer schon seinen Platz im subjektiven Diskurs eingenommen hatte, ohne dass das Subjekt allerdings darum wusste - nämlich das "Objekt *a*". Es ist das analytisch-ethische Begehren des Analytikers/"Therapeuten (Lacan 1995), dieses libidinös Objektale für die verborgene Struktur von Begehren/*jouissance* durch das Subjekt im therapeutischen Akt "niederlegen" (*déposer*) zu lassen. Dabei wirken die eventuell wiederholten kurzen "Deutungen" im Übertragungsgeschehen wie affektive und existentielle "Schockwellen", die jenes Wissen ergreifen, dessen Spielball das Subjekt ist (Fink 2013, 115-124).

Demzufolge interveniert der Analytiker/Therapeut im Prinzip auch nicht auf der Ebene der Anfrage, die stets unter solchem theoretischen oder dogmatischen Verdikt steht, sondern die "Schockwellen" entstehen in jenem schmalen Intervall, wo das Subjekt zu wissen meint (*SSS*) und die Anfrage sich abzeichnet. Denn die Verschränkung von Begehren/Phantasma besteht gerade darin, dass das Subjekt nicht weiß, um was es *anfragt*, und deshalb fragt es auch nicht nach dem, was es *weiß*. Dieses Intervall als Wunde, dieser Knoten, enthält als Distanz jenen "Rest", der sich für das Subjekt letztlich auf den Anderen (*A*) reduziert. Ein solcher Zusammenhang von Anderem (*A*) und

"Objekt *a*" als Mangel oder Rest ist jene Distanz, welche die maßgebliche singuläre Wahrheit für das Subjekt als berührbare Entdeckung ("Einfall") ausmacht. In dieser Hinsicht ist der "Dialog" zwischen Patient/Therapeut als Bezug des Subjekts zum Anderen (*A*) kein symmetrischer Dialog, sondern die singuläre Wahrheit kann sich erst erweisen, wenn die Ebene des Wissens als übliche Dimension des alltäglichen Dialogs aufgehoben ist, um jede Wissensabhängigkeit für den je einmaligen Zusammenhang von Realem/Wahrheit aufzugeben. Dadurch erfahren Wahr und Falsch ihre Herauslösung aus den ererbten oder gegenwärtig ontologischen wie individuellen Horizonten, um allein der "symptomalen Weisheit" verpflichtet zu sein (Lacan 2005), die Wahrheit und Wissen über den therapeutischen Akt dann in weiteren Situationen als praktischen Vollzug voneinander zu trennen weiß.

3. Schlussfolgerung: Verwerfung und Wiederholung als "elastische Logik"

Wenn man also die ursprüngliche Verneinung der begehrenden Affektion (bei der Mutter) nicht als eine metasprachliche Funktion versteht, die zwischen Ich und Nicht-Ich unterscheidet, indem alles, was man identifiziert, dem Ich zugeschrieben wird, dann ist systematisch festzuhalten, dass eine solch erste *Verneinung* im Bereich des Unbewussten eine *Verkennung* darstellt, denn das Subjekt entfremdet sich in der Tat von Beginn an im narzisstisch geprägten Imaginären (Freud 1925/2014, 319-326; Lacan 1966, 501-524). Das Phantasma als Stoff des Begehrens ist die logische Konsequenz hieraus im Sinne einer Verkennung des Mangels des "geteilten Subjekts", wodurch sich die "Verkennung der Verkennung" selbst im je Symbolischen wiederholt, nämlich der Mangel als "Objekt *a*". Insofern ist abschließend hier die "grammatikalische Verneinung" von der "komplementären Verneinung" (Lacan) zu unterscheiden, welche die Identität zwischen dem Subjekt als Aussage und Ausgesagtem hervorhebt. Daraus ergibt sich im Sinne der Lacanschule eine Schrift (*écriture*) der Wiederholung als "Ich", was der Logik der Grammatik entgeht, um das zu wiederholen, was gerade als erste Einschreibung des Mangels dem Subjekt fremd bleibt. Und diese "Logik des Phantasmas" ist prinzipieller als jede Theorie in Bezug auf Ganzheiten, da sie den theorieleitenden Unterschied zwischen dem *Einen* und *Einzigen* (Singulären) betrifft. Das heißt, kein Signifikant kann sich selbst bedeuten (Russell), wodurch sich die wichtige Frage für den therapeutischen Akt ergibt, was ein Signifikant darstellt, der durch die Schrift als "Buchstabe" (*lettre*) wiederholt wird (Rouzel 2016). Es ist die zentrale Frage, wie sich das Feld der subjektiven *Wiederholung* vom allgemeinen Universum des *Diskurses* unterscheidet, welches durch die Negation etwas ausscheiden kann, ohne zu sehen, dass es als Phantasma oder "Objekt *a*" dennoch weiterwirkt (Nassif 1970, 226-227).

Hinsichtlich des therapeutischen Aktes plädiert Lacan daher für ein zweiwertiges Prinzip oder auch für eine "elastische Logik" der Topologie von Imaginär-Symbolisch-Real (*RIS*) als "Borromäischem Knoten (Wörler 2015), dass es nämlich kein Wahres ohne Falsches gebe, was jeden Diskurs im Sinne nur *einer* allgemeinen Ausdehnung von Wahr oder Falsch für das Subjektverständnis in Frage stellt (Lacan 1969, Sitzung 6.12.1968). Diese andere Logik, wie sie auch in der freien Assoziation des Patienten/Analysanden als analytische Grundregel für die Kur vorgegeben ist (Dunett 2001), welche zugleich die Dimension der Deutung eröffnet, ist dann nicht mehr die Ebene der lebensweltlichen *Realität*, sondern eben der singulären *Wahrheit*. Hierin überschneiden sich die assoziierten Linien in bestimmten gewählten Ausgangspunkten, welche die Struktur eines Netzwerkes haben, wodurch die "elastische Logik" von Implikationen durch die Wahrheit der Wiederholung weitergeführt wird. Das Entscheidende ist daher in der Analyse/Therapie nicht zu wissen, *ob* ein Ereignis wirklich stattgefunden hat, sondern *wie* das Subjekt die entsprechenden Signifikanten dazu hat artikulieren können. Dies entspricht einer Verifizierung der Ur-Szene (Trauma) durch ein Symptom, welches dem zweiwertigen Prinzip des "Einen nicht ohne das Andere" (*pas sans*) folgt. Logik/Wahrheit verbinden sich hier mithin durch die Wiederholung, was dann eine Thematisierung des notwendigen singulären Aktes am Ende ermöglicht. Die hierin jeweils implizierte Entfremdung zwischen "Ich denke nicht/Ich bin nicht" (Erinnerung) erlaubt es daraufhin, sich der fundamentalsten Verneinung anzunähren, welche in der ursprünglichen *Verwerfung* besteht, wie sie sich besonders in der Psychose als Abwesenheit des "Namens-des-Vaters" offenbart (Maleval 2000). Diese ist identisch mit dem ersten Hervorbrechen des Anderen (*A*), wodurch zugleich jene durchgehend erwähnte "Logik des Phantasmas" entsteht, in der Sein und Symbolik auseinander fallen. Dadurch ist die Funktion des Dritten (Anderen) dem Cogito wesentlich eingeschrieben, welches alle Denkinhalte leert, um "Ich" sagen zu können, was zugleich heißt, sich einheitlich "schreiben" zu können.

Aus solchem Verhältnis von "Objekt *a*"/Anderem (*A*) ergeben sich zwei Möglichkeiten für den jeweils gedachten Akt: entweder ist er real und unmöglich oder er ist möglich und unwirklich. Wegen dieser phantasmatischen Alternative, die strukturell eben auch den Geschlechtsakt auszeichnet, bleibt darüber hinaus nur eine dritte mögliche Form, welche der Übergang in den therapeutischen wie je singulären Akt als "Sprung" ist. Denn wenn der Ausgangspunkt des Denkens das "Ich" ist, dann haben wir dadurch das Sein gewählt, welches stets auch die Frage über das "Nicht-Sein" impliziert. Dies wollte das Cogito von Descartes als ontologische Problematik über den hyperbolischen Zweifel beenden, was aber nur durch die Ausklammerung des Begehrens als "Objekt *a*" gelang. Mit anderen Worten ist das "Es" bei Freud jenes "nicht Ich" (*pas je* nach Lacan), welches die grammatikalische Struktur der Sprache aufhebt, damit die Entfremdung vom Sein des Subjekts über eine andere Struktur gelöst wird. Denn das "Unbewusste" ist im Diskurs alles, was nicht "Ich" sagt - anders ausgedrückt außerhalb von Grammatik und Schrift, ohne aufzuhören, Diskurs zu sein, insofern das Subjekt auch in Lapsus, Fehlleistungen, Träumen etc. gerade "spricht". Ist das, was das Cogito denkt, "Sinn", so kann über das Unbewusste als eine andere "Sprache" im Sinne Lacans auch aller "Nicht-Sinn" oder "Ab-Sinn" eine Logik beherbergen (Schindler 2017), nämlich eine solche des Phantasmas als "Triebschicksal" (Freud), aus dem das "Ich" ausgeschlossen ist, insofern es sich als Ausgangspunkt universeller Seins- und Sinngrammatik (Ontologie) versteht.

Die scheinbare Abwesenheit von Bedeutung im Unbewussten ist nichts anderes als die Überraschung, mit der das "Es" in den "Sinn" eintreten kann, wenn der therapeutische

Akt ihn als "Nicht-Sein" des Ichs zu erheben vermag. In der Freudschen Sprache lautet dies dahingehend, dass in der unbewussten Vorstellung die "Worte wie Dinge" behandelt werden. Das heißt, es taucht eine Vorstellung von Realität auf, die so nicht vorgesehen war, weshalb von ihm auch die Sprache der Träume als "egoistisch" bezeichnet wird, denn sie spricht von nichts anderem als vom Ich, auch wenn dieses in alle Trauminhalte verstreut ist. Genau auf dieses nicht-grammatikalische Ich bezieht sich die Analyse/Therapie, um Bedeutung/Dinge um jene Abwesenheiten herum kreisen zu lassen, wo das Ich nicht präsent war. Denn dort manifestiert sich dann das "Objekt *a*" in seiner phantasmatischen Logik, die letztlich in der Unmöglichkeit einer Subjektivierung der Geschlechtlichkeit wurzelt, wie besonders Lacan stets hervorhob. Dort ist das Ich im eigentlichen Sinne nicht gegeben, und die phallischen Konnotationen um dieses Geschlechtliche als "Sein" und "Haben" erfahren in der Kastration die Synkope ihres gegenseitigen Vorstellungsanspruchs. Das Nicht-Ich des Unbewussten ist hierbei nur jene Stelle als Leere, worauf sich das logische Ich der Bedeutung beziehen möchte. Und es ist dadurch gleichzeitig der Ort, wo über die sexuelle Wiederholung die Wahrheit als Unmöglichkeit der Artikulierung des Geschlechtlichen auftritt (Lacan 2011, 65-78).

Mit dem Wiederholungszwang als Symptom taucht am Ende für uns noch der Sachverhalt auf, wie das "Objekt *a*" real zu denken ist in Bezug auf die *Zeitlichkeit* des Subjekts, denn die Wiederholung besitzt notwendigerweise einen "einheitlichen Zug", in dessen Archäologie Wiederholung und Verschiebung zusammen gehören. Wenn ein biographischer Misserfolg (etwa durch erneute Wahl einer ähnlichen Situation) wiederholt wird, dann bezieht sich die Spur hierbei auf etwas, das durch die Wiederholung verloren ging. Das heißt, wir finden hier das "Objekt *a*" wieder. Und die Verschiebung innerhalb der Wiederholung selbst hat nichts mit Ähnlichkeit oder Differenz zu tun, sondern es kehrt hier im Feld des Subjekts der "eine Zug" (*trait unaire*) als symbolische Orientierung wieder. Dadurch können die unterschiedlichsten Objekte identifiziert werden, deren sachliche Differenz für nichts erachtet wird, da sie als Elemente eines Ensembles betrachtet werden können. Der nachträgliche Effekt gehört mithin zur Entfremdung in diesem Prozess, denn das *Eine* kehrt als *nicht zählbar* wieder, was jede signitive Operation auszeichnet, denn das Subjekt kehrt in der Signifikantenkette als Übergang zum Akt selbst wieder. Insofern gibt es eine Entsprechung zwischen der Entfremdung als unbewusster Wahl des "Ich denke nicht" und der Wiederholung als unausweichlicher Wahl im Übergang zum Akt, was erst durch den spezifischen therapeutischen Akt beendet wird, der kein *acting out* mehr ist, sondern Freisetzung von der Wiederholung/Verschiebung als Trennung oder Schnitt (*coupure*). In diesem Sinne ist der Akt ein zweifach Paradoxes: er gibt sich als Wiederholung des "einzigen Zugs", aber die Wiederholung ist zugleich die logische Struktur des Effekts der "Nachträglichkeit" (Kirchhof 2009). Daher hat nur der Akt diese Eigenschaft, den Signifikanten für sich selbst (und nicht für einen anderen Signifikanten) zu bedeuten, weshalb das Subjekt des Aktes als Teilung zwischen dem Wiederholenden und Wiederholten auftritt, die dennoch identisch sind (Nassif 1970, 244-245; Zižek 1993).

Alle Weisen von Befriedigung schreiben sich hier ein, denn es handelt sich um eine Struktur, wo das Auseinandertreten von Leib und *jouissance* zu Tage tritt - nämlich als erreichte Befriedigung der "Lust" (*plaisir*) und *weiterverfolgter* Wiederholung. Soll der freisetzende Akt als therapeutischer Akt diese Struktur gerade nicht wiederholen, so kann ein solcher Akt nur als *Schnitt* gedacht werden (Kühn 2018, 120-131), wodurch auch die topologische Oberfläche der Effekte des Subjekts als "Mehr-Lust" verändert wird. Es handelt sich mit anderen Worten um den Bezug zwischen Verleugnung und Akt, um das Labyrinth der Anerkennungen im Feld des Anderen (*A*) variabler zu denken, denn die Effekte des Aktes implizieren eine gewisse Verneinung der bisherigen Verleugnung. Dass "das Unbewusste keinen Widerspruch kennt" (Freud), mithin Wahr und Falsch als Allgemeinheiten im singulären Akt gerade nicht auseinander fallen müssen, macht deutlich, dass die "Logik des Phantasmas" in eine "elastische Logik" der Wahrheit von beiden im therapeutischen Akt transformiert werden kann – nämlich im Sinne der oben genannten "Transmissiblität" der Effekte des Realen als Begegnung mit der singulären Wahrheit.

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La pensée de la vie dans la phénoménologie de Michel Henry

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Abstract
The Self-comprehension of Life in Michel Henry's Phenomenology

Rationalism is perceived by some philosophers as a tearing of the being of man and a mutilation of his true nature. Meanwhile, the philosophy of life of the nineteenth century aims to go beyond it. In the second half of the twentieth century, Michel Henry takes on the project of these philosophers showing that individual life should be understood both as absolute and as something destined to a transformation by means of culture and art. When he tackles the problem of the relationship between life and thought, Henry points out to the primordial character of life in relation to the latter term, but also in relation to the world itself. World is not understood starting from the notion of being-in-the-world as classical phenomenology does, but on the basis of the experience of art. Thought itself is not devoid of its power to seize life in its very essence, as far as human life is engaged in a continuous becoming, in a process of growth and in self-knowledge. Finally, we aim to show what the self-comprehension of life in Henry's phenomenology could be.

Keywords: phenomenology, philosophy of life, thought, art, poetry

1. Introduction

Toute philosophie s'appuie sur un problème fondamental. Le phénomène de la vie humaine et de son devenir constitue le problème fondamental de la philosophie qui fait l'objet de cette étude. La connaissance dépend de la vie, dans la mesure où celle-ci est posée comme le principe de tout ce qui est ; c'est du moins ce qu'affirment certains philosophes du dix-neuvième siècle. Ces philosophies se proposent de connaître l'inconnaissable, elles veulent saisir par la pensée ce qui la dépasse en partant de l'expérience intérieure. En un sens, c'est bien d'un retour au néoplatonisme qu'il s'agit, même si celui-ci se trouve profondément transformé.

La phénoménologie de Michel Henry se situe dans le sillage des philosophies de la vie. Maine de Biran, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard et Nietzsche sont des penseurs très présents dans ses écrits. Henry reprend leurs problèmes en les traduisant dans le langage de la phénoménologie, dont il pense à nouveaux frais le concept central de l'apparaître. La vie se manifeste à elle-même, elle *est* cette manifestation d'elle-même en elle-même. Mais qu'en est-il de la pensée, de l'activité du philosophe, dont la vie est consacrée à la recherche de la vérité ? Le philosophe sait que la vie – chaque vie individuelle – constitue le lieu de la vérité, la philosophie étant un *cheminement* vers la vérité ultime ; faute de quoi nous devrions nier, avec Pascal, « que toute la philosophie vaille une heure de peine ». (Pascal 2000, 95) C'est à penser le rapport primordial entre la philosophie de la vie et la vie elle-même que nous voulons nous employer dans cette étude.

Pour poser notre problème, nous partirons de l'idée mentionnée plus haut, suivant laquelle la vie se manifeste à elle-même, indépendamment de la pensée conceptuelle, dans une profondeur où celle-ci n'a pas accès. Cependant cette affirmation comprend un paradoxe : c'est bien *la pensée* qui affirme ici la primauté de la vie et qui s'autolimite de cette manière. Mais comment *peut*-elle faire cela ? Nous verrons que l'autorévélation de la vie est en même temps un savoir de la vie saisie dans son *essence* même. Cette connaissance paradoxale suppose la négation de la connaissance au sens traditionnel du terme, où le connu et le connaissant se distinguent l'un de l'autre. Il s'agit d'une certaine forme de pensée capable de saisir la vie du dedans.

Ce type de pensée est proche de la poésie, dans la mesure où elle puise à la même source que celle-ci : la vie elle-même dans sa profondeur ultime. La connaissance *philosophique* recherchée s'appuie sur le verbe poétique.

Cette étude comprend trois parties. – La vie a la capacité de se transformer elle-même, par son activité créatrice, celle de la culture et de l'art. – Cette activité suppose une *parole*, dont nous essaierons de saisir les principaux traits. – Enfin, à cette parole correspond une *pensée de la vie*, capable de saisir la vie du dedans : la phénoménologie de la vie.

2. La transformation de la vie : l'art

La philosophie de la vie est une discipline philosophique déjà ancienne au moment où Michel Henry élabore sa phénoménologie de la vie. Tout en prenant ses distances par rapport à Heidegger et à Husserl, il s'emploie à montrer que la vie, plus précisément la vie intérieure, est le premier principe de la *phénoménologie*.

Heidegger, comme chacun le sait, exclut la vie de l'ontologie du *Dasein* ; la vie n'est qu'un domaine de l'étant, étranger comme tel au questionnement portant sur *l'être*. Dans les écrits du dernier Husserl, la vie se trouve bien au centre de la recherche, mais elle est toujours associée au concept de *monde,* comme l'indique l'expression de « monde de la vie ». Or Michel Henry dissocie provisoirement ces deux concepts pour montrer que la vie constitue à elle seule le principe de la *réalité*. Saisie dans son *immanence* radicale, la vie ne doit rien au monde. L'être-au-monde est secondaire dans cette phénoménologie : la vie, comme réalité *absolument* première, constitue son fondement. C'est parce qu'il est enraciné dans la vie que le monde acquiert une réalité. En tant qu'objet de la perception ou de l'expérience, ses apparitions s'évanouissent aussitôt que posées, elles glissent pour ainsi dire dans le néant. Les apparitions de la vie en revanche, les sentiments et les affects, semblables en cela aux modes de la substance de Spinoza, sont retenues en elle ; la vie se manifeste et se déploie dans *ses* modes à chaque instant, elle advient en elle-même sans sortir de soi, elle se pose elle-même comme *absolue*.

Si l'on peut comprendre, comme on le dit parfois, une philosophie à partir de son contraire, ce sont bien les philosophies modernes de la finitude (de l'existence) qui se situent à l'opposé de la phénoménologie de la vie, comme le souligne fortement Michel Haar : « La philosophie de M. Henry constitue un rejet violent de la pensée de la finitude ». (Haar 1987, 52) La vie est elle-même phénoménologique : pure manifestation d'elle-même. « Dans la Vie qui touche à chaque point de son être et ne fait défaut nulle part, tout est là tout entier à chaque instant » (Henry 2003a, 91). La vie s'éprouve à chaque instant, elle a le sentiment de soi et dans ce sentiment, origine de tous les affects, elle se révèle à elle-même en tant que surabondante ou *divine* en son essence même.

Ces accents théologiques ne mettent-ils pas en cause, comme on a voulu le faire croire, la rigueur de la démarche phénoménologique ? Tel n'est pas le cas. Pour Michel Henry, les textes sacrés ou ceux des penseurs mystiques sont eux-mêmes phénoménologiques ; ils ne fournissent pas à la phénoménologie de la vie son contenu – la vie n'a besoin que d'elle-même pour se révéler à elle-même, elle *est* sa propre révélation –, mais ils donnent à la pensée la possibilité de connaître la vie dans sa profondeur. La vie s'en trouve elle-même accrue, dans la mesure où la pensée, comme l'avait compris Nietzsche, lui appartient : la vie *s'interprète* elle-même (Henry 1985, 249-342). La vie – celle de chacun de nous – ne doit pas aux textes, fussent-ils révélés, le privilège de se connaître elle-même ; cependant elle se *re*connaît dans certains textes majeurs, philosophiques ou révélés : en les interprétant elle se connaît soi-même. La vie est absolue et *en même temps* engagée dans un procès d'interprétation de soi, qui est la pensée de la vie. Autrement dit, elle est infinie et finie, divine et humaine, comme l'est éminemment la Vie du Dieu-Homme. En tant que divine, elle est tout entière ce qu'elle est « à chaque instant » ; en tant qu'humaine, elle est engagée dans un devenir, qui est une croissance et une transformation de soi.

L'idée que la vie est croissance est développée dans la philosophie henryenne de la culture et de l'art : la musique et la peinture occupent une place centrale dans la pensée de Michel Henry. C'est à la peinture et au rôle qu'elle joue dans l'autorévélation et la croissance de la vie que nous voulons maintenant accorder notre attention.

La peinture est faite pour être regardée, mais que signifie le regard ? En vérité, le regard est toujours et nécessairement accompagné d'un *vécu intérieur*, par lequel nous adhérons à la chose vue et *au monde* lui-même. La perception de la chose extérieure est enracinée dans l'intériorité, que Michel Henry nomme également « chair », corps intérieur. Lors de la perception d'un tableau, les couleurs nous meuvent et nous *émeuvent* dans la mesure où elles nous impressionnent, dans le double sens du terme : « En vérité la réalité du rouge, c'est l'impression que ce rouge étalé sur la palette crée en moi. Et c'est cette impression qui est l'essence véritable de la couleur » (Henry 2004, 290). Cette émotion est un bouleversement de notre être produit par l'œuvre à même notre chair : la *transformation* de la vie. Tel est d'ailleurs le sens ultime de la culture. L'homme ne se *propose* pas de construire l'édifice de la culture, ce procès est immanent à la vie dans la mesure où elle s'approfondit en se transformant, par le moyen de l'art. Comme le dit fort bien un disciple de Michel Henry : « L'homme et le monde, en position de chiasme, ont besoin de la vie. Or c'est bien sur ce besoin que l'art se fonde. Un peintre a pour cible le tableau. Si la flèche s'écrase au point de visée, il peut s'estimer satisfait. Sauf que ce point de visée ne préexiste jamais à l'envoi de la flèche [...] Si le tableau est la cible, l'arc est la vie et les couleurs les flèches ». (Audi 2021, 12)

Notre vie participe de l'Absolu, elle est humaine *et* divine, divino-humaine, aurait dit Soloviev (Soloviev 1991). Au fond d'elle-même, la vie fait l'épreuve de soi et se pose comme un Soi vivant. Or ce vécu est éprouvé en même temps comme une impossibilité d'échapper à soi, bien que la vie, en raison même de cette impossibilité, tente parfois de nier sa condition, de s'évader dans un ailleurs merveilleux, comme la consommation des drogues le montre bien. C'est dire que *la vie est souffrance*. Elle est souffrance et joie, *passage* incessant de la souffrance à la joie et de la joie à la souffrance, tel cependant que celle-ci n'est jamais éliminée mais demeure au fond de la vie. La création – toute création culturelle, celle artistique en particulier – est une descente de la vie dans son propre fond, par laquelle le sentiment de la vie s'accroît afin de donner un sens à la souffrance, au gré d'une transformation « alchimique » de la matière charnelle dont notre vie est faite. Avant de poser des formes hors de soi, l'acte créateur digne de ce nom est un travail sur soi et en même temps une transformation de soi : son *lieu* est la vie intérieure. En tant que la vie est divine, elle demeure en elle-même ; en tant qu'elle est humaine, elle éprouve le besoin de croître, de créer. Mais le divin et l'humain sont inséparables dans la vie réelle : la création est à la fois un sortir de soi et un demeurer en soi.

La nature de la création est largement incomprise dans l'esthétique occidentale. Celle-ci est fascinée par le voir, lui-même compris comme pur contact avec le monde extérieur ; le *vécu inhérent* à tout voir, à toute perception, à *la vie sensible* elle-même, est ignoré par la plupart des théoriciens de l'art. C'est dire que l'esthétique des formes manque l'essentiel : *la source* de toute création, la vie qui pose une forme à l'extérieur de soi tout en demeurant en elle-même afin de ressentir plus intensément son propre être. Contrairement à l'enseignement de l'idéalisme allemand, *la vie ne s'objective pas*. Pour autant qu'elle est saisie en son essence, et non pas dans le monde social où elle s'aliène, son sortir de soi dans l'acte créateur doit être interprété comme un demeurer en soi-même. En créant les formes visibles, la vie se manifeste à elle-même, dans l'invisible : le visible s'appuie sur l'invisible.

Dès lors on comprend la place éminente, et à vrai dire unique, qu'occupe *Kandinsky* dans la phénoménologie de la vie. Kandinsky a montré, notamment dans ses écrits théoriques, que le domaine de l'art est « le spirituel » (Kandinsky 1989). L'art est d'une part écoute de la vibration intérieure de la vie et d'autre part expression de la vie intérieure : les couleurs et les formes sont les moyens par lesquels la vie se touche elle-même, afin de s'accroître. Dans son livre sur l'œuvre de Kandinsky, Henry affirme que « le contenu de la peinture, de toute peinture, c'est l'Intérieur, la vie en elle-même invisible et qui ne peut cesser de l'être, qui demeure à jamais dans sa Nuit ; les moyens par lesquels il s'agit d'exprimer ce contenu invisible – les formes et les couleurs – sont eux-mêmes invisibles, dans leur réalité originelle et la plus propre en tous cas ». (Henry 2003b, 24) Si le contenu de *toute* peinture – à vrai dire de tout art, y compris de l'architecture, dont on a voulu faire parfois une « discipline utilitaire » – est la vie invisible, l'art, considéré dans son essence, n'a rien à voir avec « l'imitation » de la nature (humaine) ou du monde. Le peintre n'est jamais soumis à quoi que ce soit d'extérieur, mais c'est toujours à partir de lui-même qu'il crée, dans la surabondance de la vie qui parvient à un sentiment de soi plus intense dans cette « Nuit » où elle demeure : les couleurs et les formes visibles y renvoient. Et c'est le même advenir en soi de la vie qui a lieu dans celui qui contemple l'œuvre : ce qui l'émeut, ce n'est nullement le tout des formes visibles considéré en lui-même, ni telle ou telle signification de l'œuvre questionnée, mais plutôt le jeu mystérieux des couleurs et des formes qui *exprime* la vie, sa vibration intérieure, et y renvoie. C'est dire que « *toute peinture est abstraite* » (Henry 2003b, 15). La peinture exprime un vécu que nous pouvons revivre lorsque nous laissons être devant nous les couleurs et les formes. Tout se passe au niveau du vécu, du sentiment pur. La couleur n'est pas *en son essence* quelque chose de visible : avant (ontologiquement parlant) d'être vue, elle est sentie et ressentie, vécue. « Elle est en elle-même, dans la substance phénoménologique de son être et dans sa chair, comme sensation et comme subjectivité, cette tonalité affective, cette sonorité intérieure dont il est question ». (Henry 2003b, 125)

La couleur appartient toutefois au monde, mais non pas au monde tel que le comprend Heidegger – et avec lui la phénoménologie classique – dans *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger 1984), mais au monde tel qu'il *est* pour la vie et tel que le comprend l'art. Si la vie est invisible dans son essence, le monde tel que l'artiste nous le fait découvrir est également invisible ; il se donne à nous non pas comme ce-qui-est-vu-là-devant, mais comme ce qui est *ressenti* dans les profondeurs de notre être. Nommé ici *nature*, le monde est pensé à partir de l'intériorité, comme ce qui lui appartient. « La nature n'est donc pas ce que la modernité en fait, quelque substance extérieure à nous, étrangère, autonome, difficilement accessible et dont nous serions le reflet fugace et incertain. Elle plonge ses racines en nous, dans la Nuit de notre subjectivité sans fond et en procède secrètement. Nature originelle, subjective, dynamique, impressionnelle, pathétique, dont nous sommes la chair, dont chaque battement est un battement de notre sang, qui se lève devant notre regard, cède à la pression de notre main, air que nous respirons, sol que nous foulons – ou plutôt cette respiration elle-même, ce mouvement, ce corps que je suis : cosmos ! » (Henry 2004a, 240). Mais c'est Kandinsky lui-même, cité par Henry en cet endroit, qui disait déjà : « Le monde est rempli de résonances.

Il constitue un cosmos d'êtres exerçant une action spirituelle. La matière morte est [un] esprit vivant ». (Kandinsky 2014, 160) Il ressort de ces textes que *l'opposition* du monde et de la vie n'est pas le dernier mot de Michel Henry. Cette opposition a un sens méthodique : elle vise les phénoménologies du XXème siècle, celles de Husserl, de Heidegger et de Merleau-Ponty notamment, en tant qu'elles prennent leur point de départ dans le monde situé *là-devant*, où l'on se meut et que l'on *voit*. Au contraire, le monde de la peinture est le monde ressenti, intérieur à la vie. Les éléments, l'air et la terre notamment, les choses qui nous entourent font d'emblée partie de notre être dans la mesure où elles résonnent en nous ; c'est bien cette résonance intérieure qui constitue leur *être*. Saisir le monde en tant que cosmos vivant n'est pas une forme renouvelée de panthéisme, le monde n'étant divin d'aucune manière. Cela signifie plutôt penser le monde à partir du corps, de la chair. Il s'agit de comprendre le monde à partir des *impressions* qu'il produit en nous, de notre vie.

C'est de cette appartenance du monde à la vie que nous « parle » la peinture, toute peinture, la peinture abstraite étant un retour de la pratique artistique aux éléments fondamentaux du monde sensible, aux couleurs et aux formes.

Mais la vie humaine est également inséparable du langage, plus précisément de la parole. Notre attention doit désormais se porter sur celle-ci.

3. La parole de la vie

Quel est le rôle de la parole dans le processus de l'autorévélation de la vie ? Dans quelle mesure la vie se déploie *dans* la parole de la vie, qui n'est plus celle du monde quotidien ?

Depuis la haute Antiquité, la philosophie distingue une parole intérieure que l'homme s'adresse à lui-même, de la parole qui *désigne* les choses et les actions du monde extérieur, par laquelle les hommes *communiquent* les uns avec les autres. La première est nommée, au sens fort du terme, *pensée,* tandis que la seconde – *langage.* Or, à lire les œuvres de Michel Henry de la dernière période, on constate une certaine tendance à réduire la pensée au langage, à interpréter la pensée à partir du langage. Nous verrons que ce point de vue n'est pas celui de *L'Essence de* *la manifestation.* Pour le moment il convient de saisir l'idée qui vient d'être énoncée afin de saisir, pour ainsi dire par contraste, la nature et le rôle de la parole intérieure.

La parole est d'abord un moyen de communication ; elle appartient au monde, elle est parole que nous adressons les uns aux autres dans le monde, parole *du* monde. « La parole humaine s'appuie sur le langage, lequel est composé de mots, de signes se rapportant à des objets. À cet égard le mot apparaît comme un instrument, le moyen, en conférant un nom à quelque chose qui est déjà là, d'avoir prise sur lui, de pouvoir le manier symboliquement. Mais quel que soit la façon dont on la conceptualise, cette fonction instrumentale du mot renvoie à une essence phénoménologique, qui est l'essence de la Parole. Car le mot ne peut dire la chose que s'il la donne à voir, s' '*il porte la chose en tant que chose à l'éclat du paraître*' » (Henry 2004b, 179). Cela vaut pour la pensée en général, qui se déploie dans le régime de la représentation ; contrairement à la vie, la pensée est *intentionnelle,* comme l'avait déjà montré Husserl. Henry semble vouloir dire ici que c'est la vie et elle seule, sans le secours de la pensée, qui est *révélation de soi* : la pensée, orientée d'emblée vers le monde extérieur, ne contribue pas à l'approfondissement de la vie. « Cette intériorité phénomé-nologique réciproque de la Vie et du Vivant ne se révèle que dans la Vie selon le mode de révélation propre à celle-ci. *Elle échappe à la pensée* comme au monde et pour la même raison : parce qu'elle ne se laisse jamais voir en aucun dehors » (Henry 2003a, 188). L'idée qu'une forme quelconque de pensée puisse opérer au dedans de la vie, y pénétrer d'une certaine manière – comme l'Intellect contemple à sa manière, chez Plotin, l'Un qu'il désire –, est absente des dernières œuvres de Michel Henry, absence qui demeure surprenante pour tout lecteur attentif de *L'essence de la manifestation.* Préoccupé à renforcer le pouvoir de révélation propre à la vie contre toute forme de rationalisme, notre philosophe souligne que la pensée comme telle appartient à la sphère de l'extériorité, c'est-à-dire de la *représentation.* En cela il s'oppose à Heidegger, dont le souci est de montrer que la pensée *de l'être* ne tient pas de la représentation. Pour le dernier Henry, la pensée comme telle semble être soumise à la logique de la représentation, dirigée vers le monde : elle est comme telle *intentionnelle*.

Pourtant le pouvoir de la pensée ne s'arrête pas là. Dans le « Débat autour de l'œuvre de Michel Henry » (Henry 2004b, 205-247), le philosophe ne nie pas qu'il y a une pensée de la vie, à commencer par la sienne. Mais celle-ci est, dit-il, une pensée *sur* la vie, elle ne surgit pas de l'intérieur de la vie ; elle est *logos,* autrement dit logique. Elle ne parle de la vie qu'en la tenant à distance, tout en la posant comme principe premier. Le rôle de la phénoménologie de la vie est de montrer *que* la vie s'est déjà manifestée en elle-même *avant* la pensée théorique, qui vient toujours trop tard.

Qu'en est-il de l'art et de la culture, dont nous avons montré le rôle central dans la phénoménologie de la vie ? Force est de constater qu'une pensée les habite, qu'ils en sont inséparables. Ce qui nous amène à formuler l'hypothèse suivante : la pensée n'est pas seulement un instrument de communication ; elle est une lumière que nous allumons au plus profond de notre Nuit intérieure. À ce niveau, les mots n'indiquent plus quelque chose au sein de la vie quotidienne, mais ils expriment le *mouvement de l'âme* – le nom traditionnel pour la vie telle que Michel Henry la comprend. Les mots-clés de la pensée de la vie sont les mots-images, ceux de *la poésie* : les images ont le pouvoir d'ébranler notre être, de transformer la vie ; elles sont porteuses d'énergie psychique, elles irradient l'affectivité dont elles sont grosses.

Si la phénoménologie débouche sur une philosophie de l'art, la philosophie de l'art est elle-même inséparable d'une poétique, dans la mesure où l'art et la poésie sont enracinés dans la vie. C'est à dégager le rôle de la poésie dans la phénoménologie de la vie que nous devons nous employer à présent.

4. La pensée de la vie : la poésie

Dans le grand livre de Michel Henry, *L'essence de la manifestation,* le rôle de la poésie fait l'objet d'une « monstration » rigoureuse, proprement phénoménologique. Si la vie est, dans son être même, devenir, advenir en elle-même, croissance et transformation de soi, le lieu de ce processus est l'affectivité qui se nourrit d'elle-même *et* des mots-images qui l'expriment. La vie affective ne saurait se passer de la parole, pour autant qu'elle est engagée dans le processus de la transformation de soi, qui fait d'elle une vie proprement *humaine*. La poésie n'exprime pas simplement la vie ; elle est à l'origine d'un devenir, celui de la transformation de la vie.

Le rôle de la poésie dans la phénoménologie de la vie est l'objet du & 50 de *L'essence de la manifestation* ; mais le paragraphe précédent, *La signification ontologique de la critique de la connaissance chez Eckhart*, n'est pas moins important. À travers de nombreux renvois aux *Sermons* allemands, Henry montre que la connaissance rationnelle, tournée vers les choses extérieures – « l'extériorité où se meut le savoir » –, est incapable de saisir Dieu dans son essence, pas plus que dans ses effets à l'intérieur de l'âme. Cette connaissance manque d'emblée la vérité de la manifestation de l'absolu dans l'immanence de la vie, dont la phénoménologie de la vie se propose de parler. « C'est parce que, sur le fond de l'incompatibilité de leurs structures phénoménologiques essentielles, la vérité ne peut être trouvée dans ses 'manifestations extérieures', ne peut se manifester dans le milieu de la connaissance, que toute recherche s'accomplissant en celui-ci la manque inévitablement, manque l'absolu lui-même phénoménologiquement interprété et compris comme l'essence de cette vérité originelle » (Henry 1990, 535-536). La recherche phénoménologique ne *s'appuye* plus sur la connaissance. Elle pose la question du fondement de toutes choses, autrement dit du monde et de la connaissance elle-même, et ouvre un chemin vers la vie absolue.

Tel est l'enjeu de la phénoménologie : quitter le terrain de l'*Erkenntnisproblem* pour revenir « aux choses elles-mêmes ». Mais Henry montre que la démarche de Husserl est compromise par le concept de l'intentionnalité ; sa philosophie reste accrochée au monde, plus précisément à la *saisie intellectuelle* du monde inséparable du *voir*, comme l'indique le couple des notions noèse et noème. Dans la volonté de voir est présente la volonté de savoir. Cette remarque reste valable pour la phénoménologie du corps de Merleau-Ponty : le corps est dans le monde et *du* monde, la « communion » avec le monde s'accomplit au niveau du voir, de la perception ; cette philosophie reste en deçà de la découverte nietzschéenne du corps comme unité des pulsions et des affects, découverte qui joue un rôle majeur dans la philosophie de Michel Henry, comme en témoignent les deux longs chapitres sur la philosophie de la vie de Nietzsche dans *La généalogie de la psychanalyse* (Henry 1985). Pour ce qui est de la phénoménologie heideggérienne, comprise d'emblée comme ontologie, elle est et demeure, selon Henry, une pensée de l'extériorité, de l'*außer-sich-sein* : l'être comme tel se donne à la pensée, il est pour la pensée ; la tâche de celle-ci est de surprendre dans l'histoire de la philosophie le clignotement de l'être sous la donation massive de l'étant. Michel Henry montre que ces phénoménologies restent à mi-chemin : elles ne parviennent pas à penser vraiment la vie *humaine* dans sa teneur concrète. Or c'est bien ce que Henry se propose en s'appuyant sur un penseur médiéval (Eckhart) et un poète moderne (Novalis).

Dans *L'essence de la manifestation* le recours à Maître Eckhart joue le rôle suivant. La mystique spéculative du maître dominicain est la première et peut-être la seule *déconstruction de l'intérieur* de la scolastique, de l'aristotélisme, autrement dit du « logos grec ». Les concepts de l'ontologie aristotélicienne, y compris celui de Dieu, tombent un à un sous les coups de cette pensée, qui est en même temps une parole de vie. Sous la métaphysique de l'Intellect divin, c'est une pensée de l'Un qui se cache, que seule la notion de *Déité* est en mesure de traduire, autant que faire se peut. Certes la pensée opère à l'intérieur de la vie, mais l'initiative appartient au désir qui met en mouvement l'âme qui en est le sujet. Ainsi s'accomplit la critique de la connaissance, dont la signification est cruciale dans toute philosophie de la vie. Mais avec la connaissance c'est la sphère de la représentation comme telle qui est *levée,* comme dirait Hegel (*aufgehoben*) : d'une pensée qui pose Dieu comme « tout autre », qui le représente justement, afin que la « foi » puisse en faire son bien, opération par laquelle Dieu demeure *extérieur* à l'homme. Or Dieu ou l'absolu se trouve à l'intérieur de notre vie, dans sa profondeur, il est *l'essence* même de la vie. « Que l'essence ne réside pas hors de nous mais dans notre propre vie, et cela parce qu'*elle est l'essence même de cette vie qui est la nôtre*, tout cela est dit ici et fondé » (Henry 1990, 538). De cette manière une nouvelle ontologie est fondée, où l'être se manifeste à même l'essence dans son être même. « Pour cette raison en effet, parce qu'elle ne consiste plus dans l'extériorité de l'être par rapport à soi, *la manifestation de celui-ci n'est plus une image, une simple représentation de l'être, différente de sa réalité, elle réside au contraire en lui, c'est l'être lui-même qui se phénoménalise en elle, elle est véritablement la manifestation de l'être* » (Henry 1990, 541). Si la manifestation de l'être réside dans l'être lui-même, hors du régime de la représentation, l'être se donne, précisément en tant qu'essence, à la pensée qui pénètre la vie et qui n'est rien d'autre que la connaissance de soi – de la vie comme Soi. « Parce que la réalité de l'âme dans laquelle elle se tient est identiquement sa phénoménalité, l'âme, en tant précisément qu'elle se tient dans cette réalité et se trouve constituée par elle, se manifeste à elle-même dans cette manifestation originelle de soi qui est l'essence de la vie. Parce que la réalité dans laquelle elle se connaît est la réalité de l'être absolu lui-même, c'est … la réalité de l'être absolu qu'elle connaît quand elle se connaît elle-même » (Henry 1990, 543). Encore une fois, la critique de la connaissance au sens classique, celle des Grecs, des médiévaux et des modernes, nous amène à penser une pensée différente, dont l'acte est la saisie de l'être dans son jaillissement premier.

La pensée telle qu'elle est envisagée ici est d'un autre ordre que ce qu'on désigne habituellement par savoir ou connaissance : elle un saisir *immédiat* de l'être absolu, du fond de l'âme et de la Déité, qui se donnent du même coup. Ce n'est donc pas le savoir absolu qui est rejeté, mais uniquement ce savoir qui est identique à « la conscience de l'extériorité » (Henry 1990, 547). En ce sens la saisie de l'essence de l'absolu et de l'âme, de la Vie unique, se réalise comme « non-savoir », hors du monde, dans l'invisible.

Mais il y a une pensée capable de nous faire pénétrer dans l'invisible, non pour le rendre partiellement visible, mais plutôt pour injecter une énergie nouvelle dans la révélation du sentir : la parole qui l'exprime s'intègre au devenir de la vie faisant *avec* elle le grand œuvre de sa propre transformation.

Le langage courant est un pouvoir de communication et d'extériorisation, il contribue au devenir-visible du monde. La parole recherchée est donc une espèce de contre-langage, une parole du silence – issue de lui et lui appartenant –, qui cherche à ramener la vie à son propre Soi, cette vie qui sans jamais se quitter est cependant répandue dans le monde intersubjectif qu'elle anime.

Le mot *nuit* exprime « l'objet » de cette pensée. Dans un texte qui résume son propos et qui signifie pour la pensée de l'Essence la possibilité d'un nouveau déploiement, Michel Henry nous apprend qu'« aucun horizon de lumière, pas même la possibilité ou l'esquisse de celui-ci ne se lève en ce qui cohère avec soi dans l'unité absolue de son immanence radicale. Ainsi s'accomplit dans l'essence, sur le fond de sa structure même et comme constituée par celle-ci, l'œuvre de la Nuit […] La nuit est la réalité de l'essence et c'est comme telle, comme sa réalité même et comme son essence, qu'elle la transit » (Henry 1990, 549-550). Comme réalité de l'essence, *la nuit est en même temps la révélation elle-même*, dans la mesure où l'essence *est* révélation ou manifestation d'elle-même dans son propre milieu, celui du sentir, qui constitue la sphère de l'invisible. Dans la nuit et *comme* nuit, la vie se révèle telle qu'elle est en elle-même.

Michel Henry introduit la métaphore de la nuit tout en soulignant son pouvoir de révéler l'essence. L'image de la nuit exprime l'état *caché* de l'essence. L'essence de la vie est comme telle cachée, de même que le Dieu dont parlent la Bible et Pascal. « Se révélant dans l'invisible et comme cet invisible lui-même, sous la forme de celui-ci par conséquent, *l'essence demeure cachée dans sa révélation même*. L'état caché de l'essence est sa détermination essentielle » (Henry 1990, 552). Enfin c'est parce que l'essence est cachée qu'elle est réelle, effective, autrement dit *agissante* – Nietzsche aurait dit une force, qui constitue la couche ultime de l'être. Si l'essence n'était pas cachée, elle serait située dans le monde de la vie, elle y serait jetée ou dispersée, toujours préoccupée de ses « projets » : elle serait le « néant » dont parle Sartre dans *L'être et le néant*. L'existentialisme, en tant que négation de la réalité *immanente* de la vie, est une philosophie du désespoir, de l'impossibilité pour la vie de se retrouver elle-même, de se recueillir dans sa propre essence. Ce que nous comprenons mieux si l'on se souvient que la vie n'est pas simplement la conscience ; elle n'est pas intentionnelle, elle est et demeure étrangère à la « raison communicative » étant absolument individuelle et immanente à soi, révélation de soi. Tout ce qui existe en dehors de cette vie constitue la sphère irréelle des apparitions et des signes, il n'y a aucune *réalité* en dehors de la vie subjective et du monde qui en dépend. Comme l'a montré Guy Debord (Debord 1967), lorsqu'elle est livrée au spectacle, au point qu'elle croit avoir besoin des regards braqués sur elle pour se sentir vivre, la vie est mutilée, sinon abolie. Bref, l'essence (de la vie) est cachée ; cette manière d'être constitue son état fondamental.

Quelque profonde que soit la nuit de l'essence, on peut se demander s'il n'y a tout de même pas une *lumière* allumée dans ces profondeurs ? Tel est bien le cas. Dans la nuit de l'essence, une parole silencieuse résonne, un verbe auquel répond la parole de la *poésie*. Que l'essence cachée dans la nuit soit en même temps révélation, cela veut dire qu'elle n'est pas un processus inconscient : Michel Henry soumet l'idée d'inconscient à une critique sévère (Henry 1985), dans la mesure où une vie inconsciente, simple étant, est dépourvue de ce qui en fait une vie humaine : de son pouvoir d'autorévélation. La vie essentielle est un devenir à l'intérieur de soi, une révélation de soi qui déborde dans le *dire* du poème qui nomme son essence.

Si l'essence est le fond caché de la vie, elle se donne à connaître dans l'acte d'une parole, d'une pensée qui pénètre la vie et qui est inséparable des *images* dont le pouvoir est de réveiller et de révéler *l'affectivité* : le & 52 nous apprend que celle-ci constitue l'essence originaire de la révélation. La lumière de la Nuit – le « gracieux soleil de la Nuit » – est l'image première qui met en mouvement les *Hymnes à la Nuit* (Novalis 2014). La parole de la poésie est en mesure de révéler l'essence de la vie invisible : « L'œuvre de la nuit, l'accomplissement par elle de la révélation dans sa possibilité et dans son effectivité, la détermination de celle-ci comme invisible, comme l'invisible et originelle lumière de la Nuit, *au dire authentique de la poésie il appartient de les nommer* » (Henry 1990, 554). C'est à une poésie *de la Nuit* que cette tâche revient. Novalis se situe, via *Le pèlerin chérubinique* d'Angelus Silesius (1993), dans le sillage de Maître Eckhart ; c'est à chaque fois du même processus d'autorévélation de la vie qu'il s'agit, dans ce qu'on pourrait nommer le langage paradoxal de l'image, qui est depuis toujours le sien.

La nature cachée de l'essence est ce que nous nommons *le mystère,* auquel il revient de se révéler dans la parole poétique. Cette parole est *la pensée de la vie*, par et dans laquelle la vie se déploie, mieux, se transforme suivant son être même, c'est-à-dire son devenir. La vie, à travers son déploiement dans cette parole, fait retour sur elle-même, se révèle à elle-même. Or cette pensée est déjà celle de la mystique, pour autant que celle-ci fait usage du langage poétique. En tant que manifestation de l'essence de la vie à même la vie, la pensée de la vie telle que nous venons de la décrire est la condition de possibilité de la phénoménologie comme discours sur la vie. Celui-ci est donc une *pensée de la vie.* C'est parce que la vie s'est révélée et approfondie – approfondissement qui caractérise la vie humaine en tant que telle – dans la poésie et dans d'autres formes de l'art, que la phénoménologie peut à son tour *reprendre* la vie, en saisir le mouvement dans son propre discours. C'est comme philosophie de la poésie et de l'art que la phénoménologie est elle-même pensée de la Vie absolue telle qu'elle advient dans sa Parousie, comme le dit l'un des passages-clé de *L'essence de la manifestation.* « La phénoménologie est ce qui nous donne accès au phénomène compris dans sa réalité, c'est-à-dire au phénomène en tant que tel. Mais la voie d'accès au phénomène est le phénomène lui-même. La phénoménologie se propose à nous comme un moyen, le moyen d'apporter près de nous l'essence concrète et vraie, l'essence de la présence, l'absolu en tant qu'il est la Parousie [...] La phénoménologie recherche la Parousie de l'absolu sur le fondement de l'absolu compris comme la Parousie » (Henry 1990, 68-69). En tant que discours sur la vie se déployant dans le langage argumentatif du concept, la phénoménologie est une pensée de la vie dans la mesure où elle se situe dans le sillage de la parole originaire de la vie. Autonome dans sa méthode, lorsqu'elle fait la critique des philosophies qui comprennent la vie humaine à partir du monde, la phénoménologie de la vie ne l'est pas dans son contenu : elle dépend de la vie et de son œuvre créatrice qu'elle reprend. La phénoménologie est le mouvement en direction du Fondement, qu'elle ne peut saisir sans reconnaître la parole de la vie dont elle dépend.

Dans la phénoménologie classique, la pensée *réduit* le phénomène à ce qui peut en être pensé dans la transparence du voir, et le monde lui-même à l'ensemble des choses et des significations posées et connues. Au contraire, la phénoménologie de la vie s'emploie à mettre en lumière et en œuvre une pensée qui ne tient plus du voir, mais de l'invisible. Elle s'appuie sur la pensée de la poésie ; elle est elle-même, comme nous venons de le montrer, une telle pensée.

5. Remarques finales

La vie est en elle-même révélation et vérité, révélation de la Vérité. Le procès par lequel l'être vivant s'ouvre à la Vérité est l'advenir de la vie en elle-même, saisie par la phénoménologie dans son immanence. C'est la vie elle-même qui se pose et se pense comme essence, dans l'acte d'une pensée immanente à la vie. La phénoménologie construit son discours à partir de cette connaissance de la vie, elle saisit l'essence concrète de la vie en s'appuyant sur une parole qui la précède. La pensée de la vie (génitif subjectif), celle de la mystique et de la poésie, est le sol fécond de la pensée *sur* la vie de la philosophie.

Certains commentateurs, tel Michel Haar (1987), ont jugé que cette démarche comporte une certaine dose de naïveté et que nous ne pouvons pas faire retour à des expériences qui appartiennent inéluctablement au passé. C'est mal comprendre le propos de Henry, qui ne se propose pas de faire retour à qui ou à quoi que ce soit. Notre philosophe veut simplement montrer que, nonobstant les transformations subies par l'homme moderne à travers l'histoire, *les profondeurs* de la vie individuelle ne sont pas ballotées par le mouvement incessant et chaotique de celle-ci. De son côté, Charles Taylor a montré que la compréhension que l'homme contemporain a de lui-même doit beaucoup à la vision poétique du romantisme, dont nous avons souligné le rôle, en nous arrêtant sur la reprise de Novalis dans *L'essence de la manifestation*, dans l'élaboration de la phénoménologie de la vie. « L'intériorité fait partie autant de la sensibilité moderne que de la sensibilité romantique. Et ce qui à l'intérieur est profond : l'intemporel, le mythique et l'archétypique [...] peuvent être transpersonnels, mais nous ne pouvons y avoir accès que par ce qui est personnel. En ce sens, les profondeurs restent intérieures pour nous autant que pour nos prédécesseurs romantiques » (Taylor 1998, 600).

La séparation entre la vie et le monde a un sens méthodique dans la philosophie de Michel Henry (Marion 2009), mais n'en constitue pas le dernier mot. On reproche parfois à celle-ci de *fixer* l'opposition entre la vie et le monde, comme si le monde était absolument séparé de la vie (Hanson 2009, 107). Cependant nous avons montré que la phénoménologie de la vie ne pense pas le monde comme si celui-ci était dépourvu de vie, simple objet posé devant soi. La vie comprise à partir de l'art et de la poésie se situe dans le monde qui nous « impressionne » et que l'artiste sent *en lui-même*. C'est la vie qui est posée comme *principe premier*, non pas l'être-dans-le-monde, et à partir de là une nouvelle compréhension du monde lui-même devient possible. Dans la lumière de l'art et de la poésie, l'homme peut être, penser et créer dans un monde vivant, qui est celui de la vie sensible. Si la science et la technique modernes transforment le monde en objet et le « tuent », il revient à la phénoménologie de montrer que nous ne pouvons-nous sentir vivre sans sentir le monde autour de nous et sans tisser des relations d'ordre éthique avec les autres.

La philosophie de la vie est elle-même issue d'un acte créateur, dans la mesure où la philosophie vient se greffer sur la *pensée* créatrice de l'art et de la poésie. Ce n'est qu'ainsi qu'elle pourra survivre dans un monde dominé par la technologie, dont Michel Henry a saisi le caractère menaçant pour l'essence de l'homme (Henry 2004). L'art n'est plus pensé à partir d'une « expérience esthétique », mais à partir de l'acte créateur immanent à la vie : celui qui contemple l'œuvre partage avec l'artiste une même vie, dont il sent en lui-même le pouvoir caché. Cela nous ramène à « la Nuit de notre subjectivité sans fond », qui est la source de tout art. Cette Nuit est saisie dans la parole du poème et dans la philosophie qui est à l'écoute de cette parole.

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Oedipus and the Dawn of Freud's Oedipus Narrative: His very Selective Approach

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Abstract

The "Oedipus narrative" is one of the most prominent axioms of modernity, put forward by Freud in 1899. The Ancient Greek, mythical figure of Oedipus, king of Thebes, and his unspeakable fate, became a source of inspiration for the articulation of the theory according to which a child develops latent erotic attachment to the parent of the opposite sex and, through conflict with the parent of the same sex, emerges identified, maturer and emancipated. This narrative shifts the focus of attention from mythical Oedipus' original literal but unintended taboo transgressions (patricide and incest) to any child's alleged inner psychological symbolic transgressions of the same taboos, rendering it a pre-requisite element of the human condition. Did Freud read the myth selectively in its first stage? Did he read just the myth or are there other "texts", contexts, notions, understandings that are a part of Freud's interpretation? The article re-visits Freud's introduction to the Oedipal theme in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (pub. 1899). It then re-traces the myth mostly through the path of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* and at times converses with other contexts and disciplines, focusing on Oedipus and the Other, taboo transgression as a metaphor, superiority complex and theological input.

Keywords: Oedipus, Sophocles, Freud, myth, interpretation, the Other, taboo transgression, superiority complex, interior colony, guilt

1. Introduction

Writing about Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus myth of may appear like a megalomaniac endeavour; however, it may spring out from feelings of existential suffocation. Since the establishment of psychoanalysis, the special province of "the field of possible transformations of the wish, of disguised satisfaction" (Van Zyl 1998, 82), we are told how thoughts, feelings, instincts, impulses, urges in our everyday lives, dreams and inner monologues may be perceived and analyzed, while seeking disguised traces of traumas that need to be resolved. We are reminded via media products[1] that we should want to know ourselves, not only in relation to our spatiotemporally synchronous condition, but also in accordance with bygone times as well as hypothetical states, such as wishes or fears. Apart from being required to establish a vigilant awareness of this quantum, personal, social, and political "soup" as well as our movement through it in the present, we are also required to keep track of our past navigations through it, as well as of virtual ones, in possible worlds of dreams, wishes, fears and instinct impulses. This has occurred since the conception of Freud's Oedipus narrative and the articulation of the subsequent Oedipus complex. Fundamental is a primal crime, the first repression that forms the complex lurks, awaiting to cause trouble.

Until Freud, a human life could contain mistakes, crimes, forgiveness, repentance, atonement. Psychoanalysis diagnosed a "normal" pathology present in any human psyche. The figure of Oedipus is emblematic in the psychoanalytical process, despite the fact that Oedipus may have been an unwanted child and a very unlucky man, though perhaps a caring king.

2. A brief outline of Freud's Oedipus narrative (and complex)

Oedipus is a "master narrative" that Freud (1899) introduces for the public eye in Die Traumdeutung (The Interpretation of Dreams)[2] about how sexuality becomes heterosexual and non-incestual (Van Zyl 1998, 93) by repressing "the profound and universal power of the incest-parricide fantasy" (Brown & Sugarman 2002, 250-51).[3] The Ancient Greek mythical figure of Oedipus, king of Thebes, and his unspeakable fate, became a source of inspiration for the articulation of the theory according to which, a child, mostly a boy, develops latent erotic attachment to the parent of the opposite sex, and, through conflict with the parent of the same sex, emerges with their identity, maturer and emancipated.[4] This narrative shifts the focus of attention from mythical Oedipus' original actual but unintended taboo transgressions (patricide and incest) to any child's alleged inner psychological symbolic transgressions of the same taboos, rendering it a pre-requisite element of the human condition. Did Freud actually read the myth efficiently to put forward what later came to be known as the "Oedipus complex"? Did he just "read" Oedipus or are there other "texts", contexts, notions inscribed in Freud's understanding of the myth that are superimposed on Oedipus or are critical elements in the Oedipal Freudian narrative? The current analysis evolves around some sub-themes, including colonialism and the Other, taboo transgression, and the superiority/inferiority complex.

3. Mythological background: the myth of Oedipus and the Sophoclean plot

Drawing upon several sources[5] but mostly upon the Sophoclean tragedy,[6] a thorough mythological account of Oedipus' background, as well as an outline of the plot of Oedipus Rex is provided. It was deemed necessary for the subsequent discussion about Freud's reading of the tragedy, as it proves a much richer data matrix than the one Freud proffered, so the reader, if they wish, can keep track of Laius' past with Chrysippus, for example, or the fact that Delphi oracle features twice – or whatever may attract their attention.

A descendant of the house of Labdacids, Oedipus, is the mythical king of Thebes, son of Laius and Jocasta. His grandfather, Labdakus, died young and young Laius was sent to the Peloponnese. There, Pelops king of Pisa, assigned him to protect his son, young Chrysippus. Laius raped the king's son, who then committed suicide (or was killed by relatives). Laius returned to Thebes, where the former kings had died, married Jocasta and became king. The couple did not have children for a while and Laius sought advice from the Delphic oracle. He was told not to have a child or it would kill him and marry Jocasta. However, one night, Laius was drunk and inhibitions were neglected.

Jocasta gave birth to Oedipus, who, following Laius' orders, was to be exposed on Mount Cithaeron with his feet somehow maimed, pierced or bound. The baby was taken by a shepherd and given to the childless royal couple of Corinth, King Polybus and Queen Merope, and grew up like a prince.

When he became a young man, he heard a rumour he was not truly the son of the Corinthian royals. He sought an answer about his parents from the Delphic oracle, but, instead, received the prediction that he would kill his father and mate with his mother. Oedipus decided not to return to Corinth, still thinking Polybus and Merope were his parents. Instead, he headed to the city of Thebes, on the road to which, at a fork in the road, he quarreled with an older man, accompanied by servants, over the right of way and killed him, while defending himself. The old man was Laius, king of Thebes and father to Oedipus. The latter went to Thebes where he encountered the Sphinx, a chimeric beast feasting on the human flesh on anyone failing to solve her riddle. Her famous question was “what is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening?” Oedipus emblematically answered “ἀνθρωπος”, “man”, triumphing over the Sphinx. The Thebans welcomed him as the saviour of Thebes and he married queen Jocasta, his mother, not knowing he was her son.

Sophocles’ play opens up with a plague tormenting Thebes. Oedipus had sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to ask the advice of the Delphic oracle, which delivered the information that the plague is an outcome of miasmatic pollution, as Laius’ murderer had never been discovered. King Oedipus vows to find the murderer and casts a curse upon him for causing the plague. The blind prophet Tiresias arrives at Thebes somewhat reluctantly, encouraging the king to halt his search. Oedipus accuses him of complicity in Laius' murder and the prophet unveils that the murderer is Oedipus. Oedipus accuses Tiresias and Creon as accomplices in efforts to usurp him, and even mocks Tiresias’ blindness. Tiresias reveals even more details before leaving the place.

Creon denies Oedipus’ accusations while Jocasta arrives and comforts Oedipus, advising him not to take seriously prophecies and omens, confessing that it was foretold to her husband that he would be killed by his child, though in fact bandits killed him at a fork in the road. Prompted by Oedipus to provide more information on the place and Laius’ appearance, Jocasta does so. Oedipus sends for the only surviving witness of the attack to be brought to the palace and confides in Jocasta that, having had doubts about the royal couple of Corinth being his parents, he sought the truth from the oracle. Their mysterious answer was that he would kill his father and mate with his mother. He chose to come to Thebes to avoid returning to Corinth. Oedipus shares his truth with Jocasta, resting assured since several bandits had killed Laius.

In the meantime, a messenger from Corinth delivers the news that Polybus has died. Oedipus is happy that the oracle's prophecy cannot be fulfilled – at least partly. The messenger thinks he should comfort the king more: Merope is not his real mother. He recounts the story of the Theban servant giving a baby from Laius' household he was supposed to dispose of to a shepherd who then gave it to childless Polybus. Oedipus seeks to identify this shepherd who happens to be the unique survivor who had witnessed the murder of Laius. Jocasta begs Oedipus to stop asking questions, the king refuses and the queen runs into the palace. Oedipus inquires of the shepherd and discovers the baby was Laius' son, who Jocasta gave to the shepherd to be disposed of on the mountain. Oedipus is devastated and asks for his sword to kill Jocasta, who had already hanged herself in her bedchamber. Oedipus removes the brooches from her dress and blinds himself with them. He asks to be exiled but Creon argues that the oracle should be consulted first, and, until then Oedipus should stay away from the public eye. Oedipus begs Creon to watch over his daughters, Antigone and Ismene, wishing them to have a better life than him. Creon agrees.

4. Freud's reading of Oedipus myth and Oedipus Rex: what's kept and what's left (out)?

Freudian thought was shaped by the tragedy of Oedipus. Chase (1979) argues that Freud makes a reading of Oedipus. To rethink Freud's concept, it does not suffice to trace the similarities between Oedipus' cognitive unfolding and psychoanalysis, but also to reconsider its primary source, which she claims as being Sophocles' version of the myth (54). An initial examination of how the theme of Oedipus is publicly introduced in the Interpretation of Dreams (2010), originally Die Traumdeutung (1899) is necessary.

A rather arbitrary combination between the terms "hypocritical", "Oedipus" and "dream" produces the coined term "hypocritical Oedipus dream" appearing in the sentences "I have reported elsewhere [1910/, reprinted below, p. 408 n.] a 'hypocritical Oedipus dream,' dreamt by a man, in which the hostile impulses and death-wishes contained in the dream-thoughts were replaced by manifest affection" (Freud 2010, 170), which establishes our first understanding of the use of the term as a curtain of deceit performed by unconscious mechanisms, hiding a guilt burdening truth from the subject's inner sight. Prior to the explanation of what an "Oedipal dream" might mean, the dreamer is deemed an (unintended) "hypocrite" for reversing the dynamics of impulses and disguising them. Of course, it is a mere hypothesis that an organic pre-requisite for a dream should necessarily "employ" replacements.

The main block of information on Oedipus is delivered by Freud (2010) later:

> Oedipus, son of Laïus, King of Thebes, and of Jocasta, was exposed as an infant because an oracle had warned Laïus that the still unborn child would be his father's murderer. The child was rescued, and grew up as a prince in an alien court, until, in doubts as to his origin, he too questioned the oracle and was warned to avoid his home since he was destined to murder his father and take his mother in marriage. On the road leading away from what he believed was his home, he met King Laïus and slew him in a sudden quarrel. He came next to Thebes and solved the riddle set him by the Sphinx who barred his way. Out of gratitude the Thebans made him their king and gave him Jocasta's hand in marriage. He reigned long in peace and honour, and she who, unknown to him, was his mother bore him two sons and two daughters (278-279).

There are a few differences already worth highlighting in terms of the mythological background provided mostly in Sophocles' drama, although other sources may have been used by Freud.

1. Laius' past offense and its outcome, namely his raping of Chrysippus, resulting in the latter's death (either by suicide or killing by relatives), does not attract Freud's attention at all. However, in Ancient Greek thought, this act surely constituted multiple taboo transgressions. Laius offended Pelop's hospitality, and this had severe religious

connotations, as it was an irreversible breach of the hospitality conventions coming under the sovereignty of Xenios Zeus. His act had a homosexual character, and was, of course, a transgression of the pedophilia taboo; it also led or was connected to the child's death. Hence, Freud appears to have neglected a very important point in the mythical background, possibly also dramaturgically connected to Laius', Jocasta's, Oedipus' and the latter's children's bloody fates.

2. A totally strange and incomprehensible element of the myth that Freud dismisses is that after Laius had committed his crime, the Thebans made him their king. A very bizarre coronation, especially as taboo transgressors would surely have led to possible malcontent amongst the people, as obviously underlined in Oedipus Rex.

3. Another element remaining in the dark is that, despite the Gods not blessing Laius and Jocasta with children easily, which resulted in their consulting the Delphic oracle, the couple had sexual relationships, presumably following the contraceptive method of coitus interruptus, to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. This whole frame explains how Oedipus is an unwanted baby, hence he is exposed after his birth. Laius had to choose between accepting the fate to die, killed by his son, or his family line stopping having a male successor to the throne of Thebes. A lost challenge for the reconsideration of patriarchal royal descent has not been highlighted by Freud; on the contrary, he reproduced Laius' patriarchy by imposing a male prototype of the Oedipus narrative onto females too.

4. Freud makes no mention of Oedipus marks on his famous feet or ankles, competing only with Achilles' heel. His feet were somehow maimed or marked. Such an important element that exists as a token of Oedipus' fate and verifies that he is Laius' dreaded son, remains irrelevant to the Freudian discourse, at least in the part of his text where we are introduced to Oedipus.

5. A puzzling Delphic prophecy does not stop Oedipus from killing nor wedding. Although the mythical hero had received such a descriptive answer, he did not refrain from killing the older man at Daulis, Laius, nor marrying Jocasta. Freud surprisingly omits any reference to this. It could have

been a major element in his narrative, as it betrays the power of the instincts he so much supported.

6. Interestingly, the riddle of the Sphinx is not mentioned by Freud, a rather unexpected omission, bearing in mind he was struggling with dream riddles at that time. Although Freud capitalises on the openness, vagueness and virtuality of the riddle to use it as a source for his analogy and discussion about dreams, at this point, neither Sphinx's question nor Oedipus' answer are provided to the reader.

7. The way Freud (2010) refers to Laius' killing betrays that he subconsciously thought Oedipus sensed somehow that the man he killed was Laius, his father: "On the road leading away from what he believed was his home, he met King Laïus and slew him in a sudden quarrel" (278-79). Is this slippage an indicator of the writer's strong identification with Oedipus or a big indication for an extremely biased reading?

8. Furthermore, Freud does not highlight, against all the odds, that Jocasta did not pay attention to Oedipus "feet" issue. How often had she met such feet or ankles? This could have been taken advantage of in Freud's reading, it could have enforced the reciprocity of the oedipal gesture from the side of the mother – but, thankfully, was not taken into consideration.

9. Laius' murder is never empirically established in Sophocles' drama, Oedipus just affirms he is guilty of killing Laius. What finally convinces Oedipus of his guilt is the Herdsman's implication that he, Oedipus ("Swellfoot"), is the child exposed with pierced ankles by Jocasta and Laius in response to the oracle's prediction (Chase 1978, 59). Despite Freud reproducing Oedipus' textual act via psychoanalysis, he never doubts Oedipus' parrincest, whereas Sophocles allows the spectator to decide the grade of certainty for Oedipus' taboo transgressions.

Then, Freud (2010) proceeds in unfolding the Sophoclean plot:

> Then at last a plague broke out and the Thebans made enquiry once more of the oracle. It is at this point that Sophocles' tragedy opens. The messengers bring back the reply that the plague will cease when the murderer of Laïus has been driven from the land.
>
> But he, where is he? Where shall now be read

> The fading record of this ancient guilt?
>
> The action of the play consists in nothing other than the process of revealing, with cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement—a process that can be likened to the work of a psycho-analysis—that Oedipus himself is the murderer of Laïus, but further that he is the son of the murdered man and of Jocasta. Appalled at the abomination which he has unwittingly perpetrated, Oedipus blinds himself and forsakes his home. The oracle has been fulfilled (279).

It is just unbelievable how Freud simplifies a tragedy and a plot worth gold in Philosophy, Classics and Theatre Studies, with tons of ink having been shed about it. In fact, although Freud claims he also be visiting Oedipus Rex(“What I have in mind is the legend of King Oedipus and Sophocles’ drama which bears his name”, 278), he does not dedicate many lines in his book on the Sophoclean tragedy. A few more mentions of Oedipus do occur in the Interpretation of Dreams; however, these belong to the sphere of interpretation, as they are injected into his discussion and used to support arguments, rather than standing out as denoted plot elements. Such an example can be found a couple of pages later:

> King Oedipus, who slew his father Laïus and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfillment of our own childhood wishes. But, more fortunate than he, we have meanwhile succeeded, in so far as we have not become psychoneurotics, in detaching our sexual impulses from our mothers and in forgetting our jealousy of our fathers. Here is one in whom these primaeval wishes of our childhood have been fulfilled, and we shrink back from him with the whole force of the repression by which those wishes have since that time been held down within us. While the poet, as he unravels the past, brings to light the guilt of Oedipus, he is at the same time compelling us to recognise our own inner minds, in which those same impulses, though suppressed, are still to be found. The contrast with which the closing Chorus leaves us confronted—
>
> ...Fix on Oedipus your eyes,
>
> Who resolved the dark enigma, noblest champion and most wise.
>
> Like a star his envied fortune mounted beaming far and wide:
>
> Now he sinks in seas of anguish, whelmed beneath a raging tide... (280).

Another example follows:

> At a point when Oedipus, though he is not yet enlightened, has begun to feel troubled by his recollection of the oracle, Jocasta consoles him by referring to a dream which many people dream, though, as she thinks, it has no meaning:
>
> Many a man ere now in dreams hath lain
>
> With her who bare him. He hath least annoy
>
> Who with such omens troubleth not his mind.1. (281).

The focus is solely on the "dreamy" aspect, not Jocasta's languor with regards to such a neglect. The information is provided to suggest that:

> Today, just as then, many men dream of having sexual relations with their mothers, and speak of the fact with indignation and astonishment. It is clearly the key to the tragedy and the complement to the dream of the dreamer's father being dead. The story of Oedipus is the reaction of the imagination to these two typical dreams. And just as these dreams, when dreamt by adults, are accompanied by feelings of repulsion, so too the legend must include horror and self-punishment (281).

The sphere of information provision has been abandoned and the sphere of connotation and rhetoric circumscribe Jocasta's attempt to comfort. From now on, information on the drama and Freud's interpretation of it become fabricated together.

Other sporadic mentions of Oedipus appear later with the term "Oedipus legend" or "the story of Oedipus" (281) or "Oedipus dream" (408-9), with the Oedipus narrative having been presented. This scrutinizing of the Freudian reading of the plot of the myth of Oedipus and of Oedipus Rex reveals that Freud, in his initial attempts at weaving the Oedipus narrative for the public eye, uses the plots of the myth and of the tragedy as sources of an analogy to reinforce a construct, rather than is rationally, solidly and strongly based upon them.

5. Tracing other influences in Freud's early conception of his Oedipus

Freud falls in the trap of phrasing a hypothesis as an axiom: that in our childhoods, we all develop erotic/antagonistic feelings towards our parents and most of us, "the normal", succeed in withdrawing our sexual impulses, repressing our wishes. This is based in the literalisation of a metaphor "we are all Oedipus", a convention not so evident throughout his Interpretation of Dreams. This convention passes as an objective "diagnosis" based on specific cases rather than a subjective literary, philosophical contemplation. Does Freud here export his doctor status and pose it upon our thirsty need to produce a narrative of the self? A self conceived in relation to what or whom? Furthermore, how did he reach such an arbitrary generalization, are there any other synchronic or diachronic influences he draws upon? His certainty echoes other texts or contexts interwoven alongside Sophocles' Oedipus in his first Oedipal suggestions.

5.1. The Empire and the interior colony: the Other, taboo transgression and the superiority/inferiority complex

Psychoanalysis was, and still is, although more dissipated, a privilege of the modern West for the construction of "individual Western selves" and for the exploration of "the private sphere of the bourgeois family and its individuals", pervading the public sphere of politics and the state in bourgeois society (Nonini 1992, 25). A by-product of modernity, psychoanalytic theory occurs within a larger cultural context of colonial expansion and imperial crisis (Fuss 1994, 20).

Freudian thought, at least as it emerges in the dawn of the establishment of the Oedipus narrative in Interpretation of Dreams, is not free of colonial and imperialist connotations[7]. Starting from the literal dimension of the relation of Freud to the Empire, it is worth noting that Freud appears to be a devoted royalist of the Austro-Hungarian Empire:

> he was no maverick when it came to being a Habsburg subject. The Imperial charisma touched him as it did others. Freud himself transmitted to his children this fascination with the Crown. His son Martin recalled fond stories his father told about the Emperor. And: 'We Freud children were all stout royalists.' (Nonini 1992, 28)

Freud is said to have neglected "the actual history of relations of power prevailing within primitive groups and non European agrarian civilizations, and of the politics of European empires vis-a-vis these societies". (Nonini 1992, 28) The usual imperialist and colonial borders between European civilizations and "savage" peoples manifest in his oeuvre with assumptions about the "nature" of primitive peoples as opposed to the complexities of Freud's society quotidian life. The discussion of the correlation between the primal articulation of the Freudian Oedipus narrative and the notion of colony is structured around three main axes: i) Oedipus and the Other, seen through the lens of psychoanalysis and post-colonial criticism ii) Taboo transgression and iii) superiority/inferiority complex.

5.1.1. Oedipus and the Other

It appears that post-colonial criticism has captured that Oedipus is a myth of latent pervasiveness, leaking from the domain of the drama to the domains of the individual, social and political spheres. The post-colonial Other, namely "West's representation of its Other" or the "West's misrepresentations of its Other", overlaps with the psychoanalytic Other, which comes along with other Others, as met in Hegel, Sartre, Nietzsche, Bakhtin and Adorno (Van Zyl 1998, 79-80). The paradoxical figures and qualities which haunt colonial texts, such as the puritan or eroticism mixed with repulsion are characteristically psychoanalytic (Van Zyl 1998, 82). Freud's Oedipus, in fact, appears to be an answer behind the colonial preoccupation with bodily difference and the complex play of desiring and phobic relations (Van Zyl 1998, 97).

At the core of this conceptual overlapping lies the imposing of the Freudian phantasmagoric Primal Scene, imposed axiomatically upon the non-civilized Other, reducing primitive life into a pre-repression era (Nonini 1992, 30). Is the Oedipal Other understood as a universal entity or as anchored in social – cultural processes? The tracing of the basis of the Oedipus' universality discourse is said to touch upon, among others, post-colonial criticism. Is there, for example, such a notion as an "African Oedipus" (Fortes 2018, Bertoldi 1998)? Or is it a "European Phantasy" (Hitchcott 1993, 62)?

An interesting point that post-colonial criticism could take into account is that while Oedipus thought he was conquering Thebes, and symbolically Jocasta, he was its king and her kin anyway. What is more, Oedipus was a descendant of Cadmus, a Phoenician who gave Boeotian Thebes the same name as the city in Egypt; his fatal encounter with the bestial Sphinx, a symbol already met in Egyptian culture, affirms the "Egyptian connection".

Freud's latent position on the universality of the Oedipus narrative and, later, complex, with Lacan also adhering to such an understanding, caused Fanon to put such a certainty under question, politically challenging psychoanalysis and western ethnologists, who are claimed to find their own psychosexual pathologies duplicated in their objects of study (Fanon 1986, 152).

"White" operates as its own Other, freed from any dependency upon the sign "Black" for its symbolic constitution. In contrast, "Black" functions, within a racist discourse, always diacritically, as the negative term in a Hegelian dialectic continuously incorporated and negated. Fanon articulates the process precisely: "The Negro is comparison" (Fuss 1994, 22).

Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus* (1970) highlight oedipality as an inevitable internal form of colonization, contributing in a deconstruction of its imperial politics: "Oedipus is always colonization pursued by other means, it is the interior colony, and ... even here at home, where we Europeans are concerned, it is our intimate colonial relation" (Deleuze and Guattari 1970, 186).

Bertoldi, on the other hand, attempted, more recently, to develop a critique on the implications of such post-colonial positions, which are, alarmingly, according to him, keyed around "difference":

> Thus post-colonial criticism's suggestions that Oedipus does not exist fail to take into account the implications of this non-existence of Oedipus in Africa—in effect the supposition (at least in Freudian terms) that Africans are not enculturated and have no super-ego... (Bertoldi 1998, 107).

Mitchell (1975) emphasizes the synchronic dimension of the articulation of the Freudian Oedipus narrative:

> Anthropological arguments that make the Oedipus complex general without demarcating its specificity are inadequate; political suggestions that it is only to be found in capitalist societies are incorrect. What Freud was deciphering was our human heritage—but he deciphered it in a particular time and place (409).

Freud attributed the status of a universal law to the Oedipus narrative/complex by which we are all said to find a way of acquiring our place in the world – however, this universal law finds specific expression in the capitalist family, a specificity which bears obvious or latent connotations, depending on the point of entry in the discussion.

Fuss (1994) rightly underlines that, in Freud, identification, in its psychoanalytic dimension:

> ...is itself an imperial process, a form of violent appropriation in which the Other is deposed and assimilated into the lordly domain of Self. Through a psychical process of colonization, the imperial subject builds an Empire of the Same and installs at its center a tyrannical dictator, "His Majesty the Ego." (23).

Hence, not only is the colonial-imperial register of self-other relations present as an ideological and sociopolitical influence on Freud's Oedipus; not only can this narrative be enlightened by taking into account post-colonial criticism, focusing on colonialism, imperialism and the Other; the very function psychoanalysis introduces has an imperialist character, as "the formulation of identification can be seen to locate at the very level of the unconscious the imperialist act of assimilation that drives Europe's voracious colonialist appetite" (Fuss 1994, 23).

5.1.2. Transgression: land/taboo connotations and the unconscious

The original Polynesian term "tabu" or "tapu" has come to bear even in the enlightened West specific religious connotations Freud (1913) highlights in his book Totem und Tabu (The full title of reads "Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics", 1919, confirming the criticism about colonialist, imperialist and racist ideology that pervades Freud's oeuvre). Taboos, overlapping with social norms, are behavioral guidelines that a culture or a society employs to guide the behaviour and the thoughts of their members, suggesting agreed upon expectations, restrictions and rules (Fershtman, Gneezy, Hoffman 2011, 139-140). However, taboos are sometimes referred to as doing the "unthinkable": "a taboo is a form of "thought police" that governs not just human behavior, but also its thoughts", penalizing for merely considering a deviation, as opposed to social norms, which impose sanctions for realized behaviours. A taboo as a cognitive mechanism allows perpetual negotiation between the private and the public (Fershtman, Gneezy, Hoffman 2011, 141-2).

The notion of "transgression", especially in its stochastic dimension, renders possible simultaneously a discussion about body, taboo, and territory. Originally from a Proto-Indo-European root, the word came to signify in Latin "step across, step over; climb over, pass, go beyond," and in 15c., from middle French, "to sin" (Online etymology dictionary 2022). It somehow correlates "sin" with the prohibited act of trespassing on someone else's property or a forbidden territory, hence a latent spatial quality may be diagnosed. Private or protected areas are often transgressed (for example, Ponta et al. 2021); taboos are also transgressed; bodies are transgressed when violated or objectified. This spatial dimension of the taboo and the prohibiting dimension of the territory complement one another. Civility in the Western world is constructed around the notion of property:

> Transgression and civility are, by default, co-dependent: the contours of each being defined in relation to the other. To breach the limits of the acceptable is to simultaneously define them, and as those limits expand to encompass that which once contravened them, so are the limits of transgression temporarily affirmed (Foley et al. 2012, xi-xii).

Freudian thought exploits enormously this analogy between body and territory, through the notion of taboo transgression. First of all, the ego appears to have the quality of an interface, with the true psychic self thought to be buried in the unconscious and become randomly accessible by the ego in a distorted form, with dreams being the most emblematic example of such eruptions. Lacan, a few decades later, recognizes the id, the Other that Freud identifies with the instinct, as a "'locus or site where the 'treasure of the signifier' is to be found and in which the Speaking subject is constituted" (Van Zyl 1998, p. 85) (emphasis to highlight the spatiality of the Other in Lacan as well). The id becomes, hence, understandable through the metaphor of the unexplored territory, a bit like a mythical land emerging from a mist, an Atlantis within the analysand: the body of the analysand becomes the container of a land; hence, the analysand becomes an unclassifiable Other, a hybrid, transitional organic/inorganic entity. The discovery of the id, which refers to "bodily" concepts (instincts and needs, for example), rephrases the Cartesian mind/body split as it is based on the process of objectification within the analysand and in between analyst and analysand. Within the analysand, the mind becomes a medium, a transitional entity that reads distorted stimuli and interprets them into meaning. This is a manipulated process by the analyst, in which the analysand becomes a body producing meaning, while the former retains the role of the intelligent mind that, even through silences, dictates the collaborative articulation of some compulsive narrative, the absence of which can be problematic. By identifying a new, unexplored, shape shifting, inexhaustible, virtual territory with the id, Freud attributed to the id the same spatial qualities, in parallel giving birth to the desire and fear of taboo transgression. By having the id hosting a primal repression, this space acquired wild, savage characteristics: the analyst, as a transgressor, an imperialist, a colonialist, violates the analysand to elucidate a misty landscape, this mystic jungle, inhabited by the Other. Freud reenacts colonialism by demarcating the id as an unmapped territory, also drawing his "scene"[8] from different cultures of the Others, and becomes a high priest capable of initiating rites of passage, establishing totems and diagnosing transgressions of taboo as having already taken place – in other words, by the encouragement to consider the unthinkable, a session of taboo transgression is performed. At a moment when imperialism was playing its last fin-de-siecle cards, the colonies had to be discovered within.

5.1.3. Oedipal roots of the superiority/inferiority complex

Freud uses Oedipus' drama to construct his version of the apparatus of psychic and sexual development in human existence. The socializing developmental process is interpreted as a substitution process in which alleged familial sexual entities are replaced by canonical, culturally appropriate non-familial choices. This process of substitution is said to spring out from an inferiority feeling towards the father, that leads to a competition with him and eventually to identification, accomplishment and success.

Freud, drawing upon Oedipus, negotiates superiority/inferiority complex on two levels. On one hand, he obviously identifies the young child as striving for superiority, a disguised thirst for the mother's erotic response, when competing with the father and killing him, with Oedipus' acts of killing Laius and mating with Jocasta. Freud (1919) supported the view that the violator of taboos becomes taboo himself. Thus, Oedipus in the myth becomes a taboo himself, as he transgresses the taboo of incest and patricide. Uranus was a violator, Chronus was another - the Olympians were the victims of infanticide attempts and they rephrased the incest taboo as sibling mating; Oedipus dies at Colonus a blind, peripatetic taboo. By guiding the analysand through the identification trip with Oedipus, Freud makes the patient a winner in the competition of sexual entities substitution. On the other hand, although, arbitrarily, presupposing a movement of erotic love from the side of the patient toward the analyst, which when disrupted brings forth the cure of the neurosis, the system of psychoanalysis lies on an agon, a struggle between analyst and patient or Freud and reader (Nonini 1992, 30). Bloom outlines how Freud identified totem with the psychoanalyst and taboo with analytical transference, rephrasing a superiority/inferiority complex (Nonini 1992, 25).

The success of these two agonistic sessions, one leaking from the domain of the fiction and the other springing out from the psychoanalysis system function, leaves the analysand with an air of inner superiority, bold, cured, ameliorated – a living taboo, a winner at a personal level as well as at a class level: the analysand constructs a sense of primitive historicity, a lineage likened to aristocracy, they ascend class, entering the realm of the myth of gods, queens and kings. The house of Labdacids was of divine descent, with Cadmus and Pentheus in the list, bearing the responsibility for introducing the cult of Dionysos, which played a crucial part in Greek mythology. Oedipus derives from that family line; he is not exactly "anyone". Those not having been analysed were the losers, "savages" of the winners' empire, fantasized as existing prior to repression, the Primal Scene and civilization. Ferenczi highlights that the relationship between the psychoanalyst and his patient presupposes an economic contract, accessible only to middle classes and up (Nonini 1992, 30).

Female analysandes of the European bourgeoisie had to (and still have to) even fit in the costume of a narrative/complex tailored for males, which introduces a canon for the occurrence of a feeling of inferiority, topped up by the hostile binary projection of "penis envy". Fortunately for females, the Oedipal threat of castration works only in male Oedipus, and the fetishized, stereotypic responses to the Other characterize mostly men (Van Zyl 1998, 92). Also, the compulsive pre-requisite of heterosexuality pervades the Freudian Oedipus as it is based on attraction towards the parent of the opposite sex. It is suggested that the substitution of first sexual entities (mothers, fathers, siblings) "normally" occurs with culturally appropriate substitutes of the same sex as the former. An underlying binary logic deluges the stabilization of sexual orientation, the substitution achievement and the acquisition of a gender identity (Van Zyl 1998, 95).

5.2. Behind Freud's Oedipus: diagnosing theological input

As the alleged source of the "Oedipal dream" conventionally pervades all human life, paralyzing rational counterarguments and leading to the succumbing of the literal to the metaphorical, it could be argued that perhaps its appeal and power are not drawn solely upon scientific sources.

Building upon Ricoeur, who claims that mythic figures "generalize human experience on the level of a universal concept or paradigm in which we can read our condition and destiny" (Ricoeur 1970, 38-39), Humbert (1993) holds that behind Oedipus stands Adam, with the narrative of the original sin not being "purely a work of the imagination, but the distorted remnant of an historical event, the primal killing of the father" (293). Freud is said to have reconstructed the primal historical scene, demythologizing the original sin, "only to replace it with his own semi-mythic historical construction"

(292).The "Oedipus complex" is thus interpreted as "the myth of human fallenness", "a displacement and surreptitious return of primordial sin... Adam returns, but without the opportunity of salvation which once was the prospect opened up by his fall" (296). Humbert, furthermore, traces that the Oedipal responsibility is not of an ethical quality, but of a dramaturgical one:

> Only after the event is a measure of self-conscious freedom and responsibility acquired, when conscience, morality and religion take shape in the wake of the primal event...when Freud uses the word 'guilt' then, it is clear that he means tragic rather than ethical guilt...In the Sophoclean myth, Oedipus is brought to his doom, not by his wicked instincts, but by the combination of chance and his own impetuous desire for knowledge. The essence of his tragedy is that he suffers a tragic guilt decreed by fate and not by his own will. Freud's teaching, however, is that Oedipus did will his own fate. He did harbour the intention to kill his father and sleep with his mother, only he was not aware of it. Every infant, at least in fantasy, is guilty of the same crime, tainted as he is by inherited sin (295).

Freud expels the doctrine of childhood innocence, condemning infants as guilty before they are even capable of meaningful praxis[9]. On the contrary, the mythology of Ancient Greeks, especially in terms of the gods, contains ample examples of "mother-son incest" (Uranus was also Gaia's son and Aphrodite a surrogate mother to Adonis), "infanticide" attempts (Chronus ate his children, Hephaestus was thrown down from Olympus by Hera) or doings (Niobe lost fourteen children all at once), even castration (Uranus' castration by Chronus). In this universe, for example, Uranus' castration is not understood nor experienced as a primal sin but rather as a plot evolvement - how else could in a good narrative an immortal god "grow up" and hand over the throne if not usurped, an occurrence that gave birth to the goddess of harmony, beauty and love. Oedipus' fate, a series of facts and occurrences, fatal coincidences, resulted in his total transformation into a semi-god, echoed in his mysterious "death" at Colonus and the fact that his relics would protect the city of Athens.

Freud's thesis that circumcision is a symbolic substitute for castration as a result of the Oedipus conflict was tested. The results unveil that circumcision is likely connected to either proximity and bodily contact between son and mother during sleep in the nursing period (which may vary in cultures) or to the father's superiority over the son as a competing male, especially when the father sleeps in a different place. One thing that Freud seems to have grasped is the conceptual connection between his Oedipal trip and dreams, belonging of course to the realm of sleep (Kitahara 1976, 535).

Hence, not only did Freud selectively read Oedipus Rex, but he imposed upon it a layer of guilt. Was Freud's unresolved Oedipal issue repressed aggression about circumcision, which he disguised and projected as "castration complex" for females, said to be leading to "penis envy"? In fact, the Oedipus narrative could be read, in a "reverse engineering" rationale, as based on the anger and frustration a male child feels when he realizes his symbolic castration by his expel by the mother, as she is involved with the father, possibly accompanied by sexual control by the father, sometimes literally performed.

6. Discussion

Hopefully, Freud's focal selectiveness when reading Oedipus Rex in his Interpretation of Dreams and putting forward his Oedipal narrative is now clearer, as well as other parameters influencing its shaping, such as the interiorized colony and sin connotations.

Post-colonial discourse on Oedipus' universality tends to attach it to the Freudian Oedipus complex. Indeed, Freud's reading of Oedipus in his Oedipus narrative shifted our focus so much from whatever it was we would want to focus on, so that it is almost impossible to read or watch without the Freudian concept crossing at all our minds. On the other hand, it cannot be neglected that the multi- inter- and trans-disciplinary interest in Oedipus indicates that there is something in it that triggers a massive appeal. However, it does not necessarily have to do with the Oedipus complex. Can what is at stake in the universality of Oedipus be identified as an ethical stance towards choice and politics (Bertoldi 1998, 124)? Possibly, but such an assumption just rolls the issue of universality over to another plane, that of politics, our rules, social relationships.

Is there a universal dimension in a philosophical and political approach to an ethical stance relevant to the Oedipus complex? Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949) recognized the prohibition against incest as a universal law and this as a minimal condition differentiating "culture" from "nature". The relevant literature seems to support the view that incest avoidance is widespread among vertebrata and "built into the wiring", while incest avoidance in humans, elaborated into a cultural taboo, serves to motivate exploration of and attachment to a wider social nexus than the family, by preventing fixation at a relatively undifferentiated psychological stage of development, as:

> Only by participating in progressively wider networks of relationships does the individual form a distinct and differentiated concept of self. Thus the incest taboo functions importantly in boundary maintenance and identity formation, without which a cultural mode of life is not possible (Parker 1976, 299).

Taboo, as "thought police", indicates a subtle, constant negotiation of the possibility of transgression, leading to private and/or public profit, which is as old as choice and politics can get. Refraining from transgressing a taboo makes people acknowledging their restrictions on freedom. This allows a certain agency and acceptable freedom in the public sphere as well as respect for the private spheres of others. There is a latent virtuality in the process of negotiation of a taboo transgression that the aftermath of such a transgression cannot any longer host. A movement from the level of thinking to the level of doing, felt like a "fall". Democracy is based on a process of negotiation; tyranny, on the other hand, sometimes on bold transgressions.

Oedipus is, simultaneously, a dramatis persona and a deity-protector of Athens. The 430 B.C. plague serves as a literal frame upon which the Theban fictional plague is superimposed. The children's plea addresses the audience at a literal and a fictional level. The suppliants in white at the opening of Sophocles' tragedy could be begging Oedipus for a solution to their problems. The virtual future citizens of Athens, became, with their parental blessings, ερώμενοι. In Oedipus' times, before 10th century BC, pederasty may have constituted a taboo transgression, something that could have cost Laius his life and caused Oedipus' fate. Symbolically, the young of classical Athens could beg to stop being courted by adult εραστές, something their fathers, as other Laiuses, seem to have decided upon, may be not piercing and tying up their feet, but making them part of a social apparatus for war. They claim virtuality over realization, the virtuality of democracy. They want a future and peace. They beg for a retrograde orbit that would undo the upcoming eradication of a polity they already saw, as angeli novi, the most inspiring political moment of human history – not necessarily the most just or the less problematic, but the most inspiring, politically speaking, virtual one. An orbit that would allow a contemplation of political, social and personal violations occurring in their present.

To conclude, the Freudian reading of Oedipus is very selective, omitting critical elements. Most crucial is that Laius' had multiply transgressed a taboo prior to becoming a father and secondly that Oedipus was an unwanted child. One could almost claim that the whole story could be decrypted as a bad trip inspired by a transitional phase in the history of birth control, where the aborted child, with heavy feet like Erinyes', sheds family blood in revenge and symbolically re-enters the womb to be born anew, or, as a fantasy about a young man springing out from some coitus interruptus, without nurturing strings attached, then taking revenge on his parents for his rejection.

Freudian injustice to the story probably gave rise to the need for an articulation of a "counter-oedipal", "Laius complex" (Devereux 1953) of repressed infanticide urges and wishes. Laplanche explains, "the slightest parental gesture bear[s] the parents' fantasies ... the parents themselves had their own parents; they have their 'complexes,' wishes marked by historicity" (Laplanche 1976, 45). Oedipus killed his father while defending himself; he mated his mother without knowing. How was Freud not tempted to ask the question: did not Laius and Jocasta recognize their son Oedipus, whose feet were so legendary? This showcases how biased his reading was. A Laius complex approach re-virtualises Oedipus narrative, and as such, would be worth exploring more widely. Freud's point of view in the story coincides with Oedipus at the moment of the full realisation of his taboo transgression. While Freud read erotic attraction towards the mother and a patricide wish in all of us, he forgot to include in his reading all that the parents throw in the faces of the children, literally and symbolically, on an individual and a political level. He forgot to include in his schema that, if we are all Oedipus, we are merely reacting to our parents' projections, fears, wishes and choices made in our names.

The process of realization of a virtuality requires an occurrence on the symbolic as well as the literal plane. By challenging the analysand's "articulating in language" through the elusive dream world, an emergence of forced realizations takes place; the analyst traps the analysand in a "normative" situation. By making us study inner symbolic transgressions of taboos, Freud created a virtual place, a spatiality and turned our "unconscious" into a land, awaiting a visit. A promising, never ending, shape shifting land where he is king and we are his placeholders. By having the analysands symbolically transgressing taboos in real time, even if they never had before, during analysis, Freud installed a guilt that initiated a need for therapy. By using Oedipus, he invented a narrative that makes us all transgressors, and then taboos, agents metabolizing the self, interested a priori in our private profit.

NOTES

[1] For an understanding of the term "media product", see Elleström (2021) and Bruhn & Schirrmacher (2022, 4).

[2] Freud appears to have conceived the Oedipus complex already in 1897 (Letters 64 to 71 in Freud 2010, 18). However, he introduced the Oedipus theme in *Die Traumdeutung* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*) in 1899. The edition (2010) followed in the article was first published in 1955, translated from German and edited by James Strachey. See Freud (2010).

[3] Brown and Sugarman (2002) provide an efficient historical account of the Oedipus complex.

[4] The narrative of the child's loving and aggressive feelings towards its parents has as its essential starting point the view that the child of either sex develops a strong attachment to the mother and subsequently to the father coupled with the (at the time) novel assumption that these attachments are in

essence no different in character from those usually described as sexual (Van Zyl 1998, 94).

[5] Sources used include Appollodorus 1921; Diodorus Siculus 1933; Ευριπίδης 1938 pub.; Hyginus 1960; Kerenyi and Hillman 1991; Όμηρος, 1976 pub.; Σοφοκλής. 1942 (pub.); and Sophocles and Lloyd-Jones 1994.

[6] Σοφοκλής. 1942 (pub.); and Sophocles and Lloyd-Jones 1994.

[7] The term "colonialism" refers almost exclusively to historical processes involving western Europeans in disparate areas such as North America, South Africa, and New Zealand, as opposed to the term "imperialism", which signifies the conquering of neighbouring peoples and states, added as territories to imperial domains (Adas 1998).

[8] For a "scenographic" reading of trauma with relation to Oedipus, see Fletcher 2013, 123-152.

[9] This notion is not embraced by the Christian Greek Orthodox religion.

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Scenes of Mourning: Theater Between Life and Death

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Abstract

This paper aims to articulate Judith Butler's thought on the "powers of grief" to some debates on the functions of theater in the political field. This articulation involves revisiting a whole section of the contemporary scene that has confronted the political institution of loss and analyzing from a Butlerian perspective the politics of theatrical representation called by the mechanisms of exclusion of certain lives outside the field of the human. But this articulation implies above all to question the theater that Butler's reflections on the vulnerability and the springs of the ascent to extreme violence presuppose. From this point of view, the question of the powers of mourning is very closely linked to that of tragedy and the complex relationship it has with the norms by which the political community codifies narratives that deliver the dead to memory and oblivion. The first tragedy to have come down to us, *The Persians* is an exemplary manifestation of this complexity by the unstable division it provides between the victors and the vanquished and the impossible identifications it implements. It is therefore to Aeschylus' play that we propose to return, opening the historical context of its creation to that of contemporary staging – those of Jean Prat in 1961 and Peter Sellars in 1993 – which accentuate its paradoxes.

Keywords: theater, political field, mourning, vulnerability, violence, tragedy, representation, Judith Butler

> "Many people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it furnishes a sense of political community of a complex order, and it does this first of all by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility." Judith Butler (2004, 22)

We would like to examine the potential contribution of Judith Butler's thought on the "powers of mourning" to some contemporary debates on how the theater functions in the political sphere. We are thinking in particular of the work she has done since the early 2000s with *Precarious Life* and in a series of interventions collected in 2008 in *Ce qui fait une vie*. It is true that the most direct focus of these texts does not relate to the question of theater. Yet this discretion is no less an invitation to imagine the motives for creating this dialogue.

The first motive stems from the observation that the contemporary stage itself has faced the question of the *political institution of loss*. By this we mean the normative arrangements—the institutional and discursive arrangements—that choose and hierarchize the dead and which, therefore, include them unequally in a public space of recognition and in a possible sphere of experience: what deaths are counted as deaths, in other words as lives that have been destroyed? What deaths are experienced as deaths, in other words as lost lives that cause us grief? We would wager that theatrical representation has redefined some of its tasks here, at the intersection of two nodal dimensions of contemporary political spaces. One relates to changes in the politics of memory, or to the ways in which hegemonic narratives of identity have been contested by counter-memories, the counter-histories of workers, colonized peoples, women, immigrants... The other relates to the biopolitical consciousness of our time, or rather to its "necropolitical" opposite: the one that is concerned with political technologies that cannot include the life of the species without also including death, to the point of placing the differentiation of life and death *under political conditions*. Presenting wandering ghosts to our eyes and ears, bringing the departed on stage, accounting for the uncounted dead, giving a place to the non-place of the lost who are denied: you may recognize here some of the rich motifs of contemporary theatrical creation, even without the same dramaturgical and political objectives: theater of memory or theater-*momentum*; theater of reparations; theater of struggle against the denials of official historiographers and the montages of media representations; documentary theater against falsifications and archival repression…

The second motive of the dialogue we are trying to establish takes the form of a hypothesis. Starting from Butler's analyses of the powers of mourning, we will consider how to rethink not only the politics of theatrical representation called on by the mechanisms that exclude some lives outside the sphere of humanity. We will also examine the theater *presupposed* by Butler's questions on the entanglement of denial of loss with the motivations to escalation to extreme violence. This questioning may in fact be based on a historical a priori that was first developed with the "birth of tragedy," or to say it alongside Nicole Loraux, with the theatrical birth of tragic thought. Because that is where we would see for the first time an anthropology of vulnerability be combined with a conception of theater as a place of ethical experience irreducible to the frameworks of collective identity.[1] If we were to summarize the patient analyses of Loraux into the hastier form of a thesis, we could say that tragic theater literally invented anthropological discourse as such, under the figure of a common condition, a common exposure to twists of fate, loss, and death. From this point of view, the question of the powers of mourning comes to occupy the space of tragic anthropology, and the disparity that it introduces with the norms through which the political community appropriates, so to speak, "its" dead, and codifies the narrations that deliver them to memory and forgetting.

Yet we must also say on the contrary that Butler's thought cannot occupy this space without producing a paradoxical effect of deconstruction, or at least without blocking the humanist interpretation that makes the human condition a horizon of experience simply transcending borders and antagonisms. The problem remains how to think about the way politics is *always already* at play in the anthropological difference of life and death, and in the work of mourning that repeats this differentiation. Should we always distinguish tragedies, one "antique" and the other "modern"? One, inventing a figure of humanity overflowing the normative contours of political existence, the other inventing modes of exclusion of the political space that lead to foreclosures of the field of humanity as such? One, disconnecting anthropology and politics and the other, fusing them to the extreme? Finally, one, finding in mythology the material of expression of "antipolitical" excess, and the other giving the *fatum* through which death comes into its secular faces, those of nations and peoples? It would be tempting. However, it would then be necessary to admit that the first Greek tragedy, at least the oldest that has reached us, is the first "modern" tragedy. Letting Antigone rest from the many philosophical solicitations which she has already endured,[2] we will turn to *The Persians* by Aeschylus.

1. Patriotic Distribution of Signs and Affects

Here we are in—472: staged eight years after the battle of Salamis, Aeschylus' *The Persians* presents all of traits of a self-celebration of Athens, through the intermediary of a hyperbolic representation of the defeat of the great Persian power. "Painful to us but to our enemies joy" (Aeschylus 1981, 56, v. 1034): placed in the mouth of Xerxes at the heart of the *kommos* that concludes the tragedy, this formula expresses the inversion of signs and affects as distributed by the play, which operates their very violent separation between Greek glory and barbarian failure, between the song of triumph and the song of mourning, between audience and stage.

This play, which is edifying in every way, has been conjectured to have drawn on the misadventures of Phrynikos when he had staged *The Fall of Miletus* soon after it was pillaged by the Persians in—494. As Herodotus reported, "the whole theater fell to weeping" before the spectacle of their Ionian brothers being routed, such that the Athenians "fined [the playwright] a thousand drachmas for bringing to mind a calamity that affected them so personally" and "forbade the performance of that play forever." (Herodotus 2018, VI, 21) This account expresses both the interdiction of this play that was in fact lost and the interdiction of the memory of the suffering it evoked. As such, it constitutes an indication of the politics of memory and forgetting that began to be institutionalized at the beginning of the Fifth century, and which converges with the different evolutions of Athenian burials at the time. Lamentations were from that point reserved for the women of the family and strictly limited, while the eulogy, which became the heart of the ceremony, banished them to focus entirely on the praise of citizen-soldiers and of the city-state by ratifying their unity and immortal glory. As Loraux indicates in *L'Invention d'Athènes*, "As much as the Athenian city-state made history, the only complaints that one had the right to mention [in a eulogy] were those of defeated enemies crying over their misfortunes, complaints that were mentioned self-servingly since they blended into a hymn to Athenian greatness." (Loraux 1981, 50; Hodges transl.)

There is no arguing that *The Persians* uses this device abundantly: where Phrynikos erred by excess proximity between stage and audience, to the point of negating theatrical mediation by reliving an all-too-recent past, Aeschylus plays on a shift in focus that relegates the politically prohibited effects into an outside place that removes any risk of confusion. Does this mean that geographical distance compensates for the lack of temporal distance, and that Persia, for the Athenian public, constitutes a figure of otherness similar those that later tragedies create by drawing on the repertory of myths—in short, the Persia of Xerxes instead of the Thebes of the Labdacids? That would mean overlooking the referential dimension carried by this play, which could almost be called "contemporaneous," at a time when Xerxes was still alive and the Persian Empire was less weak than Aeschylus would lead us to believe;[3] at a time especially when the Battle of Salamis represents not only an already legendary episode in Athenian History but a crucial moment in a long-term conflict that the audience and even the playwright himself experienced concretely, on the battlefront and at home. We should add the bitter memory of the sack of Athens that took place on the eve of the Battle of Salamis and that allows us to measure the symbolic violence carried out by these veritable *theatrical reprisals* which, through the stage, have the Persians reenter the city, at the foot of the Acropolis that they had burned eight years earlier, but only to leave a king in rags, with no followers, armed only with a tattered quiver that is "the remnants of [his] power." (Aeschylus 1981, 55, v. 1016) The near contemporaneity of the sack of Athens and the Battle of Salamis and, we can conjecture, the combination of their memory in the minds of the Athenian spectators, implies a remarkably complex topography of the theatrical space. This space has four places coexist: Salamis, made omnipresent by the accounts throughout the play, and representing the off-stage area shared by the Persians (in the dramatic space of the tale) and the Athenians (in the contemporary space of the play's performance); Susa, where the chorus and Queen Atossa await in fear the confirmation of disaster; Athens, the physical place of the performance; but also the Athens pillaged eight years earlier, which the play alludes to when Darius laments the sacrilegious abuses of his son's armies,[4] and of which the traces are still visible on the Acropolis looming behind the audience, and on the ruins deliberately left unrepaired…[5]

In this context, Aeschylus' play engages a double enunciation where Athens addresses Athens over the shoulder of the Persians and inscribes each of their characteristics in a xenophobic construction in which they find themselves "captured"[6]: the exotic sound of the names of places and people, the allusions to the proverbial riches of Sardis and Babylon, the insistent references to the despotic character of an Empire that opposes Athenian democracy on all points… and even in the manifestations of pain, this divisive, and, to be frank, racist logic is present, a dire lament where the litany of interjections, with accompanying ostentatious gestures, like striking the chest, pulling out hair, or tearing clothes, refers to the uncontrolled emotiveness of the Barbarians and contributes to feminizing them, to the point where some have asked whether these effects of foreignness were not added touches of comedy for the public of the time.

Placed under the sign of theatrical revenge, *The Persians* presents the singularity of having a finally, absolutely self-centered narration that is based on a decentering. In short, we seem to be far from the requirement described by Judith Butler at the beginning of *Precarious Life*, the requirement of stories abandoning the first person in favor of the second or third person, of a "we" capable of seeing itself from the point of view of the other, even an enemy. We can also add the atypical character of a tragedy that excludes any dimension of *drama*, relegating the action off-stage in favor of an inactive stage that only leaves room for the expression of *pathos*. In fact, there is *drama* but only in the content of the Persian accounts, in reference to the off-stage defeat of Salamis or to a recent past, already struck with the irreversibility of what has been done. On the present of the stage, the erasure of *drama* theatrically inscribes the military defeat of the Persians, who can only make themselves the *object* of their own discourse, while the Athenians are placed in a triple position of mastery: mastery of the battle as reported by the Messenger, mastery of knowledge that the Persian rearguard can only learn painfully, mastery of the affect caused by the performance itself, which gives a meta-theatrical scope to the "joy of the enemy" mentioned above, doubling the pleasure of victory with that of *catharsis*.

2. Anthropology of Vulnerability and Reversibility of Signs

It is possible, however, that none of these elements is unequivocal and that what we have described until now as a false decentering produces effects that are less decidable than they appear.

First, we cannot overlook the omnipresence, in this "historical" play, of *até* and the intervention of the gods that punish Persian *hubris* with dire consequences.[7] We said that the Athenians, within the Persian words, were the only ones in the position of *subject*; but the routing of the armies of Xerxes is never portrayed as being solely due to the skills of their foe, and is only described against the background of a shared fate, that of the "race of mortals" exposed to pain and loss.[8] Second, where Athenian funerals were about to be reorganized in a clear distinction of public space between the political scene of celebration and the domestic scene of lamentation, *The Persians* restages their entanglement. In representing the antagonism of the Greeks and the Barbarians from the echo chamber behind the battlefront, Aeschylus' tragedy produces a real decentering. In the empty time of this scene "*à la cantonade*," (Althusser 2005) the expected effect of an immediate recognition of rival political identities is diverted, displaced towards the periphery where only the agony of not knowing and waiting can be heard: the king's advisors who form the chorus have no expression other than that of crying old men; the few individual characters, a queen, a late king, a defeated king become a mother, a father, and a son once again. For all of the Persians, however, the *political* scene of the defeat is combined with a private mourning, "parents and wives counting the days tremble at the lengthening time."[9] What emerges here, in the cracks of this patriotic play, is the vulnerability of mortals exposed to the loss of their own, within a same time that extends between both here and there. From this point of view, the macabre tableau of Persian corpses buffeted by waves, left to the worst fate imaginable for the Greeks, leaving the dead without a grave, gives the litany of the names of the army leaders repeated three times in the play a symbolic dimension that is not fully explained by an "orientalist" stigmatization or by being incorporated in an account opposing Athenian egalitarianism and the servile hierarchies of the Great King. The very proliferation of these names makes the stage the *monumentum* that saves them from being forgotten. We must also give full importance to those moments where the description has no other object than the extreme impotence of these soldiers who "gasp out their lives on the shore," (Aeschylus 1981, 153, v. 978) of these men who are no longer but "tuna or some other catch of fish" (*Ibid.*, 34, v. 425) yet continue to be rehumanized by the sole force of their evocation. The description overflows the apologetic aim of the account, and gives new existence to "every living man [who] was butchered." (*Ibid.*, 35, v. 464)

The logic of inversion mentioned above thus gives way to more ambivalent forms of reversibility. And the triumphalist temptation of Athenian citizens in the face of the spectacle of Persian suffering is found to be, not negated, but exposed to the risk of being converted into suffering. Where the political law opposing "us" and "others" is underpinned by the anthropological vulnerability of all and everyone, this "us" and "others" are structurally threatened with having to trade places in the play of reversals found in every tragedy and through which "the extremes of fortune and glory change into their exact opposite." (Alaux 2002, 202; Hodges transl.)

"Painful on the stage but to the audience joy," we would say: perhaps, in the end, the cathartic operation of the play should apply even to joy itself and not only to terror and pity. When Darius, just before rejoining the land of the dead, entreats the old men, "Though in time of troubles, give your hearts each day some pleasure," (Aeschylus 1981, 49, v. 840-842) the political production of glorious affects is bordered by a horizon of experience that escapes it.

In short, while it is impossible to identify with the losers, it is not much easier to identify with the winners. This identification is less easy, in truth, because the mourning voices of the Persians, at the very moment that they send an echo of Athenian victory to the Athenian spectators, cannot do so without disturbing the language in which their cohesion was supposed to be reinforced. Here we can do no better than to refer to the stellar analyses of Loraux demonstrating how "the plaintive cry, foreclosed by the civic *logos*, operates a powerful return in the tragic text itself, even to the point of contaminating the key words of Greek politics."[10] For example, the term *aei*, "always" or "constantly," which means the repetition of the same in the legal and political lexicon of Athens, a guarantee of the permanence of the body politic through rotations of leadership and new generations. The writing of Aeschylus, using a procedure that later tragedies would copy, gives this term a singular treatment by imposing on it the proximity of a consonant term, *aiai*, "alas," which submits the time of "always" to another iterative regime: no longer the expression of continuity of a principle that would preserve its integrity through cycles of renewal but the occasion of an irreparable rupture; no longer the time of perpetuation and conservation of political Measure, but on the contrary, the illimited time of a mourning without measure that is also imprescriptible. The essential aspect, however, resides perhaps in a third iterative register through which the interjection *aiai* is repeated and disseminated throughout Aeschylus' text, providing an overpowering bass line short-circuiting the semantism of the phrases.[11] It is not only a question then of staging the tension between the "always" of civic discourse and the "always" of the mourning voice, but of making the cry of pain heard as close as possible to the physical performance, in an effect of generalized auditory hallucination. First concerned of course is the semantic specter derived from pain and complaint (*ania, anios, ian, iakhan*), that is also found in the verbs *diainomai* and *aiazdô* ("to cry" and "to lament"). The process, however, extends until it contaminates the terms designating the enemies of the Persians, in other words, the Greeks: their cruelty (*diaios*), their land (*aian/daia*), Salamis renamed "isle of Ajax" (*Aiantos nêson*), and the name of the "Ionians" itself (*Iaonôn*)… Making the "alas" of the defeated heard *within* the "always" of the victor; or rather making heard a cry of pain that no longer has the language to speak itself *within the logos itself*, at the moment when this *logos* proclaims that this pain is that of the distant Other: this is what short-circuits the distribution of signs and affects that we mentioned at the start. It is not only the grieving voice of the (barbarian) Other but a voice that "plunges into mourning" the speech of the (Greek) Same, which alters it by carving out something like a "foreign language" in it, even a language that only counts, as Deleuze might have said, for its intensive and a-signifying limit: cries, stammering with pain, sighs of misery—*ani'ania kaka keokota / kai dai' aiai, diainesthe, Per- /sai.* (Aeschylus 1981, 28, v. 256-257). While we cannot reconstruct the musical texture that Aeschylus' play produced, we can at least be free to imagine the effect of this *logos*, literally *haunted* in its phonic material by the Persian moans. If we accept the connection between melancholy and the effect of spectrality, this survival of the dead who cannot be mourned, then Aeschylus' technique must be defined as a vast operation of *melancholizing the Greek language.*

Thus, there is a third interpretation of "*Painful to us but to our enemies joy*" since we are now entering the realm of combined affects, where joy becomes inextricably attached to the pain of the other, which continues to be heard even within the language of triumph. Is this mechanism still connected to *catharsis*? Isn't a recognition instead that Aeschylus' play invents an *anti-cathartic* mode of shaping affect? The bereavement of the Greek *logos* by the Persian complaint is no longer a way of "purging" the unmasterable violence from affect; it is on the contrary a way to make the impossibility of mastery heard. It speaks to both the impurity of joy and the impurity of *catharsis* itself.

3. Impossible Identification

Let us now turn to the present. You might think that the only way this play could be heard outside the Athenian ideological context would be on the humanist register of an ode to the fragility of the human condition or a denunciation of the violence of *war*, in all times and in all places. However, it is significant that several contemporary stagings of *The Persians* have made use of the complexity of the play of identification that was already in the play, drawing out the echoes between the Greco-Persian Wars and colonial or post-colonial conflicts. Take, for example, the famous production by Jean Prat broadcast on the ORTF in late October 1961, or the adaptation by Robert Auletta directed by Peter Sellars in 1993. Both show the inevitable strangeness produced by contemporary adaptation, whether it is found directly in the performance or left to the responsibility of the audience alone.

When Sellars, two years after the end of the First Gulf War, wanted history to be heard from the point of view of the defeated and to overcome the denial orchestrated by the media representations of the conflict, the transposition he proceeded to use played on the imaginary polarity between Orient and Occident to show war-torn Iraq under the suffering people of Xerxes. Against the derealizing rhetoric that erases hundreds of thousands of victims under hygienic "surgical strikes" and accidental "collateral damage," Sellars opposes the muddled threne of Iraqi victims. He not only makes their grieving voices heard but also the loud airplanes and helicopters that cover them and almost make them inaudible, at a time when the distinction between frontline and behind the lines that gave Aeschylus' play its topographical structure has been replaced by constant exposure to aerial forces of destruction. To do this, the staging must simultaneously minimize the polarity Aeschylus constructed by opposing the threatening Persian imperial power (which would not correspond to Iraq) and Athenian resistance guaranteeing the shared freedom of the Greeks (which would correspond even less to the US offensive, despite its use of this language). In short, this militant oratorio could only make the Persian complaint the allegory of the forclosed voices of the victims of American neo-imperialism (not only Iraq, but by metonymy the Third World)[12] on the condition of distributing the place of the aggressor and aggressee in a more univocal manner. Bringing an end to the vertigo of double enunciation: the defeated address the victors directly; *painful to us and on you shame*.

The production of the play in the context of the end of the Algerian War produced no less unstable effects of identification, and in the end, equally improbable ones. The televised adaptation by Jean Prat refused to bring Aeschylus' play into a contemporary setting, and its resonance with the present of the audience remains hypothetical based on the connections the audience could make themselves. In 1961, how could place be given to the possible echoes between the resistance to the Persian invader and the fight for Algerian liberation, without being led to identify colonial France with the armies of Xerxes, against the filiation that French republican historiography had forged with Athenian democracy? As expressed by Jean Alaux, "how could the Athens of Aeschylus be emblematic of both Algeria at present and France of all time?" (Alaux 2001, 12; Hodges transl.). How could it be one *and* the other without being both simultaneously, a veritable *double bind* that reactivates the play of impossible identifications operated by Aeschylus while displacing it?

This vertiginous merry-go-round would thus find its source in Aeschylus' play itself, and precisely in its capacity to articulate the impossible identification with the Persians and a disidentification with Athens in celebrating its glory. An articulation that is all the more troubling if we note its homology with what Rancière, in the mid-1990s, proposed to see as a new matrix of political subjectivation, situating its traumatic emergence in an event that occurred precisely two weeks, day for day, before the television broadcast of Jean Prat's adaptation: the massacre of October 17, 1961. We would hazard that this event could not avoid haunting the perception of a viewer on the evening of October 31, like an "absent cause."[13] This is what Rancière drew from the Parisian protest organized by the FLN and its bloody repression by the police followed by the denial of the authorities and a massive obliteration by media outlets: "We could not identify with those Algerians who had brutally appeared and disappeared as protesters in French public space. We could, however, disidentify with this State that had killed them and removed from any account."[14] (Rancière 1997, 43; Hodges transl.) On what was this impossibility of identifying with the Algerians based? Not on a particularly strong feeling of otherness, since it was on the contrary protesters exercising their citizenship in the center of the capital but on the radical absence of a scene capable of making their disappearance representable: those who had suffered the state repression exercised in the name of French citizens, had precisely been removed from all public visibility, deprived of bodies, faces, voices, and names. We could ask, however, whether Rancière, by hyperbolizing the politicizing power of this impossible identification, does not tend to minimize the ambivalence of the mechanism of derealization that supports it, in other words the ambivalence of after effects that could be produced by this foreclosure of the missing. How could this non-event [*non-lieu*] provoke a counter-appeal to this assassin state that is supposed to be "ours," or even supposed to be "us", without constituting *at the same time* the place of a highly melancholic identification, exposed to the indefinitely spectral return of these "living dead" whose death will have been denied and that will have to be "denied again and again" for failure of being able to recognize the loss and mourn it? This question would obviously be best filed in the dossier on the melancholic structure of postcolonial racism.[15]

It is precisely the political aporia of this type of forclosure that Butler invites us to think about. We are thinking in particular here of the two dimensions of the power of mourning, of which *Precarious Life* seeks to show the articulation in the mechanisms of ascension to extreme violence. One of these dimensions relates to the effect of derealization of some lives produced recursively by the refusal to recognize their loss publicly, and to the connection of this mechanism of derealization with the type of destructive violence—potentially "exterminist" (Ogilvie 2012)—which tends to be exerted against these lives that cannot be grieved, whose loss is not a loss, whose death matters as little as their life. The other dimension relates to the connection between the exploitation of this violence against these lives that are not lives, and the denial by those that exercise this violence of their own vulnerability. When Butler emphasizes the "change in the horizon of experience" that violently occurred for Americans with the 2001 attacks, the question of mourning no longer takes place solely in relationship to an other, be it humanized or dehumanized. It is found to be overdetermined by another loss related directly to the imagination of political identification and on the mechanisms of idealization that support it: loss of the feeling of security inside the borders of the country, or again, as Butler writes, loss of this singular prerogative of the United States, "only and always, to be the one who transgresses the sovereign boundaries of other states, but never to be in the position of having one's own boundaries transgressed" (cf. Butler 2004, 39)[16]; finally, loss of the representation of its power and the collective identification with this representation. This means posing the question of knowing how their own vulnerability, at a time when they were being violently reminded of it, could be seen to be suddenly negated in an infernal *melancholic-paranoiac circuit*, turning the violence suffered into an all the more uncompromising, vengeful violence. Thus this play of *double denial* analyzed by Butler: the *denial of mourning*, distributed unequally by the norms including certain lives of the experience of loss and repressing other, Iraqi and Afghan civilians decimated by war, but also the victims of the September 11 attacks who, for being gay, lesbian, homeless, were excluded from the public necrologies, "whose nameless and faceless deaths form the melancholic background for [our] social world" (ibid., 46); denial of mourning but moreover *denial of melancholy itself*, which wards off the narcissistic wound caused by the experience of loss, by means of the protection of a fantasy of mastery and absolute sovereignty, fantasy of an immunized self charged with "impossibly" reversing the feeling of impotence into a feeling of all-powerfulness. While melancholy is the end without end of a denied work of mourning, paranoia appears here as the end without end of a melancholy denied, like the one heard in Bush's injunction, scarcely ten days after the attacks, to replace mourning with "resolute action," (ibid., 29) to bring an end to the time of *pathos* to enter that of *drama*, as if this injunction could do anything other than continue this fantasy of conjuring all-powerfulness, or as Butler puts it, this "United States *hubris*" tasked with "fixing" the world order—"with or without" the world…

In the margins of this circular scene, Butler traces *another scene* that shows the directly political implications of her thought on mourning—and we believe with her that it concerns all so-called "developed" countries—a scene where we would have something to "gain" from loss, to endure it, to put up with remaining in its ordeal, in short to be able to "act" it in the way that we say that mourning is the object of work: mourning the imagination of geopolitical identifications, mourning the feeling of security provided to those who benefit from the inequalities of the world-system, mourning without which one could not envisage either the possibility of less asymmetrical international relations or a global economy of violence less brutally exacerbated by the border disturbances between those believe they have everything and refuse to lose it, and those who have nothing to lose because they have never had anything, not even a human life. We obviously do not want to identify or even compare this historical context with that of the Greek-Persian War. This detour simply allows us to draw attention to the way Aeschylus' play already presents this work of mourning directly connected to the mechanisms of idealization inherent to the constitution of geopolitical identities. *The Persians* makes the complaint heard, not only in the account of the men who died in combat, but also in the spectacle of collapse of a power. Under this light, we rediscover once again the reversibility that is part of the play. On the one hand, the hyperbolic decline of this power comes to celebrate the advent of a new one; and in this respect, *The Persians* is inscribed in the ideological fabric of the Greek-Persian War, the myth by which orators and historians justify throughout the Fifth century the Athenian hegemony over the Delian League. On the other hand, by raising Athens to the height of the power that it supplants, Aeschylus places it in a game of mirrors where the fatal *hubris* of Xerxes reflects not only the victorious image of its past but exposes it to the uncertainty of the future. Everything takes place as if Aeschylus' play, at a period when Athens was just beginning to assert its domination, was already suggesting the hypothesis of its fall. The knowledge carried by this play would be that the work of mourning power always already begins with this power itself, which doubles it like its reverse or like its shadow.

4. Critical Performances of Mourning

In conclusion, we would like to offer a few paths for research, turned towards other scenes on which the normative frameworks instituting life and death and their effects of relegation are contested or disturbed, on the stage and in the streets. As Butler emphasizes for other normative arrangements, collective practices of memory and forgetting cannot avoid the necessity of spectacularly reiterating their division, and actualizing it in images and discourses through the performative play of repetition. Precisely in this place, which brings together the strike force of the dominant apparatuses of communication and the fragility that constantly obliges them to have to reassert their norms to be able to guarantee their efficacity, the possibility of a *critical performance of mourning* insinuates itself, along with a displacement of its powers.[17] And because theater should not have the monopoly on this subversion of the sensible and political coordinates of the public space, it is necessary to recall here some of the many struggles carried out against the obliteration of the dead: all the "Plaza de Mayo" where the mothers of Buenos Aires and of Acari, the "mad women" of Nicosia and Galatasaray combat the unending erasure of the lost by laws of amnesty and rituals of "national reconciliation," the march of silence and the "escraches" through which the H.I.J.O.S. of Argentina and Uruguay resist forgetting and impunity, even in the heart of Western metropolises, the parades and the die-ins organized by Act Up against the silent proclamation of the non-existence of those sick or dying of AIDS.[18]

That said, what interests us is the way the theater can constitute a privileged operator in the critical performance of mourning. We are thinking primarily of some of the proposals of so-called documentary theater, like *The Investigation* by Peter Weiss (1998, 117-296)[19] or *Rwanda 94* by Groupov (2002), a theater built on the most contemporary events and especially the way in which they were immediately staged, theater that confronts the prose of the world through the work of repetition. Repeating discourses to make heard the performative violence of the derealizations they operate by substituting "work" and "allocation" for murder, "cockroaches" and "rats" for people, and the counting of "units" for the passage from life to death. Dismantling and rebuilding the things said to restore descriptive efficacity to language against administrative euphemisms and aestheticizing evasions. Repeating the noble forms of the tragic register to have the Chorus of the Tutsi Dead on stage and short-circuit the post-colonial refrains in a "Rwandan tragedy" relegating criminals and victims to an eternal "African tribalism." Repeating the structure of Dante's *Divine Comedy* to reconstruct the Frankfurt trials against those responsible for Auschwitz and breaking the metaphorical and sublimatory universe in which the media relegated camp prisoners to the last circles of Hell. Taking up the words of mourning to expose them in the isolation of a verse that uncovers them and to oppose the anesthetic powers of hype with a haunting "litany of questions." Renaming the dead without graves and turning the obstinate presence of bodies and faces against amnesiac proclamations and calls for prescription. Repeating the performance itself and, as Yolande Mukagasana in *Rwanda 94*, bearing witness each evening to replay the conquest of her own voice and become an actress again of her story and her history.

In every respect, we do not see what justifies the association of the powers of resistance of mourning with the exclusive motif of the "anti-political," and we have difficulty understanding why Loraux bases our ability to hear once again the grieving voice of tragedy after decades of over-politicization of antique theater, on the advent of a world where "ruptures themselves seem obscure and where one [would] no longer be able to be tranquilly Manichean," an uncertain, aporetical world where "history [would] act convulsively" and where "manifestations of mourning [would] become […] the sole weapon of a disarmed combat or one without hope." (Loraux 1999, 26-27; Hodges transl.) We fear that these somewhat depressing formula confuse the political struggle for a "right to mourn" with a resigned mourning of politics that nothing obliges one to admit. Not even these modern Trojan women who are, for Loraux, the Madwomen of the Plaza de Mayo. Especially not them.

Translation: Ames Hodges

NOTES

[1] We are unable to provide a full description of the work of Nicole Loraux here. Her historiography of the eulogy as a privileged discursive site where the new democratic and imperialist ideology of the Athenian city-state was elaborated in the Fifth century, and her analyses of the anomie that the "grieving voice" of Greek tragedy introduces into the normative play of public speech and civic rituals dedicated to the celebration of memorable lives, encounter in a relatively obvious way Butler's analyses of post-September 11, 2001 necrological practices. On these two points, see Loraux (1981; 1999).
[2] Bringing together the analyses of Loraux and Butler on *Antigone* has been attempted elsewhere: see Sanna (2010).
[3] On this point, see Alaux (2001, 6): "Certainly the praise of Athens and the manipulations of history that it presupposes are clearly present in Aeschylus'

play: first because we find in it the widespread Greek 'myopia' that, according to the historians of Achaemenid Empire, painted in the colors of the darkest rout, a series of failures that never really threatened the power of Xerxes. Just after Salamis, the Great King was still able to crush a Babylonian revolt that posed a much greater threat to the unity of the Empire than the Aegean troubles. As the remaining Persian sources attest, Xerxes continued and bolstered the work of his father Darius and never appeared to be an unworthy son." (Hodges transl.)

[4] Cf. Aeschylus (1981, 48, v. 809-813): "Invading Greece, they felt no awe or reverence; they did not hesitate to plunder images of gods and put their temples to the torch; altars were no more, and statues of divinities were uprooted and torn right off their bases."

[5] On this subject, see Étienne (2004, 67; Hodges transl.): "Even if the 'Oath of Plataea' as handed down by tradition, is a fabrication of the Fourth century BCE, the Greeks agreed after their victories not to rebuild the sanctuaries destroyed by the Persians: there is proof that the temples remained in ruins on the Acropolis and, in Phocis, in Kalapodi, a memorial was also made of the sanctuary destroyed during the Greco-Persian Wars."

[6] On this notion of "capture," see Butler (2004, 141-147), on the faces of Osama bin Laden and Afghan women: it is not enough that there is an other or the representation of the other for the "right of citizenship" [*droit de cité*] be given to them.

[7] This is the explanation Aeschylus has the shade of Darius provide, but it is also one that the account of Herodotus attributes to Themistocles: "for it is not we who have won this victory, but the gods and the heroes, who deemed Asia and Europe too great a realm for one man to rule, and that a wicked man and an impious one who dealt alike with temples and bones, burning and overthrowing the images of the gods." (Herodotus 2018, VIII, 109)

[8] Thus the importance of the way the different *names of the human* are distributed: to the characteristic figures of Athenian civic ideology opposing the *andres* and the *anthropoid*, the virile citizen-soldiers celebrated by public discourse and simple humans without qualities, the Aeschylean lexicon adds and soon prefers this new figure which transcends the internal and external divisions of the city, those of *brotos* or *thnetos*: the mortal. On this subject, see Loraux (1999, 79-80; 1993, 151-158).

[9] Cf. Aeschylus (1981, 37, v. 537-546): "Many with the delicate hands rending their veils, drenching their breasts, swollen with tears, sharing their woe. The ladies of Persia softly are weeping, desiring each him to behold wedded but lately; forsaking their couches, soft with their coverlets, the joy of their youth, now they lament their sorrows, insatiate, full of woe."

[10] Cf. Alaux (2002, 7). Alaux relies here on the analyses of Loraux (1999, 64-66).

[11] Here we are following Alaux (2001, 7-8).

[12] This is suggested in particular by the casting of several roles, played by an actor of Palestinian origin, Joseph Haj (Chorus), and two Carribean actors from Puerto Rico, Cordelia Gonzalez (Atossa) and John Ortiz (Xerxes). On this performance, see Vasseur-Lagangneux (2004, 192 et seq.).

[13] From this perspective, the place occupied by this event would be analogous to that of the sack of Athens in Aeschylus' tragedy.

[14] "Nous ne pouvions nous identifier à ces Algériens brutalement apparus et disparus comme manifestants dans l'espace public français. Nous pouvions en revanche nous désidentifier par rapport à cet État qui les avait tués et soustraits à tout compte."

[15] Cf. Butler (2004, 33): "If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were," and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object."
[16] See also Butler (2004, 40): "Doing this involves a certain 'loss' for the country as a whole: the notion of the world itself as a sovereign entitlement of the United States must be given up, lost, and mourned, as narcissistic and grandiose fantasies must be lost and mourned. From the subsequent experience of loss and fragility, however, the possibility of making different kinds of ties emerges."
[17] That one can "perform mourning" pushes the idea of performance to its paradoxical extremity. What in fact is more "unavailable" than the ordeal of grief, that experience, as Butler says, that "tear[s] us from ourselves," make ourselves enigmatic and impenetrable to ourselves? If we consider, however, that the work of mourning is precisely that movement to reestablish a division between life and death—to repeat that there were lives here where there are now deaths, and that it makes a difference, and that the disappearance of the bodies does not make their absence disappear—then the scenes we are thinking of here are precisely those where there is a performance of mourning.
[18] "We women and men, activists, HIV-positive, HIV-negative, straight, gay, bi, trans, we have been members of Act-up-Paris for many years; we protest with our bodies. Our damaged bodies, for some, wounded bodies, our bodies put on the line in public actions, our bodies assembled in protests, gatherings, and all of our meetings; in our bodies and the image of them performed lies our strength. Our bodies that sometimes escape us, patients on life-support until 1995, we became survivors marked by the secondary effects of treatment. In this society of performance, we stand out thanks to numerous artifices, shows that we put on because we will never give up. Because AIDS affects our body and that of our friends, we joined Act up and we fight for it; by putting our bodies on the line we invented and produced a different politics for fighting AIDS." (Maison Pop 2008; Hodges transl.)
[19] On this subject, see Talbot (2015, 103-126).

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Political Responsibility: Reflections based on Hannah Arendt and Eric Weil

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Abstract

This article discusses political responsibility based on the works of Hannah Arendt and Eric Weil. For this purpose, it initially addresses the "German question", highlighting a markedly "anti-political" scenario as a fruitful field to reflect on responsibility as a political phenomenon. Then, it exposes the Weilian critique of the traditional split between morals and politics and, starting from a similar terrain, Arendtian analysis of the political implications of thought. Finally, we take political responsibility as an object of investigation by the two authors, either from the blurring of the distinction between guilt and responsibility in Arendt or the focus on the political subject in Weil. From what follows, it is possible to conclude by pointing to the importance of educating people for the exercise of democracy, conceived in two fundamental senses, namely, as a form of government and as a mode of social organization.

Keywords: political responsibility, politics, moral, Hannah Arendt. Eric Weil

1. Introduction

This article addresses the notion of political responsibility from Hannah Arendt and Eric Weil. The objective is to take the reflection of these authors to think about our position regarding the commitment to building a shared world and guaranteeing the essential conditions of our democracies.

We must consider at least two fundamental observations when proposing a reflection on political responsibility inspired by these two authors. First, this requires emphasizing that we will consider them respecting the nature of their different conceptions of politics. In the case of Arendt, a reflection centered on the effort to combine the action of human beings with politics. That means, firstly, recovering action insofar as it reveals a who, a person, and, secondly, institutions that can safeguard the human capacity to start new things in a shared world (Andreiuolo 2013). In Weil, a proposal for the normative foundation of politics in articulating the "idea" of the State in a form of the ethical-political theory of Hegelian inspiration (Perine 2018).

Then, the approximation between Arendt and Weil is not arbitrary but presents justifications of different orders. The first concerns the historical experiences of the two Jewish-German thinkers (Calvet 2004, 149), adding to this the intercession of Anne Mendelsonn-Weil, Weil's wife and the friend to whom Arendt dedicated the book *Rahel Venhagen*[1]. Much more important, however, is the fact that both assume the challenge of thinking about politics after the "Hitlerian gospel" (Weil 1982, 51), recognizing the rupture that totalitarianism represents in the Western political tradition. Finally, the approach to different issues in the light of the approximation of both works has already been carried out by both commentators of Arendt (Calvet 2004) and interpreters of Weil (Castelo Branco 2018; Canivez 2021).

We reinforce that our intention is not restricted to the authors' comments; instead, we reflect on an urgent topic, benefiting from the theoretical apparatus developed by them. To this end, we have divided this text into three parts. In the first one, we revisit a subject common to political thought immediately after the Second World War, namely, the "German question". In the second, we return to Weilian reflection on the relationship between morality and politics and Arendt's analysis of the political implications of thought. In the last one, we approach political responsibility in terms of building a shared world and overcoming the crises of democracy.

As we can intuit, the route leads us to think about the conditions for the formation of the subject capable of responding, in the sphere of political action, for the world and democracy. Therefore, our final considerations resume the ideas present in Arendt and Weil about the essential role of education in political life.

2. Political responsibility and the "German question"

Our initial hypothesis is that, both in Arendt and in Weil, we can consider the reflection on political responsibility from the bases posed by the "German question", more precisely by the question about the responsibility of the German people for the crimes of the Hitler government. In other words, in these authors, as was common among German intellectuals after the Second World War, political responsibility appears as a constitutive moment of the "German question" taken as a "question of guilt" (Jaspers 1946, 44).

But if, for the authors, the question of guilt is established as an unavoidable moment for the "German question", both reject a general condemnation of the Germans. Therefore, an adequate approach to the problem needs to overcome vansittartism, as it must be able to point both to the conditions of co-responsibility of the German people and to determine the sense in which each citizen should feel responsible indeed.

In this domain, Arendtian thought not only underlines the limits of the idea of "general guilt", but also points to the conditions that made possible the victory of animal laborans and the emptying of public space. Weil, on the other hand, emphasizes the insufficiency of a "moral reaction" when problems are effectively placed in the field of political action.

In several of Arendt's writings, we can find the theme of responsibility as a dimension of the German question. In those works, the author maintains that universal condemnation of the Germans does not only represent the emptying of the sense of responsibility; rather, it signifies the victory of one of the fundamental theses of Nazism: the assertion that the people form a single bloc with their government. In this sense, the vansittartist vision is taken as a result of Nazi propaganda abroad and the totalitarian politcs committed to making each German a co-author, an accomplice of the perpetrated crimes. In this scenario, "whether any person in Germany is a Nazi or an anti-Nazi can be determined only by the One who knows the secrets of the human heart, which no human eye can penetrate.” (Arendt 2005, 123) The conclusion reveals the dimensions of the question: “the only way in which we can identify an anti-Nazi is when the Nazis have hanged him. There is no other reliable token.” (Arendt 2005, 124) Therefore, the real problem of the German question is to consider the possibilities for action, participation, and resistance when the boundary between criminals and ordinary people has been erased, where there is no longer a sharp separation between the guilty and the innocent.

The dilution of guilt among the German people would be the inversion of Nazi racism and the condition for the guilty to escape their responsibility. This dilution would also leave unanswered the question of the responsibility of those favorable to Hitler from the beginning, who helped him come to power and those who applauded him inside and outside Germany. If, in general, “these people, who were co-responsible for Hitler’s crimes in a broader sense, did not incur any guilt in a stricter sense. They, who were the Nazis’ first accomplices and their best aides, truly did not know what they were doing nor with whom they were dealing.” (Arendt 2005, 126) What was at the base of the support of a large part of the germans for nazism, what made them effectively co-responsible for the atrocities perpetrated by the Hitler regime, was “their inability to judge modern political organizations” (Arendt 2005, 125).

In Arendt, this inability to evaluate is made explicit in the question about the factors that led the common man to put himself, without great difficulty, at the service of the extermination machine, becoming, without resistance or reflection, the most dangerous criminal of the twentieth century. For the author, answering this question also requires thinking about the conditions that made the emergence of the “mass man” possible. In this regard, she lists two fundamental factors: the victory of the animal laborans, that is, the individual who deals exclusively with his private life and with the demands of survival dictated by work (Correia 2014), and the role played by totalitarian propaganda (Aguiar 2007).

These are two distinct factors but intrinsically intertwined. The totalitarian propaganda stands out for its definitive explanations about the German context, fully responding to the needs of the masses formed by the animal laborans, those subjects lacking in the world whose common experience is not the perception of the capacity for political action but loneliness and helplessness. In general, this propaganda was developed through the justification provided by superhuman laws (Chapoutot 2014) and turned to a mass of individuals lacking explanations about their situation, who cannot bear to deal with the contingency inherent in the relationship between men (Koonz 2005). The propaganda then traps the masses in its pretense of complete explanation. It gives them the false sensation of being part of a superior reality when, in fact, it distances them both from the potential outer space of freedom, the public sphere, and from interior freedom, the locus of spiritual activities. The psychological attraction exercised by Nazism was thus based on the world's emptiness as a shared experience. So, "its immense lies [...] were psychologically efficient because they corresponded to certain fundamental experiences and even more to certain fundamental cravings." (Arendt 2005, 111)

Weil, in turn, directly addresses the "German question" in a series of reviews published between 1946 and 1947. In these texts, the philosopher analyzes works by Hans Gisevius, Edgard Morin, Albert Béguin, Ernest Pezet, Leopold Schwarzschild, Ulrich von Hassell, and Karl Jaspers. They were jurists, historians, politicians, and philosophers who were attentive to the issue of guilt and, especially, to the political role of those who resisted Hitler, those who tried to break the situation of absolute voicelessness. However, we can find the best key to his understanding of the theme in an impressive metaphor, both for its clarity and forcefulness.

> If in a family, someone becomes a rabid madman, it may be tragic from a personal point of view, but it is not that serious; however, when the family watches, with tears in their eyes, his fits of rage, and quietly waits for him to set fire to the house, one gets the impression that the other members are singularly shortsighted. The madman is no less mad because of this, he is the one who provoked the catastrophe; it is recommended that he be watched closely after the attack; but the family should also be concerned with reflecting on its role both in controlling crises and preventing them. (Weil 1982, 51)

The image does not need much analysis. On it, we know who the crazy and the improvident are and, after the attack, the task remains to reflect and create the means so that history does not repeat itself, after all, “nothing prevents us from waiting for others like [Hitler] to appear” (Weil 1950, 37). Now, it is precisely the reflection on the “role of the family” in the face of crises that forces us to think about the question of the guilt of the German people. Like Arendt, Weil refutes vansittartism while rejecting the Nazi argument about the identification between people and government. Therefore, the question is to determine how the government's acts make the citizens of a State co-responsible.

In Weil’s texts, three arguments stand out. First, Hitler should be fought not just because he was leading Germany to ruin, but because his triumph resulted in “action for the sake of action, action in its purest state” (Weil 1982, 71). In this case, there was no true political idea, but the coupling of the forces of popular fury gave the most brutal power its ideological justification, sustained by racism and biologism, as well as by myth and its intrinsic hostility to reason.

Secondly, there is the definition of the real problem of the “question of guilt” and political responsibility since, in the political field, “the government is responsible, but the people are responsible for their government”. This definition leads to the conclusion that “if [the people] do not accept this responsibility will never be a free people or worthy of freedom” (Weil 1982, 54).

Finally, opposition to Hitler’s government would only make political sense if it took place in the sphere of action. Acting responsibly in this field presupposes both knowledge of political conditions and a distinction of the meaning of moral responsibility. Weil (1982, 45) even argues that under the setting imposed by the Nazi government, the opposition would demand the renunciation of “traditional morality”. For the philosopher, many who resisted Nazism remained on the moral plane, limiting themselves, for example, to affirming their own repudiation concerning the regime's atrocities. These “saved their own souls and tried to save those souls around them: we do not have the impression that they did great things to save their people or at least to warn or awaken them" (Weil 1982, 45). In a word, we are facing the fundamental problem of distinguishing between moral responsibility and political responsibility and recognizing the insufficiency of remaining on the moral plane when it comes to action in history.

3. Neither Adolf Hitler nor Francis of Assisi

If we are interested in the distinction between moral responsibility and political responsibility, in this case, we are much more concerned with understanding the consequences of the separation between moral conscience and political action. This split broadly characterizes part of our intellectual tradition.

In this domain, Eric Weil's philosophy helps us to specify the terms involved and to perceive the issue from a broad perspective, capable of criticizing the traditional point of view that sustains the radical separation between morality and politics. In a few words, the author argues that only by acting politically we can build a world in which it is possible to live morally. However, if Weil remains within the conceptual scope, Arendt moves towards the resumption of this same problem considering the "moral eclipse" that characterized the totalitarian experience and highlighting the political value of the faculty of thinking.

Weil starts from the observation that for our tradition, between morals and politics, there is a disagreement whose roots go back to the Old Testament and the writings of Plato. In other words, we are dealing with a tradition that considers politics "bad and perverse in its deepest nature" and morality as "an ideology that understands nothing about the reality of human relations" (Weil 2003, 241). The immediate consequence is the possibility of choosing between them.

> The choice is possible. The proof is in the fact that men chose, opting for one possibility to the exclusion of the other: Epicurus and St. Francis of Assisi rejected politics, Gengis Khan and Hitler did not dedicate their time to solving problems of morality. It means that we can live in one of the two domains as if the other did not exist, at least as if the other did not represent any interest. (Weil 2003, 241-242)

It is necessary not only to consider the possibility of an exclusive choice; it is equally fundamental to understand that the problem of this alternative exists for those who did not opt for one over the other. Therefore, the question arises for those who want a world in which politics and morals dialogue.

The philosopher's task assumes a precise design here since the possibility of an agreement between morality and politics must be examined from the assumptions of each one of them (Raimondi 2018). This problem will only make sense if, regardless of the starting point, the place of the interpenetration of domains "appears as such to those who initially believed in their radical separation" (Weil 2003, 244). Considering the search for a positive relationship between politics and morals to think about political responsibility, we return to the terms of the "German question" when Weil recalls that many opponents of the Nazi regime positioned themselves in the moral domain without effective action on the political level (logically when this was still possible). Furthermore, we must always deal with the "temptation" to put the conscience at peace by abstention (Weil 1991a, 169).

However, after all, what would be the price of renouncing political space, of trying to escape political responsibility? Concerning the condition of modern man, this complete abstention from the political plane is simply impracticable. It is no longer a question of saving one's soul but of creating a world in which it is possible to live morally. The point is not to stay off from the political world but to ask what constitutes good politics. In Weil's philosophy, good politics is the one that reduces violence in the world, that is, the one that creates the conditions for every man to lead a sensible life (Weil 2003, 246-247). Weil resorts to another image to develop the argument of the insufficiency of the exclusive option for morality.

> Neither goodwill nor the will to the good suffices, as much as they would not be enough in the case of a doctor ready to sacrifice himself for the sick but who does not cure anyone, either because of technical incompetence or because his moral convictions prevent him from intervening in the field of individual autonomy through anesthesia, scalpel or potions (Weil 1991a, 162).

However, highlighting the insufficiency of moral conscience in the face of the demands of political responsibility is a limited exercise, an effort that only sometimes reaches the extent of the problem shown in situations of moral collapse, such as what happened in totalitarianism. Therefore, a broader approach to the issue also considers that those historical conditions not only compromised the bases of political responsibility, pushing subjects into the inviolable sanctum of their own moral conscience while undermining the possibility of a properly moral life itself.

In the essay "Personal responsibility under dictatorship", Arendt poses a similar question: it is up to those who preferred to withdraw from public affairs in order not to be responsible for the crimes committed by the Hitler government to be accused of being concerned only with the salvation of their own souls and, therefore, focused solely on non-political issues that can have undeniable anti-political reverberations? For the author, far from irresponsibility and indifference, in the extreme situations that characterize dark times, responsibility for the world – politics par excellence – cannot be assumed since it implies a minimum of power, participation, and freedom. Under the totalitarian aegis, these potential processes give way to powerlessness, which undermines the foundations of responsibility and also demonstrates that the total absence of power is a valid justification for those who choose not to participate.

Still taking these individuals as a reference, Arendt undertakes the argumentative path that leads to questioning what differed those who participated in the regime – with more or less enthusiasm – from those who did not. She found that the seconds never experienced conflicts of conscience or pondered over the lesser harm their insertion would cause. On the contrary, she "never doubted that crimes remained crimes even if legalized by the government and that it was better not to participate in these crimes under any circumstances". In other words, "they did not feel an obligation but acted according to something self-evident to them even though it was no longer self-evident to those around them" (Arendt 2003, 78). This axiomatic evidence, capable of demonstrating what cannot be done, would be achieved through the dialogue between me and myself that lays the foundations of moralities and thinking.

For Arendt, the thought, under the eclipse of traditional morality, when trying to understand those who adapted so quickly to the Hitler regime, comes close to the observation that the greater the firmness with which individuals adhere to political movements without questioning, them, the more thoughtlessly they will align themselves with its prescriptions. Thus, there is another place for the problem of morality:

> Morality collapsed into a mere set of mores-manners, customs, conventions to be changed at will-not with criminals, but with ordinary people, who, as long as moral standards were socially accepted, never dreamt of doubting what they had been taught to believe in (Arendt 2003, 54).

Arendt's arguments point to an essential direction for understanding contemporary political challenges and questions concerning political responsibility. That is the centrality of thought, especially in extreme situations where the line between obedience and participation in the execution of political crimes is blurred. The inability to think underlies the phenomenon of evil acts whose agents are not monstrous or demonic nor moved by villainy, pathology, or ideological conviction. Therefore, Arendt alerts us to the dangers of non-reflection that, unlike stupidity, "it can be found in highly intelligent people" (Arendt 2003, 164).[2]

Taking this relationship between the inability to think and evil is necessary considering three fundamental propositions. First, we must take this connection as a risk inherent in all men. Second, the thinking faculty cannot be expected to generate moral propositions, such as a prescriptive code of conduct or a new definition of good and evil. Finally, thinking is "out of order" for dealing with the invisible as we move into a world of appearances in which truly human existence can be described as "pure presence". Hence the conclusion that "For thinking as such does society little good (...). It does not create values, it will not find out, once and for all, what 'the good' is, and it does not confirm but rather dissolves accepted rules of conduct." (Arendt 2003, 188)

It is not our purpose to make a complete analysis of Arendt's[3] faculty of thinking but to point out some of the author's arguments about political responsibility. The political importance of thinking is precisely shown when things seem to fall apart, when political structures crumble, and moral convictions fade away. In these moments, thinking ceases to be a politically marginal issue. "When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join is conspicuous and thereby becomes a kind of action" (Arendt 2003, 188). Therefore, "thinking itself is dangerous" (Arendt 2003, 177), since it provides the conditions for the release of the faculty of judgment, the most political of spiritual capacities, the ability to take a stand, stating "this is wrong" or even "I cannot do this", a moral proposition par excellence that, in times from political obscurity, distinguishes those exempt from guilt and participation (Arendt 2003, 78).[4] That is why the author states that "it is sheer absurdity to expect moral behavior from someone who does not think. Not thinking is, for example, not imagining how I would feel if what I inflict on others happened to me; it is evil." (Arendt 2006b, 718)

Finally, if the "German question" is part of the frame of reference of political responsibility in Arendt and Weil, an adequate answer to the problem must, for Arendt, reflect on thinking as an essential element to release the capacity to judge. For Weil, it is indispensable to consider the relationship between morality and politics and the insufficiency of remaining in the moral field when it comes to acting. In both, what is at stake is man's freedom understood as a condition and as an end of politics.

4. Responsibility for the common world and the maintenance of democracy

Arendt addresses the issue in "Collective Responsibility" which starting point is the dividing line between moral guilt and political responsibility. The text revolves around responsibility "for things one has not done", that is, the question of whether "one can be held liable for them" (Arendt 2003, 147). To a large extent, the difficulties arise precisely from the blurring of distinctions between guilt and responsibility, a confusion that, in the post-war period, encouraged, even among Germans resistant to Nazism, the confession of collective or global guilt[5]. For Arendt, as we have seen, such a statement only serves to excuse those who are effectively guilty, after all, saying that everyone is guilty is the same as saying that no one is guilty. Precisely to avoid the dilution of guilt until its complete disappearance, it is essential to delimit the border between guilt and responsibility. In other words, it is necessary to emphasize that "guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out; it is strictly personal" (Arendt 2003, 147).

For Arendt, the blurring of the line that separates guilt and responsibility is due to two distinct difficulties. First, by the vagueness of the terms in which we deal with the conflicts between moral and political considerations, on the one hand, and with moral and political standards, on the other. Roughly speaking, the ambiguity that dominates our vocabulary is made explicit in Modernity by shifting the center of interest from the world to the self. Secondly, this movement is justified by the religious discourse, translated in the shift from care for the world to concern for one's soul and salvation. The conclusion is simple: "In the center of moral considerations of human conduct stands the self; in the center of political considerations of conduct stands the world." (Arendt 2003, 153)

The difference between morals and politics becomes clearer when Arendt takes up two Socratic propositions extracted from the Gorgias. In the first, Socrates says that "to commit injustice is worse than to suffer it" (474b). In the second, he states: "it would be better for me that my lyre or a choir that I lead were out of tune or strident with dissonance, and that the majority of men disagreed with me and said the opposite of what I say, than I, being one, were at variance and contradiction with myself" (484c). Both reflect the assumption that I live not only with others but also with myself. The question is to define which perspective should take precedence, because, if from a moral point of view suffering an injustice is better than practicing it, from a political perspective, the best thing is that there is no injustice, which implies the duty to prevent it. Thus, the problem of political responsibility can finally gain definitive features, pari passu with which the question becomes unavoidable because there are injustices in the world and they concern everyone who shares the world that made them possible.

In the exact text, Arendt adds to the constant reference to Hitler's Germany the framework posed by the controversies surrounding the Vietnam War: in both contexts, the question of responsibility appears as a dilemma in the face of which it is necessary to decide between complicity and resistance. The latter, however, is only possible when the center of concern shifts from the self to the destiny of collective life since political resistance also involves thinking that, in turn, "calls not only for intelligence and profundity but above all for courage" (Arendt 1970, 8). Once again, it is important to stress that no moral and personal standard of conduct can excuse us from responsibility for this decision. Political responsibility "is the price we pay for the fact that we live our lives not by ourselves but among our fellow men" (Arendt 2003, 158)[6]. Therefore, it is intersubjectively based, as one is always responsible towards someone, whether towards oneself or those with whom we share the world. The recognition of political responsibility, whose genesis is the exercise of the capacity to judge, is contrary to anonymous complicity with violence, terror, and the always anti-political use of hatred and racism. Sharing a familiar world, everyone is responsible, whether those who can be singled out, like Eichmann, or the co-responsible, diluted in a depersonalized mass of supporters (Sanchez 2011).

For a final observation from the "German question", given the embarrassment felt by some Germans for what the Nazi government had caused, Arendt points to the "ashamed of being human" (Arendt 2005, 131). Indeed, only the idea of humanity can illuminate both the imperative of collective responsibility and the consequence it entails in the political field, namely, the fact that "must assume responsibility for all crimes committed by men" (Arendt 2005, 131). Faced with the unfortunate actuality of the resumption of Nazi-fascist discourses and the ever-strong acceptance of racial ideologies, "in political terms, the idea of humanity [...] is the on guarantee that one 'superior race' after another may not feel obligated to follow the 'natural law' of the right of the powerful and exterminate 'inferior races un-worthy of survival'" (Arendt 2005, 131).

In 1957, Weil published „Responsabilité politique", whose approach not only distinguishes it from the moral and legal planes but focuses attention on the "political subject" in a narrow sense, beginning with the question about the political responsibility of a man of government.

Following him in that direction would take us away from the itinerary proposed. However, two of Weil's observations allow us to take the article for our scope. First, we must consider the idea that in constitutional States, there exists a relation of reciprocity regarding political responsibility between the political man and the common citizen (Weil 1991b, 342). Then, in the last paragraph of the text, we find the assertion that "a political responsibility of the citizen exists wherever the question of such responsibility is explicitly posed" (Weil 1991b, 350).

On the one hand, this responsibility is properly political because it concerns the value of the action. On the other hand, it is situated on three interdependent and distinct planes. First, the responsible agent is required to discover the true problems and discard those that are only apparent or even absurd, in other words, to separate what can only be solved in the political field from what should not be linked to this domain. Then, it must also deal with articulating the solution to political problems. Finally, the solution needs to be put into action. In this regard, it is essential to remember that a theoretically good solution may not achieve the desired ends. Due to negligence, the ill will of lower bodies, or the intervention of non-political groups and groupings, the chosen plan is not implemented (Weil 1991b, 344).

Therefore, political actions are judged "the criterion is historical and not moral or opposed to moral: the man who acts invokes this criterion himself: his political responsibility was precisely to succeed in the realization of what he considered as desirable, just, good" (Weil 1991b, 344). But even more important is the statement that "implicitly or explicitly, all political discussion recognizes the validity of this criterion" (Weil 1991b, 344). Indeed, by bringing the expression "political discussion", Weil offers the keys to directly associate the theme with reflection on the tensions and limits of democracy. Political responsibility and democracy are not just convergent themes but are placed in Weil's political philosophy as interconnected issues that share his assumptions. This thesis is supported if we consider democracy a government regime and a form of social life.

At first, however, in a first attempt at a definition, we can return to Weil's words when he states that democracy is "always a system of free discussion in evolution" (Weil 1950, 37), which can only be achieved by "conscious and responsible action" (Weil 1950, 39). At this point, our problem arises since democracy is the most complex political system to define. It does not exist fully realized anywhere; everywhere, it presents itself as an ideal and a march. This first attempt at a definition highlights another essential aspect: the fact that democracy "does not withstand all tests, tensions, and injustices due to a kind of state of grace" (Weil 1950, 39). Also, nothing guarantees that a democratic community does not fall into a situation in which democracy becomes impossible, after all, as the author recalls in another text, "it is not enough to talk about democracy for citizens to be able, or at least willing, to take part in the discussions that regulate the destiny of the community" (Weil 1996, 172-173).

Weil lists at least four risks to democracies. First, there is the fact that "the citizens may be so ignorant of public affairs that they fail to appreciate the importance of the problems involved and may well have no desire to express an opinion on them" (Weil 1951, 425). Then there is the danger that social and economic pressures are so intense that they prevent most citizens from expressing their convictions. Third, the political system can exclude part of the population from discussions about ends and means to problems in collective life. Finally, there is always the possibility of finding a population willing to "dispose" of democracy.

This last risk mainly revolves around the attitude to adopt when democratic instruments threaten democracy. It leads us to two fundamental problems: on the one hand, thinking about the limits of tolerance and, on the other hand, considering the current success of anti-democratic doctrines. While the first is a constitutive issue of our theme, the second is a challenge that not only resurfaces from time to time but which is never wholly absent.

This makes it particularly urgent to think about political responsibility in this framework, as “it is impossible to ascertain a priori whether a state which is at present democratic will remain so” (Weil 1951, 442). Weil recalls that “Hitler came to power by the most democratic means possible” (Weil 1950, 36). So now “we no longer ignore the reasons for considering Hitler, elected by the German people, as an undemocratic head of state – but nothing prevents us from hoping that others like him will appear” (Weil 1950, 37).

Finally, to remain faithful to the initial proposal, we want to note that the democracy for which we are responsible should not be taken as a means but as an end capable of guiding the creation of material and spiritual conditions without which it would not even be possible. Furthermore, “every democratic government train its citizens” (Weil 1951, 438). That is, he also conceives action to educate the people for democracy. We end with a constant concern in Weil, education, without which “talking about democracy (in whatever sense such a controversial term assumes) is a joke” (Weil 1993, 135).

According to Arendt’s perspective, education is a double path of responsibility, namely, with the conservation of the world and with the protection of the unexpected that underlies every newcomer, those in whom we place our hope in the establishment of a world in which the dignity of politics is finally protected. Therefore, initiation into the legacy of our ancestors is essential to form individuals who are genuinely responsible for the in-between space, which reverberates in action, discourse, belonging, participation, and thought. Therefore, it would be up to education the arduous mission to provide us with the necessary information so that “our inheritance [no] was left to us by no testament” (Arendt 1961, 3). Not only that but also to prevent thoughtlessness and loneliness from remaining the routine experiences of an everincreasing number of people. All this makes the educational process a spark of illumination for the problem of thoughtlessness. Consequently, to face evil, a potential help to decide, "in the rare moments when the chips are down" (Arendt 2003, 4), which other self we want to live with and how we choose to appear to those with whom we share the world.

5. Final Considerations

Our itinerary brought us responsibility for building a shared world and for the foundations that sustain democracy. At the starting point, the German issues call attention to the reflection, difficult and necessary, on the responsibility that the members of a community and a State have, if not for the mistakes (or crimes) of their government, at least for the existence of such government. In periods of destabilization of democracy, this reflection becomes even more complex and necessary. We think this makes the theme's relevance sufficiently clear for current philosophical reflection.

If responsibility always demands a response, in the political field, it is not limited to the moral sphere, but people must translate it into a form of action. In other words, political responsibility is not consistent with the concern for "saving one's own soul", nor is it reduced to signing notes of repudiation. It implies the transformation of the world through the creation of conditions in which moral life becomes possible.

Finally, particularly in a democracy, political responsibility is essentially placed in the obligation of each one and everyone in training the people to participate, which also leads us to say a word about education, not by chance a topic that appears, with different spaces, in the reflections of Arendt and Weil. We are responsible for forming a subject capable of participating in the processes of solving collective problems, aware of the importance of their participation. It is equivalent, as stated above, to the formation of a man capable of thinking, expressing himself, discerning, and engaging responsibly in the construction – and permanence – of the familiar world.

The choice of Arendt and Weil is not fortuitous. They are thinkers deeply concerned with the erosion of essential conditions for everyday life, even if they see this phenomenon from different angles. The two, whose experiences with Nazism are well known, take on the task of thinking about time itself, and in this, they also help us to understand the social role of those who think about politics. In dark times there is no exemption from political responsibility, not even for the pseudo-humanist, who perhaps imagines himself untouchable in an ivory tower. Finally, the "courage of reason" must be recovered, recognizing that what is at stake is the possibility of effectively combating violence and not just its verbal and artificial exclusion.

NOTES

1 For the correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Anne Mendelsonn-Weil, cf. Arendt (2019).
2 "[Nonthinking] teaches them to hold fast to whatever the prescribed rules of conduct may be a given time in a given Society. What people then get used to is not so much the content of the rules, a close examination of which would Always lead them into perplexity, as the possession os rules under which to subsume particulars. In other words, they get used to never making up their minds. If somebody then should now up who, for whatever reasons and purposes, wishes to abolish the old 'values' or virtues, he will find it easy enough provided he offers a new code, and he will need no force and no persuasion (...) to establish it" (Arendt 2003, 178).
3 About the faculty of thought in Arendt, see Richard Bernstein (2000) and Fábio Passos (2017).
4 As thinking imposes reflection on what causes astonishment, enabling individuals to judge whether they should adhere to specific values, it is understandable why the most questioning have always been considered "dangerous". They are described like this due to the threat inherent in their own thinking because, in extreme situations, while the respectable are more easily controlled, the rebels seldom adhere to the "new order". Those who question keep the inner dialogue alive and update the question about the *self* with which they will live. "They asked themselves to what extent they would still be able to live in peace with themselves after having committed certain deeds; and they decided that it would be better to do nothing [...] because only on this condition could they go on living with themselves at all" (Arendt n.d., 5).
5 As happened in Stuttgart in October 1945, when the Evangelical Church Council - also composed of opponents of the Hitler regime, such as Pastor Martin Niemöller – stated: "It is with deep pain that we declare: through our fault, unspeakable sufferings have befallen many peoples and countries (...), although we have fought for long years against (...) the terrible National Socialist regime, we accuse ourselves" (Gounelle 2017, 3).

[6] In this sense, the cosmopolitanism of human life is affirmed, a character that is reflected not only in plurality but also in the fact that, in every community, individuals are responsible for each other, in reciprocal care, and in the relationship with the common world. Thus, it is possible to understand why the responsibility that binds men in the public space is the same that gives meaning to the Kantian maxim according to which the violation of rights committed in one place is felt worldwide. In other words, our cosmopolitan existence is sustained by political responsibility that aims to ensure that, even immersed in being together, we can, as agents, differentiate ourselves in uniqueness, given the permanence of the world. At this point, the boundaries between action and political responsibility are blurred: as every action implies the actor's desire for his peers to witness his deed, it can be said that the action also aims to serve as an example. The exemplary character of the action means that responsibility is, in essence, "knowing that, starting from you, an example is presented that others will 'follow'; this is how we change the world" (Arendt 2006b, 626). The relationship between cosmopolitanism and responsibility was the backdrop for Young's (2005) discussions on how to think about responsibility in a context of globalization: instead of the perspective that defended that political responsibility only refers to individuals from the same community, the sharing a globalized world imposes the perception, inspired by Arendt, that actions give rise to chains whose apprehension is impossible in terms of their consequences and the determination of those concerned by their effects.

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Adorno's Dash: Dialectics of the Inconspicuous*

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Abstract

The study focuses in detail on Adorno's punctuation as one of the key components of his philosophic style and an integral element of his negative dialectics. By providing a complex analysis of the peculiar way Adorno handles punctuation marks, the study should help the reader to achieve a richer and more precise understanding of Adorno's texts. Punctuation marks will be presented not only as means of underscoring the acoustic aspect of the text and rendering it musical but also as objects that can react to current historical processes and help to meaningfully transform them as well.

Keywords: Adorno, style, punctuation in philosophy, theory of language, Walter Benjamin

After the turn of the millennium it has been widely recognized that Adorno's conception of language plays a central role in his philosophy.[1] Numerous treatises of the main aspects of Adorno's approach have been already published by excellent adornian interpreters[2] and the only thing the readership may be still waiting for are more systematic book-length studies of his overall language theory.[3] An important piece of the puzzle that is still missing, though, is a case study that would focus complexly on one of the components of Adorno's style and demonstrate how it presents itself in a concrete text;[4] for Adorno was a performative philosopher in the sense that he manifested his theoretical insights in the *Darstellung* of his works, i.e. in the manner in which they were written.[5] Therefore, a comprehensive interpretation of a concrete text

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that would close in on *how* it is written would be as valuable as the numerous studies that pick out *what* Adorno says about language from the fragmentary insights scattered across his various works and try to reconstruct his overall view of the matter.[6] However, a text that would serve well as object of such detailed examination is hard to find since most of Adorno's studies are stuffed with unusual linguistic figures to such a degree that they simply overpower the interpreter with their sheer number and subtlety. There's too much going on in works like the *Aesthetic Theory* to be analysed complexly in this way. For this reason the interpreter has no choice but to turn to the most innocent looking texts by Adorno and hope that at least in their case he will be able to make sense of their style. I will venture on the task of such an analysis and look closely at a neat study from the *Notes to Literature* called *Punctuation Marks*, because it provides me with an opportunity to pick out and examine Adorno's punctuation as one of the little key elements of his style. The same way Benjamin's sole disciple Adorno often does, I will focus on a tiny fragment and try to show how it expresses the whole. My intention is to meaningfully compare two aspects of the study with each other, namely that what Adorno *says* in the text and what he *does* in it, mostly in terms of punctuation. Such a comparison should yield interesting results. For although it may not seem like it, a better grasp of Adorno's approach to punctuation can enable the reader to uncover the whole scope of what his texts express.[7] The concrete, material experience of reading Adorno, so to say, may transform itself into a more enriching and enjoyable undertaking.

It is no secret that Adorno had a singular, almost idiosyncratic style of writing and that many readers of philosophy have become acquainted with "an instantly recognizable Adorno sound" (Plass 2007).[8] Nevertheless, it should still be pointed out that punctuation is one of the main secrets of his uniqueness since it defines the rhythm, tempo and voice-leading of the text; in other words, it structures the text musically.[9] It is also the aspect in which Adorno's style differs the most from Benjamin's. For even though the influence of Benjamin's theory of language on Adorno was decisive and central benjaminian *words* such as *constellation*, *dialectical image* or *allegory* have made their way into Adorno's philosophic vocabulary,[10] the same did not apply for Benjamin's punctuation and all that goes along with it. Both thinkers placed decisive emphasis on the moment of expression of truth that is in opposition to mere communication of thoughts or information, but whereas Benjamin understood his texts in visual terms, namely as the notorious dialectical images, Adorno kept his attention directed primarily to the acoustic aspect of his works. Benjamin cared primarily about how his philosophy looked, Adorno about how it sounded. In other words, Adorno was more reserved than Benjamin with regards to the conception of the philosophical text as revelation, as instantaneous visual manifestation of truth. Adorno's style lies somewhere in between the *stasis* of Benjamin's revelatory dialectical imagery and the dynamic flow of a discursive text.[11] It is also situated between the two poles designated by language ontology and language instrumentalism. For Adorno, language is neither a being in itself through which Being itself would speak,[12] nor is it a mere arbitrary instrument for communicating human thoughts.[13] Language cannot become expressive either when the human subject puts itself in the position of a mere amplifier that lets language itself speak and does not add anything of its own to it, or when the subject takes the reins completely and the text becomes a dead representation of his or her ideas that does not enrich or alter them in any way. The subject should not stand over language, but neither should it disappear under its *murmure*. It is a subtle cooperation of subject and language that Adorno is about. And the same applies to the relation of language and history. Adorno was neither a language *purist* nor what I would like to provisionally call a language *grimist*. While the purists view language as a closed system that evolves on its own like a growing organism and remains relatively untouched by historic events, the so called grimists consider it to be completely dependent on the course of history and defined by it.[14] The purists have no place in language for external influences, the grimists see language as influenced primarily from the outside, e.g. by Latinization. According to the purists, language is an organic unity that is purposeful in itself and its organic life is measured by a "teleological rhythm" (Adorno 1992, 288), i.e. it grows towards flourishment, towards expressive fullness; in the grimists view, language is purely passive towards history and has no opportunity to transcend it. Once again, Adorno confronts dialectically these two positions and maintains a conception of language that is utmost sensitive to the influence of history on it but keeps the possibility to transcend or transform the course of history *in language*–how ever slightly–open. Through the most complex mediations, Adorno's thoroughly historical language points to something beyond history. History transcends itself in adornian texts the same way the subject does. With this necessary basic delineation of Adorno's position being completed, I invite the reader to join me in the detailed examination of the chosen text.

I.

The essay *Punctuation Marks* stands out from the whole of *Notes to Literature* at first glance. It is the only text that visually suggests fragmentation. The paragraphs are separated by blank lines and look like free-floating pieces of a mosaic. However, it was not Adorno's intention to point to the fragmentary character of the text by this very visual shape. Such simple use of expressive means was something he rather omitted–and even his works that are made of seamlessly connected page-long paragraphs that the modern readers fear[15] are fragmentary. There are no less discontinuities in *Negative Dialectics* or *Aesthetic Theory* than in the *Punctuation Marks*. So the question is what Adorno wants to say by the blatant separation of individual paragraphs. In the case of *Punctuation Marks* he seems to be expressing something he explicitly claims in the text, namely that "the writer is in a permanent predicament when it comes to punctuation marks" (Adorno 1991, 96). The blank spaces express that there should be something that both connects and separates the paragraphs, but the writer is not able to find it. A dash, ellipsis, a little *, anything would be more satisfying than the open space that evokes a strong feeling of incompleteness, of the author leaving the text too early before its proper completion.[16] In other words, Adorno expresses the *failure* of punctuation marks to complete the text into a visually satisfying whole.[17] He is showing the reader that given the historical state of language he has no punctuation marks at hand that would help him to express the very sense of separation and connection between the paragraphs–i.e. between the ensembles of his thoughts–that he wants to manifest. Any given mark would be misleading and give the reader a wrong impression. In a sense, the void between the lines is more glaring than even the crudest punctuation mark would be and in this way it gives the reader the primary impression the text is supposed to make: the failure and absence of punctuation marks are what the text is about in the first place.[18] The main content of the work is expressed primarily through the form in which it is written.[19]

II.

If Adorno were to opt to fill the void with a punctuation mark, the main candidate would be the dash. For the dash captures "both connection and detachment" (Adorno 1991, 95), which is something Adorno wants to make the reader feel at the beginning of each new paragraph.[20] It is in the dash that "thought becomes aware of its fragmentary character" (Adorno 1991, 93). For this reason dashes kept their place–unlike question marks or exclamation points–in Adorno's repertoire of punctuation marks and were used with vigour by the big proponent of fragmentariness of thought. Adorno's dashes often remind the reader of Hegel's ones which could split a paragraph into two dialectically opposed halves like a flash of lightning. Nevertheless, Adorno chose to not set them in between the ensembles of his thoughts in *Punctuation Marks* and the sole two places where he did use them show that it is the very dash that performs the most dialectical act in the whole text. I will quote the two sentences in original because it is extremely hard to reproduce perfectly Adorno's punctuation in a foreign language, for which reason the punctuation in Shierry Weber Nicholsen's translation differs from the original. The first sentence goes like this:

> Der Unterschied zwischen dem griechischen Semikolon, jenem erhöhten Punkt, der der Stimme verwehren will, sich zu senken, und

> dem deutschen, das mit Punkt und Unterlänge die Senkung vollzieht und gleichwohl, indem es den Beistrich in sich aufnimmt, die Stimme in der Schwebe läßt, wahrhaft ein dialektisches Bild – dieser Unterschied scheint den zwischen der Antike und dem christlichen Zeitalter, der durchs Unendliche gebrochenen Endlichkeit, nachzuahmen; auf die Gefahr hin, daß das heute gebräuchliche griechische Zeichen erst von Humanisten des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts erfunden ward. (GS 11, 107)

> The distinction between the Greek semicolon [.] , a raised point whose aim is to keep the voice from being lowered, and the German one, which accomplishes the lowering with its period and its hanging lower part and yet keeps the voice suspended by incorporating the comma–truly a dialectical image–seems to reproduce the distinction between classical antiquity and the Christian Era, finitude refracted through the infinite, although it may be the case that the Greek sign currently in use was invented by the sixteenth-century Humanists. (Adorno 1991, 92)

Now while the English dashes uplift the term *dialectical image* from the stream of the sentence, the German dash functions similarly as the serious dashes of Theodor Storm, whom Adorno praises as their "unsurpassed master in nineteenth-century German literature" (Adorno 1991, 93). Storm was more thoughtful in using his dashes than the modern writers that Adorno criticizes as sloppy; nevertheless, he still used the dash in a way that was unsatisfactory to Adorno and the quoted sentence can be viewed as an implicit critique of the nineteenth-century dash. For even though Storm could place dashes between sentences in a compelling way that evoked a connection of events that were separated by large periods of time or an enormous temporary separation of those that were seemingly contemporary to each other, these connections and separations had a tint of mythical fatefulness, which is something that Adorno tried diligently to overcome. In Storm's texts events were bound together by a mythological force and it was in the dashes that myth was hidden, according to Adorno.[21] Well, his own dash does the same thing as those of Storm: it carries the reader far back into antiquity and makes it seem as if the evolution of the semicolon from the Greek one to the German Christian one was mythically bound to happen; as though things couldn't be otherwise. But his sentence does not stop here. In fact, the effect of the dash is immediately negated by another of Adorno's favourites, the semicolon. The latter interrupts the seeming mythological continuity of historical time, saying that the Greek mark can very well be just an anachronism and the pictured development just an illusion. In the sentence the dash introduces a mythical moment, the semicolon a critical one. It is the latter that breaks the flow of the sentence in the right way, not the former, and Adorno's critique of myth expresses itself as a critique of the dash by the semicolon. The dash is implicitly told that it should search for a new function since the nineteenth-century's one has become outdated. Another telling fact is that the dash appears right after the term *dialectical image* which seems to be originally designated to describe the semicolon; nonetheless, it is the dash itself that becomes a dialectical image in the end, fitting precisely the definition of such a phenomenon. It is that which was once modern and effective but ages and becomes outmoded in front of the reader's eyes.[22] The dash is a place at which a historical dynamic can be sensed as it is in process.

III.

All in all, the way Adorno handles the first dash is a bright little variation on Benjamin's approach to historic phenomena. First, he declares that the dash is currently undergoing a crisis, degenerating into a sloppy device and, as far as its proper function goes, vanishing from history.[23] His next step is to direct his gaze towards the past and look for a better example of a use of the dash in it–not to restore it pure and simple but to critically overcome it. Adorno shows that the fact that the present is in crisis does not imply that the past was perfect; it had its own flaws and can be used only as a clue leading to new possibilities that can be discovered in the degenerating phenomenon. The dash should separate seemingly connected things without re-inserting a mythic fateful bond in between them; it should separate them in order to investigate each of them immanently and to critique rationally the false claims they are making. It is a new way of using the dash Adorno is looking for.[24]

IV.

The second dash in the *Punctuation Marks* is dialectical in a much more direct sense. For it is a dash and a negation of a dash at the same time. It appears in the last paragraph where Adorno elaborates on the relation of the writer to the rules of punctuation:

> Weder kann er den vielfach starren und groben Regeln sich anvertrauen, noch kann er sie ignorieren, wenn er nicht einer Art Eigenkleidung verfallen und durch die Pointierung des Unscheinbaren – und Unscheinbarkeit ist das Lebenselement der Interpunktion – deren Wesen verletzen will. (GS 11, 112)

> The writer cannot trust in the rules, which are often rigid and crude; nor can he ignore them without indulging in a kind of eccentricity and doing harm to their nature by calling attention to what is inconspicuous–and inconspicuousness is what punctuation lives by. (Adorno 1991, 96)

Here the interruption effected by the dashes highlights Adorno's insight about the inconspicuous nature of punctuation marks. However, by calling attention to the inconspicuous, Adorno negates its very imperceptibility. The inconspicuous becomes glaring. Now the dashes stare at the reader like two *chlorurus sordidus*. As such, they can no longer put emphasis on the words they uplift since they are drawing it involuntarily on themselves. The dash has stopped being a dash and became an incomprehensible glaring symbol instead. As conspicuous, the dash is dead, wrested out of its *Lebenselement* like a fish on the shore.[25] The symbol "–" exists as a dash, as a punctuation mark only insofar as it is working inconspicuously in between words. Otherwise it turns into an undecipherable short line. Still, this is what Adorno makes the reader experience. The quoted sentence is a place where the dialectics of punctuation have been brought to a standstill. Now that the words have called attention to punctuation, the reader becomes painfully aware not only of the dashes but of all the marks in the text. This attentive gaze puts them to death and the text cannot flow forward anymore. The sentences disintegrate into single words which lack any structured context that would provide them with meaning. The words have turned against punctuation marks whose annulation has brought the downfall of words. This conflict does not lead to any goal, though, it results in no higher conception of language that would do away with punctuation marks. Rather, it has to be "endured each time" (Adorno 1991, 96) as a conflict between the universal rules of punctuation, the adherence to which keeps the marks inconspicuous, and the subjective will to expression which wants to use them even against rules, thus making them stand out. Without either of these elements the text would not be truly expressive.

V.

It is no accident that Adorno created a conflict between words and punctuation marks. For these two had been already set in opposition by the manner in which they were used by the society of Adorno's day. They had been viewed as two separated, autonomous sets, not as two inseparable organs of the body of written language. According to social custom, punctuation marks were used as external instruments that structure words in order to make them comprehensible to the reader; they were like blades with which the raw meat of the text was chopped up into small chunks so that it could be easily consumed. However, Adorno viewed them differently: "instead of diligently serving the interplay between language and the reader, they serve, hieroglyphically, an interplay that takes places in the interior of language, along its own pathways" (Adorno 1991, 96). According to Adorno, punctuation marks should not be set in between words with the intention of making an effect on the reader; it should rather be the words themselves, the expression they want to achieve, that demand certain marks to be used at concrete places. Adorno's punctuation marks can–and at some places indeed do–make the text more unreadable in the sense of its simple discursive comprehensibility. They are not used to make the text more logical or informative but to render it more expressive.[26] Or, to put it more precisely, the logical and expressive functions of punctuation marks cannot be separated from each other in Adorno's texts. The melody and rhythm, the musicality of the text is not to be isolated from its logical informativity. For this reason Adorno criticizes the fact that in modern society punctuation marks have become an autonomous group of instruments with purely logical-semantic functions:

> For through their logical-semantic autonomy, punctuation marks, which articulate language and thereby bring writing closer to the voice, have become separate from both voice and writing, and they come into conflict with their own mimetic nature. An ascetic use of punctuation marks attempts to compensate for some of that. In every punctuation mark thoughtfully avoided, writing pays homage to the sound it suppresses. (Adorno 1991, 97)

The mimetic, hieroglyphic nature of punctuation marks makes the written text liken itself to the expressivity of spoken language. In a mediated fashion, hieroglyphically, i.e. as images of certain acoustic phenomena, the punctuation marks should make the text *sound* a certain way.[27] However, in Adorno's time they were rather used to squeeze out a certain message from the text or to make an effect on the reader. As such, they were to be thoughtfully avoided, as Adorno suggests. For to communicate with the reader, they had had to become somehow evident. Nonetheless, only those marks that draw attention to words whilst remaining inconspicuous themselves can render the text truly musical and expressive. The mark has to withdraw from the reader's attention and in this withdrawal it colours the given word. In times when all the marks serve too blatantly to communicate with the reader, this withdrawal has to turn into omission.

VI.

The modern dash that sets off the conflict between words and punctuation marks is tellingly described by Adorno in another context as *zu kraß* (GS 11, 109). This does not only mean "too crude", as the English translation has it, but also "too blatant" or "too glaring". The downfall of punctuation marks is brought about by the mark that is no longer able "to accomplish what it should" (Adorno 1991, 94) because it has already stopped being inconspicuous. The dash is used by Adorno as a representative of the fact that perhaps all punctuation marks have become *zu kraß*. All have been incapacitated by the social conduct. Some for other reasons than others, though. A case in point is the semicolon whose blatancy was not caused by its use as an instrument of communication with the reader. Modern texts have no place for the semicolon precisely for the reason that it is not well suited to take part in such a communication, according to Adorno; the only way the semicolon can help to make the text more reader friendly is to disappear from it. Since hardly anybody is used to it anymore, the semicolon becomes glaring every time it still makes its way into a modern text. This is expressed by Adorno in the following passage:

> Theodor Haecker erschrak mit Recht darüber, daß das Semikolon ausstirbt: er erkannte darin, daß keiner mehr eine Periode schreiben kann. Dazu gehört die Furcht vor seitenlangen Abschnitten, die vom Markt erzeugt ward; von dem Kunden, der sich nicht anstrengen will und dem erst die Redakteure und dann die Schriftsteller, um ihr Leben zu erwerben, sich anpaßten, bis sie am Ende der eigenen Anpassung Ideologien wie die der Luzidität, der sachlichen Härte, der gedrängten Präzision erfanden. (GS 11, 110)

> Theodor Haecker was rightfully alarmed by the fact that the semicolon is dying out; this told him that no one can write a period, a sentence containing several balanced clauses, any more. Part of this incapacity is the fear of page-long paragraphs, a fear created by the marketplace—by the consumer who does not want to tax himself and to whom first editors and then writers accommodated for the sake of their incomes, until finally they invented ideologies for their own accommodation, like lucidity, objectivity, and concise precision. (Adorno 1991, 95)

Once again, an interesting difference between the German and English versions can be spotted. Where Adorno used the colon, Nicholsen went for the semicolon; where Adorno placed the semicolon, Nicholsen set the dash. The second difference is more important, for it reveals Adorno's semicolon as a place of a thoughtful omission of the dash. The fact that Nicholsen chose the dash is eloquent, namely because Adorno set the semicolon at a place where one would expect the dash. And Adorno's semicolon seems to be fulfilling the function of the already impotent dash. It creates a rupture, a sense of waiting in a mood of connection and detachment that was typical for the dash. On the contrary, it does not fulfil its proper traditional function, which was to suspend the flow of the text at a place of equilibrium where it would be too early to set a period but where a larger break was needed than a comma would provide. Adorno's semicolon does not create a period, it does not split the sentence into two balanced clauses. While Adorno claims that in its period-making function the semicolon is dying out, he demonstrates at the same time that precisely for this reason it can be used in new ways. He uses the semicolon to slightly shock the reader; the strangeness of the mark in modern prose can serve well to create a shocking effect. The semicolon reappears as a ghost at peculiar places. It seems that by shocking the reader, Adorno wants to make her start listening to the sound of the text as well as to the conveyed message. For when the text does not let the reader move forward in his consumption of information, when the shock disrupts his attention to the message, the sound of language can reach his ears.[28] However, it seems to be less and less easy to shock the recipient after Surrealism or Dadaism, in the era of sensations, shocking news and aggressive visual media. A subtle use of punctuation could be one of the ways to achieve a mild but effective shock. Adorno's semicolons do not make their entrance when the idea is out of breath and needs to take a breather; they appear when thoughtlessness needs to have its breath taken away.

VII.

Adorno tried to use the historical condition of certain punctuation marks to his own benefit. So far we have seen his efforts to negate and transform the degenerating dash and to rescue the disappearing semicolon by changing its function. But the mark that may be the most important in the whole text is the one that does not get almost any direct attention in it. Adorno seems to me to be primarily concerned with a new way of handling the period. For the period served traditionally to achieve closure and completeness, which was something that Adorno tried to negate and expel from his works. Since he was convinced that modern reality is profoundly fragmentary and in no way holistic, he could not let the period express a sense of a totality of thought being articulated and completed. In other words, he attempted to negate the Hegelian period, the final point towards which everything is striving and in which it turns into a meaningful whole. To give the period a new sound was bound to be one of the main tasks of negative dialectics. It is only telling, then, that Adorno makes this very mark the most inconspicuous of all in the whole essay. He only briefly mentions it once, saying that “the comma and the period correspond to the half-cadence and the authentic cadence” (Adorno 1991, 92). Contrary to all the other marks, the period gets no individual attention, though. Adorno even claims that the most inconspicuous marks are the commas (Adorno 1991, 97), thus making them conspicuous and hiding the truly inconspicuous period behind this blind screen by not mentioning it at all. Similarly as in the case of the two most abrupt ones, the dash and the semicolon, Adorno creates a tension between the two most inconspicuous marks, the comma and the period, and tries to transform them in the process.

VIII.

Since I want to limit myself to the *Punctuation Marks*, I will work with an example of Adorno’s confrontation of the comma with the period from the given text, although passages that are more exemplary can be found in other Adorno’s works. Still, one eloquent sentence made its way into the essay:

> Die Prosa wird auf den Protokollsatz, der Positivisten liebstes Kind, heruntergebracht, auf die bloße Registrierung der Tatsachen, und indem Syntax und Interpunktion des Rechts sich begeben, diese zu artikulieren, zu formen, Kritik an ihnen zu üben, schickt bereits die Sprache sich an, vor dem bloß Seienden zu kapitulieren, ehe nur der Gedanke Zeit hat, diese Kapitulation eifrig von sich aus ein zweites Mal zu vollziehen. (GS 11, 110)

> Prose is reduced to the “protocol sentence,” the darling of the logical positivists, to a mere recording of facts, and when syntax and punctuation relinquish the right to articulate and shape the facts, to critique them, language is getting ready to capitulate to what merely exists, even before thought has time to perform this capitulation eagerly on its own for the second time. (Adorno 1991, 95)

In this case, the English translator managed to keep the sentence intact without splitting it up into two or three individual sentences, as often happens elsewhere in Adorno’s works. Nonetheless, the English sentence is significantly less fragmented and the number of commas has been reduced from eleven to six. This is partly due to the different structures of German and English languages, partly to the effort on the translator’s part to make the sentence at least a little smoother. While Adorno tried to stuff it with as many disruptions in the form of commas as possible, Nicholsen avoided the unnecessary ones, most tellingly in the case of the simple "and" that she places between "articulate" and "shape" instead of the German comma. Of course, Adorno could have used "*und*" as well, thus making the sentence flow better. His intention was the opposite, though. He structured the sentence purposefully in such a way that it moves forward only difficultly. It is as if a certain force had to be overcome at each comma so that the movement of language could even continue. The commas are purposefully set like a *mimesis* of the real historical negativity that constantly blocks off the movement of history towards a significant change. Adorno drops them into his sentences like little dynamites that shock the reader and stop the flow of reading. The sentences no longer form arches which would start at the first word and end at the period. There is no more momentum that would carry the reader to the final point. Adorno's periods have no gravity. In the middle of the sentence, the reader no longer feels attracted with interest towards the end but rather exhausted and almost unable to even get there. More importantly, once one finally reaches the period, so many commas have been already gone through that the period seems just as another comma. Adorno's constant interruptions force the reader into a rhythm that prevents him to feel the long continuity between the start of the sentence and its end. The commas weaken the force of the period. There are so many little stops on the way that the final one does not seem much different. The reader feels no unity being achieved but has to rather turn back and face the ruins of the sentence, its *membra disiecta* that have been chopped off by the commas, and try to reconstruct something meaningful from them. At the period, the work does not stop; it starts.

IX.

The same way Adorno's periods are no longer marks of closure but of suspension, thus becoming similar to the commas, the commas do not produce an emphatic sense of suspension, for there is no goal towards which the sentence would flow and thus no movement to be suspended. Adorno's mentioned analogy with music does not apply to his own text.

For cadences and half-cadences, to which he likens the periods and commas, belong to the domain of tonality, and Adorno, the proponent of atonality in modern music, composed his texts in an atonal manner. Adorno's periods are not unlike the endings of e.g. Shönberg's compositions. They are not places of a final gradation of positivity; they are bringing negativity to a fleeting standstill. Thus, Adorno's texts sound unsatisfactorily and unpleasantly. At their ends, nothing is achieved and everything disrupted.

X.

Some things can be only shown, not directly said.[29] Such is the reason why Adorno did not simply state that thought has become fragmentary and closure unachievable in his historical day but took the reader through the exhausting experience of confronting the stylistic expression of such fragmentariness instead. For claiming in a closed and undisrupted manner that thought is fragmentary would contain a paradox. The fragmentariness would be articulated by a non-fragmentary thought.[30] The form of expression itself would negate the formulated content. The non-fragmentariness of the formulation would reveal that its claim about fragmentariness is false.[31] The closure of the sentence would be a disclosure of its untruth. Adorno's texts, on the contrary, are implicitly telling the reader that there is no way of overcoming fragmentation in a historical reality that blocks off closure, not even by a closed claim about the unclosed state of thought and reality. For the claim–which Adorno makes from time to time as well[32]–has to be a fragment itself, if thought is to be truly fragmentary; the whole historic situation cannot be expressed by it. To simply say that the whole is fragmentary is to say that it is non-fragmentary at the same time. To acknowledge fragmentation as essential, one has to express it in the form of the message. It is for this task that punctuation marks prove to be especially handy. Since the fragmentariness of the modern world is one of the main themes in Adorno's philosophy, focusing on his punctuation becomes highly relevant even from a philosophic standpoint.

XI.

Adorno's language makes an impression of a machine that has not been very well oiled. Such a machine that seems to be not working right draws attention towards itself, similarly as the notorious broken hammer. By making language sound funky, Adorno's punctuation helps to make the reader see that philosophic works are *texts*, not mere documentations of thought. It forces one to focus with the same intensity on how the thoughts are expressed as on what they say. In the last instance, it draws attention to the text itself, not as a result of a certain thought process and intention but as an object in its own right. The text is no longer ancillary, it is primary. When one focuses on it in this way–almost as on a painting or a musical composition–, something different comes to the foreground than usually: not meaning or reference, but history. Once the text is viewed as an autonomous object, every aspect of it breathes out history: the words and phrases imported in it by Latinization, the terms stemming from ancient Greek or even Hebrew, the more recent expressions such as "Expressionism" or "Facebook," the current shape and function of punctuation marks, the way the text is structured in paragraphs and laid out on the page etc. All of these aspects are historically conditioned, originating from different eras and undergoing a process of sedimentation:[33] the individual historical layers penetrate each other, forming a fairly homogenous unity. One does not usually differentiate between distinct historic aspects of a text that one is reading. What has become second nature suddenly feels slightly unnatural, though, namely when the text itself in its object-being is highlighted. To a reader that starts paying attention to it as to an object, the text starts looking like an amalgam of heterogenous historic elements. The reader sees that the unity formed by the process of historic sedimentation is not an essential or natural one. More importantly, with the historical form of the text goes hand in hand a certain form of receptivity on the part of the reader, a certain form of thinking and acting. It is the historical condition of *these* forms that Adorno's texts seem to be manifesting as well. By making the seemingly natural approach towards texts not work,[34] they force one to acknowledge that the possibilities of his receptivity are limited by their historical condition[35] and to struggle to transform them. The reader has to get rid of those old receptive residues that only block one's possibility of understanding correctly the current historic situation. Otherwise the text will remain an impenetrable cipher.

XII.

Writing about historical objects unfolds in two dimensions simultaneously: in the dimension of what the text says about history and in the way history expresses itself *in* the text. The medium used to present the object is alike it: both are historical. The words, turns of phrases or punctuation marks used to document history are themselves documents of history.[36] The current state of language itself says perhaps more about history than that what can be said about history in the current language. Adorno was well aware of this paradox, as e.g. his *Theses on the Language of the Philosopher* show, and his *Punctuation Marks* that approach the marks primarily as historic objects can be read on both of the mentioned levels simultaneously. The author is walking a thin line; he is trying to use his punctuation marks in such a way that it is their historical character that comes to the fore, not their meaning or grammatical function. This means that he has to break the rules of punctuation so evidently that the reader does not primarily focus on their grammatical function, but at the same time he has to break them so slightly that it is not subjective intention that emerges from the marks the most.

> History has left its residue (*sich sedimentiert*) in punctuation marks, and it is history, far more than meaning or grammatical function, that looks out at us, rigidified and trembling slightly, from every mark of punctuation. One is almost, therefore, tempted to consider authentic only the punctuation marks in German Gothic type, or *Fraktur,* where the graphic images retain allegorical features, and to regard those of Roman type as mere secularized imitations. (Adorno 1991, 92)

In fact, it is usually meaning or grammatical function that looks out at the reader from punctuation marks and history has to be *made* to emerge from them. Adorno describes not a factual state of things but a desired one. In his description, the figure of the modern becoming outdated as well as the word allegory remind one immediately of Benjamin. Once again, Adorno is subtly varying Benjamin's conception of the allegorical object that describes it as a mere thing that has been hollowed out of all meaning and function by historical time and lies in front of the observer like a strange cipher.[37] For Adorno claims that punctuation marks should keep at least their semantic function.[38] So even though the only authentic punctuation marks could very well be the allegorical ones, it does not imply that they are mere graphic shapes devoid of all function. Adorno does not simply consider their function to be defining for them. The allegorical moment becomes decisive without completely negating the semantic-grammatical one. – Why should one approach punctuation marks as allegories, though. The reason is that Adorno is aiming at an explosion of second nature, at an annulation of convention. This life-long effort of his is taking place once more in the case of punctuation marks. For if one manages to discover the conventionally established marks as estranged allegories, a large potential for critique is unleashed. Adorno's allegories are not allegories of transcendence, as in the case of those from Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* book, but of a better state of immanence, of a situation where language is free of convention and historic rigidity, of its sign character. Punctuation marks as mere signs express allegorically a language that is no longer a sign. For allegories typically express something that is prominently missing in the given state of immanence. Once the text forces the reader to reflect on convention from a significant distance, to see what is missing, a transformation of convention can be on the horizon. And the more innocent looking the reflected conventional object, the greater the explosive potential, perhaps. Such may be the case of punctuation marks: when their harmlessness is disclosed as a strange power that structures the reader's thought, they can no longer be used thoughtlessly.[39] There is one mark in particular that Adorno seems to expose in this way: the question mark. One can stumble upon it only very rarely in Adorno's texts, for even when he poses a question, he does it in an indirect way and ends the sentence with a period. The period usually takes up the function of the question mark in his works. Nonetheless, in the *Punctuation Marks* the question mark makes its appearance twice and in a way that is highly uncharacteristic for Adorno:

> Gleicht nicht das Ausrufungszeichen dem drohend gehobenen Zeigfinger? Sind nicht Fragezeichen wie Blinklichter oder ein Augenaufschlag? (GS 11, 106)

> An exclamation point looks like an index finger raised in warning; a question mark looks like a flashing light or the blink of an eye. (Adorno 1991, 91)

Now Adorno's questions are not really questions. They are mere attempts to persuade the reader about the claim being made. However, Adorno almost never communicated with the reader through his texts, for he deemed such an interaction to be manipulative and to the detriment of the expressive forces of the text as well as of the free interpretive activity of the reader. So when he poses these two suggestive, manipulative questions, they can be only interpreted as ironical.[40] The irony is directed towards the question mark itself, though. For Adorno's thought process probably looked as follows: what is the meaning of such a mark in a world where the break with tradition did not lead to a new stronger certainty but to a crisis in which all certainty was lost, in which everything has become questionable and questioned.[41] In a historic situation where one can no longer make emphatic claims, one can no longer pose strong questions either. The only way the question mark can still function is to manipulate the reader, to persuade him that he should question for a second time something that he already questions. In the postmodern world that Adorno saw being born, the question mark has become outdated since every period has become a question mark as well. Adorno set the mark into his text as an emptied allegory, as a mere graphic shape with some wholly conventional residues of function. In the *Punctuation Marks*, the question mark no longer signals a question, it becomes a question itself. What does it even mean now. Why should one still succumb to its persuasive power. How should one continue.

XIII.

The question mark is the most conspicuous and at the same time most allegorical of all the punctuation marks used in Adorno's text. The period is the most inconspicuous and at the same time most effective of them. Based on Adorno's hints, one can understand the dialectics of punctuation to be moving between the extremes of the totally inconspicuous and the wholly conspicuous. The conspicuous marks make the reader distance herself from the text and take it into account as a peculiar object in its own right, the inconspicuous ones draw her into the text and help it flow and sound good.[42] A skilled writer, a skilled philosopher should be able to set the marks in both of these ways. For what else does the expressivity of writing live by than the tension between the living and the dead.

NOTES

[1] For a more comprehensive summary of the reception of Adorno's theory see Palmarek (2007, 42-43).
[2] For the most influential publications see Richter (2010); Plass (2007); Foster (2007); Nicolsen (1997); Hohendahl (1995) the essay on language in the monograph *Adorno and the Need in Thinking*.
[3] For the only one that has been already published see Hogh (2016).
[4] Partial insights into the style of concrete texts have been published already, notably in Nicholsen (1997); Buck-Morss (1977). However, they still lack a certain complexity.
[5] See esp. Foster (2007, 31-88).
[6] Along with the above cited works see also Gandesha (2007); Bernstein (2001, 263-329).
[7] Punctuation in philosophic works has long been neglected, as Christine Abbt und Tim Kammasch, the editors of a rare recent monograph on punctuation in philosophy claim. Adorno's name is one of the most quoted in the whole book since he was one of the most vigorous proponents of the importance of punctuation in philosophy. See Abbt and Kammasch (2009).
[8] For a presentation of some of Adorno's stylistic figures such as the chiasm see Rose (2014, 15-34).
[9] "There is no element in which language resembles music more that in the punctuation marks." Adorno 1991, 92.
[10] "…from 1928 on virtually everything that Adorno wrote bore the imprint of Benjamin's language. To someone like Adorno, reared in the tradition of Kraus and Schönberg, who viewed language as the 'representation' of truth, a

change in vocabulary had a theoretical importance of the first magnitude." (Buck-Morss, 1977, 21). By the term "representation" Buck-Morss means the German *Darstellung*. Perhaps a little less misleading translation would be "presentation" or "expression". The same problem with translation of *Darstellung* arose at a key place in *Negative Dialectics* and has been rightly pointed out by Palamarek. See Palamarek (2007, 66).

[11] "The expressive dimensions of language often have to be *enacted* in ways which only partially translate into discursive idioms." Bowie 2013, 16.

[12] "…language should also not be absolutized as the voice of Being, as opposed to the … subject, as many of the current ontological theories of language would have it." (Adorno 1991, 43) "Foreign words demonstrate the impossibility of an ontology of language: they confront even concepts that try to pass themselves as origin itself with their mediatedness, their moment of being subjectively constructed." (Adorno 1991, 189)

[13] "It is a sign of all reification through idealist consciousness that things can be named arbitrarily … For a thinking that seizes the things exclusively as functions of thought, names have become arbitrary: they are free positings of consciousness." (Adorno 2007, 35) "In any case, stylistic indifference is almost always a symptom of dogmatic rigidification of the content." (Adorno 1991, 219)

[14] For a concise expression of Adorno's take see See Adorno (1992, 286-291).

[15] Adorno's criticism of the laziness of the modern reader is expressed in Adorno (1991, 95.

[16] It is telling that the English translation did not resist the temptation to insert a peculiar symbol in the spaces between the paragraphs, wherefore the visual shape of the text differs from the original one. The expressivity of the text is altered too, however, for which reason I will always refer to the visual form of the original.

[17] The expressivity of language in the moment of its failure is one of the main themes of Roger Foster's study. See Foster (2007, 9-56).

[18] One of the very few texts that have the same visual form as *Punctuation Marks* are Adorno's *Transparencies on Film*. In this case as well, the form expresses something unique to the content, the inner fragmentary nature of films that Adorno considered to be defining for the form of art. See Adorno (1991/1992).

[19] Adorno led a life-long battle against the separation of form and content in philosophy. See Adorno (2007).

[20] The combination of connection and disconnection is defining for Adorno's philosophy overall. That is why the dash seems to be one of his favourite punctuation marks.

[21] "So discreetly does myth conceal itself in the nineteenth century; it seeks refuge in typography." Adorno (1991, 94).

[22] This is, of course, only one of the possible definitions of the notoriously equivocal dialectical image. However, in the context of *Notes to Literature* Adorno seems to understand the term also in this way. See Adorno (1991, 89-90, 92).

[23] "It is no accident that in the era of the progressive degeneration of language, this mark of punctuation is neglected precisely insofar as it fulfils its function: when it separates things that feign a connection. All the dash claims to do now is to prepare us in a foolish way for surprises that by that very token are no longer surprising." Adorno (1991, 93)
[24] "In the history of the family of punctuation marks one can find new additions and drop-outs. Transformed social contexts require new marks that are defined in a new iconographic way and make the traditional ones superfluous." Following this claim by Abbt and Kammasch, one could say that Adorno is looking for a wholly new mark to replace the dash. However, Adorno was usually concerned more with an *Umfunktionierung* of the existing phenomena rather with their replacement. See Abbt und Kammasch (2009, 12).
[25] In this respect, punctuation marks are similar to tools, as described by e.g. Graham Herman. For tools work and exist as tools only when they are concealed, according to Harman. See Harman (2002, 13-23).
[26] This does not imply that Adorno would want to make his texts illogical, though; the moment of logicality is merely not absolutized, not put above all the other ones. It is rather inseparably interwoven with the expressive moment. Moreover, Adorno speaks of a peculiar logic that his texts are following, a logic proper to the examined object itself. See Adorno (1991, 22).
[27] "Exclamation points are like silent cymbal clashes, question marks like musical upbeats, colons dominant seventh chords" Adorno (1991, 92).
[28] "…in any case shock may now be the only way to reach human beings through language." (Adorno 1991, 192)
[29] For a comparison of Adorno and Wittgenstein see Foster (2007, 31-56).
[30] Hence the problematic nature of the celebrated Adorno's claim: *Das Ganze is das Unwahre*. Perhaps even the author himself could not resist the temptation to articulate his thought in a simple and closed manner. See GS 4, 55.
[31] I.e., the same way "one can hardly speak of aesthetic matters unaesthetically," one cannot describe fragmentation holistically. See Adorno (1991, 16).
[32] See e.g. Adorno (1991, 5).
[33] The concept of historical sedimentation is a key reoccurring figure in Adorno's works. See e.g. Adorno (2004, 163; 1991, 11).
[34] Adorno manages this not in a crude, brutal manner, not as a Dadaist or a Surrealist would. His texts resist subtly, very inconspicuously. They create an impression that something fleeting and delicate is not right. For the reader to get the most of the text, Adorno has to make her feel that what she is reading is by no means meaningless. The reader has to feel that the text is saying something important, something she is not able to decipher. And the understanding should not come as a result of a hermeneutic returning to the text over and over again; it should follow from a radical change in the readers approach.
[35] It is important to differentiate between the historic limitation and the individual one. It is not a lack of individual intellectual capacities, of intelligence or talent, that prevents the reader from understanding the text. It

is his historic and social conditioning. Of course, certain intelligence is needed to get a good grasp of Adorno's thoughts, but the main resistance of his texts seems to be directed against the historic and social limitations of the reader's cognitive abilities.

[36] "Any period to which its own past has become as questionable as it has to us must eventually come up against the phenomenon of language, for in it the past is contained ineradicably … The Greek *polis* will continue to exist at the bottom of our political existence … for as long as we use the word 'politics.'" (Arendt 2007, 49)

[37] See Benjamin 2003, 159-235. "…the often laborious interpretation of allegorical figures always unhappily reminds one of the solving of puzzles." (Arendt 2007, 14)

[38] The author states this in the very first sentence of the text: "The less punctuation marks, taken in isolation, convey meaning or expression and the more they constitute the opposite pole in language to names, the more each of them acquires a definitive physiognomic status of its own, an expression of its own, which cannot be separated from its syntactic function but is by no means exhausted by it." (Adorno 1991, 91)

[39] Elsewhere Adorno states that to start thinking critically one should feel the philosophical θαυμαζειν in face of the "world of convention as it is historically produced, this world of estranged things that cannot be decoded but encounters us as ciphers." (Adorno 2006, 261)

[40] Nicholsen perhaps felt the oddity of the questions and avoided both of the question marks as uncharacteristic for Adorno.

[41] For Adorno's take on tradition and the break in it see Adorno (2004, 53-55).

[42] "For these are the two primary ways in which the punctuation marks can be meaningful: on the one hand, the performative-operative leading of the reading, on the other hand, their iconic-mimetic dimension." Abbt und Kammasch (2009, 15).

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The Concept of the World: From the Husserlian Epistemological Horizon to the Heideggerian Hermeneutical Possibility

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Abstract

The phenomenological approach to the lifeworld aims to reveal the structure of world without support on metaphysical speculation or epistemological assumptions, exclusively on the basis of subjective experience and intuition, instances which mark the formal coordinates of the ontological structure of what it means to live in a context. For this reason, the description and explanation of the meaning of the lifeworld presupposes revealing the daily structures of the world of life, the interconnections of the self with others and with the environment not in the sense of a causal system, but more in a sense of a system of possibility of what Martin Heidegger called *hermeneutics of the facticity*. In this context, the following paper is dedicated to a treatment of the of some of the frequently debated issues in the literature on Husserl and Heidegger by providing phenomenological analyses of world and subjectivity as the respective philosophers viewed this particular relation.

Keywords: Intentionality, *being-in-the-world*, horizon, referential whole, being-at-hand, epoché

1. Introduction

"To the things themselves!" Thus can be summarized the conceptual vector of the movement of phenomenology inaugurated by Husserl and later branched by Heidegger, but even under this general battle cry it has been and remains unclear to what extent "phenomenology" actually means the same thing to Husserl and Heidegger. Opinions range from the view that "Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology are radically different, and have virtually nothing to do with each other," (Schacht 1972, 294) to the contention that "the whole of *Sein and Zeit* springs from an indication given by Husserl and amounts to nothing more than a detailed elaboration of a particular Husserlian theme." (Merleau-Ponty 2005, VII)

In this context, it is necessary to acquire a more systematic grasp on this matter of defining the lines and the limits of what is called phenomenology. At least it is clear that Husserl and Heidegger agreed on one or two negative points concerning phenomenology. Neither suggests that agreement on the phenomenological slogan ensures any common theme. What are the "things themselves" that we should go back to? The answer with necessity does not follow from the maxim itself. Secondly, Husserl and Heidegger are equally worried about the method of phenomenology. They are both concerned with the way other phenomenologists construe all kinds of theories and ideas and easily pass them of as "essential insights". For both Husserl and Heidegger, phenomenology is "hard work". Despite their negative and formal agreements, however, there are good reasons to believe that "phenomenological work" has very different meanings for Husserl and Heidegger. After all, Husserl conceives of his phenomenology as a "transcendental," even "epistemological" project, while Heidegger's phenomenology must understand itself as "ontology." On the one hand, the "things themselves" are consciousness" and the question of how it "reaches" transcendent things, and, on the other hand, the being of entities is the phenomenon *par excellence*. In the final analysis, it seems, there is no single phenomenology, but rather a series of different phenomenologies. But can Husserlian constitutive phenomenology be identified with epistemology really without further extensions? And is it so obvious that Heidegger's "ontological" phenomenology is opposed to transcendental philosophy? In the present study, I will try to answer these questions by arguing that there are important similarities between the two accounts when it comes to how they characterizehe world and subjectivity. However, as we shall see, there are significant differences in the interpretation of intra-mundane entities.

In the following lines, I intend to carry out my intentions by taking up two charges that are often leveled against Husserl—the charge that he has no conception of the world except as a totality of entities, and the charge that Husserlian transcendental subjectivity is "worldless". I argue that Husserl's notion of a world horizon is in many ways similar to Heidegger's conception of the world as a referential network, and that the former indeed seems to have the advantage of being less tied to a specific way of being intra-mundane. I also bring up the issue of subjectivity. One of the "guiding clues" for this study is the charge of worldlessness, but Husserl's charge that Heidegger's phenomenology is a type of "anthropology" is also considered. I argue, among other things, that Husserl's phenomenology of the embodied transcendental subject exhibits features very similar to those expounded by *Dasein*: both are "in" the world, rather than simply "related" to it, but are "in" the world precisely as subjects, not as objects. Thus, just as the transcendental subject cannot be said to be worldless, it is equally wrong to claim that Heidegger's phenomenology of *Dasein* is a type of anthropology. Both Husserl and Heidegger analyze the structures of the transcendental subject, and both offer a radically new interpretation of it.

2. Object-intentionality and the world

Many discussions in the literature about Husserl and Heidegger revolve around the concept of the *world*. It would not be entirely wrong to say that a significant part of this discussion was triggered by a famous passage from *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger accuses traditional philosophy of assuming too little instead of too much, when it characterizes subjectivity. This passage, which concerns us, unfolds as follows: "If, in the ontology of Dasein, we 'take our departure' from a worldless "I" in order to provide this "I" with an Object and an ontologically baseless relation to that Object, then we have 'presupposed' not too much, but too little." (Heidegger 1962, 316) How does Husserl react to this when he reads *Being and Time*? Having already read more than three hundred pages of the book, which, as Gadamer suggests (Gadamer 2013, 261), must have appeared ambiguous, sometimes articulating a transcendental phenomenology, sometimes criticizing the same transcendental stance, Husserl is suspicious that the accusation is above all directed at his phenomenological corpus.

In the margin of his copy of *Being and Time*, Husserl notes: "Objection, wordless I" (Husserl 1997, 377).

Although Heidegger's criticism against Husserl is concealed throughout the pages of the Heideggerian *magnum opus* – often disguised as a critique of Descartes – in this case of the concept of the world, the critique is so subtly disguised that there is no doubt that a critique of Husserl's methodology is in fact one of Heidegger's main goals. But is the criticism in question justified criticism? Despite Husserl's preoccupation with the notion of intentionality, many commentators are willing to give legitimacy to Heidegger's accusation. It would not be enough to answer that these commentators simply do not respect the inherent central subject of the Husserlian corpus namely the intentionality, or that they misinterpret the *epoché* as implying the exclusion of the world from the phenomenological thematization of a "pure" ego. In this context, it is necessary to approach the question carefully and from two different perspectives. First, we must examine the phenomenological notion of "world" – not only Husserl's notion, but also the notion that Heidegger might consider when he claims that the Husserlian ego is one without a world. Is there any common ground to be found here, or is what Heidegger labels the "world" actually absent from the Husserlian phenomenology, or at least not something that essentially belongs to transcendental subjectivity as Husserl understood it? This last remark suggests a distinct set of questions which we need to address exhaustively. What is the notion of *Dasein* that we find in Heidegger's work, and is the *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-sein*) the concept that adequately describes the being of *Dasein* compared to the being of Husserl's transcendental subjectivity? These questions are considerable and are provided with only preliminary answers in the present study. But if we want to be able to locate with a certain accuracy the differences that separate Heidegger's questions about being from Husserl's view on the subject, we must understand to some extent what conceptions of the world, worldly beings, and subject are developed in these phenomenologies. For Husserl, the suspension is justified because he never gives up his "sympathy" for the descriptions of beings within the natural attitude. This is also true for Heidegger, because he articulates the description of mundane *Dasein* from a point of view that is already phenomenological. To the extent that individual worldly beings are conceived, we already have sufficient indications to deduce: Husserlian and Heideggerian accounts are – at least at the "descriptive" level – almost identical. In this context, it cannot be the case that the Husserlian *epoché* and reduction imply that we should ignore the world in favor of a sphere of the "subjective" being. On the contrary, the method of reduction requires us to preserve the world, because it must function as a transcendental clue to a return to subjectivity. Also, if what is meant by the accusation of "lack of the world" is specifically that the reduction, although it needs a mundane "guiding clue", implies a "retreat" back to a subjective sphere, never to return in the world, the accusation can be rejected immediately, especially given the thread of the Husserlian method. The regression to subjectivity does not imply an abandonment of the world; the reduction does nothing but articulate the *being-there-for-us* of the world and can only do so by "leaving" the theme of the world. However, the fact that the world does not disappear from the focus of the Husserlian phenomenology with the realization of the transcendental reduction does not mean that subjectivity through such a reduction cannot be "deprived of the world" in a certain specific sense, more precisely in a sense in which the question of constitution implies primacy of one pole over the other.

Certainly, Heidegger would never think that the Husserlian phenomenology has no interest in the world; rather, he must have reason to assume that, despite Husserl's insistence on the importance of the world and the mundane as transcendental clues, the transcendental subjectivity that Husserl discovers must nevertheless be categorized as "worldless" in a sense in which the world is excluded from the constitution of the subject. But Husserl ostentatiously emphasizes that - as it is intentionally directed - transcendental subjectivity has in itself a relation to objects. It is essentially object-oriented, and if we were to remove intentionality from the transcendental subject, this instance can no longer be called transcendental subjectivity, because it could no longer be the "place of manifestation" of something. And having no experience, it would, in fact, cease to be subjectivity in any concrete sense. Despite all these aspects, a commentator like Pierre Keller claims that Husserl opts for a theory of intentionality based on acts of consciousness that do not need any object (Keller 1999, 17) and that this is the crucial difference between Husserl and Heidegger. Certainly, insofar as what is meant is that acts of imagination, memory, or even perception might have intentional objects that turn out, in fact, not to exist in reality (one may, once again, think of the puddles seen on the road ahead on a hot day), then Husserl's theory of intentionality does have a great deal to say about precisely these sorts of acts[1]. But the question arises: what types of acts should Husserl analyze instead? Furthermore, why is it a problem to study acts whose objects need not exist? It seems that the commentator's apparent worries — that phenomenology should concentrate on acts whose objects necessarily exist – surely cannot be Heidegger's.

However, as we read in the commentary, it turns out Keller's main contention isthat Husserl assumes that intentionality can be understood by abstraction from the existence of objects to which consciousness is directed in intentionality. It is precisely this view and the internalist interpretation of intentionality in Husserl that Heidegger rejects, according to Pierre Keller. It is important to note that the problem in question does not respect the Husserlian vector, as in *Logical Investigations* the central question is not whether the objects of intentional experiments should matter „like nothing" for phenomenology or whether the exclusive "noetic" accent that Husserl articulates as characteristic should be completed with a "noematic" focus. Therefore, an accusation such as: Husserl's transcendental phenomenology ignores objects, in order to focus on the subjective acts themselves, can be easily rejected. But that is not Keller's argument. Rather, the existence of objects is supposed to be ignored by Husserl, and this leads him to an unacceptable „internalism", according to Heidegger. But how should Husserl consider the existence of intentional objects? Certainly, Husserl would be quick to point out that the noematic correlations discovered by phenomenology – intentional objects only as intentional – would be, for example, for (normal) acts of perception "real", "existing". When I touch the keyboard in front of me, there is no doubt that the perceived keyboard is perceived as existing, and therefore it would simply be bad phenomenology if Husserl had abstracted the "existence of the object' in this sense. I suspect that what Pierre Keller has in mind is a much stronger notion of "existence": not existence as something that belongs to a description of certain noematic correlations, but existence there, in reality, in the real world. In other words, the main difficulty in Husserl's theory of intentionality would then be its failure to take into account this problematic fact: whether or not intentional objects really exist, and this is a significant difficulty, because the real existence of objects possible plays a major role in the "intentional" reporting of consciousness. Husserl positions himself in an unacceptable "internalist" view because he does not even consider the role of intentional objects, which exist in his account of our experience of these objects. This reading seems to be confirmed by Keller's definition of internalism. An internalist is one who believes that "it is possible to understand at least some contents of the mind in the narrow terms provided by introspection and first-person awareness that does not appeal to any knowledge of other persons or objects outside of the person in question. It is thus possible to investigate such contents of consciousness in a manner that is methodologically solipsistic." (Keller 1999, 111)

It seems that the difficulty of Husserl's thesis of intentionality lies in the fact that it undertakes to delimit our consciousness of the world and worldliness without appealing to any knowledge of that world and of the worldly entities concerned. But our experiences of the world and worldly beings cannot be explained by reference to the existence of that world and those beings. This is because we have access to the "existence of objects" only through our experience in which they turn out to exist, which means that the naturalist critic must "live" uncritically and in the explanation of experience he must invokethe same type of experience that we intend to explain. The naturalistic vision starts from the wrong end, assuming as unproblematic the very experience that it problematizes.

Husserl, therefore, cannot be criticized consistently for understanding intentionality in abstraction from the existence of the intentional objects – because if Husserl does not "abstract" in his account of intentionality from the existence (in the sense discussed) of the intended objects, if he does not refrain from appealing in the natural way to our knowledge of them, he cannot succeed in making intelligible our intentional awareness of those objects at all. I don't think that Heidegger's accusation of "lack of world" overlaps with Pierre Keller's criticism of Husserl. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Heidegger 1988), for example, Heidegger rejects emphatically the "natural" account of intentionality according to which intentionality is a relation between two entities, a relation that subsists only insofar as the entities (object and subject) exist. In opposition to such an account, Heidegger insists that the "subject" itself is intentionally related). This is hardly compatible with the position that a satisfactory explanation of intentionality should take into account our existence or (non-phenomenological) knowledge of intentional objects. As it should already be clear to some extent, the present study argues that Heidegger (at least Heidegger from the period of *Being and Time*) is a transcendental phenomenologist, who asks questions of constitution and not a realist, as Keller points out. Experiences always have their intentional objects (although they do not have to exist). There is no intention without an intentional object, insofar as transcendental subjectivity is essentially characterized by intentionality, it would be analytically false to call it "objectless" as Heidegger points out. In this context, Heidegger can describe Husserl's transcendental subjectivity as "worldless" because there is no other concept of world in Husserl's work than that of a totality of spatio-temporal events regulated by laws or other than that of a mass of all beings real (and ideal). The only concept of the world in Husserl's thesis would seem to belong to a totality of beings or events. This conception of the world is one that Heidegger briefly mentions in *Being and Time* and labels it "world" (in quotation marks) in contrast to his own conception of the world (without quotation marks) as the one in which *Dasein* "lives". Thus, Husserl's transcendental subjectivity is not "without world", in the sense in which it would not be intentionally bound to beings — but it is "without world", in the sense in which it is devoid of a connection to the world in the specific sense Heidegger purports. In other words, even though on Husserl's account transcendental consciousness is temporal, embodied, personal, and socio-historically embedded, and even though Husserl provides the outlines of an elaborate phenomenological ontology of a spatio-temporal socio-historical world, Heidegger objects in his early work that Husserl never sufficiently addressed the question of the being of this consciousness or the being of the world, as Hanne Jacobs points out in "Transcendental subjectivity and the human being" (Jacobs 2014, 87-105).

Now, before we discuss whether this in fact must be a problem for Husserl – it might be, after all, that Heidegger's concept of world is phenomenologically unsound or inferior to Husserl's conception – let us take a closer look at the claims just cited. Is Husserl's sole concept of world really that of a totality of either spatio-temporal events or of real and ideal entities? Do we find in Husserl no other notion of world than that of a totality of beings and events?

3. The world as horizon

It is certainly true that Husserl, as Ludwig Landgrebe points out (Landgrebe 1967, 57-58), tends to initiate his analyses of the world's constitution by focusing on the given individual entity. But, from the beginning, Husserl seems to realize that the individual entity is never given in complete isolation, as if perceiving this computer screen could mean seeing it as the whole and only thing that exists. Rather, the computer screen is seen as a simple part of a world that extends beyond it. For example, although my focus is on the computer screen, there is actually more in my field of vision: the table on which the computer screen sits, the curtains behind it, the glass, and beyond that, the trees. These things are part of the non-thematic background object [*gegenständlicher Hintergrund*] against which the screen of the thematically perceived computer is displayed. But reality, as it is given to me in my current perception of the screen, is not exhausted in this relationship between thematic and non-thematic. It extends beyond my current visual framework. I can let my gaze go to the door behind me, and behind that door I know that there is a familiar corridor, and although none of this, under normal circumstances, is not explicitly in my consciousness, nor is co-thematized. However, these instances "matter" for the constitution in question. According to Husserl, the perceived does not matter, so to speak, for itself, but instead counts as an extract from a wider environment of objects. This computer screen and this curtain are perceived as belonging to a world that extends even beyond what I will be able to see in my entire experience.

The key terms with which Husserl tries to conceptualize the present being of this reality – never as a whole perceived in fact, yet somehow always involved in what is actually perceived – is elaborated in *Ideas* as follows: "But not even with the domain of this intuitionally clear or obscure, distinct or indistinct, *co-present* – which makes up a constant halo around the field of actual perception – is the world exhausted which is 'on hand' for me in the manner peculiar to consciousness. What is now perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (or at least somewhat determinate), are penetrated and surrounded by *obscurely intended horizon of indeterminate actuality*." (Husserl, 2000, 57)

Whatever it may not be concerned with, the subject finds himself at every moment surrounded by a horizon of indeterminate reality. Even when I am caught writing a text or arranging my books, an endless reality is, in a non-thematic way, at play. An easy way to understand Husserl's perspective would be the following: The perceived object, such as the computer screen, is seen as an object in a more or less intuitive "object-field" [*Dingfeld*], e.g. this office with its various objects. But what "matters" to me, what "exists" to me, is not exhausted in this field. Rather, the field of things presents itself as a simple "section" of the world: "as the momentary field of perception, [it] always has the character for us of a *sector of* the world, of the universe of things for possible percetions." (Husserl 1970, 162) The world, according to the quote, is thus the universe of perceptible things – certainly, this is precisely the concept of "world" (in quotation marks) from which the Heidegger scholars criticize Husserl as reducing the whole phenomenon of the world to perceptibility. The horizon of the world, it seems, functions for Husserl as a universal "container" for perceptible objects, or even the totality of such objects. The latter notion of world seems implicit, for example, in Husserl's characterization of the world as the horizon of things (*Horizont von Dingen*) or of reality rather than the horizon of things, and in the description of the world as the "universal unity" of things (*die Alleinheit von Dingen*). From a Heideggerian point of view, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann offers a justified conclusion to this subject: "Insofar as consciousness is already intentionally alongside the entities, the critique of a 'world' less subject that may be directed at Hartmann's subject of knowledge cannot be directed at Husserl. But if by world, we do not mean the totality of real (and ideal) entities, given horizontally, but rather the disclosedness of a world (clearing, openness) as that which ontologically makes it possible for entities to be encountered as inner-worldly (and thus also [makes possible] the givenness of objects for consciousness), then the intentional consciousness of Husserl – both the objectified and the transcendental-constituting consciousness – must also be characterized as *worldless*. It is worldless because it is only intentionally related to life-worldly objects, and to the universal horizon of the life-world that embraces all possible objects – i.e., it is only related to *inner-worldly* [entities]." (Herrmann 2004, 65)

In other words, it seems the introduction of the notion of *horizon* only brings more clearly to light the essential limitations of Husserl's description of the phenomenon of world, as seen from Heidegger's point of view. By no means does the world as a whole allow Husserl to redirect his thesis beyond individual things and their manifestation to articulate a subjectivity that tends to a world that is *not composed of such things* – a world that allows things to manifest themselves in the first place. Although Husserl insists that we do not perceive things in complete isolation; although he realizes that each individual object is necessarily perceived in a framework that involves other objects and, ultimately, the entire universe of objects, his concept of the world still remains essentially a collection or a totality of objects. These limitations are included in Heidegger's argument. But this argument, in my opinion, overlooks the most important features of the notion of horizon developed by Husserl in his concrete analyses of perceptual intentionality. As I try to show in the following part of this study, the idea of the horizon is in fact, if understood correctly, an alternative to the conception of the world as a whole, rather than another version of it. It should be noted, however, that the following account highlights only a few facets of Husserl's conception.

It is important to determine as a premise that, according to Husserl, we never perceive an object completely isolated from other objects. When I perceive a tree, I see it as a tree in a garden, surrounded by other trees and so on. But the perceptual horizon on this current act of perception is not exhausted by these “objects-surroundings”. For the perceived tree itself, regardless of its surroundings, there is a perceptual horizon: the tree presents itself as one that I could see from different angles, thus bringing different sides (such as the “invisible” back of the trunk) into view. and also as one that I can inspect more closely in terms of the part actually perceived. These multiple aspects of the tree are co-intentional, according to Husserl, in my current perception of the tree – a perception that, strictly speaking, has only one such aspect: “The object is not actually given, it is not given wholly and entirely as that which it itself is. It is only given 'from the front' only 'perspectivally foreshortened and projected' etc. While many of its properties are illustrated in the core content of the perception, at least in the manner which the last expressions indicate, many others are not present in the perception in such illustrated form: to be sure, the elements of the invisible rear side, the interior etc, are co-intended [*mitgemeint*] in more or less definite fashion […], but they are not themselves part of the intuitive, i.e., of the [strictly] perceptual or imaginative content, of the perception.” (Husserl 2001, 220)

The sides or additional aspects belong to the perceived tree exactly as intended in the perception in question (that is to say in the noematic correlate). According to *the perception itself*, the tree has "more to offer". If we were to successfully isolate a "core" of the complete perceptual presentation and throw away the intended "surplus", the result would be a disintegration of the concrete perception. In other words, the intentional surplus must itself be considered a perceptual intentional surplus, rather than a certain non-perceptual intentionality, for example, an imaginative intentional complex, always accompanying a perception. What I perceive when I perceive a tree is not an aspect of a tree nor (in most cases) a part of it, but precisely the tree itself, the "whole" tree – and this means that, perceptually, it intends many things that are not themselves, strictly speaking, manifest. The concrete perceptual manifestation includes both the "authentic" and the "inauthentic". Speaking from a noematic point of view, we can say that the perceived object belongs to a horizon of co-parts and intended aspects. Thus, the paradigm of an intuitive "presenting" act, the paradigm of a "fulfilling" act, turns out to be "a complex of full and empty intentions". But does perception need to have this "horizontal structure"? In *Ideas*, Husserl argues that God himself should perceive material things in this way, if he were to perceive them as they are. It is not because we are "finite" creatures that we can perceive worldly entities only in perceptions that have a horizontal structure. Rather, the beings themselves demand this type of perception: it is up to their essence to manifest in this way. According to Husserl, a perception that does not have a horizontal structure would simply not be a perception of something like a tree – it would not be a perception of a transcendent object, an object that is not contained or exhausted by my experience of it. A tree perceived as complete or "adequate" would not be a tree at all. It would be something inseparable from my instant experience. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl already offers an explanation: "If perception were always the actual, genuine self-presentations of objects that they pretend to be, there could be only one single perception for each object, since its peculiar essence would be exhausted in this self-presentation." (Husserl 2001, 220)

We have to imagine that everything that is intended in my current perception of the tree is *given* in that perception, that all the “intentional terminals” that make up the noema of the tree are manifested in the strict sense. Now, if I moved my upper body just a few inches on both sides, then – given that everything that was intended was already given in the previous perception, that all aspects of the tree were fully manifest – we should say that my perception can no longer be a perception of the same unaltered object. It could not be the same unchanged tree that I perceived, because the movement of my upper body by a few centimeters makes me see new aspects. If these new aspects are new aspects of the same tree, then we should say that not all aspects were given at the beginning, which, by hypothesis, must confirm the Husserlian perspective. But why is it important to be able to have several perceptions, different in the perceived content, of the same object? In fact, we can and would have been wrong to claim that a perception of something like a tree can ever give all aspects of its object simultaneously – but why does Husserl think it is a matter of principle that the perception of a thing is “inadequate” in this way? If all aspects of the perceived object are fully manifest and, therefore, if the perceived object changes whenever the “perceptual content” changes, then the perceived object will change with experience. Each qualitatively different perceptual experience would mean a qualitatively different perceived object. The state in question involves asking the question: how could experiences be experiences of something? Is it not justified in principle rather for experience and object to not be separated? Experience seems to completely absorb the object, so that perception cannot be differentiated from perceptual experience. This is, in fact, what Husserl concludes is: If we think of the ideal aspect that is extracted from the nexus of fulfillment and is extended in time, then we would have a completely concrete appearance as an absolute donation of a thing. What kind of donation would this be? It would not be an inappropriate donation. It would not contain anything indeterminate: it would be a completely appropriate and completely decisive aspect. There would also be a difference between the aspect which appears and the transcendence determined by it.

This means, in general, that no concrete perceptual object - even viewed (artificially) in isolation - can manifest without a horizon of intuitive "absence". A tree could not manifest as such for me in an act of perception, if that perception does not intend both intuitively given aspects and intuitively non-given aspects. Thus, the perception of the object is not such a simple matter, according to Husserl. It eliminates the possibility of a pure and simple donation; rather, donation according to a horizon is *the essence of being in the world*. Therefore, even in the absence of the co-intentional horizon, what is donated is not a "whole" thing, but rather only a part or an aspect of a thing, because obviously a "part" is necessarily a side of an object, and refers to other sides, so it can only be given as a side when the horizontal intention of other sides or aspects is at stake. It is important to remember that the intended horizon must be there from the beginning, implicitly right from the first "sight" I threw at the object. If I want to take an exact look at this object, it is necessary that the multiple aspects given improperly be co-intended simultaneously. It cannot be my subsequent intention to lead to the discovery of "additional" aspects of the object, because if I had not anticipated from the beginning only the strictly given, there would be nothing more to explore. Obviously, all these have important implications not only for the Husserlian conception of the world, but also for its notion of subjectivity. In Husserl's terms, every perceived worldly being requires an "inner horizon" (*Innenhorizont*), a horizon of aspects that are *not-yet-manifest* and *are-not-longer-manifest* aspects of the same being - and as we have seen, without such of an "inner horizon", we would not perceive any mundane entity at all. We can thus label the object-surroundings in which such a perceived object is always perceived, the "outer horizon" (*Außenhorizont*). The world itself would include both the inner and the outer horizon, plus the corresponding manifestation, thus being a universal horizon in which *what appears appears as such*.

This discussion about object and perception therefore indicates something essential about the concept of world as horizon. The world is not a totality of entities, but as horizon is rather the very structure that allows entities to appear. If the world is the universal horizon, then it cannot be a totality of entities, because entities cannot manifest or constitute in any way, so to speak, “horizon-free”. If entities are simply and completely given, given without horizons of non-givenness, then it would make sense to say that the (rest of) the world, as a world horizon, is the totality of those entities that are not currently given. But as a matter of principle, there can be no such horizonless giving of any worldly entity, according to Husserl. Even when we abstract from all surroundings and have the entity perceived individually as given in total isolation, we are necessarily drawn back to perceptual horizons. Therefore, if we take seriously the notion of a world-horizon and are careful not to overlook its implications, we can appreciate why Husserl notes that the world is something in *things-in-themselves* rather than a collection of things (Husserl 1970, 296). The world, as (“inner”) horizon is certainly part of what constitutes manifest things as they are manifest, and if individual things already involve the world in this sense, they need it, as it were, in order to constitute themselves, then it makes no sense to say of the world that it is a collection or a totality of things. If we mean by horizon the worldliness of entities, this would seem to suggest that entities are what make the world possible, or at most that world and individual entities are interdependent. But our earlier discussion of perceptual intentionality shows that the horizon is the condition of entities' possibilities and not the other way around. Certainly, there can be no present horizon except as a horizon that allows entities to appear, and in this sense the horizon of the world needs entities. But this does not mean that entities make the horizon possible, it only means that an intentional horizon cannot be any other way than a horizon that has lets entities appear. Since no entity can be given otherwise than in and through co-intentional horizons, the idea of the world as a totality implies that also the world can only be given in and through co-intentional horizons. Intentional horizons, such as the multitude co-intended in the present perception and co-responsible for my perceiving this or that thing, would then be something that makes the world possible, rather than themselves constituting the world. The world could not be the perceptual horizon itself, but only a collection of entities that appear in and through the perceptual horizon. Therefore, the concept of the world as a horizon is not only non-identical with the concept of the world as a totality; is actually incompatible with it. The two would only be compatible if there could be given "horizonless" entities.

In short, the world is not a horizon of things, but a horizon of possible experience; "an infinite horizon of possible experience" (Husserl 1959, 148) or, more precisely, the universe of actual as well as possible experience, and that makes all the difference. As the horizon of possible experience, the world has a mode of being (*Seinsweise*) completely different from the mode of being of the individual thing. A horizon of possible experience that in and through which, as we have seen, any individual entity can manifest, is not itself a "container" of such entities, nor is it the totality of them. As a universal horizon, the world is a structure that allows individual entities to manifest. If we return to our discussion of "wordlessness," it becomes clear that the charge is not legitimate if it is based on the assumption that Husserl has no other concept of the world than that of a totality of entities. If *being-in-the-world* means "transcending to the World as the possibility of encountering objects," then Husserlian transcendental subjectivity certainly *is* in-the-world. It intentionally transcends the universal horizon of the world, thereby allowing entities to appear. Without "transcendence" in the form of horizontal intentionality, it is clear that there can be no transcendence at all.

Although the discussion in the present section seems to suggest it, Husserl does not mean that the world is nothing but a world of possible perceptual experiences. In addition to existing as a world of perception, he points out, the world is there "with the same immediacy as a world of valued objects, a world of goods, a practical world" (Husserl 1983, 63). In fact, the horizon of the world is primarily determined (*vor allem*) by our everyday practices, says Husserl, and if he sometimes limits himself to talking about it as if it were only a horizon of possible perception, this is purely because the world as practical world is necessarily grounded in the world as world of perception. Every practical activity presupposes an underlying "layer" of perception, according to Husserl. I cannot drive nails into a wall unless I can see the nails and feel the hammer in my hand, and the world cannot be the universal horizon for practical activity unless it is the horizon for perceptual experience. The latter founds the former. But we note that this does not necessarily mean that I live primarily in acts of perception, nor does it imply that the concrete world matters to me primarily as a world of perception. Would Heidegger be convinced, or would he still maintain that the true phenomenon of the world remains unseen by Husserl? To clarify this question, we need to make a brief sketch of Heidegger's concept of the world.

4. The world as a referentian whole

When we treat the phenomenon of the world, as it is developed in *Being and Time* and in other writings of Heidegger from the late twenties, it may be advisable to determine as a starting point of hermeneutics *the individual*, *the given being*. In this context, according to Heidegger, the being that *Dasein* immediately encounters is not a material object which is simply "there", which "appears"; it is not even an object with certain cultural layers, but rather something essentially different. The entity with which *Dasein* is immediately concerned is what Heidegger calls *Zeug* or a „tool". In what seems to be a clear contrast to Husserl, Heidegger insists that the "tool" has a way of being different from that of a "material thing". A tool is "something-with-which-to"...; this *Um-zu* makes up the very being of the utensil. Understanding *Um-zu*, understanding the *Zuhandenheit* (*quality-of-being-at-hand*[2]), is what allows me to encounter for example, a hammer like a hammer, allows me to encounter it in an interaction of the type: *to use*. The hammer is a "something-with-which-to" drive a nail in wooden planks. That is, in the "something-with-witch-to" structure that constitutes the hammer there is a reference to something. The same is true for all "utensils": wooden planks are *something with which* the individual – provided additional utensils, such as hammers and nails are available – can build something, for example, a house. What is a house? A house is something you can live in – a "living utensil" (*Wohnzeug*), as Heidegger puts it. A utensil or a tool necessarily refers to other utensils that necessarily refers to others, i.e., strictly speaking, there cannot be a single, isolated utensil. A utensil can be what it is as a utensil only in *a utensil complex* or *Zeugganzes*. This whole, complex comes "ahead" and makes the tool possible as an individual, in the sense that the tool can be a particular tool only if it is already placed in an assembly of such a complex of tools. A hammer cannot be like a hammer in the absence of other utensils, such as nails and boards. If a tribe of Amazonian Indians, completely unfamiliar with hammers and nails, coincided with a hammer by chance, they probably would not be able to „discover" it specifically as a hammer. This does not mean, however, that they would perceive the hammer as a simple occasional simple-present thing – they would probably see the hammer as a tool to be understood by them and would continue to investigate that "something-with-which-to" by placing it in already familiar utensil complex. The hammer would not be perceived in any way as what it is - as a tool - but embedded in a complex of utensils. It is probably tempting to conclude that what Heidegger wants to label as a world is precisely this utensil complex, considered a whole or a whole of such an accumulation of utensils. Some might even argue that Heidegger himself sometimes approaches such an interpretation, for example, when he remarks that, with the whole (*Ganzes*) of the utensil complex, the world announces itself (Heidegger 1962, 105). However, a utensil complex involves utensil interconnection (*Zeugzusammenhang*) and thus is ultimately something different from an accumulation of utensils, if the latter is understood as a "sum", totality or collection of beings. And, as we already know, Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes that the world must not be identified with the sum of all existing beings (Heidegger 1988, 165). When Heidegger's specific use of the notion of world is introduced into *Being and Time*, as opposed to "world" (in quotation marks) as the "total sum" of beings, he defines it as that in which *Dasein "lives"*.

However, in this context, the term "living" ("*lebt*") is contested by Heidegger, for him it is a concept that does not exhaustively determine the ontology of *Dasein*. *Dasein* does not "live" but rather exists, since "*Dasein* must never be determined ontologically in such a way that it is seen as life – (ontologically indeterminate) and as something above." (Heidegger 1962, 75) Then why suspend the term of life and "living"? Our imminent intuition is that Heidegger understands by "living" not the way animals or humans exist but rather something similar to what Husserl indicates when he speaks of the acts in which we "live". Husserl acknowledges that we do not normally "live" in selfless acts of perception, which means that these acts do not represent our active involvement. Normally, we "live" in various practical acts; we are disinterested in the visual appearance of the hammer tool, as we are preoccupied with planking the board and so on. When Husserl speaks here of "living" he is speaking of those actions in which we are truly engaged. In this sense, following other demands, we can argue that Heidegger uses the term in question in the style of Husserl, but with the minor specification that Heidegger does not designate anything "noetic" in the world, but rather the "noematic" side of everyday involvement, if we use a Husserlian idiom here.

It is necessary to reformulate the question, then. What is *Dasein* aimed at when it is "interested", what is the "object" of its involvement? It is certainly not the individual tool. When I'm busy assembling a new library together, I don't constantly focus on the hand screwdriver; in fact, I could be so caught up in the project that I completely forget that the screwdriver is present. Heidegger would similarly claim that I am not concerned with the screwdriver or the shelf, although it would be wrong to claim that I am not in any way attentive to the shelf and the screw. I am attentive and interested in the functioning of the ensemble, so in the determination of the simple presence of things, utensils. What concerns me is the assembly of the library base, for example, and in this activity it would be wrong to say that I am, first of all, actively directed towards private entities and that I am attentive to a series of such entities, beings. We should say, therefore, that the idea of the library in its definite state is what concerns me as I assemble the library base. In this spirit, Heidegger seems to articulate his theory at some point in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962, 98-99), but such a vision proves to be difficult to categorize as phenomenological. First of all, it would be quite difficult to be properly involved in a practical activity if someone were constantly focused on what was to be built (*das Herzustellende*). And secondly, this suggestion seems to be too closely related to the process of making or producing something. In fact, counterarguments can be made, such as the use of the bicycle to get from point A to point B. The latter example could suspend the suggestion that we are engaged purely in an process of making or producing because the use of the bicycle is intended precisely to "produce" my being at B, at a certain moment. But it simply seems wrong to say that the next position in B is in what I am "living". It seems more correct to point out that I "live" in all those references involved in my process that involves getting to the point. What I "live" when I ride a bike or assemble the base of my new library is the referential structure itself, the references themselves and not the beings, Heidegger would eventually argue when he states: "When I am completely engrossed in dealing with something and make use of some equipment in this activity, I am just not directed toward the equipment as such, say, toward the tool. And I am just as little directed toward the work itself. Instead, in my occupation I move in the functionality relations as such. In understanding them I dwell with the equipmental contexture that is handy. I stand neither with the one nor with the other but move in the in-order-to." (Heidegger 1988, 293) *Dasein* "lives" in a system of references, rather than in a collection of beings, according to Heidegger.

As stated above, each individual utensil is in its being something that carries or is a reference to other utensils. Screwdriver refers to the screw and so on. But this is not all. The defining characteristic of the screwdriver as a tool is not, in fact, a direct reference to other beings, but its *usefulness*. This is involved in Heidegger's use of the concept of *Um-zu* to describe his being, because *Um-zu* literally means "in order to". The reference to other tools, the reference to the screwdriver to the screw, is a reference to the screw only in and through the utility of the screwdriver to insert a screw into a materiality. Thus, it could be said that the being of the instrument is the "functional purpose" (*Bewandtnis*) and that the references in which *Dasein* "lives" are functional references and, in addition, that they make up a whole or a "totality of functional purposes"

(*Bewandtnisganzheit*). Obviously, this link of functional purposes must eventually reach a finiteness of references, or to become, rather, *the telos* of the whole system of references. This *telos* – the last instance of the "for the sake of" (*Umwillen*) - which the whole structure "in order to" presupposes – can be nothing but the being of the human being. Although not a focal point for the investigation, Heidegger seems to avoid what might be seen as the real question involved in pointing out the world as the one in which *Dasein* "lives", as he never positively states that *Dasein* in his every-day state is mainly thematically aware. The exegetical tradition recommends the use of concepts such as "attention" and "interest" in trying to capture what Heidegger might mean by "living" Dasein, but, of course, attention does not coincide with the instance in which I might pay attention to something I do not show or have any interest in, for example, because other interests dictate that I do so. In other words, "attention" may more appropriately capture what Heidegger (following Husserl) would label as the determination of the concept of "living". The question of interest should be put aside, on the other hand, there is also the hermeneutic possibility of interrogating Heidegger regarding the question of concentration, *Dasein*'s attention to his own facticity. He uses terms such as "focus" and "theme" only when he aims to critically emphasize what *Dasein* cannot be strictly aware of (for example, this tool or another, the work in question). Consistently, Heidegger prefers terminology that deals with what *Dasein* "moves" or "finds" and is then identified with the network of references as such.

What Heidegger indicates is that the terms "targeting", "theme" and "focus" are not adequate to capture what happens in everyday involvement (*Umgang*). Assembling a library is a "practical" activity and, involved in this way with its surroundings, Dasein does not have a clearly discernible theme. What happens is the simple fact that *Dasein* "lives" or moves in "utility" relationships, so it is not thematically aware of the various beings-utensils as such, nor is it thematically directed towards what needs to be built (the library) and nor does it reflectively thematize its own activity as such. In fact, we can eliminate the discourse in which it is announced that the referential network is thematic as such: “And insofar as it is encountered in use, this means that, in relation to sight, its genuine reality appears in looking away from it as a mere thing on hand.” (Heidegger 2009, 191) Therefore, Heidegger argues that an approach to everyday practical life in terms of thematic awareness is wrong. Our usual involvement in interacting with the world, although by no means devoid of circumspect vision, is as such non-thematic. The thematic awareness is articulated when *Dasein* is involved in theoretical observation – in itself a kind of involvement, although by no means a simplistic one – an instance not necessarily characteristic of the type of involvement attributable to everyday *Dasein*. So what *Dasein* “lives” in is not for Heidegger the equivalent of what *Dasein* knows thematically. However, the best way to approach the way Heidegger articulates “living”, “moving”, or “dwelling in” is by appealing to Husserl's theory of the acts in which we “live” - it is important to note that Husserl, in turn, articulates the terminology of his discourse in order to avoid invoking the pejorative idea of ”theme” or (theoretical) “focus”. According to Heidegger, it is justified to argue that the everyday involved *Dasein* is not necessarily “thematic” aware of something in general - neither of individual tools, nor what needs to be built, nor of the reference network – but moves or is in the network of references and not in individual utensils or something close to it.

However, Heidegger does not claim that references in which *Dasein* “lives”, “moves” or “dwells” can in no way become „thematic” in an everyday context, but only that they are almost never thematic as objects of a purely theoretical and neutral investigation. Although Heidegger consistently insists that tools, operations, and even the reference network remain discreet in the natural context of use, he considers a number of ways in which the reference network can still be highlighted on a daily basis using the *Umgang*. These include examples of disorders - such as when a tool is missing or defective - involving use. What happens, Heidegger asks, if, for example, an instrument malfunctions? Since the most appropriate way to encounter an instrument as an instrument is by resorting to interacting with it, and since this interaction is determined by updating as impossible due to the malfunction of the tool, the tool is now presented to its potential user in a certain "unhandiness" (*Unzuhandenheit*). It could be argued that the defective utensil announces itself in a certain *presence-at-hand*, as just another occurring being, because it is there unsuitable for anything, in a propensity for disinterest. And yet Heidegger argues that "This presence-at-hand of something that cannot be used is still not devoid of all readiness-to-hand whatsoever; equipment which is present-at-hand in this way is still not just a Thing which occurs somewhere." (Heidegger 1962, 103)

Although it literally loses its handiness or rather because of the way it loses it, the tool accentuates its "presence-at-hand" quality in a deficiency. When I find that the necessary tool is defective, the "in order to" is highlighted in a problematic way. Now I am suddenly aware that I need this tool to do what I needed for that project and so on. As the reference is disturbed, the reference itself becomes explicit (*ausdrücklich*). In this context, not only the malfunctioning individual utensil, so to speak in its isolated *Um-zu*, is highlighted, because "When equipment cannot be used, this implies that the constitutive assignment of the "in-order-to" to a "towards-this" has been disturbed. The assignments themselves are not observed; they are rather 'there' when we concernfully submit ourselves to them [*Sichstellen unter sie*]. But when an assignment has been disturbed – when something is unusable for some purpose-then the assignment becomes explicit." (Heidegger 1962, 105)

Not only the keyboard in its „in order to" or related to "with which to" is accentuated when the keyboard does not work, but also the whole network of references, references, also: I needed the functional keyboard to write that text, which, in turn, had to be completed by that date in order to be sent to that conference, and so on. Another way in which the reference network can be accentuated for everyday *Dasein* involves meeting the *sign*. A *sign*, such as an indicator on a car - to use Heidegger's example - is itself characterized by a "in order to", it is itself a tool. Unlike most other utensils, the indicator has the task of being noticed. Of course, this is not about other road users noticing the indicator as a car-like tool, such as a radio antenna. Rather, the indicator has the specific function of providing other road users with guidance in the environment, says Heidegger. What accentuates the indicator is, for example, that this car will turn right at the next intersection and therefore also highlights subsequent references to my need to make sure the driver saw me so I can continue to ride my bike safely. In other words, the indicator is a special tool in that it does not highlight its own status as a tool and no being, instead, highlights a network of references. Heidegger concludes: “Signs always indicate primarily 'wherein' one lives, where one's concern dwells, what sort of involvement there is with something.” (Heidegger 1962, 111)

The encounter of a malfunctioning utensil or sign is unique in that both involve an emphasis on the reference network “in which the Dasein lives” or through which the *Dasein* lives. This *referencial whole*, following the initial formal definition of Heidegger's articulated world is the *world*, so it is natural to subscribe when Heidegger concludes that both the defective utensil and the sign have the function of making explicit the daily *Dasein* in its facticity. In order to discover the utensil as a utensil, *Dasein* should first understand the reference that constitutes the being of the utensil, of course, it is a reference to something and that something (usually) itself has a way of being defined by its *reference to*. In other words, a whole network of references must be understood in order for *Dasein* to have the possibility to interact with the individual being: “The world itself is not an entity *within-the-world*; and yet it is so determinative for such entities that only in so far as 'there is' a world can they be encountered and show themselves, in their Being, as entities which have been discovered.” (Heidegger 1962, 102)

Therefore, the world is a *referential whole* that, as such, allows individual beings to present themselves. Without an understood world, there can be no encountered entities, or *The world* is not something that comes after, but what is before, in the strict sense of this expression “That which is before” means that which is revealed and understood from the very beginning in every *Dasein* that exists, namely before any notification of one being or another; “That which is before” is that which is before us as something that is already always and before revealed.

5. The phenomenon of world

Some argue that one of the most efficient ways to approach the problem of possible affinities between Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology is through the concept of the world (Holmes 1985, 371-387). Given the debate in the literature – especially criticism of Husserl's conception of the world –surrounding the very concept of the world, this suggestion may seem unconvincing at first. However, as I hope to show in this section, there are certain structural similarities between the two accounts as they have been presented in this study. First, Husserl's developed conception of the world as a horizon is ultimately unearthed as incompatible with the notion of the world as a totality of entities. As a horizon, the world is precisely a structure without which entities could not present themselves, a precondition for the manifestation of entities, rather than something itself consisting of such entities. The Heideggerian concept of the world as a whole of references exhibits the same features. It is not itself to be conceived as a totality of entities, whether with the being of "occurrent" things or equipment. Rather, the world is the referential structure that allows such entities to be met. If the world is an entity or a collection of entities, it should probably itself be placed in a referential whole, that is, a world, to be encountered; or, using the Husserlian model, it should be given horizontally, that is, in a world. Husserl and Heidegger thus seem to agree on a perfectly tangible, if only negative, point - viz. that the world cannot be described phenomenologically as a totality of entities – and on a positive, if less palpable, point—namely, that the world should somehow be conceived as a structure that allows entities to emerge. Second, according to both authors, the world is experientially "present" in roughly the same way. Husserl, as we have seen, emphasizes that the world is something I am conscious of in a "dim" manner (Husserl 1983, 57). Although it can be thematized (by phenomenology), the world is not a theme for the naturally granted subject. It is there in a non-thematic, "background" way, making possible our thematic awareness of what we are thematically aware of. However, the same could be said of Heidegger's notion of the world. The world is something that does not announce itself, at least normally, and, present in this "background" manner, makes possible our unproblematic interaction with individual (inconspicuous) entities. Third, despite the fact that the two notions of world seem, from a Husserlian perspective, to refer to two different "levels" of concrete life (namely, the concrete practical-understanding level we live on and the foundational level of perceptions "in the function of serving"), if probed a little deeper, other structural similarities are also discovered. These will be revealed if we pay attention to how both worldviews are developed. In both cases, the initial focus is on the individual entity rather than any collection or configuration of such entities. Even with this initially limited focus, Husserl and Heidegger are both driven to understand that the individual entity is not given as a simple matter, but rather, according to both accounts, it gives itself only, as it were, by dragging something more with it. How does this happen? In Heidegger's view, the individual instrument can present itself as such only insofar as it is understood in its being, that is, in its reference to... A referential structure must be understood if there is to be any encountered entity. For Husserl, the situation appears significantly different; after all, not a word has been said about references in our presentation of Husserl. But what, for instance, is a perceptual "inner horizon"? The horizon of "improperly" manifest that the "properly" manifest is embedded in is not unrelated to the authentically manifest. How could it be, if the properly manifest aspect is to be *an* aspect of the same as the continuum of improperly manifest aspects are aspects of? The properly given aspect cannot be self-sufficient, as it were, but must - as a dependent moment - refer to other aspects, if it is to be an *aspect of*... (Husserl 1983, 306). We might say, accordingly, that is in its reference to a continuum of other aspects that the authentically manifest aspect becomes an aspect of a thing. Clearly, then, nothing in principle prevents us from interpreting the Husserlian conception of world as itself a "referential structure," along the lines of Heidegger's concept of world[3]. What is more, this reading seems to be partially confirmed by certain passages written by Husserl himself.

In *Cartesian Meditations*, for instance, he uses the term "reference" (*Verweisung*) to describe the phenomenon of horizonal intentionality (Husserl 1973, 82-97), and in an early lecture course he formulates the relation between proper and improper manifestation thus: "Actual appearance 'refers' to such and such possible appearance, and actual perception in a harmonious perceptual nexus refers to these or those possible perceptions that are in accord with the elapsing perceptual nexus." (Husserl 1988, 216) In conclusion, perhaps, after all, it can be said that Husserl is of agreement with Heidegger's characterization of the world as a whole of references. However, Heidegger's conception of the world in *Being and Time* is not, as we have seen, a purely formal idea of a referential whole, but that of a very specific referential system—namely a reference system of "for" and "for the sake of". I have already mentioned that Heidegger's analysis of the phenomenon of the world seems, at least in the magnate opus, a little too closely related to the specific situation of the craftsman in her workshop – it is, more than anything else, a "world of work" (*Werkwelt*). But it seems that a similar point could be made about Husserl. The world-horizon, for Husserl, is primarily a horizon of possible experience, even as he points out that in its full concretization, it is much more than that. However, while this is a large claim that cannot be properly substantiated in the present study, it seems to me that the world-horizon notion has greater descriptive potential than the world-as-referential-network conception; it seems, for example, that the "horizon" can capture not only perceptual phenomena but also "practical" phenomena. One can make the movement of a *Dasein* in its referential network intelligible in terms of "practical horizons" or horizons of "practical possibilities", at just as the continuous co-presence of the imperceptible wall of the desk behind me can be made intelligible in terms of 'perceptual horizons'. The "practical horizon" is precisely that in which we "live" mainly, according to Husserl. This becomes evident when we look at an unpublished manuscript. In "Ms. A VI 14 a" from the beginning of the thirties, Husserl repeats his contention that, no matter what we are caught up with, "the whole world is always in this connection the implicit background, the constant universal horizon"[4]. He continues: "In addition, a 'practical horizon,' a horizon of that which I can do in my horizonally given situation, belongs to every activity, every praxis"[5]. The individual references are ordered somehow in relation to the practical "goal" of the activity, something Husserl (like Heidegger) does not describe as thematically in focus, but rather as placed in the horizon: "in the praxis I am directed towards a goal as the end of a praxis-path, and it [the goal] lies in the horizon as the practical *towards-which*"[6]. Furthermore, we have – once again, in case this point has not been emphasized enough in the present chapter – Husserl's unambiguous assurance that this practical horizon has a very special status within the world-horizon: What is called a 'practical horizon' here thus has a distinctiveness, in terms of 'liveliness,' within the universal horizon world[7]. The "practical horizon" is precisely the one in which we mainly "live," according to Husserl. Moreover, let us note in passing that Heidegger himself uses the concept of horizon when trying to explain the relationship between the "relevance" of the individual equipment and the "referential whole" that constitutes the world. In *Being and Time*, he writes: "Relationships of involvement [or of 'relevance': *Bewandtnisbezüge* intelligible only within the horizon of a world that has been disclosed. Their honzontal character, moreover, is what first makes possible the specific horizon of the 'whither' of belonging-somewhere regionally." (Heidegger 1962, 368) Now the crucial point is that even the phenomenon of nature - precisely one of the phenomena that does not fit well in the early Heidegger's account - as something discovered in states of mind, can apparently be covered through this Husserlian notion. Actually, Husserl himself develops, if not a full-fledged theory, then at least outlines for a theory of disposition along these very lines. *Mood*, according to Husserl, is something that relates, in a kind of background, to the horizon more than to any particular object. In this way, it "colors," as Husserl explicitly says, not only whatever we happen to look at, but essentially the whole world. Is it not very plausible to explain all this in terms of horizons? Or, to put it more cautiously, is there any reason to think that Husserl's notion of the world horizon should not be able to capture this?

The *world-as-world-horizon* conception is so giving in terms of phenomenological connotations, but at the same time it is strangely "neutral" to ontological issues in Heidegger's sense of the word, that there is no reason why it should not be able to capture practical aspects and "related to the state of mind"; world dimensions as well as "theoretical" dimensions. The horizon of the world, one might say, is a non-committal ontological concept of the world, that is, one that does not prejudge the being of intra-worldly entities. It does not oppose the specific notion of a set of references and, at the same time, is not essentially tied to the idea of *readiness-at-hand*, nor is it committed to an ontology of *presence-at-hand*. In this way, characterizing the world as a horizon seems to be the most fruitful phenomenological approach to the world. The *world-as-world-horizon* conception seems at once to capture the practical, referential connection that Heidegger emphasizes (rightly so, I think) and to capture some of what seems to escape Heidegger's somewhat ontologically narrow account early.

NOTES

[1] Interestingly, however, the cartesian Husserl would say exactly that the phenomenology or theory of his intentionality is not itself based on acts that do not need an existing object, although he describes such acts in detail. Although *I perceive*, for example, it is absolutely indubitable that the act of perceiving exists and, therefore, the phenomenological act directed towards the act of perceiving is precisely that act for which an object cannot be non-existent. But clearly, Keller discusses the types of acts "treated" in Husserl's theory of intentionality, rather than those in which phenomenologization itself takes place.
[2] It would take me too far afield to elaborate on the intricacies of Heidegger's own account of the relation between what he calls entities that are ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) and those that are present-to-hand (*vorhanden*). McManus provides a book-length treatment of the issue in *Heidegger and the Measure of Truth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012.
[3] It might be objected that this is stretching Husserl's conception of the world too far in the direction of Heidegger. But my point is simply that the Husserlian conception of world as horizon seems able to encompass that which Heidegger is trying to bring to light under the heading of *Venveistingszusarnmenhang*: i.e., I am claiming that the conception of world as horizon can be stretched in such a way, not that Husserl actually develops it along those lines;

[4] "[…] stets ist dabei die garlic Welt der implizite Hintergrund, der standige Universalhorizont." (Husserl 2006, Ms. A VI 14a, 19a)

[5] "[…] Dabei gehort wesensmassig zu jedem Tun, zu jeder Praxis on praktischer Horizont, ein Horizont dessen, was ich in meiner horizontmassig bewussten Situation kann." (Husserl 2006, Ms. A VI 14a, 24h)

[6] "[…] praktisch bin ich auf ein Ziel gerichtet als Ende eines praktischen Weges, und das liegt im Horizont als das praktische Woraufhin." (Husserl 2006, Ms. A VI 14a, 25a)

[7] Husserl's concept of world as such can be understood as guaranteeing the intersubjective nature of practical reason, which allows for different individuals validating and questioning practical decisions of others that are not and never will be their own. This is not to say that a view like Heidegger's could not in a different way account for this kind of validating. Indeed, several commentators have addressed the challenge of how to think of success and failure or better or worse ways of disclosing the world from within Heidegger's early philosophy. Smith (2007, 1–22.) critically considers several proposals before formulating his own according to which we are to look at the way that *Dasein* is beholden to itself in authenticity and resoluteness. Most recently, McKinney (2016, 111–130) has proposed a competing interpretation arguing that we are beholden to the world itself and that authenticity is to be understood as sustaining our openness to the world. McManus (2015, 195–220.), then again, has elaborated how one, from a Heideggerian perspective, can call into question that the different understandings of Being are like different perspectives that can be better or worse because these different understandings are not rivals in that they are not about the same aspect of the world.

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Phänomenologie der psychedelischen Erfahrung. Versuch einer Felderschließung

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Abstract

Phenomenology of Psychedelic Experience: An Attempt to Open up a New Research Area

Since the 1990s there has been an increased scientific interest in psychedelics, their mode of action and their therapeutic potential. In Addition, there seems to have been an increased philosophical interest in the subject and in particular in psychedelic experiences in recent years. From the phenomenological side, however, there are very few relevant studies on this subject area. Therefore, in this article, an attempt is made to open up a new field of research for phenomenology.

Keywords: psychedelics, psychedelic experience, phenomenology, metaphysics, perception, hallucination, LSD, DMT, Mescaline

„Qualitaet ist […] quallen […] eines Dinges […].“
Jakob Böhme

Der Phänomenologie soll im Folgenden ein neues Forschungsfeld erschlossen werden: das Feld der psychedelischen Erfahrungen. Seit den 90er Jahren ist allgemein ein zunehmendes Forschungsinteresse hinsichtlich der Wirkweise und des therapeutischen Potenzials von Psychedelika zu verzeichnen. Und auch Philosophinnen und Philosophen scheinen sich dieses Themas in den letzten Jahren verstärkt anzunehmen. An erster Stelle wäre hier Chris Letheby zu nennen (Letheby 2021). Aber genuin phänomenologische Arbeiten sind (noch) rar gesät (vgl. Day & Smetkamp 2022). Letheby verfolgt einen dezidiert naturalistischen Ansatz.

Dagegen müsste eine phänomenologische Herangehensweise versuchen, zunächst alle metaphysischen oder ontologischen Vorannahmen einzuklammern, um den Phänomenen (hier: den psychedelischen Erfahrungen) möglichst unvoreingenommen gegenüberzutreten. Dies schließt jedoch gerade nicht aus, dass phänomenologische Deskriptionen psychedelischer Erfahrungen zu metaphysischen und epistemischen Fragen etwas Substanzielles beitragen könnten. Im Gegenteil: Ich werde am Ende dieses Artikels einen entsprechenden Versuch unternehmen und zur Diskussion stellen. Ich versuche insgesamt drei Dinge in Angriff zu nehmen: Ich möchte erstens der Phänomenologie methodisch und inhaltlich eine ‚neue' Phänomengruppe erschließen, ich möchte zweitens an einigen Erfahrungsberichten demonstrieren, inwiefern eine phänomenologische Psychedelik fruchtbar für die phänomenologische Forschung im Allgemeinen sein könnte, und ich möchte drittens die ontologische bzw. epistemische Relevanz psychedelischer Erfahrungen aufzeigen.

1. Die Phänomenologie und die psychedelischen Erfahrungen

Die Phänomenologie hat sich seit ihrer ‚Inauguration' durch Edmund Husserl intensiv mit den verschiedenen Modi unseres subjektiven Zur-Welt-Seins und In-der-Welt-Seins und überhaupt unseres Welt-Seins[1] beschäftigt. Eine besondere Erfahrungsweise hat sie jedoch bisher eher stiefmütterlich behandelt: die sogenannte *psychedelische Erfahrung*. Dies hatte und hat natürlich verschiedene und durchaus nachvollziehbare Gründe: Etwa denjenigen, dass es die vordringliche Aufgabe sein musste, zunächst die ‚normale' Erfahrung (oder was dafür gehalten wird) zum Gegenstand der phänomenologischen Beschreibung zu machen, oder die Tatsache, dass psychedelische Erfahrungen eher selten ohne die Einnahme psychoaktiver Substanzen auftreten (und insofern ‚artifiziell' zu sein scheinen). Und natürlich hatten zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts nur wenige ‚Eingeweihte' überhaupt Zugang zu Psychedelika wie Meskalin oder Psilocybin – ganz zu schweigen von Lysergsäurediethylamid (LSD), das erst am 16. November 1938 von Albert Hofmann synthetisiert wurde (gut sieben Monate nach Husserls Tod am 27. April 1938).[2] Erschwerend kommt hinzu, dass die subjektive Varianz der psychedelischen Erfahrung viel größer zu sein scheint als bei den Erlebnisweisen im Normalzustand, was eine eidetische Verallgemeinerung und Deskription deutlich erschwert.

Nichtsdestotrotz scheint das phänomenologisch wenig erschlossene Gebiet der psychedelischen Erfahrungen ein lohnenswerter Forschungsgegenstand für die Phänomenologie zu sein, da eine Analyse dieser Erfahrungen die Möglichkeit bietet, vermeintliche phänomenologische Selbstverständlichkeiten oder eidetisch notwendige Zusammenhänge auf den Prüfstand zu stellen wie z.B. die Vorstellung einer stets klaren Grenze zwischen dem *leiblichen* Subjekt und seiner Umwelt, die Annahme einer strikten Trennung von Imagination und Perzeption sowie von perzeptiven Wachzuständen und nicht-perzeptiven Traumzuständen. Man könnte die psychedelische Erfahrung daher auch selbst als Möglichkeit einer realen Variantenbildung und damit nicht nur als Ausweitung der Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten, sondern eben auch als mögliche Erweiterung der eidetischen Variation selbst durch *reale* Erlebnisvariationen verstehen (die dann freilich in der eidetischen Variation als reine Möglichkeiten behandelt werden müssen).[3] Um dies vorweg an einem Beispiel zu erläutern: Die husserlschen Wahrnehmungsanalysen zielen beispielsweise darauf ab, auf den Begriff zu bringen, was *Wahrnehmung überhaupt* ist. Was ist jedoch, wenn die Wahrnehmung im psychedelischen Erleben deutlich von der gewöhnlichen Wahrnehmung abweicht? Muss dies nicht auch den allgemeinen Begriff der Wahrnehmung affizieren?

2. Die möglichen Aufgaben und Funktionen einer phänomenologischen Psychedelik

Prinzipiell gilt: Eine zukünftige phänomenologische Psychedelik (wie ich diese projektierte phänomenologische Teildisziplin nennen möchte) ist kein bloß exotisches oder extraordinäres Anhängsel der ordentlichen Phänomenologie, sondern deren notwendige Erweiterung. Notwendig ist diese Erweiterung, da ein Ausschluss der phänomenologischen Psychedelik aus der Phänomenologie zur Folge hätte, dass diese selbst unvollständig bliebe. Das Gleiche gilt natürlich für alle von der vermeintlichen Normalität abweichende Weisen des Subjektseins und subjektiven Zur-Welt-Seins (etwa für das Erleben in der Depression, bei paranoider Schizophrenie, bei Demenz, in Panik und Angstzuständen etc.). Hier soll es aber nur um den Formenkreis der psychedelischen Erfahrungen gehen. Ich möchte vier Aufgaben und Funktionen der eidetischen Psychedelik als künftigen Zweig der Phänomenologie benennen (ohne Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit):

1. Grundsätzlich soll der Phänomenologie ein neues Forschungsfeld erschlossen werden, für dessen ‚Bestellung' sie aufgrund ihrer methodischen und begrifflichen Ressourcen prädestiniert ist. Es gibt zwar massenhaft Erfahrungsberichte über entsprechende psychedelische Erfahrungen. Aber nur wenige davon sind von phänomenologisch geschulten Forschern verfasst worden. Glücklicherweise besitzen wir aber solche von prominenten Literaten wie Ernst Jünger (Jünger 1980) oder Aldous Huxley, dem Autor von *Brave New World* und von den einschlägigen *Pforten der Wahrnehmung* (Huxley 1991). Die phänomenologische Psychedelik ist zunächst einmal ein legitimes wissenschaftliches Projekt des theoretischen Interesses.
2. Die Deskription psychedelischer Erfahrung kann jedoch mehr leisten: Sie kann die Phänomenologie der Subjektivität insgesamt erweitern und auch dabei helfen, die faktischen Anthropologismen der Phänomenologie offenzulegen. Hiermit meine ich, dass die Faktizitäten und Normalitäten, die vielleicht Homo-sapiens-spezifisch (manchmal sogar nur für den europäisierten Menschen der Moderne typisch) sind, gelegentlich methodisch unsauber zu eidetischen Allgemeinheiten hochstilisiert werden (etwa die eidetische Verallgemeinerung der Art und Weise, wie wir faktisch die Dinge in der Welt wahrnehmen). So setzen die Dinganalysen Husserls wie selbstverständlich die Binokularität, das Farbsehen oder überhaupt Visualität etc. voraus, die zwar typisch für den

Homo sapiens sind, aber schon bei diesem keine wesensnotwendige Verfasstheit darstellen.[4]

3. Darüber hinaus kann die phänomenologische Psychedelik aber auch einen Beitrag zur rezenten Realismusdebatte und zu einer künftigen phänomenologischen Metaphysik beizusteuern, indem sie dabei hilft, die Ontologie der Wahrnehmung und der Wahrnehmungsgegenstände sowie des wahrnehmenden leiblichen Subjekts zu erhellen (s. unten: Kapitel 5).
4. Und last but not least kann sie auch (wie bereits angemerkt) die Grenzen der phänomenologischen Methode, insbesondere der eidetischen Variation offenlegen. Sie kann also einen wichtigen Beitrag zur phänomenologischen Methodendiskussion leisten.

3. Thesen

These 1: Die psychedelische Erfahrung ist eine *anthropologische* Erfahrungsmöglichkeit, eine veränderte Art des In-der-Welt-, des Zur-Welt- und des Welt-Seins überhaupt. Sie setzt ein (selbst-)bewusstes Wesen voraus, das anthropoial konstituiert ist, das heißt ein Wesen, welches sowohl geistig-egologisch als auch leiblich-körperlich verfasst ist, das zudem nicht nur einfach in der Welt lokalisiert ist, sondern selbst ‚welthaft' ist. (Damit ist also nicht per se impliziert, dass die Möglichkeit psychedelischer Erfahrungen zum Wesen von Subjektivität überhaupt gehört.)

These 2: Die psychedelische Erfahrung stellt (abhängig von ihrer situativen Intensität und der Substanzart) einerseits eine Art Abwandlung des gewöhnlichen Welt- und Selbsterlebens dar, andererseits handelt es sich bei ihr aber auch um eine genuin eigenartige Erfahrungsart, bei der ansonsten verborgene Potenzialitäten des erlebenden Subjekts patent werden.

These 3: Vieles von dem, was psychedelische Erfahrungen kennzeichnet, ist durch eidetische Variation (also imaginativ) nur schwer oder gar nicht erreichbar bzw. produzierbar.

These 4: ‚*Die*' psychedelische Erfahrung gibt es möglicherweise so nicht. Oder präziser: Ein einheitliches Wesen der psychedelischen Erfahrung lässt sich möglicherweise nicht angeben. Denn jede psychedelische Erfahrung scheint nicht nur individuell, sondern oft auch essenziell von jeder anderen verschieden zu sein. Allerdings ist auch dies möglicherweise noch unpräzise formuliert: Vielleicht könnte man sagen, dass die unterschiedlichen psychedelischen Erfahrungen Familienähnlichkeiten aufweisen und dass sich einzelne Merkmale durchaus eidetisch fassen lassen. Man kann aber nicht aus einem einheitlichen Eidos deduzieren oder prognostizieren, durch welche einzelnen Merkmale (Modifizierungen, Umstrukturierungen und Prozessualitäten/Dynamiken) eine bestimmte psychedelische Erfahrung gekennzeichnet sein wird (so wie man sagen kann: wenn etwas ein Körper ist, dann ist es notwendig ausgedehnt).[5] Lediglich die urimpressional-retentional-protentionalen Strukturen der lebendigen Gegenwart halten sich grundsätzlich auch bei der psychedelischen Erfahrung durch, weshalb die gängige Rede von einer „Bewusstseinserweiterung" höchst problematisch ist, weil damit eigentlich *neuartige* Erfahrungen gemeint sind (und eben keine formale Erweiterung des Bewusstseins selbst, zumindest wenn man unter Bewusstsein die „lebendige Gegenwart" im husserlschen Sinne versteht).[6]

These 4: Methodisch folgt hieraus, dass es weniger um eine gleichsam monobegriffliche und abgeschlossene Eidetik der psychedelischen Erfahrung gehen kann, als vielmehr darum, psychedelische Erfahrungen und ihre individuellen Deskriptionen selbst als Erfahrungs*varianten* anzusehen, die die von der normalen Erfahrung ausgehende eidetische Variation durch neue Erfahrungsvarianten bereichert und erweitert, die selbst nicht oder nur schwer auf dem Wege der imaginativen Variation erreichbar sind.

4. Methodisches

Dies heißt nun methodisch konkret, dass man nicht umhinkommt, individuelle psychedelische Erfahrungen möglichst akribisch genau und – das lässt sich gar nicht vermeiden – mit einer Theorie oder Phänomenologie der normalen menschlichen Erfahrung im Hintergrund analysiert (so problematisch das Konzept der Normalität auch sein mag). Wenn man hiergegen einwenden würde, dass man dann aber den psychedelischen Erfahrungen nicht mehr unvoreingenommen gegenüberträte, sondern sie gleichsam a priori in ein begrifflich-theoretisches Korsett pressen (und damit verfälschen) würde, so scheint mir dieser Einwand zwar naheliegend, aber nicht stichhaltig zu sein. Denn die Phänomenologie bildet ja nie einfach nur in Gestalt einer wiederholenden und trivialen Narration ab, wie Menschen sich und die Welt durchschnittlich so erleben. Das wäre nicht Wissenschaft, sondern buchstäblich: Schundprosa. Vielmehr geht es stets um eine analytische Durchdringung des Erlebens und Erfahrens und der anschließenden eidetischen Verallgemeinerung. Und das Besondere psychedelischer Erfahrungen kann nur ausgehend von einer analytisch aufgeschlüsselten und begrifflich erschlossenen normalen Erfahrung her erfasst werden. Alles andere wäre zutiefst naiv. Das Besondere der psychedelischen Erfahrung für den Psychonauten, aber eben auch für den Phänomenologen, ist das Abweichende, die Alterität. Und nur weil dies so ist, kann dann auch umgekehrt das normale Erfahren von einem jenseitigen Standpunkt aus neu erblickt und erfasst werden. Die psychedelische Erfahrung bietet genau dies: einen jenseitigen Standpunkt und einen Verfremdungseffekt in Bezug auf die Selbstverständlichkeiten der Normalität.

Es gilt also der methodische Primat der Phänomenologie der normalen Erfahrung. Umgekehrt gilt aber auch, dass die Phänomenologie der psychedelischen Erfahrung dabei helfen kann, das Konzept der Normalität zu schärfen und gleichzeitig dafür zu sensibilisieren, welche Faktizitäten gerade nicht eidetisch notwendig sind in Bezug auf ein bestimmtes generisches Eidos, etwa in Bezug auf das Eidos ‚Wahrnehmung überhaupt' (so dass sich hier die Möglichkeit eines hermeneutisch-phänomenologischen Auslegungszirkels zwischen den Analysen der Normalität und der Anormalität eröffnet). Die Psychedelik kann daher auch die Funktion eines Korrektivs in Bezug auf die Phänomenologie der Normalität ausüben. Dieses Potential der Korrektion durch Distanzierung, Verfremdung und exzentrische Positionierung teilt die Psychedelik übrigens mit der Zoologie, der Humanmedizin (und Psychiatrie) und dem Science-fiction-Genre. Die Zoologie macht uns damit bekannt, dass unsere Wahrnehmungsorganisation nicht die eines transzendentalen Subjekts überhaupt ist, sondern nur die einer mundanen Spezies, nämlich des Homo sapiens. (Man erinnere sich auch an Thomas Nagels berühmten Aufsatz: ‚What is it like to be a bat?'‘) Medizin und Psychiatrie machen uns mit allerlei Devianzen und Alteritäten bekannt: etwa mit Farbblindheit, Gesichtsblindheit, Blindsehen, mit dem Zur-Welt-Sein in der Schizophrenie etc. Und *Science fiction* macht uns mit möglichen (vorstellbaren) anderen *geistigen* (bzw. anthropoialen) Subjekten bekannt, die nicht der Spezies Homo sapiens angehören und die auch über andere Leiblichkeiten und über andere Wahrnehmungsapparate verfügen, die sich deutlich von dem des durchschnittlichen Homo-sapiens-Vertreters unterscheiden. Kurz: Die normale Wahrnehmung eines Homo-sapiens-Vertreters exemplifiziert nicht die einzige Art von Wahrnehmung, die es gibt, sondern ist nur eine von vielen anderen möglichen. Und es besteht die methodische Gefahr, dass die Normalität zur Norm bei der Erfassung des generischen Eidos (Gattung) wird. ‚Die‘ psychedelische Erfahrung (und damit die phänomenologische Psychedelik) kann hier, wie gesagt, als Korrekturinstanz dienen. Denn sie stellt eine andere Art der Wahrnehmung und Erfahrung schon bei (psychonautischen) Homo-sapiens-Vertretern dar.

5. Einige Fragen der phänomenologischen Psychedelik

Es geht mir hier zunächst vor allem um die *Erschließung* einer neuen phänomenologischen Forschungsrichtung. Einer künftigen phänomenologischen Psychedelik müsste es dann unter anderen um folgende Fragen gehen: Was passiert mit der Welt und dem Zur-Welt-Sein des Subjekts in der psychedelischen Erfahrung? Was geschieht mit dem Selbstbezug? Kann man angeben, was es eigentlich heißt, *eine tiefe psychedelische Erfahrung zu machen?* Was folgt hieraus für die Ontologie der Erfahrungsdinge bzw. der Lebenswelt? Lassen sich Typen psychedelischer Erfahrungen differenzieren? (…)

Aus den bisherigen Erörterungen dürfte klar sein, dass man die psychedelische Erfahrung nicht einfach dadurch genauestens analysieren, deskribieren und eidetisieren kann, dass man den strengen Vorgaben der eidetischen Variation folgt. Würde man so vorgehen, müsste man von einer einzelnen psychedelischen Erfahrung ausgehen und imaginativ eine offen-endlose Variantenbildung erzeugen, um so die Essenz oder das begrifflich Allgemeine der psychedelischen Erfahrung zu erfassen.[7] Damit schließt man aber von vornherein hiervon essenziell verschiedene andere psychedelische Erfahrungen aus. Der einzig mögliche Zugang zum Gesamtfeld der psychedelischen Erfahrungen sind daher die mannigfaltigen psychedelischen Erfahrungen selbst, die Menschen gemacht haben, einschließlich dessen, was sie darüber zu berichten haben. Auch eigene psychedelische Erfahrungen wären zunächst nur gleichsam kontingente Singularitäten (resultierend aus Set und Setting) und behöben das grundsätzliche Problem nicht, das darin besteht, dass psychedelische Erfahrungen vermutlich nur über Familienähnlichkeiten zusammenhängen und sich daher kaum eidetisch einheitlich fassen lassen. Ich sehe den Wert der psychedelischen Erfahrungen und ihrer Beschreibungen daher auch (wie gesagt) als Erweiterung der bisherigen eidetischen Variation durch – nicht durch ebendiese eidetische Variation erreichbare – Varianten des Erfahrens. Das bedeutet, dass ich die Methode der eidetischen Variation weder generell noch auch nur in Bezug auf psychedelische Erfahrungen verabschieden möchte, sondern dass ich den psychedelischen Erfahrungen und deren begrifflichen Analyse gewissermaßen einen supplementären Status zuspreche. Denn ich bestreite natürlich nicht, dass auch psychedelische Wahrnehmungen und Erfahrungen ebendies sind: (echte) Wahrnehmungen und/oder Erfahrungen.[8] Oder anders formuliert: Auch eine psychedelische Wahrnehmung fällt unter den allgemeinen Begriff der Wahrnehmung. Und was für Wahrnehmungen überhaupt gilt, gilt notwendig auch für psychedelische Wahrnehmungen.[9]

Was eint dann die Pluralität der psychedelischen Erfahrungen als *psychedelische*? Wie und wodurch sollen wir sie von anderen Erfahrungen abgrenzen? Sollen wir sagen, psychedelische Erfahrungen seien substanzeninduziert? Aber der dumpfe Bierrausch wird auch durch eine Substanz hervorgerufen, ohne dass man diesem Rausch *deshalb* psychedelische Eigenschaften zusprechen würde. Und nicht jede psychedelische

Erfahrung ist substanzeninduziert, sondern kann z.B. im Zuge einer außergewöhnliche(n) Kunst- und Naturerfahrung auftreten;[10] oder durch bestimmte Meditationspraktiken oder zu Trancen führende Tänze und sonstige rhythmische Bewegungen (ja sogar durch das Stroboskop[11]) hervorgerufen werden. Daher nützt es auch nichts, sich in den definitorischen Zirkel zu flüchten und zu sagen, dass psychedelische Erfahrungen diejenige seien, die durch psychedelische Substanzen hervorgerufen würden, und umgekehrt seien psychedelische Substanzen eben diejenigen, die psychedelische Erfahrungen hervorriefen.

‚Psychedelisch' heißt wörtlich: die Seele öffnend oder offenbarend.[12] Doch dieses Verständnis ist eindeutig zu eng und verweist vor allem auf den psycholytischen Anteil, also das häufig zu beobachtende Phänomen, dass sich durch Einnahme psychedelischer Substanzen die Tore zum Unbewussten öffnen und Verdrängtes an die Oberfläche strömt (weshalb schon kolportiert wurde, dass ein einmaliger LSD-Trip hundert Stunden Psychoanalyse ersetzen könnte[13]). Dies ist aber sehr oft auch nicht der Fall. Viele psychedelische Erfahrungen bestehen nicht in der Bewusstmachung und Verarbeitung von Verdrängtem, sondern in einem intensiven und veränderten Kontakt mit der Welt. Oft spricht man auch von Bewusstseinserweiterung, meint damit aber vor allem eine Erweiterung der Erfahrungsmöglichkeiten und die Neustiftung von gedanklichen Verbindungen. Dies trifft es schon eher. Aber eigentlich geht es tatsächlich um eine völlig veränderte Art des Zur-Welt-, In-der-Welt- und Welt-Seins. Die Welt ist oft schlicht nicht mehr einfach dieselbe – und das Gleiche gilt in gewisser Weise auch für das erfahrende Subjekt.

Ich fürchte, der Bereich des Psychedelischen lässt sich nicht scharf und allenfalls in dieser ganz allgemeinen und nichtssagenden Art von anderen Erfahrungs- und Erlebnisarten abgrenzen, weder vom sogenannten normalen Alltagserfahren noch von solchem Erleben, das als psychiatrisch relevant angesehen wird, noch von mystischen oder spirituellen Erfahrungen; ja gerade psychedelische Erfahrungen weisen oft selbst mystische und spirituelle Qualitäten auf. Es gibt kontinuierliche Übergänge zu anderen Erfahrungsarten und Zuständen, aber eben auch Brüche. Es ist letztlich eine Frage der Intensität und Tiefe des Erlebens. Trotzdem scheint es so zu sein, dass die meisten psychedelischen Erfahrungen durch Psychedelika hervorgerufen werden und diese Erfahrungen unterscheiden sich (jedenfalls ab einer bestimmten Dosis) deutlich sowohl vom alltäglichen In-der-Welt-Sein als auch von gewöhnlichen Rauschzuständen. Methodisch bedeutet dies, dass man aus forschungspragmatischen Gründen nicht umhinkommt, das Erleben zu beschreiben, welches durch Psychedelika induziert wird.[14] Denn hierdurch lassen sich solche Erfahrungen gezielt hervorrufen (was ja forschungspragmatisch höchst relevant ist). Und es bedeutet, dass man nicht auf die Erfahrungsberichte anderer verzichten kann. Erfahrungsberichte sind aber immer mit Vorsicht zu genießen, weshalb es wünschenswert wäre, dass diese entweder von geschulten Phänomenologen (aufgrund originärer Erfahrungen) selbst verfasst würden oder dass zumindest Phänomenologen diese Erfahrungsberichte durch Interviews, also durch gezieltes Fragen und Nachfragen, gleichsam kontrolliert ‚mitverfassen' würden.

6. Erfahrungsberichte

Ich möchte im Folgenden einige wenige Erfahrungsberichte präsentieren (die ich der Fachliteratur entnommen, aber auch durch eigene Interviews gewonnen habe). Ich konzentriere mich dabei auf folgende Punkte: verändertes In-der-Welt-Sein, veränderte Gegenstandswahrnehmung und verändertes Selbst-Sein.

Ich beginne mit Aldous Huxley und einer Art mystisch-spirituellen Erfahrung:

> „Die ‚andere Welt', zu der das Meskalin mir Zutritt gewährte, war nicht die Welt der Visionen; sie existierte draußen, war das, was ich mit offenen Augen sehen konnte. Die große Veränderung vollzog sich im Bereich objektiver Tatsachen. Was mit meinem subjektiven Weltall geschehen war, war verhältnismäßig unbedeutend.
>
> Ich schluckte meine Pille um elf Uhr. Eineinhalb Stunden später saß ich in meinem Arbeitszimmer und blickte angespannt auf eine kleine Glasvase. Die Vase enthielt nur drei Blumen – eine voll erblühte Rose mit dem Namen ‚Schöne aus Portugal', sie war muschelrosa, mit einer wärmeren, flammenden Tönung am unteren Rand jedes Blütenblattes;

> eine große magentarote und cremeweiße Nelke und auf gekürztem Stängel die blassviolette, sehr heraldische Blüte einer Schwertlilie. Nur zufällig und vorläufig zusammengetan, verstieß das kleine Sträußchen gegen alle Regeln herkömmlichen guten Geschmacks. Beim Frühstück an diesem Morgen war mir die lebhafte Disharmonie seiner Farben aufgefallen. Aber auf sie kam es nicht länger an. Ich blickte jetzt nicht auf eine ungewöhnliche Zusammenstellung von Blumen. Ich sah, was Adam am Morgen seiner Erschaffung gesehen hatte – das Wunder, das sich von Augenblick zu Augenblick erneuernde Wunder bloßen Daseins.
>
> ‚Ist es angenehm?‘ fragte jemand. […]
>
> ‚Weder angenehm noch unangenehm‘, antwortete ich. ‚Es ist.‘
>
> *Istigkeit* – war das nicht das Wort, das Meister Eckart so gerne gebrauchte? Das *Sein* der platonischen Philosophie – nur dass Platon den ungeheuren, den grotesken Irrtum begangen zu haben schien, das Sein vom Werden zu trennen und es dem mathematischen Abstraktum der Idee gleichzusetzen. Der arme Kerl konnte nie gesehen haben, wie Blumen aus ihrem eigenen inneren Licht heraus leuchteten und so große Bedeutung erlangten, dass sie unter dem Druck erbebten, der ihnen auferlegt war; er konnte nie wahrgenommen haben, dass das, was Rose und Schwertlinie und Nelke so eindringlich darstellten, nichts mehr und nichts weniger war, als was sie *waren* – eine Vergänglichkeit, die doch ewiges Leben war, ein unaufhörliches Vergehen, das gleichzeitig reines Sein war, ein Bündel winziger, einzigartiger Besonderheiten, worin durch ein unaussprechliches und doch selbstverständliches Paradoxon der göttliche Ursprung allen Daseins sichtbar wurde.“ (Huxley 1991, 15 f.)

Es klingen hier zwei Motive an, auf die man bei solchen psychedelischen Erfahrungsberichten immer wieder stößt: Einmal der Gedanke, dass der Psychonaut die Dinge so sieht als sähe er sie zum ersten Mal – was eine Art entsymbolisierte Perzeption suggeriert wie sie Max Scheler als methodische Aufgabe der Phänomenologie formuliert hat. Die „*Entsymbolisierung der Welt*“[15] scheint durch Psychedelika ganz von selbst zu geschehen. Zum anderen findet oft im scheinbaren Widerspruch hierzu eine Intensivierung und Neuassoziierung des Apperzeptiven, des Gedanklichen, des Denkens statt, ohne dass der Ausdruck Hyperreflexion hier angebracht wäre. Ob Huxley tatsächlich die philosophisch-mystischen Gedanken *während* des Meskalintrips hatte, lässt sich wohl nicht mehr eruieren. Aber wenn, dann fliegen einem diese Gedanken nicht aus einem Jenseits zu, sondern aus dem Unbewussten. Dies ist zwar immer so, aber wer würde beim Anblick dreier Blümchen in einer Vase normalerweise an Meister Eckart, an das Sein, an das Allleben denken? Selbst bei großen mystischen Philosophen wie Jakob Böhme waren mystische Erlebnisse bei Betrachtung von Alltagsgegenständen die absolute Ausnahme. (Von Böhme wird ja berichtet, dass ihm beim Anblick eines Zinngefäßes der Durchbruch seines Geistes „biß in die innerste Geburth der Gottheit" (Böhme 1997, 226) gelang.[16]) Psychedelische Erfahrungen sind aber oft auf merkwürdige Weise widersprüchlich und manchmal eben auch mystisch: Im Fall von Huxley ist die psychedelische Erfahrung durch die Gleichzeitigkeit von asymbolischer Unmittelbarkeit und hochsymbolischer Vermitteltheit ausgezeichnet. Es handelt sich natürlich um keinen echten logischen Widerspruch, aber doch um ein Phänomen, das ausgehend von der Normalperzeption schwer imaginierbar ist. Die vergegenständlichende Funktion der Sprache und der Eindeutigkeitszusammenhang von Ausdruck und Gegenstand scheinen jedenfalls hier deutlich gelockert zu sein.

Dies wird auch in folgender Passage deutlich, die zudem auf den Aspekt der Schönheit hinweist, die oft eine wichtige Rolle bei psychedelischen Erfahrungen spielt:

> „Ich blickte weiter auf die Blumen, und in ihrem lebendigen Licht glaubte ich das qualitative Äquivalent des Atmens zu entdecken – aber eines Atmens ohne das wiederholte Zurückkehren zu einem Ausgangspunkt, ohne ein wiederkehrendes Verebben; nur ein Fluten von Schönheit zu immer größerer Schönheit, von tiefer zu immer tieferer Bedeutung." (Huxley 1991, 16)

Huxley schildert hier noch einmal eindringlich die gleichzeitige und zeitliche Intensivierung von lebendiger ‚Schönerwerdung' des sinnlich Gegebenen und des sich verselbständigen gedanklichen Verweisungsgeschehens, einen Prozess der psychedelischen Erfahrung, in den das Subjekt dieser Erfahrung gleichsam gebannt hineingesogen wird. Man könnte hier mit Heidegger und Goethe davon sprechen, dass das „Welten der Welt" gleichsam veloziferisch intensiviert wird.[17]

Die Beseelung der Welt, insbesondere der lebendigen Natur, wird oft beschrieben. So hat mir ein Interviewpartner hierzu Folgendes gesagt:

> „In besonders beglückenden psychedelischen Momenten ängt die Welt, fangen die Bäume und die Blumen an, aus sich heraus zu quellen; sie sind nicht mehr starre für sich seiende Entitäten, sie sind auch nicht einfach pulsierende oder wabernde Entitäten, sondern man scheint vielmehr unmittelbar wahrzunehmen, wie alles aus einem verborgenen Grund hervorströmt, als sei die Idee der creatio continua plötzlich direkt mit den eigenen Augen zu sehen. Bäume, Sträucher, Wolken verwandeln sich zudem in Subjekte, bekommen Gesichter und scheinen eine umfassende Subjektgemeinschaft zu bilden. Alles wird zu einer großen beseelten Einheit. Man findet sich in einer lebendigen und animistischen Welt wieder und man hat das Gefühl, es sei alles gut so! Es ist, als sei man in die Welt der Märchen geraten, in das Land von Frau Holle, nur dass es nichts Verstörendes oder Bedrohliches oder auch nur Kurioses hat. Man könnte auch von einer Wiederverzauberung der Welt sprechen.“

Interessant scheint mir zu sein, dass hier möglichweise ein ursprünglicher Erfahrungsmodus (sowohl im onto- wie phylogenetischen Sinne) hervorzubrechen scheint, der sowohl in animistischen Kulturen kultiviert als auch in vielen Märchen narrativ inszeniert wird. Helmuth Plessner schreibt hierzu in *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch*:

> „Nichts widerlegt schon innerhalb der einfachen Lebenserfahrung die berühmten Theorien des Analogieschlusses und der Einfühlung, nach denen angeblich der Mensch auf die Idee einer Mitwelt verfällt und schließlich zur Gewissheit der Wirklichkeit anderer Iche gebracht wird, stärker als die in Individual- und Kollektiventwicklung des Menschen überall beobachtbare Tatsache einer ursprünglichen Tendenz zur Anthropomorphisierung und Personifizierung. In der Umwelt des Kindes nehmen auch die toten Dinge den Charakter persönlicher Lebendigkeit an. Das Weltbild der Primitiven – soweit wir überhaupt sicher sein können, Primitive, als Anfangsformen und nicht Rückbildungsformen, vor uns zu haben – zeigt ähnliche Züge. Erst der Ernüchterungsprozess durch die Verstandeskultur bringt den Menschen zum Bewusstsein toter Dinge. Von hier aus gesehen bedeutet die pantheistische Allbeseelung und Weltverlebendigung, die in den Weltbildern der späten Kulturen auftritt, den Versuch, dieses Bewusstsein zu paralysieren, eine Flucht in die Kindheit.“ (Plessner 2016, 374)

Wie dem auch sei, interessant ist jedenfalls, dass in der psychedelischen Wahrnehmung schon perzeptiv viele Dinge, tote wie lebendige, wieder ein Gesicht bekommen. Mir scheint hierbei eine Wahrnehmungsfunktion verstärkt zu werden, die nicht einfach in der Gestaltbildung überhaupt aufgeht, sondern durch die Gesichts- oder Antlitzbildung ausgezeichnet ist. Dieser Vorgang liegt jeder geistigen Welterschließung voraus und scheint eine Voraussetzung der Anthropomorphisierung der Welt schon auf der perzeptiven Ebene darzustellen. Was wir (apperzeptiv) wahrnehmen, hängt eben nicht nur von unserem sprachlich-kulturellem Hintergrund ab, sondern von den durchaus archaischen Gestaltbildungsfunktionen unserer Sinnlichkeit. Und diese werden etwa durch LSD verstärkt und ihre Effekte so unmittelbar erfahrbar.

Ein weiterer wichtiger Punkt, der auch aus dem eben Gesagten folgt, ist, dass viele psychedelische Erfahrungen nicht darin bestehen, dass irgendetwas Wildes vor dem sogenannten inneren geistigen Auge passiert (dies kommt natürlich auch vor), sondern dass die *Welt selbst* sich verändert, also die Erfahrungswelt einschließlich des erfahrenden Subjekts. Es sind sowohl die (mundanen) Sachen selbst als auch die Wahrnehmung und der wahrnehmende Leib, die sich einerseits intrinsisch, aber andererseits auch in ihrem welthaften Bezug untereinander durchgreifend verändern. So wird häufig berichtet, dass es vorübergehend zu einer Schärfung aller Sinne und zur Intensivierung des Wahrgenommenen kommt. Allerdings mit einer ziemlich relevanten Ausnahme: So scheint das Selbstgefühl oder das Sich-selbst-Empfinden stets gedämpft und manchmal sogar derart stark vermindert zu werden, so dass das einzutreten vermag, was man terminologisch unglücklich als ‚Ichauflösung' bezeichnet. In Wahrheit löst sich natürlich nicht das Ich auf, denn der Psychonaut ist ja in einem gewissen Sinne weiterhin das Subjekt des Erlebens und Erfahrens, sondern die erlebnismäßige Grundlage des menschlichen Selbstbewusstseins wird gewissermaßen heruntergeregelt. Dies bestätigt meine eigene Theorie des Selbstbewusstseins,[18] wonach Selbstbewusstsein zwar ein Selbstverhältnis und kein bloßes Gefühl oder eine bloße Empfindung ist, aber durchaus in einem solchen leiblichen *Sichempfinden* fundiert ist. Fehlt diese Fundierung, dann hat dies Folgen für das Selbstverhältnis und das Leibsein. Man kann vielleicht sagen, dass in psychedelischen Erfahrungen zwar der Leib weiterhin das „Wahrnehmungsorgan“[19] ist, dass er aber selbst weniger bis gar nicht mehr in seiner *Meinigkeit* erlebt wird. Und spürt man sich selbst nicht mehr leiblich, dann wird es verständlich, warum man sich in die Welt verlieren kann. Es wird verständlich, warum Erfahrungen der kosmischen Einheit möglich werden oder zumindest ozeanische Gefühle unvermittelt auftreten können. Dabei wird eine Grundfunktion unseres Bewusstseins zusätzlich verstärkt: nämlich das wahrnehmungsmäßige Sein-bei-den-Dingen. Psychedelische Erfahrungen potenzieren oft diese ‚Weltverschossenheit'. Sie offenbaren dabei jedoch unmittelbar nicht die sogenannten transzendentalen Leistungen, die hinter den psychedelischen Erfahrungen stehen. Man muss sogar sagen, dass eine unmittelbare phänomenologische Reflexion auf psychedelisches Erleben dieses erheblich stört. Trotzdem kann man sagen, dass eine nachträgliche Analyse psychedelischer Erfahrungen durchaus einiges über die Funktionsweise der menschlichen Subjektivität verrät, die vielleicht bei einer Beschränkung der phänomenologischen Analyse auf die normale Erfahrung übersehen wird.

Worin besteht eine tiefe psychedelische Erfahrung? – Hierauf gibt es natürlich nicht nur eine Antwort. Aber wenn wir die bisherigen Momente kombinieren, wird verständlich, worin die Tiefe bestehen könnte. Die Unmittelbarkeit, die innere Schönheit der Weltgegebenheiten in Verbindung mit dem reduzierten Sich-selbst-Spüren bewirkt gleichsam ein hypnotisch-tranceartiges Aufgehen in eine veränderte (nämlich animierte) Welt, welches nicht sinnfrei erfolgt, sondern im Gegenteil sogar in Form gedanklicher Intensivierung stattfinden und zudem mit ozeanischen Gefühlen einhergehen kann. Hinzu kommt ein Sein im hic et nunc. Man lebt nicht in der Vergangenheit und nicht in der Zukunft, ist sich nicht vorweg, entwirft sich auf nichts, sondern geht gleichsam ekstatisch in der Gegenwart auf und geht eine tiefe Verbindung mit den Dingen ein, die – metaphorisch ausgedrückt – anfangen, zu sprechen, vielsagend werden und einen tieferen Sinn zu offenbaren scheinen oder auch dem Subjekt wie geheimnisvolle Hieroglyphen entgegen treten. Die blaue Blume der Romantik – sie kann einem tatsächlich in psychedelischen Erfahrungen begegnen. Dass dieses ekstatische Zu-Welt-Sein oder auch einfach nur Welt-Sein in Schönheit zu spirituellen oder gar mystischen Erfahrungen disponiert, dürfte so gesehen nicht weiter verwunderlich sein. Ich behaupte, wie gesagt nicht, dass es immer so ist, aber solche Erfahrungen des Selbstverlustes, des Einsseins mit der Welt, ja der Offenbarung von Göttlichem, scheinen gar nicht so selten zu sein, weshalb Psychedelika auch gerne Entheogene genannt werden.[20]

Tiefe Bedeutsamkeit, gedankliche Neuarrangements und neue assoziative Verknüpfungen, tiefe, aus den Sachen selbst hervorleuchtende Schönheit, hypnotisches Sein-bei-den-Phänomenen, Prozessualität, Einheitserfahrung, Zur-Welt-Werden, spirituelle und mystische Erlebnisse – dies sind einige Stichworte, mit denen psychedelische Erfahrungen oft beschrieben werden. Hinzu kommt eine Verlebendigung, Animierung oder Beseelung der Welt, eine Verflüssigung und organische Dynamisierung der Dinge, die durch rhythmische Musik zudem in eine Art kosmischen Gleichklang gebracht werden kann. Alles kann in Bewegung geraten und eine Art Traumzeit hat begonnen. Man ist im Kontakt mit der Welt, aber es ist nur noch bedingt die Welt des Alltagsmenschen.[21]

Völlige andersartige psychedelische Erfahrungen als durch Meskalin, Psilocybin und LSD werden allerdings durch DMT (Dimethyltryptamin) hervorgerufen, das auch in der Natur (in verschiedenen Pflanzen und Tieren, aber auch im menschlichen Organismus) vorkommt und der wirkmächtigste psychoaktive Bestandteil des Schamanensuds Ayahuasca darstellt. Eine der ersten und größten klinischen Studien zu DMT hat Rick Strassman in den 90er Jahren des vorherigen Jahrhunderts, damals außerordentlicher Professor für klinische Psychiatrie an der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität New Mexico (Albuquerque), durchgeführt. Strassman schreibt hierzu:

> „DMT zog mich an, weil diese Substanz im Körper jedes Menschen vorkommt. Ich war der Überzeugung, dass dieses DMT aus der geheimnisvollen Zirbeldrüse stammt, einem winzigen Organ, das in der Mitte unseres Gehirns zu finden ist. Die moderne Medizin weiß nur wenig darüber, welche Rolle diese kleine Drüse eigentlich spielt;

> ihre ‚metaphysische' Geschichte ist dagegen umso umfangreicher. So glaubte zum Beispiel Descartes, dass die Zirbeldrüse der ‚Sitz der Seele' sei, und auch die mystischen Traditionen sowohl des Westens wie des Ostens lokalisieren unser höchstes spirituelles Zentrum in dieser Region des Körpers. Daher stellte sich mir die Frage, ob nicht vielleicht eine übermäßige Produktion von DMT in der Zirbeldrüse etwas mit natürlich vorkommenden ‚psychedelischen' Zuständen zu tun haben könnte, zu denen wir Geburt und den Tod, Nahtoderfahrungen, Psychosen und mystische Erfahrungen zählen könnten. Erst später, als die Untersuchung schon weit fortgeschritten war, begann ich den Gedanken in Erwägung zu ziehen, dass DMT auch etwas mit Erlebnissen von ‚Entführungen durch Außerirdische' zu tun haben könnte.“ (Strassman 2014, 13)

Während durch die bisher geschilderten psychedelischen Erfahrungen die normale Welt der Erfahrung und auch des Alltags eine andere zu werden scheint, scheint DMT eher ‚Zugang' zu anderen Welten zu ermöglichen.

Zunächst zur Illustration ein spektakulärer, aber nicht untypischer Erfahrungsbericht[22]:

> „Als ich das erste Mal abtauchte, waren überall um mich herum diese insektenähnlichen Wesen. Sie versuchten eindeutig, zu mir vorzudringen. Ich kämpfte dagegen an, das loszulassen, was ich bin oder war. Doch je mehr ich kämpfte, desto dämonischer wurden diese Wesen, die in meine Seele und meinen Geist eindrangen. Da ich irgendwann nicht mehr alles zusammenhalten konnte, ließ ich schließlich Teile von mir los. Während ich das tat, klammerte ich mich immer noch an den Gedanken, dass alles Gott war, dass Gott Liebe war und dass ich mich Gott und Gottes Liebe hingab. Ich war mir sicher zu sterben. Als ich meinen Tod und die Auflösung in der Liebe Gottes akzeptiert hatte, begannen die Insekten, mein Herz aufzufressen, und verschlangen dabei auch die Gefühle der Liebe und Hingabe.“ (Strassman 2014, 280 f.)

Solche und ähnliche phantastischen Erfahrungsberichte sind Legion, wenn es um DMT geht, auch wenn nicht alle diese Erlebnisse solche beängstigen Elemente enthalten. Oft wird von einem Verlassen des Körpers gesprochen, von der Begegnung mit fremden und bizarren Wesenheiten, von Aliens, Engeln, Insekten, die in merkwürdigen Szenerien, Räumen, auf Raumschiffen oder im Weltraum begegnen, von mystischen und Nahtoderfahrungen. Daraus lässt sich ontologisch oder metaphysisch natürlich nichts unmittelbar folgern, aber es stellt sich doch die Frage, ob DMT-Erfahrungen nicht denselben

Ursprung wie etwa Träume haben. Während die bisherigen psychedelischen Erfahrungen nur traum*artig* zu sein *scheinen*, erinnern die Berichte über DMT-Erfahrungen an echte Träume. Nur werden sie zumeist als noch realistischer als reale Erfahrungen erfahren. Denn der ‚Reisende' ist ja wach, während das Erwachen aus Träumen diese allererst für das erlebende Subjekt zu *bloßen* Träumen stempelt. Der hyperrealistische Eindruck der DMT-Erfahrung, der nichts mit irgendeinem besonderen Widerstandserlebnis à la Scheler zu tun zu haben scheint, gehört zur Phänomenologie der DMT-Erfahrung dazu.

Strassman bemerkt hierzu:

> „Auf der Ebene der Hirnforschung könnten die von unseren Freiwilligen erlebten Begegnungen eine lebhafte Halluzination sein, die durch die Aktivierung bestimmter für das Sehen, Fühlen und Denken zuständiger Hirnzentren durch das DMT ausgelöst wurde. Immerhin werden wir ja auch während unserer Träume vollständig von der Wirklichkeit der Erfahrung erfasst. Die schnellen Augenbewegungen, die manchmal bei unseren Freiwilligen zu beobachten waren, könnten ein Hinweis auf einen Zustand des ‚Wachträumens' gewesen sein. Die Probanden waren jedoch überzeugt davon, dass es Unterschiede zwischen dem von ihnen erlebten und durch DMT hervorgerufenen Kontakt mit Wesen und ihren üblichen Träumen gab. Auch die Tatsache, dass sie mit offenen oder geschlossenen Augen das Gleiche wahrnahmen und sich die ganze Zeit in einem wachen Zustand des Bewusstseins befanden, machte es für sie schwierig zu akzeptieren, dass dies alles ‚nur ein Traum' war. Wenn ich mir ihre Geschichten von diesen Begegnungen anhörte, hatte ich auch nicht das gleiche Gefühl wie bei den Berichten meiner Patienten über ihre Träume in der Psychotherapie." (Strassman 2014, 418)

Man sollte als Phänomenologe diese sonderbaren Erfahrungen natürlich nicht vorschnell ontologisch ausdeuten. Strassman selbst diskutiert durchaus die Möglichkeit, dass DMT Zugänge zu bewusstseinsunabhängigen Realitätsbereichen eröffnet. Diese Möglichkeit darf nicht von vornherein verworfen werden, nur weil sie vermeintlich nicht in unser naturwissenschaftlich geprägtes Weltbild passt. Zudem diskutieren gerade Physiker (‚Quantenmechaniker') ganz ernsthaft die Existenz von Parallelwelten. Trotzdem möchte ich eine andere These formulieren: DMT ist kein „Molekül des Bewusstseins", wie der deutsche Titel von Strassmans Buch insinuiert, denn es gibt, wenn ich richtig sehe, keinerlei empirische Belege dafür, dass DMT notwendig für die Aktualgenese des Bewusstseins ist. Und Strassman selbst behauptet dies auch gar nicht, sondern spricht vom „spirit molecule". Und diese These ist viel spezieller: Es geht Strassman nicht um das Phänomen des Bewusstseins im Allgemeinen, sondern um die Frage, ob psychedelische und spirituelle Erfahrungen durch endogenes oder exogenes DMT ausgelöst werden. (Es handelt sich hier also offensichtlich um eine Fehlübersetzung ins Deutsche.)

Die exogene Zufuhr von DMT mag merkwürdige, z.T. spektakuläre Effekte zeitigen: mystische Erlebnisse, Nahtoderfahrungen, Begegnungen mit „Maschinenelfen" (Terence McKenna) und Außerirdischen. Doch auch wenn diese Erlebnisse bzw. deren ‚Inhalte' realer als real erlebt werden, stützt dies für sich noch keine realistische Interpretation dieser Erlebnisse. Man könnte in Anknüpfung an die rezente Realismusdebatte sagen: Nur weil etwas als hyperrealistisch erfahren wird, beweist dies noch lange nicht die nicht-korrelationistische (= erlebnis- bzw. subjektunabhängige) Seinsweise des so Erlebten. Denn dass dieses notwendig erlebt werden musste, um erlebt worden zu sein, ist eine so triviale wie wichtige Tatsache. Wahrscheinlich versetzt uns DMT nicht in reale Anderswelten. Die umfangreichen Erfahrungsberichte legen m.E. vielmehr etwas anderes nahe, nämlich dass exogen zugeführtes DMT die Traumfunktion aktiviert und zwar im Wachzustand. Dies würde zugleich bedeuten, dass jeder von uns schon viele Male einen DMT-Trip durchlaufen hat, nämlich jedes Mal wenn wir schlafen und träumen. Unsere Träume sind DMT-Trips – hervorgerufen durch endogenes DMT. Dies ist, wie gesagt, eine Hypothese. Aber sie wird dadurch gestützt, dass Probanden, die ihren DMT-Trip mit geschlossenen Augen durchlebten (und eine Augenbinde trugen – so das Setting bei Strassman), beim Öffnen derselben von charakteristischen Überblendungsphänomenen berichten. Das Bewusstsein der Probanden hatte sich also mitnichten vom Körper gelöst und war in andere Welten gereist.

Strassman schreibt hierzu:

> „Die vorherrschenden Wirkungen auf die Wahrnehmung waren bei einer vollen Dosis DMT visuelle Bilder. Gewöhnlich bestand nur ein geringer Unterschied zwischen dem, was die Freiwilligen mit offenen oder geschlossenen Augen ‚sahen'. Beim Öffnen der Augen überdeckten die Visionen häufig die Wahrnehmung dessen, was sich im Zimmer befand. Dies führte zu Desorientierung, und die Augen geschlossen zu halten war weniger verwirrend." (Strassman 2014, 206)

> „Während das DMT vom Körper rasch umgewandelt wurde, klangen die visuellen Wirkungen noch nach. Wenn die Freiwilligen die Augenbinde abnahmen oder die Augen öffneten, war das Zimmer unangenehm hell. Die Gegenstände des Zimmers wogten und wallten und verströmten ein ihnen innewohnendes Licht." (Strassman 2014, 207)

Hierzu möchte ich ergänzend noch folgenden Erfahrungsbericht anführen:

> „Auf einmal befand ich mich über einer merkwürdigen Landschaft, die wie die Erde aussah, aber gleichzeitig völlig unirdisch wirkte. Ich sah irgendwelche Gebirge. Die Landschaft machte einen ausgesprochen freundlichen und einladenden Eindruck. Sie war so real, dass ich meine Augen öffnen musste. Bei offenen Augen legte sich die Landschaft über den Anblick des Zimmers. Ich schloss die Augen wieder, und dadurch verschwand auch die gerade wahrgenommene Überlagerung." (Strassman 2014, 250 f.)[23]

Meine Traum-Hypothese wird hierzu passend auch durch drei eigene Erlebnisse gestützt, die ich im Laufe der letzten zehn Jahre hatte. Ich bin jeweils plötzlich mitten in der Nacht erwacht und als ich die Augen aufschlug, waren die Wände und die Decke meines Schlafzimmers von einem merkwürdigen überhellen Funkeln und Glitzern überzogen, so dass ich wie geblendet war. Nach wenigen Sekunden ließ dieses Phänomen nach und das Zimmer war wieder in das gewohnte Dunkel getaucht. Es war so ähnlich wie es in dem bereits angeführten Erfahrungsbericht beschrieben wird: „Die Gegenstände des Zimmers wogten und wallten und verströmten ein ihnen innewohnendes Licht."

Das dritte Erlebnis war sogar noch eindrücklicher, es geschah irgendwann im Jahr 2021: Ich öffnete die Augen, während der Traum (bzw. das Traumgeschehen), den ich gerade hatte, nicht aufhörte, sondern – und dies meine ich ganz wörtlich – noch wenige Sekunden mit den leiblichen Augen *zu sehen* war. Das Traumgeschehen fand plötzlich im Zimmer (in Form der beschriebenen Überblendung) seine kurze Fortsetzung und klang dann schnell ab.

Die angeführten Erfahrungsberichte und meine eigenen (nicht durch exogenes DMT hervorgerufenen) Erlebnisse sind für mich starke Indizien dafür, dass DMT Träume hervorruft bzw. die Traumfunktion aktiviert. Und exogen (und intravenös) zugeführtes DMT hat die Potenz, das Träumen im Wachzustand in Gang zu setzen. Und da Träume während des Träumens als real erlebt werden, nimmt es nicht Wunder, dass Strassmans Freiwillige Ihre Erfahrungen als hyperrealistisch wahrgenommen haben. Für die phänomenologische Forschung ergäbe sich hier die Möglichkeit, Träume gezielt hervorzurufen und deren Natur im Wachzustand zu studieren.[24] Träume scheinen ein zur menschlichen Natur gehörender Bewusstseinsmodus zu sein. Ein, wenn man es distanziert betrachtet, äußerst merkwürdiger dazu. DMT-Erlebnisse können uns helfen, die Natur von und die Differenzen zwischen Perzeptionen, Imaginationen und Halluzinationen zu erkunden. Vielleicht sind Träume und DMT-Erlebnisse aber auch Bewusstseinsformen sui generis und weder unter die Kategorien ‚Halluzination' oder ‚Imagination' zu subsumieren. Gleich, ob man die Phänomenologie als Bewusstseinsanalyse, Daseinsontologie oder als eidetische Anthropologie versteht: Eine Phänomenologie, die sich zwar methodisch der Imagination bedient, aber nichts darüber aussagen kann, was Imaginationen von Perzeptionen, Halluzinationen und Träumen unterscheidet, ist eine sehr unvollständige Phänomenologie.

Dasselbe, was für die Frage nach der Ontologie der DMT-Erlebnisinhalte gilt, gilt natürlich auch für die Frage der vorübergehenden ‚Entleiblichung': Auch wenn das Verlassen des Körpers ein typisches DMT-Phänomen zu sein scheint, folgt daraus nicht notwendig, dass das Bewusstsein den Körper wirklich verlässt. Die Überblendungsphänomene sprechen jedenfalls gegen eine realistische Interpretation außerkörperlicher Erfahrungen (die als Phänomene allerdings ernst zu nehmen sind). Im Traum spüre ich meinen realen Körper auch nicht wirklich, aber das heißt nicht, dass ich mich wie ein Schamane jede Nacht auf eine Seelenreise begebe. Es ist ja auch eine sehr problematische Vorstellung von unserem Bewusstsein, sich dieses als eine Art Substanz oder zumindest als eine konkrete Entität vorzustellen, die im Körper sei und ihn daher auch verlassen könne. Ich vertrete hiermit freilich auch nicht die naturalistische Überzeugung, dass das Bewusstsein nur ein Gehirnphänomen sei. Dieser Punkt wäre eigens zu diskutieren. Ich meine, dass dem Phänomen nach unser Bewusstsein kein Weltinnenraum, sondern die erlebnismäßige Präsenz der Umwelt, des Eigenkörpers und der eigenen Leiblichkeit ist. Es ist zwar durchaus so, dass im Traum diese Phänomene weitgehend ausgeblendet werden. Das Zur-Welt-Sein des Träumens ist selbst ein geträumtes, wir sind bewusstseinsmäßig in einer geträumten Welt und in einem geträumten Körper (falls dieser überhaupt im Traum eigens erscheint). Aber dies bedeutet nicht, dass das Bewusstsein etwas ist, was in einem platonistischen Sinne im Körper gefangen ist und sich aus diesem nach dem Tod befreien kann. Oder dass wir unser Bewusstsein sind und ohne Körper im realistischen Sinne verreisen könnten, sei es im Schlaf oder auf DMT. Welche Ontologie des Bewusstseins man auch immer vertreten möchte. Man hat sich, wenn man methodisch sauber arbeiten möchte, zuvor das Phänomen des Bewusstseins anzusehen und dieses und dessen Verhältnis zu Leib, Körper und Welt zu analysieren. Erst von hier aus lässt sich etwas philosophisch Sinnvolles über die Ontologie schamanistischer Seelenreisen, Nahtoderfahrungen und DMT-induzierte außerkörperliche Erfahrungen sagen. Es ist jedenfalls festzuhalten, dass die durchaus echte Erfahrung: ‚mein Körper ist nicht mehr Teil meines Erlebens‘ oder ‚ich erlebe, wie ich aus meinem Körper herausgeschleudert werde‘, nicht die anthropologische These belegen, dass das Bewusstsein tatsächlich etwas ist, was sich vom Körper lösen kann.

7. Psychedelische Wahrnehmung und Realismus[25]

Die verschiedenartigen psychedelischen Erfahrungen sind als aktualisierbare Potenzialitäten des Erlebens Teil dessen, was zum Menschsein dazugehört. Subjekttheorie und philosophische und phänomenologische Anthropologie sollten diese Phänomene daher nicht aufgrund ihrer vermeintlichen Abseitigkeit ausklammern. Abseitig sind sie nämlich menschheitsgeschichtlich keineswegs. Im Gegenteil: Sie waren und sind ein wichtiger Bestandteil vieler Kulturen. Zum Schluss möchte ich jedoch fragen, welche Konsequenzen möglicherweise aus einer Analyse der psychedelischen Wahrnehmung über die Natur der Wahrnehmung und des Wahrgenommen generell gezogen werden könnten. Ich möchte das Problem auf die erkenntnistheoretische Frage zuspitzen, ob die Wahrnehmungsgehalte als solche in ihrer konkreten Phänomenalität, also die *wahrgenommenen ‚Dinge' in der Welt*, nur als Korrelate der Wahrnehmung existieren oder ob sie auch unabhängig von jeglicher Wahrnehmung oder zumindest meiner Wahrnehmung existieren, ob sie also zugleich *Dinge an sich* sein könnten. Es geht also näherhin um eine Ontologie und ontologische Bestimmung der Aistheta. Die psychedelische Wahrnehmung enthält diesbezüglich natürlich keine ontologischen Beweise bereit. Aber ab einer gewissen Dosis Psilocybin oder LSD verändern sich die „Sachen selbst" oft auf signifikante Weise. Es ist hier nicht so, dass sich – wie bei DMT – über die gewöhnliche Welt der Wahrnehmung andere Szenarien schieben und diese überlagern oder überblenden. Vielmehr kommt es zu einer deutlichen perzeptiven Veränderung der Wahrnehmungsobjekte selbst, die man mit den Kategorien ‚Verflüssigung', ‚Dynamisierung', ‚Animierung' umschreiben könnte. Wenn es nun so ist, dass die gewöhnlichen Wahrnehmungsobjekte nicht durch psychedelische Objekte einfach ersetzt werden, sondern wenn deren kontinuierliche Existenz gewahrt bleibt, aber deren Sosein sich substanziell (in dem doppelten Sinne von substanziell-phänomenal und substanzeninduziert) verändert, wird es unplausibel, die Wahrnehmungswelt realistisch zu deuten. Denn dann müsste man sagen: Die gewöhnliche Wahrnehmung berührt oder präsentiert die „Dinge an sich' direkt und macht sie mysteriöser Weise auch noch bewusst. Aber Psilocybin und LSD ersetzten diese Wahrnehmungsgehalte durch wabernde, quellende und fließende *Repräsentationen*. Aber woher kommt plötzlich die Fähigkeit der Wahrnehmung eine Welt der Repräsentationen zu erschaffen, wo sie doch sonst die Welt direkt und korrekt *präsentiert*? Mir scheint diese Auffassung nicht plausibel zu sein. Ich vertrete die Gegenthese: Der Welt der Wahrnehmung kommt tatsächlich eine radikal korrelative Seinsweise zu. Nur deshalb können sich die „Sachen selbst" der Wahrnehmung in der psychedelischen Wahrnehmung auf markante Weise verändern, ohne dass sie dabei aufhörten sie selbst zu sein oder besser: ohne dass es hier einen Bruch in der Zeit gibt und die Dinge an sich von halluzinogenen Repräsentanten ersetzt würden. Denn von einem solchen Bruch wurde in der Tat meines Wissens noch nie berichtet.

Die psychedelische Wahrnehmung scheint vielmehr die Möglichkeit zu bieten, die korrelative Seinsweise der Lebenswelt als subjektives Phänomen nicht nur zu begreifen, sondern tatsächlich zu erleben. Die psychedelische Erfahrung ist gleichsam ein Performance-Kunstwerk, das uns unsere konkrete Subjektivität vor allen begrifflichen Spaltungen inszenatorisch vor Augen führt und diesbezügliche Evidenzen gewinnen lässt. Die Lebenswelt (oder besser: die Umwelt) kann hierbei als ein essenzieller Teil des Subjekts erfahren werden. Und diese Erfahrung stellt natürlich auch eine Kontrasterfahrung dar: Denn im Vergleich zur normalen Erfahrung, in der die Dinge als vom empirischen Subjekt distanziert und verschieden *erlebt* werden, können sie in der psychedelischen Erfahrung als Erlebnisbestandteile in ihrer Subjektivität erfahren werden – und zwar gerade deshalb, weil der Psychonaut weiß, dass die kommunizierenden Dinge, die Welt und er selbst darum so modifiziert sind, weil er sich in einem psychedelischen Zustand befindet. Man spricht hier oft von Pseudohalluzinationen. Doch dieser Begriff ist problematisch da vorurteilsbelastet, denn er suggeriert, dass die normale Wahrnehmung die Dinge richtig präsentiert, wie sie nämlich *an sich sind*, während die psychedelische Wahrnehmung die Dinge verfälscht darstellt. Doch diese Sichtweise setzt die epistemische Position des direkten Realismus bereits voraus und begründet diesen nicht. Die psychedelische Erfahrung hat dagegen, wie gezeigt, das Potential, diese Position fragwürdig erscheinen zu lassen.

Es ging in diesem letzten Kapitel nur um die Ontologie der Wahrnehmung und der Wahrnehmungsinhalte und inwiefern die psychedelische Erfahrung und ihre nachträgliche Analyse zu dieser Frage etwas Relevantes beisteuern kann. Über das, was die Welt (und das Subjekt) überhaupt ist und was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält – darüber verrät uns wohl auch die psychedelische Erfahrung: nichts. Es gibt keinen Durchbruch auf die andere Seite. Das erlebende Subjekt bleibt immer bei sich, es kann sein Erleben nicht transzendieren, es sei denn wiederum erlebend. Wir können die „Pforten der Wahrnehmung“ vielleicht erweitern, aber dies bedeutet nicht, dass wir selbst durch diese hindurch schreiten können, um die andere Seite zu betrachten.[26]

ANMERKUNGEN

[1] Mit ‚Welt-Sein‘ bezeichne ich einerseits die phänomenale Tatsache, dass die Welt als Umwelt einen wesentlichen Teil unseres Erlebens ausmacht, andererseits das Phänomen des sinnhaften und sich dynamisch verändernden Verweisungszusammenhangs.

[2] Der erste Selbstversuch Hofmanns (und damit der erste ausgewachsene LSD-Trip der Menschheitsgeschichte), der heute als Fahrradtag („Bicycle-Day“) international zelebriert wird, datiert sogar erst auf den 19. April 1943. Allerdings hatte Hofmann bereits am 16. April gewisse Symptome registriert, nachdem er vermutlich bei der erneuten LSD-25-Synthese ausversehen geringfügige Mengen über die Haut aufgenommen hatte. „Um der Sache auf den Grund zu gehen“, so Hofmann, „entschloss ich mich zum Selbstversuch. Ich wollte vorsichtig sein und begann deshalb die geplante Versuchsreihe mit der kleinsten Menge, von der, verglichen mit der Wirksamkeit der damals bekannten Mutterkornalkaloide, noch irgendein feststellbarer Effekt erwartet werden konnte, nämlich mit 0,25 mg […] Lysergsäure-diäthylamidtartrat.“ Schon bald setzen die ersten Wirkungen ein, denn 0,25 mg ist eine relativ hohe Dosis. Hofmann verlässt daraufhin das Labor: „Schon jetzt war es mir klar“, so Hofmann weiter, „dass Lysergsäure-diäthylamid die Ursache des merkwürdigen Erlebnisses vom vergangenen Freitag war, denn die Veränderungen der Empfindungen und des Erlebens waren von gleicher Art wie damals [am 16. April], nur viel tiefgehender. […] Schon auf dem Heimweg mit dem Fahrrad […] nahm mein Zustand bedrohliche Formen an. Alles in meinem Gesichtsfeld schwankte und war verzerrt wie in einem gekrümmten Spiegel.“ Der vollständige Bericht findet sich in: Hofmann 1994: 26 ff.

[3] Vgl. zur eidetischen Variation: Husserl 1999, § 87. Zusammenfassend heißt es: „Überblicken wir […] die drei Hauptschritte, die zum Prozess der Ideation gehören: 1. erzeugendes Durchlaufen der Mannigfaltigkeit der Variationen; 2. einheitliche Verknüpfung in fortwährender Deckung; 3. herausschauende aktive Identifizierung des Kongruierenden gegenüber den Differenzen.“ (419)

[4] Husserl hat dieses Problem später über das Konzept der Normalität in den Griff zu bekommen versucht. Aber auch der Begriff der Normalität ist gewissermaßen speziesistisch in einem schlechten Sinne. Zumindest wenn man wie Husserl Transzendentalphilosophie statt philosophischer Anthropologie als Prima Philosophia propagiert. In Wahrheit ist diese husserlsche Entgegensetzung selbst ziemlich schief und es bedarf einer transzendentalen Anthropologie oder genauer einer Fundamentalanthropologie, die zwar auf die Bestimmung des Menschseins überhaupt abzielt, aber damit weder beansprucht, gültige Aussagen über alle möglichen transzendentalen Subjekte überhaupt zu machen, noch nur empirisch Kontingentes über die empirische Spezies *Homo sapiens* feststellt. Zielgegenstand der Fundamentalanthropologie ist daher das Eidos ‚Anthropos' und nicht die terrestrische Spezies ‚Homo sapiens' und auch nicht das Eidos ‚Transzendentale Subjektivität überhaupt'. Vgl. hierzu Streubel 2021a.

[5] Gewisse Familienähnlichkeiten sollten sich etwa auch zwischen LSD-induzierten und DMT-induzierten Erfahrungen aufweisen lassen (etwa neuartige Sinnverbindungen und Einsichten) trotz großer und auch qualitativer Differenzen (s. hierzu unten Kapitel 6). Paul-Philipp Hanske und Benedikt Sarreiter schreiben hierzu: „Sie [die DMT-User] sind in einer geschlossenen halluzinierten Welt, die nicht einfach nur eine verformte Version der Realität ist (wie bei den meisten anderen Halluzinogenen), sondern mit dieser nichts zu tun hat." (Hanske, Sarreiter 2015, 148) Ein Versuch, nur die Ayahuasca-Erfahrungen (bzw. die entsprechenden Erfahrungsberichte) zu systematisieren, findet sich in Shannon 2003.

[6] Vgl. zum problematischen Konzept ‚Bewusstseinserweiterung' auch: Day, Schmetkamp 2022. Die Autoren versuchen mittels eines „Gurwitchian Approach" das entsprechende Phänomen, aber auch andere typische Phänomene wie Selbstauflösung und Einheitserfahrungen in der psychedelischen Erfahrung „in terms of attention" verständlich zu machen. Die Modifikation des Aufmerksamkeitsreliefs ist sicherlich ein wesentlicher Aspekt der psychedelischen Erfahrung und Day/Schmetkamp haben hierzu einen wichtigen und überzeugenden Beitrag geleistet. Ich denke aber, dass dies nur ein Aspekt unter mehreren ist. Letztlich kann man m.E. die psychedelische Erfahrung nur auf der Grundlage einer adäquaten phänomenologischen Anthropologie angemessen aufklären. Wesentliche Aspekte, die hierbei zu berücksichtigen wären, sind zum Beispiel folgende: Neben der Aufmerksamkeitsmodifikation wäre auch die erhöhte Affektivität der Phänomene sowie das (veränderte) Gestaltrelief des Erlebnisraums zu berücksichtigen, zudem das Wechselspiel von Ichaffektion (durch Tatsachen des Bewusstseins) und Ichreaktion (aufgrund dieser Affektionen) sowie die Reduktion des leiblichen Selbstempfindens (im Falle der Selbstauflösung) und damit überhaupt das Phänomen der Leiblichkeit (in seiner Differenz zur Körperlichkeit) etc. Das Konzept der „Bewusstseinserweiterung" sollte man aber besser vermeiden, da es irreführend ist und die Phänomene eher verdeckt als erhellt.

[7] Dieses Problem ist nicht schlicht identisch mit dem der sekundären Qualitäten, die sich auch schwer ohne vorherige Bekanntschaft imaginieren

lassen. So sind ein einzelnes Rot, Grün, oder Gelb jedoch ohne Zweifel Farben, also Vereinzelungen des Eidos ‚Farbe'. Aber es ist nicht ebenso zweifelsfrei, dass es ein einheitliches generisches Eidos ‚psychedelische Erfahrung überhaupt' gibt. Jedenfalls darf dies methodisch nicht präjudiziert werden.

[8] Dies impliziert jedoch nicht, dass jede psychedelische Erfahrung in sinnlichen Wahrnehmungen fundiert ist. Bei den DMT-Erfahrungen scheint dies nicht der Fall zu sein (s.u.).

[9] Vgl. zum Begriff der *eidetischen Notwendigkeit* den § 5 der Ideen I (Husserl 1976, 17 f.).

[10] Vgl. z.B. das außergewöhnliche Naturerlebnis, von dem Hofmann im Vorwort zu *LSD – mein Sorgenkind* (7 f.) berichtet.

[11] Vgl. Huxley 1991, 110 ff.

[12] Der Begriff ‚psychedelisch' zur Beschreibung entsprechender Erfahrungen wurde 1956 von dem Psychiater Humphry Osmond im Briefwechsel mit Aldous Huxley geprägt. Vgl. Huxley 1983, 125 und insbesondere Fußnote 5 (134).

[13] Vgl. hierzu Hanske, Sarreiter 2015, 182.

[14] Michael Pollan (Pollan 2019, 23 f.) schreibt hierzu: „Die Prämisse der Psychedelik-Forschung ist, dass diese spezielle Gruppe von Molekülen uns Zugang zu anderen Bewusstseinsformen verschaffen kann, die uns spezielle Vorteile bringen könnten, ob therapeutischer, spiritueller oder kreativer Natur. Psychedelika sind bestimmt nicht die einzige Tür zu diesen anderen Bewusstseinsformen […], doch an diesem Knopf lässt sich offenbar am leichtesten drehen."

[15] „*Selbstgegeben* kann nur das sein, was nicht mehr bloß durch irgendeine Art von Symbol gegeben ist, d.h. so, dass es als bloße ‚Erfüllung' eines Zeichens ‚gemeint' ist, das vorher irgendwie definiert ist. In diesem Sinne ist die phänomenologische Philosophie eine fortwährende *Entsymbolisierung der Welt*." (Scheler 1957, 384)

[16] Vgl. hierzu ausführlich: Petsch 1999, 12 ff.

[17] Wendet man ein, dass wilde Assoziationen und Gedankenflüchtigkeit nicht so seltene Alltagsphänomene seien, dann stimmt zwar der Befund, doch taugt er nicht als Einwand, denn was ja in der psychedelischen Wahrnehmung hinzukommt, ist die gleichzeitige entsymbolisierte Präsenz eines Wahrnehmungsgegenstandes oder eines Aspekts desselben, der zudem – im scheinbaren Widerspruch hierzu – selbst oft als eine Art Hieroglyphe erfahren wird, also als Symbol unter aller symbolischen Verdeckung.

[18] Vgl. hierzu Streubel 2021a, 69-82 sowie speziell in Bezug auf psychedelische Erfahrungen: Letheby 2020.

[19] In den *Ideen II* schreibt Husserl, „dass bei aller Erfahrung von raumdinglichen Objekten *der Leib* als Wahrnehmungsorgan des erfahrenden Subjektes *‚mit dabei ist*'". (Husserl 1952, 144)

[20] Vgl. hierzu Strassman: „Die erste Frage besteht darin, wie wir sie [die Droge] überhaupt nennen sollen: Über diesen entscheidenden Punkt herrscht selbst bei den Forschern wenig Einigkeit. Einige verwenden das Wort *Droge* überhaupt nicht und sagen lieber *Molekül*, *chemische Verbindung*, *Wirkstoff*, *Substanz*, *Medizin* oder *Sakrament*. Auch wenn wir nichts dagegen haben, das Wort Droge zu verwenden, stehen uns immer noch etliche verschiedene

Begriffe zur Auswahl: *Halluzinogen* (ruft Halluzinationen hervor), *Entheogen* (lässt das Göttliche entstehen), *Mystikomimetikum* (ahmt mystische Zustände nach), *Oneirogen* (ruft Träume hervor), *Psychodysleptikum* (bringt den Geist durcheinander), *Phantastikum* (regt die Fantasie an), *Psychotomimetikum* oder *Psychotogen* (ahmt eine Psychose nach bzw. ruft sie hervor) und *Psychotoxin* oder *Schizotoxin* (ein Gift, das eine Psychose oder Schizophrenie hervorruft). Dabei ist es alles andere als trivial, dass der Bezeichnung so eine große Beachtung geschenkt wird. Wenn alle sich darüber einig wären, was eine psychedelische Substanz ist oder bewirkt, würde es bestimmt nicht so viele Worte für ein und dieselbe Substanz geben. In dieser Vielzahl von Bezeichnungen spiegelt sich die so tiefe Themen anrührende Debatte über psychedelische Substanzen und ihre Wirkungen.“ Und: „Wie wir […] eine Droge bezeichnen, die wir nehmen oder anderen geben, beeinflusst unsere Erwartungen gegenüber dem, was diese Substanz bewirkt. Es verändert auch die Wirkungen selbst und darüber hinaus die Art und Weise, wie wir sie interpretieren und wie wir damit umgehen. Bei keiner anderen Droge hat die Bezeichnung eine so starke Rückwirkung auf die von ihr hervorgerufene Wirkung wie bei einer psychedelischen Substanz, da diese unsere Beeinflussbarkeit sehr stark erhöht.“ (Strassman 2014, 52 ff.)

[21] Es soll nicht verschwiegen werden, dass die Harmonie und Einheit auch zerfallen kann. Ein sogenannter Bad Trip ist unter anderem durch Weltverlust, Dissoziation und negative Gefühle wie Angst und Verzweiflung gekennzeichnet.

[22] Es ist vielleicht wichtig anzumerken, dass DMT durchaus verschieden wirkt, je nachdem, ob es als Tee (Ayahuasca, Yagé) getrunken, geschnupft, geraucht oder intravenös verabreicht wird. Strassman hat den Probanden DMT intravenös verabreicht.

[23] Ralph Metzner schreibt in Bezug auf seine eigene DMT-Erfahrung: „Es gab einen vollständigen dissoziativen Verlust der bewussten Wahrnehmung meiner Umgebung. Anscheinend war diese Trennung jedoch eine Funktion meiner geschlossenen Augen, denn zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt öffnete ich meine Augen einen Moment lang für eine Art unmittelbaren ‚Realitätscheck‘ und konnte sehen, dass ich von meinen Freunden davor beschützt worden war, gegen Dinge zu stoßen oder in die Feuerstelle zu rollen. Unmittelbar nachdem ich meine Augen wieder geschlossen hatte, war ich wieder eingetaucht in den wirbelnden, brodelnden Mahlstrom synästhetischer Empfindungen.“ (Metzner 2015, 34)

[24] Zur Phänomenologie des Traumes s. Ates 2023.

[25] Vgl. zum Folgenden auch Streubel 2021b und die dort angegebene Literatur.

[26] Hanske und Sarreiter (Hanske, Sarreiter 2015) bemerken hierzu: „Folgt man der Erklärung, dass die Welt-Konstruktion des Gehirns über synchronisierte Schaltkreise läuft, die aus dem Takt gebracht werden können, dann hätte der Psychedelika-Rausch weniger eine Reduktion des Wahrnehmungsfilters zur Folge [wie Huxley behauptet hatte – Anm. T.S.] (was ja gewissermaßen ein ‚Mehr‘ an Realität bedeuten würde), sondern vielmehr ein Brüchigwerden dessen, was wir Realität nennen – die feste Unterscheidung von Objekten untereinander, von Außen und Innen, von

Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Genau das aber ist die psychedelische Erfahrung, zumindest in höheren Dosen.“ (32)

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Paradoxes of an Image: Religion, Art and the Problem of Aura

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Abstract

The article discusses the interaction between religion and art, focusing on the problem of aura of artwork. At first sight It could look like in contemporary culture the contexts of religion and art became very distant. As the example of this kind of alienation the article recalls a recent situation in one of Vilnius (Lithuania) churches, when the original sculpture of St. Virgin Mary, created by Lithuanian artist Ksenija Jaroševaitė, was replaced by the copy of widely circulated sculpture of St. Mary of Lourdes at request of the churchgoers. In the article this situation also serves as representative model, revealing the paradoxicality of an image, when the power of image (aura) depends not on its authenticity and unapproachability (Walter Benjamin), but on the contrary is related to its proliferation and availability (David Joselit). Referring to the theoreticians of contemporary visual studies (David Freedberg, Horst Bredekamp, Georges Didi-Huberman, David Joselit), author polemises with Benjamin's thesis, according to which reproducibility of artwork leads to the destruction of its aura. The article states that rethinking the process of art's reproducibility in a positive way opens up the possibility to discuss the relationship between religion and contemporary art in a new form, however the post-secular approach of this interaction should be taken into account.

Keywords: religion, art, image, aura, post-secularity

1. Introduction

The offhand approach to the visual mediation of the content of faith is discussed in contemporary world already for some decades. As opposed to the Renaissance when the European churches had boasted the most innovative

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achievements of art of that time, contemporary sacral art of our days occupies (with a few exceptions) a marginal place on the periphery of the field. Undoubtedly, this situation can be described as the radical separation of religion and art, and that is inherent to the era of secularisation. At the same time, however, it looks like a more fundamental problem can be seen here, and it is directly related to the specifics of the religious image in Western culture. As we know, Christianity is the only monotheistic religion that accepts the image of God, moreover, the paradox of the relationship between image and its prototype is implicit in Christian theology itself. In the first place, his aspect can be recognized in the figure of Christ as the divine incarnation to a human form. That specific paradox helped to justify the icon at the Second Council of Nicaea by interpreting it not as a direct image of God (which could be understood as an idolatry), but as a reference to holiness. Thus, it could be asserted that in the sphere of faith, the legitimation of image has become an integral part of at least the Catholic part of Christian tradition. However, it is important to stress that in order to justify the necessity of religious image, a requirement of some kind of aesthetic *askesis* has also been implicated in the tradition. The icon was justified not because of its visual-artistic qualities, but only as a mediator, as an indication towards divinity.[1]

A quick glance at the field of contemporary religious art could be sufficient to understand that this requirement of aesthetic *askesis* often shifts to the one we might call a kind of aesthetic negligence. The latter aspect is expressed by ignoring the general principles of the contemporary art[2]. At this point I would like to recall one especially exemplar situation that happened in one of Vilnius (Lithuania) churches about 15 years ago, when the churchgoers literally carried out the sculpture of saint Mary, created for that specific space by the Lithuanian artist Ksenija Jaroševaitė. The believers explained their decision and initiative, claiming that they could not pray in the presence of this work. It is even more important to add that the original Jaroševaitė's work was eventually replaced by the well-known and widely circulated copy of saint Mary of Lourdes, originally created by French sculptor Joseph-Hugues Fabish in 1864. The sequence of these events lets us discuss the presupposition that the main reason for this expulsion was the unrecognizability of the image. In other words, the believers did not need an artistically influential work within the space of the church. Instead of it they chose an image of the saint that would be ordinary and common to them. This story of the new iconoclasm became famous in Lithuanian cultural community as an illustrative example representing the complexity of paths that contemporary art takes on its way to Lithuanian catholic churches (Jačėnaitė 2019). However, we should also take into account that the discussed example can be described not only in terms of these contradictions, accompanying the separation of artistic and religious contexts in our days, but also in those of apparent affection to the particular image, "an image in front of which one could pray". In other words, it seems like the above-mentioned situation in which the original artwork was switched with a widely circulating copy of canonical sculpture – nearly a religious kitsch can also be explained as the case of the strong emotional reaction overshadowing the aesthetic judgement.

Or, according to David Freedberg, the author of the monograph "The Power of Images" – the influential work in the 1990s field of humanities – at this point the disinterested and sober valuation has been changed by the passionate faith in power of an image. According to Freedberg, both iconoclasm and the emotional need for images should be seen not as opposite intentions, but on the contrary as the two sides of the same coin. According to Freedberg, the acceptance of an image not as the flat reflection of reality, but as a menacing or gracious entity that operates a certain function and power (Freedberg 1989, 407-428) is characteristic to both of these intentions. As a reference to the problematics of this paper it is important to notice that Freedberg invites us finally to refuse the status of art as an exceptional phenomenon. Therefore, as he puts, this resolution could be achieved only if the distinction between the *art as art* and the *sacral art* (Belting 1996) would be refused altogether. In the introduction of his book Freedberg states: "I would, in fact, be happy if the long-standing distinction between objects that elicit particular responses because of imputed "religious" or "magical" powers and those that are supposed to have purely "aesthetic" functions could be collapsed. I do not believe that the distinction is a viable one." (Freedberg 1989, xxi-xxii)

According to Freedberg, today the question of the power of image should be asked not in the context of autonomous cultural fields, as the ones of religion or art, but in a more general perspective of visual register. It should be noted that Freedberg's position at this point is inscribed into the context of visual studies which is currently very relevant. The latter perspective is represented by the different scholars, such as Gottfried Boehm, William. J. T. Mitchell, Horst Bredekamp, George Didi-Huberman and others, who call for a more attentive reflection on the ambivalent relationship with images already for an almost three decades now, and often it is based on a sentimental faith rather than rationality. Coming back to the interaction between religion and art, at this point the investigations of various forms of contemporary visuality assume peculiar relevance, because this theoretical approach restores the certain possibility to see that although today the fields of religion and art seem distant, there is still a vivid circulation between them. The theories of the mentioned authors can provide us not only with the reflection on the excessive visuality, characteristic to our everyday reality, but also with the post-secular implications of religious contents. One of the topics where the perspective of new visual studies can be especially relevant is the widely discussed problem of the ontological distinction between image and copy, or in other words – the problem of aura.

2. Reproduction as the condition for the loss of aura

To relate the value of the artwork with its authenticity and on the same time to equate the copy of it to a trifling replicate[3] seems to be an old tendency in a Western culture. This tendency is approved by the practice of the world-wide famous museums and galleries, which, in search of the highest standards, almost exclusively display original artworks. On the contrary, contemporary religious spaces (at least in Eastern Europe) apparently have adopted quite different criteria, as obvious from the above-mentioned example, when the original artwork was changed by the copy of St. Mary of Lourdes. In our days it wouldn't be strange to find the copies or reproductions of artworks – specifically the ones considered having the sacral-cultural disposition – in the catholic spaces of worship. From the first glance this circumstance can appear as an additional argument to approve the radical separation of religion and art. However, the more attentive look at the tradition of art forces us to doubt in this presupposition; and even more – it rises the suspicion that the inclination to privilege the original in regard to a copy in certain way testifies the religious gene, distinctive to the identity of contemporary art as the sign of previously existed symbiosis.

The interaction between religion and art was explained in a similar perspective by Walter Benjamin in his influential text "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935). As we know, in this article Benjamin defines the artwork as a certain formation, in which aural (sacral) and exponent dimensions correlate. Therefore, it is important to consider that by emphasising the religious component in art Benjamin does not appeal to the direct religious interest. The concept of aura in his theory covers quite a wide notional field – it refers to the distinctive importance of art in cultural tradition, more specifically, to the idealistic-romantic concept of it, where art is treated as the possible catalyst for a religious experience. For Benjamin, to assert that the artwork disposes aura first of all means the recognition of the realness of the power of art. On the other hand, by discussing the aura of the work, Benjamin indirectly demonstrates that the autonomy of art is quite conditional – the exceptionality of art as a phenomenon is the result of its tight connection to religion in the past.

We could claim that in analysis of Benjamin the aura is described by indicating two main aspects: firstly, the presence of aura is considered as the evidence of the authenticity and uniqueness of artwork, and secondly – aura is related to the unapproachability of artwork as such. According to Benjamin, the uniqueness of artwork is directly dependent on the anticipatory condition to maintain what he calls the "Here and Now" of the origin of the artwork. In other words, it is possible to assert that on this point Benjamin adopts an approach that the experience of aura is presupposed by the artwork's dependence to the certain situativity, to the concrete temporal and local conditions, which influence the process of formation. As for the criterion of the unapproachability, Benjamin characterises it "as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be" (Benjamin 2007, 222), at that point providing the direct indication of the religious remnant in art. According to Benjamin:

> „The definition of the aura as a "unique phenomenon of a distance however close it may be" represents nothing but the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception. Distance is the opposite of closeness. The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a major quality of the cult image." (ibid, 243)

As Benjamin diagnoses, both criteria by which he defines aura – authenticity and unapproachability – are destroyed during the process of technological intensification in art. According to Benjamin, the possibility to make the incalculable number of copies makes it increasingly complicated to define the artwork in the terms of unique value – even the works of old masters of their epochs circulate then by withdrawing them from their local and temporal structure. Even more severe problem arises when it comes to the condition of unapproachability of artwork – the process of visual reproduction inevitably violates it. Physical or visual appropriation of art also functions as its disclosure.

Thus, by referring to the position of Benjamin, it is possible to assert that the exploitation of the visual reproduction, which happens in the sphere of art, directly generates the process of desacralization. At this point desacralization should be understood, on the one hand, as an ultimate loss of the religious residue, and on the other hand – as an exhaustion of the idealistic concept of art. However, it should be taken into account that Benjamin sees this turning-point not only as a situation of loss, but also as the moment of positivity and deliberation. As Benjamin claims: „for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility." (ibid, 224) Referring to this quotation, we may assume that from the perspective of the identity of art, this transformation due to technological reproduction is even more significant than the turn of the Renaissance era when the art as such has begun to form its autonomy in the world dominated by religion. The principle of technological reproduction leads to the fundamental transformation of the ontological constitution of artwork, which now requires not only a totally different artistic approach, but also a different reception. In short, Benjamin's diagnosis lets us state that technological turn in art signs the beginning of art which cannot be interpreted in the romanticised or idealised categories such as aura, mystery or truth anymore.

3. Sacral Art and Reproduction

Despite the huge impact the article "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" made on the later theories of art and visual studies, it's main thesis about the decisive importance of the reproduction on the devaluation of aura of artwork nevertheless has met more than a few doubts and confrontations. At this point it is handy to remember the French philosopher George Didi-Huberman who in his analysis of the connection between photography and sacrality (or in Benjaminian terms – aura) offers an insight that technology not always is the one to be blamed for the destruction of a sacral dimension. In his article "The Index of the Absent Wound" Didi-Huberman discusses the photos of one of the most famous Christian relics – the shroud of Turin. The given photographs were made in 1898 by Italian photographer Secondo Pia and, as it is well known, the negatives of these photographs have revealed to the author an image which could not be seen by the eye – the face of the wounded man. As Didi-Huberman suggests:

> "As the photographic "evidence" objectified an aspect of the shroud, it became proof of a miracle. Not only did it sanction an unprecedented sort of expository value for this relic heretofore hidden from view, it reestablished the *aura* of the shroud, investing the object itself with a counterpart to its semiotic status. The holy shroud became the *negative imprint* of the body of Christ, its *luminous* index miraculously produced and miraculously inverted in the very act of resurrection, henceforth to be conceived of in photographic terms." (Didi-Huberman 1984, 65)

German art historian Horst Bredekamp, who provides an original reflection on a process of reproduction of images, would totally agree with Didi-Huberman on this point. Bredekamp also objects to that thesis of Benjamin in which the latter claims that the domination of technological reproduction in art is the main condition of the decline of the aura. This problem is analysed in Bredekamp's article, from 1992, "The Simulated Benjamin: Medieval Remarks on his Actuality" (*cf.* Bredekamp 2009).[4] Opposing the ideas presented in the influential Benjamin's text and especially to their reception in the thought of French postmodernism, Bredekamp provides a couple of arguments. The first one could be defined as historical and the second one as theological-ontological. According to Bredekamp, from a historical point of view, despite the fact that Benjamin was a meticulous follower of the Western tradition, he interpreted the dynamics of sacrality and reproduction in a different way in regard to how this interconnection expressed itself (and still does) in the Christian practices. According to Bredekamp, if one investigates the field of sacral art more attentively, it becomes hardly possible not to notice that the reproducibility of sacral images was especially widely used during the Middle Ages, Renaissance and also the Modern times. Even more – in the context of sacral art there was a common opinion that the copies of image not only do not annihilate its sacrality (aura), but on the contrary – they multiplicate it or at least maintain at the same level. By asserting this Bredekamp refers to the iconographical data on the images of St. Virgin Mary and Christ that were abundantly widespread in Western Europe in XV century:

"The image of clemency, replete with divine power, radiates this power through its physical appearance; its healing, godly substance is contained and identified in its form, which thus takes on a divine character. As the supernatural is indissolubly held in this form, its copy represents the duplication or at least the transportation of its healing aura. In terms of the theological image, it is significant that even the small, mass-produced devotional figures appear to have possessed no less value than their grander counterparts; the authenticity of the original and its power to heal had been conferred on each of the many copies." (Bredekamp 2009, 295)

As we can see in this quotation, Bredekamp defines the structure of the power (aura) of image in a way that totally differs from the Benjaminian one. According to Bredekamp, the constitution of aura does not depend on the conditions of temporality and locality related to the creation of an image; rather it correlates with the intention and functioning of the image. Thus, in this perspective the copy is treated not just as the simple copying of the surface, transporting the image from one media to the other, but as the duplicate. As it is well known, in the sphere of the law duplicate serves as the second exemplar of the document. In other words, legally speaking duplicate acts on behalf of the original – it disposes the same executive power as an original. In the interpretation formulated by Bredekamp, the copy of an image should be understood in this exact sense – it has to be treated as a duplicate that maintains the same divine power of the original. Even more, Bredekamp adds, "It is probably that printing derived from the same impulse, for it is invariably forgotten that the first printed works were devotional texts." (ibid., 295-296)

Bredekamp analyses this impulse, which, in his own words, was inspired by religious intention and afterwards had the impact on the flourishing of the machinery of reproduction, even more properly in the monograph "Image Acts. A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency". In this book Bredekamp elaborates the so-called Image Act theory, interpreting image as the substitute of reality – in other words, not as a mimicking of it, but rather as it's analogue, which has the other, invisible side of reality in its disposal. In his analysis Bredekamp addresses the religious context and invites us to remember St. Veronica and the huge impact a traditional depiction of this saint had had on the Christian iconography. According to Bredekamp, the figure of St. Veronica served as a critical factor by decisively influencing the foundation of ontological status of the image in the theological sense and also beyond it. This was apparent during the process of secularisation, when the interpretation of image as an element of reality, which disposes the immediacy of acting, was adapted in a wider cultural view. To the Christian tradition belonging the story of the cloth used by St. Veronica to wipe the face of Christ which led to the imprint of the divine image and subsequently to the healing powers it possessed, became the starting point for applying the contact imprint model in the field of physical sciences as well. As Bredekamp writes, the understanding of the image as something that reveals and affects reality in a unique way was taken over along with the practical circumstances of this act. According to him:

Through recourse to naturally occurring forms of imprint, the principle of the legend of Saint Veronica entered the realm of scientific research. Just as the imprint of the face of Christ was preserved upon Veronica's veil when this had been brought briefly into contact with it, so too might the imprint of diverse natural objects be preserved upon certain types of fabric or paper when these had been brought into contact with them. By this means, the atmospheric connection between image and body became the basis for a living, and thus active, presence that made for a valuable natural-historical document (Bredekamp 2018, 143).

As Bredekamp explains, during the Renaissance and later centuries the term *vera icon* was used to name not only the sacral relics such as the Shroud of Christ, but the contact prints of natural plants as well. The fact that an image emerges on paper or other materials without a direct human intervention was understood as a testimony of its authenticity to a higher degree. By referring to the tradition according to which the miraculous image on St. Veronica's cloth retains the divine properties linked to those of the very Christ, in the same manner it was believed that modern versions of the *vera icon* should retain a similar effect, or using Benjaminian terminology, an aura. Such a belief, as Bredekamp notes, became a significant impetus for the development of, for example, botany or such a new science as criminology. On the other hand, if the belief that the transmission to the corporeal dimension still preserves the properties of plants or fingerprints is quite uncomplicated to explain in the context of these sciences, the analogy presented by Bredekamp between *vera icon* and photography seems much more unexpected and intriguing. According to Bredekamp:

> "When, in February 1947, the inventor of the Polaroid technique, Edwin Lands, publicly announced the production of a self portrait that had come about in a fashion as direct as it was mysterious, without

> any processing in the dark room and without any human intervention in the laboratory, it was hardly necessary to spell out a notional connection with the *vera icon*. As if he had himself adopted the hand movements of Veronica and of Christ in Schongauer's engraving, Lands as recorded here looks at the miraculously appearing portrait of himself. All surviving descriptions of this moment have emphasised the stirring element in the scene. The event also had a particular magic because, through it, the primal experience of photography – the technically realised production of a "true image" – seemed to be recaptured, albeit now as the outcome of a procedure of apparently heightened authenticity." (ibid., 148)

As we can see, here Bredekamp arrives at a similar thesis as before cited Didi- Huberman – media, which operates on the principle of technological reproduction, does not negate the possibility of creating an aura of an image, but on the contrary, it may even contribute to it. However, if the discussion on tension between photographical image and authentic reality (the fact that the "true image" appears in the negative only accentuates the dialectical nature of this tension) for Didi-Huberman is his primary concern, it seems like Bredekamp at this point seeks to emphasise yet another aspect – for him it is important to stress out that the veneration of relics - the ancient practice implied in the Christian tradition - is essentially inseparable from the genesis of reproduction and it's mechanisms in a Western culture.

4. Re-actualization of the concept of aura and contemporary art

It's worth to notice that Bredekamp's thoughts acquire even more relevance if they are revised in the perspective of contemporary art theories, where this question - of how significant the impact of Benjaminian diagnosis of the aura-less identity of art still remains - is raised over and over again. This question stands out as even more vital if we turn the focus to those more and more common forms of art based on the principle of reproduction. Let us shortly examine the position of American theoretician David Joselit, who explores the question of aura in his book *After Art*. By following the actor-network theory by Bruno Latour, Joselit investigates the essence and identity of contemporary art. In the age of mobile phones, Google and

YouTube, he argues, brilliant analysis of artwork made by Benjamin has become a roadblock. One must notice that Joselit criticises not the very thesis of Benjamin, but the inert practice to applicate it for contemporary art, at the same time ignoring the fact that the principle of multiplicity and repetition has already become the foundation of it. Therefore, considering the problematics of this paper, the most intriguing aspect of Joselit's theory is the intention to revive the relevance of the notion of aura. Joselit's strategy to grant positive value to the process of art's technological digitization (reproduction *par excellence*), at the same time relating this process to the effect of aura, is yet another important aspect of his position As Joselit notes, multiplying and repetition in art function not by annihilating the charm of reality, but by producing certain effect of saturation, the one that could be compared to aura, or, in Joselit's own terminology, the effect of *buzz*. According to him:

> "Instead of radiating nimbus of authenticity and authority underwritten by site specificity, we have the value of saturation, of being everywhere at once. In place of aura, there is buzz. Like a swarm of bees, a swarm of images makes a buzz, and like a new idea or trend, once an image (whether attached to a product, a policy, a person, or a work of art) achieves saturation, it has a buzz." (Joselit 2013, 16)

Thus, as Joselit explains, the factor of repetition creates a certain vitality, which becomes active precisely by rewatching "the same" image multiple times. Joselit draws our attention to the fact that the sameness, usually attributed to the reproducing as such, is, in fact, quite questionable, the image that has been copied, multiplied, reproduced is not any more the same one. The multiplication of an image empowers it to circulate in different contexts where it acquires yet another, not final, identity again and again. In this perspective the impossibility to identify the copy versus the original is treated not in reductive terms, but as emancipation of an image in general. So, it could be said that Joselit contributes to the polemics on aura by turning upside down the dynamics of power of artwork as it was defined by Benjamin. For Joselit, relevance of aura in the context of contemporary art should be discussed not in terms of authenticity and unapproachability, but on the contrary: he claims that when the image circulates deliberated from any site specifics and remains always accessible, the effect of aura forms itself. That leads, on the one hand, to the image acquiring a flexible, undetermined identity, and on the other hand, gaining the possibility to be perceived not as a single, unique piece, but as an element belonging to the extended net of links.

If we turn back to the interaction between art and religion, it is evident that although Joselit's intention to discuss the notion of aura in a new light does not take out directly to the possibility of reviving this reunion, this theoretical position opens up a space for the potential of similar configuration. This assumption is supposed in Joselit's very concept of art, where the art is attributed to exceptional power of connecting heterogeneous contexts[5]. Certainly, in this approach the probable interaction between art and religion could be possible only as a connection of a horizontal dimension – in other words, it should be discussed exclusively in the terms resounding the post-secular condition. At this point it could be useful to remember that Jurgen Habermas was the first one to use the term "post-secularity". Analysing the structural transformations of contemporaneity, Habermas stated that we should refuse to restrict our public space into frames of a secular discourse, because, as it was proved by recent challenges in the field of global politics, the latter strategy clearly did not serve the purpose. Thus, in his proposal Habermas discusses the necessity to reconcile the institutions of rationality and faith that were autonomized and radically separated during the process of secularisation (Habermas 2008). Theoretically, it would mean that the interconnection between such fields as religion and art becomes possible again. However, an important question of how should this "again" be understood today – considering the defragmentation of cultural horizons, the impact a secular worldview has on our everyday reality and such processes as desacralization of art – still remains unanswered. It seems that this return, the "new" form of connection between religion and art, would be not in the least an easy going, fluent return to the harmonious compatibility, characteristic to the premodern epoch. On the contrary – it looks like the apparent post-secular configuration of religion and art should be marked, on the one hand, by the lack of pretension to reconstruct the symbiotic relationship between these fields and, on the other hand, by the revision of purely secular approach when the topic of religion as such is considered unwelcome guest in the sphere of contemporary art. In other words, it would mean to presume the constellation of religion and art as the horizontally oriented plane where the religious sphere would be drawn into the artistic one at the same, non-special status as, for example, in the case of science, technology or politics.

A relevant example where the encounter between religion and art could be seen in a similar lens is the video polyptych "Martyrs (Earth. Air. Fire. Water)", created by the American artist Bill Viola, who has been exploiting the theme of religion for more than several decades now. As it is widely known, this artwork, which is on display in the cathedral of St. Paul in London since 2014, is considered to be the first video permanently installed in the sacral space. Video work "Martyrs" consists of four equally-sized panels which show four different, albeit synchronised, actions. In each of the displays, a single person is subjected to the violence of one of nature's elements. As explains Viola, his aim was to demonstrate the inner strength of people who remain faithful to their convictions and thereby are capable to overcome their sufferings (cf. Viola 2014). The narrative of this art project is elaborated by representing the processuality of human existential experience and especially focussing on the transformative character of it. Thus, the dimension of temporality becomes crucial here, and, undoubtedly, the media of the video allows to show these aspects in a more effective way as compared to the more traditional, static art forms, such as painting or sculpture.

As one would suppose, the installation of Viola's video work has provoked quite a controversial reaction. Big part of the spectators welcomed it enthusiastically – the project was greeted as the contemporary version of an icon, the meditative mood of it, it's minimalism and resemblance to the Medieval altar paintings (*cf*. Cumming 2014) were taken into notice. On the other hand, there were more negative responses as well. According to some of them, the work of Viola did not demonstrate sufficient attention to the specifics of the sacral site, moreover, the artist did not emphasise the historical relevance of Christian martyrdom and ignored the whole tradition of iconographic attributes (Berger 2015). Therefore, reacting to the similar remarks, it could be noticed that the power of Viola's "Martyrs" probably comes precisely from its ability to resound the post- secular condition of our days in a particular way. This project highlights the universal aspects of human experience – suffering, faith, and death. These kinds of liminal experiences are reflected by connecting Western artistic practices with various spiritual traditions – Zen Buddhism, Islamic Sufism, Christian mysticism. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that despite the meditative feeling and resemblance to Christian sacral paintings, the topic of religion in Viola's project does not become dominant. The approach to religion in this case is not oriented to the hierarchical vertical, it is rather maintained at a horizontal level. "Martyrs" in equal rights draws in the contexts we see today as being beyond the autonomy of religion – the project remains open to neuro sciences, psychology, politics, ethics; it resounds the problems concerning globalisation and refugees. Because of this openness to heterogeneous contexts, one could claim that Viola's "Martyrs" do not represent the restitution of religion in art (or the restitution of art into the sacral place), but rather it makes us reflect on the position of religiosity in contemporaneity and invites to imagine the forms it could acquire in the future.

NOTES

[1] This aspect was analyzed by Jean-Luc Marion. Marion argues that, if the profane image is based on means of mimetic logic when one visible object is imitated by another visible object, the case of icon is totally different because here the importance is laid on what is indicated by the visible, rather than on what is exposed for us to see, thus by this the dimension of exposing itself has to be destroyed. The visible at this point is significant only as a medium, opening the possibility to indicate what it is not (Marion 2004).

[2] The latter problem was discussed by James Elkins in his book *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art.* According to Elkins, bringing the problem of religion into the serious discussions on contemporary art can be associated with "living in a house infested with mice and not noticing that something is wrong" (Elkins 2004, XI). The prevalence of this kind of preconceived opinion is influenced by the secularisation of society which brought the cultural sphere into a situation where the big part of

contemporary art exposed in most important biennales and galleries refuse to touch upon the topic of religion. On the other hand, Elkins argues that religious art produced in ours times is simply bad art in most of the cases.

[3] At this point it would be useful to remember Hans-Georg Gadamer who in *Truth and Method* analysed the correlation between image (*Bild*), the copy (*Abbild*) and reality (*Urbild*). According to Gadamer, the function of a copy (*Abbild*) is restricted just to its identification with an original image (*Bild*). According to him, in a copy (*Abbild*) resides the objective to self-destruction. Meanwhile the purpose of the image (*Bild*) has to do with the demonstration of how the reality (*Urbild*) is revealed through it. Compared to a copy (*Abbild*) the image (*Bild*) does not has to be identical to the original (*Urbild*) and precisely in this incompatibility resides the positive value of the image (*Bild*) (Gadamer 1986, 139-149).

[4] Originally the text was published in German as „Der simulierte Benjamin: Mittelalterliche Bemerkungen zu seiner Aktualität", in *Frankfurter Schule und Kunstgeschichte* edited by Andreas Berndt et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 1992).

[5] As Joselit notices, the very title of his book *After Art* indicates contemporary art's power to conclude the stage of the "era of art" where the function of art was limited to expression of secular contents in an aesthetic form. As Joselit argues: "Art can establish a wide variety of connections simultaneously: after art comes the logic of networks where links can cross space, time, genre, and scale in surprising and multiple ways." (ibid., 89).

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Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Film: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

This paper aims to make a critical analysis of the haptic visuality concept. It elucidates the crossing philosophical basis that uses a metaphor to emphasize the way film highlights through its materiality and an encounter between the perceiver and the object represented. In that effort, the analysis takes four paces: first, positioning films in the perspective of media as mediation; second, reviewing the philosophy of film refers to conceptualizing film phenomenology; third, discussing the phenomenology philosophical tenets; fourth, discoursing the crossing basic assumptions of the concept. The results show that a crossing dialogue between Heidegger's film phenomenological framework and Ricoeur's values of hermeneutic to film phenomenology bridges the understanding of a film's conscious and unconscious process. The outcomes of crossing philosophical dialogue answer the question of whether natural science can understand films.

Keywords: hermeneutics, phenomenology, film, critical analysis, haptic visuality

1. Introduction

To begin with, I intend to describe the philosophy contest among scholars regarding film which questions if a film is scientific or not. Wartenberg (2015) notes that film interpretations stimulate theoretical generalizations as well as theorizing the film aspects. The emphasis here is on developing theories of film, as Wartenberg (ibid.) further adds, that the philosophy of film based on the natural sciences has been prominent among cognitive film theorists such as Bordwell and Carroll (1996) and Currie (1995) who emphasize viewers' conscious processing of films. This opposes the traditional film theories which work on unconscious processes. Some see films in pragmatism like William James and others make use of Wittgenstein's hermeneutic tradition. Both parties have questioned if natural science can understand films. Amid the debate, Laura U. Marks presents a conceptual formulation of the film. In her work entitled "The Skin of Film," Marks (2000) promotes a concept, called "haptic visuality" that signifies vision as something tangible.

In this paper, I intend critically analyze Marks's haptic visuality theory. The theory is based on a metaphor about natural (bodily) experiences. The theory emphasizes the bodily experiences of film in the philosophical basis of phenomenology. The arguments in haptic visuality are built on a phenomenology philosophical basis. In this paper, I argue that the film's bodily experience intersects phenomenology and hermeneutics. Therefore, I elucidate the concept's crossing philosophical basis that signifies a metaphor to emphasize the way film signifies through its materiality, through an encounter between the perceiver and the object represented.

Preceding the elucidation of the film's bodily experience's crossing philosophical basis, it is necessary to present Marks's concept of haptic visuality. "The Skin of Film" emphasizes that films represent experiences through the senses (Marks 2000, vi). Films are the tangible body that viewers can touch (ibid., vii) and also represent other senses like smell and taste (ibid., xvi). These bodily experiences are beyond the transmitter of sign from films to the viewers (ibid., p. xvii), and the presence of the objects presented stimulate memories through embodied knowledge (ibid., 2).

To prove my argument, I take four paces: first, positioning films in the perspective of media as mediation as the ground-breaking of understanding; second, reviewing the philosophy of film refers to conceptualizing film phenomenology; third, discussing the phenomenology philosophical tenets which include knowledge, experience and consciousness, relationship or interaction with the object and making meaning, and expressing the world through language – and how the tenets in film phenomenology; fourth, discoursing the crossing philosophical assumptions of haptic visuality which emphasizes on prosthetic experience, prosthetic memory and the embodiment of memory through senses. This critical analysis bridges the sharp debate among film scholars about the conscious and unconscious process of a film. Presenting a crossing philosophical dialogue to understand bodily experience will answer the question of whether natural science can understand films.

2. Film: Media and Mediation

In this first part, preceding to scrutinize deeply the concept of haptic visuality, I propose to position films from the perspective of media as mediation. To understand the position of media, for example, film as mediation, I refer to McLuhan's "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man". "The medium is the message," McLuhan states (1964). It emphasizes that a medium and its characteristics that have an important role are the focus, rather than the content of the medium. McLuhan's proposition of "The medium is the message' lays "message" within two different meanings which signify both content and character of the medium: the content of the medium is a message and the character of the medium is another message.

The concept of film as a medium emphasizes what Schummer (2013, 18) states that film is visual images that are presentational and opaque since the perceptible and sensible contents are presented through senses modalities. Thus, film images are not representations that occur by means of the presented contents (ibid., 19).

Here, the concept of mediation in films refers to the experience of viewing cinematic images as Walton (1984) calls "seeing through." It is perspectival meaning seeing from a given and determinate perspective (Currie 1995). McLuhan emphasizes the correlation of the experience of this "mediated seeing" with the character of the medium rather than on the content because he believes that human's association and action are influenced by the medium (McLuhan 1964, 9). He states that a film is a medium that changes the sequence and lineal connections into creative configuration and structure (ibid., 12).

McLuhan's term "configuration connection" correspond to the media discursive practices which actually constitute reality in the process of communication (Fairclough 1995). Discourse is seen as the main instrument of production and reproduction of shared social knowledge and practice (Van Dijk 1997). Therefore, when films are seen from a discursive point of view, it is based on the concepts of cognition, society, and discourse to provide orientation, consistency, and organization (Colombo 2004). The concerns are laid on both the textual dimensions of a film which account for the structures of discourse at various levels of description and the contextual dimensions of a film which relate the structural descriptions to various properties of context, such as representations or sociocultural factors (Van Dijk 1988).

Extending the argument for understanding the medium as the message itself, McLuhan proposes that the content of any medium is always another medium (1964, 8). It means that the nature of the channel through which a message is transmitted is more important than the meaning of a message. McLuhan maintains that a message is the change of a pattern that innovation provides human affairs (Federman 2004).

To my concern, the haptic visuality concept work under the media and mediation point of view explained above. It emphasizes the intercultural film as a medium, not the content of the film. Both the characteristics of the film as a medium and its content play an important role to affect the viewers. Both transmit their own message.

The images and objects presented in the films as postulated in haptic visuality meet the presentational and representational characters. The visual images themselves are presentational and the objects presented in the film are representational. Both are mediated in a combination of sensory modalities. This mediated seeing process results in the embodied viewing experience which extends to the physical and social spaces of the viewing environment. Viewers take sensory information from outside the film's world when watching (Marks 2000, 211).

From a discursive point of view, the haptic visuality concept shows that in a complex way, film, then, can follow an object in an attempt to elicit its cultural biography and to read the knowledge it embodies: to engage with the object discursively. In addition, as material objects themselves, films are uniquely capable of confronting the object in its material as well as its discursive meaning to the viewers (Marks 2000, 97). Whereas in the simplest way, the visual image presentation and the object representation appeal to the viewer's senses are through narrative identification: viewers identify what the characters doing with their activity (ibid., 213).

3. Philosophy of Film: Conceptualizing Film Phenomenology

In the previous part, it has been discussed that film provides a mediated experience. In this part, initially before discussing the philosophical basis of a film, I provide some basic understanding of the correlation between film and philosophy.

According to Botz-Bornstein (2005), philosophy sees a film as a subject and object which can build its own truth and which the world can be seen through it. Here, it means that a film provides a form of thinking about reality through the rules of logic and time. When watching a film, a thinking process occurs thus, a film is considered as an organic intelligence and does not present reality in a metaphorical way. A film has its own mind to present the world as a particular film phenomenology. The abstract existential stance it presents makes a philosophical phenomenon.

As a media that provides the phenomena of experience, a film can be seen in Husserl's philosophical thinking that underlines human experience as the sensible intuition of phenomena. On the basis of this prescription, phenomenology attempts to understand the essence of what is experienced. In the philosophy of film, as this film experience is mediated, it is seen in the phenomenological synthetic approach rather than in the analytical one.

Initially, it is necessary to define the phenomenology of film. Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich (2016, 3) maintain that the phenomenology of the film emphasizes two things: film-as-intentional-object and the viewer-as-experiencing-subject which refers to the film viewer's lived experience when watching moving images and termed as "lived body experience of senses'. Merleau-Ponty states that phenomenology reveals the connection between subject, world, and others; regarding that definition, movies reveal the connection between mind, body, and world (*cf*. Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich 2016, 4).

Following Merleau-Ponty, Vivian Sobchack maintains that film is a philosophical exemplar of intentionality that manifest the correlation of subjective consciousness and its real or imaginary objects (in Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich 2016, 5). Sobchack's film phenomenology focuses on the embodied experience—including the viewer's tactile experience (ibid., 6). The film does phenomenology as it has a form of subjectivity, intentionality, and mind entwined with the film's body to express experience (ibid., 39-40). This experience can be distinguished into different degrees of generality and specificity: the lived body experience of senses, the spatial experience of video images, the temporal experience of documentary films, the collective experience of the cinema auditorium, and the aesthetic experience of film worlds (Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich 2016, 4). Drawing on a strong analogy between human experience and the way film engages with the world is comparable to film as a phenomenology for film manifests particular human experience characteristics.

4. From Philosophical Tenets to Film Phenomenology

In this part, I provide some film philosophical thoughts that position film as a model of philosophy. These thoughts are developed from the basic tenets of Husserl's phenomenology which posit that first, knowledge is something that is realized and found directly in the experience of consciousness; second, a person's relationship or the interaction with an object will determine the meaning of the object for the person concerned; and third, people experience the world and express it through language.

Emphasizing the first tenet of phenomenology in film phenomenology, the understanding of knowledge, experience, and consciousness refers to how the film world is perceived by the viewers as if they were being in the film world. Life in the film world is perceived in awareness through the capture of reality the camera produces (*cf.* Botz-Bornstein 2005). Therefore, viewers experience the human consciousness through spatial time during the viewing process when the viewers sense the images, as Bergson (1988) states that the image which is more than merely a representation of a thing provides an experience and stimulates thought to form memory aligned with bodily perception. Merleau-Ponty (1992) adds that the meaning of a film image is laid on its ability to fashion a new reality. A film provides a phenomenological experience in which human consciousness is brought to the world in an ordinary way while watching the film images.

This phenomenological experience works to create self and world by emphasizing the interactive character of film viewing. Two bodies which include the body of the viewer and the body of a film involved in the production of the film experience during the film viewing. This cinematic experience refers to "the embodiment experience through senses' and refers to what is called a "mediated experience" through film. The viewers' mediated experience through the film is accessible by the scientific method and such experience is projected to the whole domain of human sciences as Gadamer (Skorin-Kapov 2016) argues that truth and method can be approached. The objective observation and analysis of film and film text and meaning as an object can be found within a film text through a particular process that allowed for a connection with the filmmakers' thoughts that led to the creation of a film text. Instead of a prescribing method of analysis, Gadamer's philosophical thinking examines the understanding of artwork and experience work.

Gadamer argues that humans possess what so-called "historically-effected consciousness," which refers to a meaning that they are embedded in and shaped by a particular history and culture; however, this historical consciousness is not against humans' existence, but it involves their understanding (Palmer 1969, 117). Regarding this concept, viewers' background knowledge that is rooted in a particular culture shapes the audience and influences their consciousness to make actions driven by their understanding.

Emphasizing the second tenet of phenomenology in film phenomenology, the understanding of relationship or the interaction with the object and making meaning refers to the relationship or the interaction between viewers and film. The interaction of viewers and film results in understanding the film as the medium which contains images and objects parallel to symbols within a "container" called a "text'; therefore, the film itself can be seen as this "container" and the interpretation of the visual symbols is an effort to construct meanings.

Interpretation is a form of human expression and a result of mediated understanding when humans are placed in a particular historical context. The historical context here concerns particular space and time. The film does not provide a direct experience, but a mediated experience in a particular space and time to viewers. Through this mediated experience, viewers can get an indirect understanding as well. Something mediated results in another mediated thing. The viewers' mediated understanding of the filmic text does not mean reconstructing the filmmakers' state of mind, but articulating what is expressed in the film.

Viewers' mediated experience means to feel a situation or thing personally in which they can always grasp the mediated meaning of unknown thought through it. Their "mediated experience" is converted into meaning because of the appeal of the film text discourse that says more than the filmmaker intends. Viewers' comprehension of the filmic text produces coexistence among the viewers.

In Heidegger's concept of humans' existence or "Dasein," the viewers have the capacity to make interpretations of their world – the mediated world presented in the filmic text (Horrigan-Kelly et al. 2016, 1). Their interpretation involves their understanding to make the implicit understanding explicit. Further, in Heidegger's "Dasein," the intertwined state of interpretation and understanding emphasizes two processes of interpretation: "as structure" and "for structure." The prior means that the interpretation is something for something else and the latter means that the interpretation is to reveal humans' prior knowledge about their world (ibid., 3).

The viewers' capacity to interpret their mediated world demonstrates that interaction with entities is not fewer presuppositions, but guided by the familiarity of their real everyday interaction. The capacity that shows humans' existence, therefore is said that human existence is presented as having pre-existing knowledge or fore structure of understanding of their world (ibid., 3). This understanding is the result of the manifestations of action and productivity produced by humans to explore the inside meaning (Dilthey 1977).

Viewers' capability to make meaning is something that evolves. This puts forth human's capacity analytics which focuses on both understanding and interpretation. Viewers' capacity to make meaning acknowledges a way of accessing humans' existence that facilitates, said in Heidegger's phrase "show itself in itself and from itself" (ibid., 4).

Viewers may have biases in their interpretation due to the situation that they do not have any sort of preunderstanding. These biases called "prejudices" are said not as something that hinders people's ability to make meanings, but are both integral to the reality of being, and are the basis of human's ability to understand (Palmer 1969, 182).

Making meaning of a film text involves both the film text itself and the viewers within a particular medium of language and makes understanding possible. This kind of making meaning experience marks a dialogue with some characteristics: taking seriously "the truth" claims of the person with whom one is conversing, each participant in the conversation relates to one another insofar as they belong to the common goal of understanding one another, and the interpretation of a given text will change depending on the questions the interpreter asks of the text because the meaning emerges not as an object that lies in the text or in the interpreter, but rather an event that results from the interaction of the two (Gonzalez 2006).

Making meaning of a film text within a particular medium of language can be understood as a dialogue between viewers and filmmakers to achieve an understanding. The making meaning of a film text depends on the critical response from the viewers toward the film text and the interaction of the viewers and the film text results in the meaning.

Emphasizing the third tenet of phenomenology in film phenomenology, the understanding of expressing the world through language in the phenomenology of the film refers to the film as the medium which contains images and objects parallel to symbols within a container called a text; therefore, the film itself can be seen as this container and the interpretation of the visual symbols is an effort to construct meanings.

Attaching the concept of texts and symbols to films, the elucidation of the philosophy of film begins with discussing how this philosophy is used to understand a text. Humans' efforts to clarify the meanings of their surrounding is related to their existence as Cassirer posits that in the viewpoint of human culture, the explanatory definition of man is an animal *symbolicum* rather than animal rationale (Coelho 2001, 72). Man as an animal *symbolicum* is an ontological curiosity because his existence depends on his consciousness; the existence depends on his consciousness, and his consciousness defines his existence (Przylebski 2017, 133). Humans create a system of symbols to communicate. Their world becomes more modern as well as their symbol system develops through their invention of many communication tools. Humans' inventions are produced by the consciousness of their existing needs and this also marks their existence in the world.

A film is a form of art in which the viewers attempt to understand texts as well as or even better than the authors understand their own works, and understand the authors of texts better than the authors understand themselves (Schleiermacher 1998). A film is considered a text in which viewers are expected to understand what the text is meant by the film. For this reason, viewers must clearly understand the language used in the film that applies at the time and place of the filmmakers producing the film text. The relationship between language and logic lies within the rational method of interpretation to define the truth or fallaciousness of the message (Grondin 1994).

By positioning film in philosophical tenets of phenomenology, I further discuss how the concepts of haptic visuality– the lived body experience of senses like touch or smell and the basic philosophical assumptions.

The word "haptic" relates to the sense of touch, perception, and manipulation of objects using the senses of touch and awareness. When the word "haptic" is attached to visuality, it refers to metaphorical meaning. The term "haptic visuality" means the way vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes (Marks 2000, v). In a nutshell, the haptic visuality concept in intercultural cinema suggests that memories stimulate the senses' awareness of touch, smell, and bodily towards the viewers' original culture.

The haptic visuality concept is the answer to the question of how filmmakers can use a cinematic visual medium to transmit the physical senses. It refers to a visuality that functions like the sense of touch by stimulating the senses' memories and engaging the viewers' physical experience. This is not a form of mental visuality to the things seen but something that has its location in the body (Marks 2000, 132). Haptic visuality does not separate the viewers and the world of a film but recognizes the connection between self and others to bring the filmic images closer to the viewers' body and their senses (Marks 2000, 151).

It has been explained in the previous parts of the discussion that the very basic understanding of film should be seen in the context of media and mediation and that to conduct the mediation function, the film communicates with the viewers through presenting visual images and representing the objects. Visual image presentation and object representation are the languages of the film and the viewers' understanding of the meaning of the film language is gained through the process of interpretation. Viewers make the interpretation of a filmic text which is full of filmic language symbols.

To the viewers, they experience what the film content is exposed to through the mediation of the presentation of visual images and the representation of objects in the film text. To understand what kind of experience the viewers gain from the film, I refer to Lansberg (2004) who differentiates between "having a real experience" and "experiencing the real." "Having a real experience" means being involved with a historical moment and becoming a part of it whereas "experiencing the real" means experiencing the historical moment but not getting involves in it (Lansberg 2004, 33). Since participation in the historical moment is indirect, it is called an "inauthentic experience." The word "historical" here means "particular time and space." The film can be a medium that enables viewers to connect with the "past" they did not experience first-hand. The medium which provides viewers with the collective opportunity of having a relationship with the "history" they did not experience is called the "experiential site" (ibid.). Watching the film is "an act of prosthesis" (ibid., 34). Viewers' mediated experience is an inauthentic experience where feeling and observing the "history" or the occurrence in a particular time and space through a medium or carrier, therefore, their understanding, as well as the experience, are also termed "mediated" and "prosthetic."

Regarding the relation of experience to memory, Lansberg (2004, 45) argues that people gain memories through mediated images and narratives presented by modern technologies. This is what so-called "inauthentic memory" or "prosthetic memory" – memory which is resulted from the engagement between viewers and a mass-mediated representation (ibid., 20). This kind of memory viewers takes while watching films. The haptic visuality concept which emphasizes the embodiment of memory through senses, through "filmic mediated experience" and "filmic mediated memory" works under the concept of prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory. Taking a deeper look at tenets in "The Skin of Film," I will elaborate on how the concept of prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory work.

Focusing on intercultural cinema, Marks states that intercultural cinema operates at the intersections of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge: the issue of where meaningful knowledge is located and the awareness that it is between cultures (Lansberg 2004, 24). This meaningful knowledge and awareness are produced by the mediated experience or so-called prosthetic experience.

Marks uses metaphors to formulate her arguments. Van Wolputte (2004, 257) shows, metaphors that do not belong to cognition are tools to work with experience, functions to suggest, elicit, and provoke, and are rooted in bodily experience, particularly in the sense of touch. Metaphors are the imaginative elaboration around bodily functions, create many possible meanings that are symbolic conventions free, and produce effect and efficacy that one can attribute to the fact that metaphors address both bodily and social experience (Wolputte 2004, 258).

The metaphor Marks uses to postulate the prosthetic experience is "cinema as archaeology." She argues that the metaphor is useful to carry a mental diagram that combines elements from different strata: the hard sedimented layer at the bottom and the vulnerable layer at the surface (Marks 2000, 28).

I explain in detail how the metaphor is attached to the film: first, the sediment layers refer to viewers' knowledge and awareness. The surface layer is knowledge and the deepest layer is awareness. Second, the elements of strata refer to the film elements. These film elements include the actual image, virtual image, cliché, optical image, and recollection image (Marks 2000, 30). Each film element has different nature of revealing the knowledge. The actual image corresponds to the past and present whereas the virtual image is to the preserved past (ibid., 40). Clichés and optical images have the opposite function; the previous hides the object in the image, and the latter, makes the object visible to reveal the knowledge it constitutes (ibid., 46). The recollection image brings what cannot be represented into a dialogue with memory in a particular space and time (ibid., 51). In the process of viewing, all the elements will be working in one vein to construct viewers' knowledge and awareness.

The process of viewing is a mediated process in which the filmic elements (actual image, virtual image, cliché, optical image, and recollection image) work on building the viewers' prosthetic experience. Such experience is represented partially through what is uttered and seen (Marks 2000, 30). Through a mediated experience, viewers have two different forms of "experience the real" that confront each other at a given occurrence in a particular space and time. These two different forms refer to differences in what is seen and what is perceived. As the film is an audio-visual medium, it makes these differences possible. The cinematic image corresponds to the notion of the visible which viewers can read about a particular occurrence formation. In Marks's metaphor of "cinema as archaeology," the concept of prosthetic experience emphasizes "experiencing the real" – indirect participation at the moment in a particular space and time through the film elements to build viewers' knowledge and awareness toward that moment.

In Marks's metaphor of "cinema as archaeology," memory is related to the order of knowledge expressed in the intercultural film. The word "order" refers to the level of the memory: private and "official" memory. The "official" refers to the communal memory. It is said that there is a disjunction between these orders of knowledge – memory (Marks 2000, 31). These memories are constructed in the viewers' prosthetic experience through the recollection of images and objects. The interconnection of memory and the recollection-image occurs when the time-image shifts to the movement-image (ibid., 64).

Through their prosthetic experience, viewers gain prosthetic memory during their viewing process which exposes the image presentation and object representation. Marks uses "fossil" as another metaphor that refers to image presentation and object representation. As Marks says fossils are produced during the contact between viewers with the image presentation and object representation during the viewing process; it corresponds with the photographic process when light reflected by an object makes contact with the witnessing material of film (Marks 2000, 84).

The metaphor of "fossil" describes filmic images as entities that "embody a past." It is a representation of an entity that is incomparable with the image depiction of the presentation of the entity. In the concept of this "film fossil" the representation images that arise from reality may be presented in a different way from the reality itself; such representation creates memory fragments that surface repeatedly to consciousness but are mysterious in their meaning (ibid.). When the prosthetic experience occurs during the process of viewing, a recollection-object breaks down through the engagement with memory, then this memory – a prosthetic one generates sensation in the body. Thus, the embodiment of memory through senses Marks proposed meaning that when the filmic images result in prosthetic memory, this refers to the engagement of prosthetic memory with the senses. As Marks states, meaning resides in objects, but memory is stored in the body (2000, 121).

In the previous parts, I have explained that haptic visuality is a metaphor that refers to the embodiment of memory through senses and that the archaeological metaphor used in “the Skin of Film” refers to the central tenets of “haptic visuality’: prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory. In this part, I continue my discussion more specifically on this memory which drives the explanation beyond the hermeneutics tradition since both filmic prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory are produced by the relationship between viewers and film. Both film prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory are the products of a relationship between two parties. In this part, I focus my discussion on the relationship as the “producer” rather than on the “product.’

Memory is a process at once cerebral and emotional. Merleau-Ponty (1992) significantly developed the ground for the relationship between perception, body, and memory. The concept posits that the relationship between self and world is mimetic which means that meaning is not solely communicated through signs but experienced in the body. In this embodied perception the perceiver relinquishes power over the perceived occurs. Just like language is an extension of being, a film is an extension of the viewer's embodied existence.

This relationship between viewers and film is a phenomenological model of subjectivity which posits a mutual permeability and mutual creation of self and world through perceptions of the world (Marks 2000, 149). The Film is a phenomenological art, *par excellenc*e, therefore a phenomenology of the film must describe how the film world is perceived by the viewers as if they were being in the film world. This refers to the meaning that the phenomenology of the film focuses on the relationship between viewers and the film through the conditions and aspects of the film experience. In a nutshell, film phenomenology focuses on describing the perception and understanding of the world and its existence in the world. Sobchack (1992) argues that the phenomenology of film experience emphasizes the interaction between two bodies

– the film body and the viewers' body – during film viewing to produce a film experience.

Marks (2000) argues that the phenomenology of individual experience explains how a viewer experiences images. In the new phenomenology perspective, the embodiment perceives bodies as active objects that work as the courses of meanings (Csordas 1994, 7). Advancing this point, Csordas (ibid., 257) argues that the body should not be considered as an object but as the subject. An exchange between the embodied self of the viewer and the film as the embodied intermediary is a phenomenological encounter in which during the seeing process the presence of the body is recognized, but the unity of the other self is abandoned (ibid., 151). In embodied spectatorship, the senses and the intellect are not separate and how the body encodes power relations somatically can be explained by phenomenology (Sobchack 1992, 152). Haptic visuality resembles existential phenomenology in that recognizes the viewers and the visual object constitute each other (ibid., 93).

Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich (2016, 33) see that the embodiment concept in Marks's haptic visuality convinces that films can evoke other senses than merely those of seeing and hearing to work together. The concept emphasizes both the haptic quality of the filmic experience and the viewer's relationship to the moving image as a continuum. This haptic experience means that viewers do not actually touch the objects displayed on the screen, but the sense of touch is approached asymptotically, with some images evoking a more haptic experience than others.

Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich (2016, 34-35) see that Marks's embodiment concept distinguishes between optical and haptic visuality; when optical visuality is identified with a distant position of the viewers to understand the images, haptic visuality evokes an experience of closeness towards the object seen, as if touching it. The metaphor of "skin" that stress the surface texture of objects is used beyond the literal and biological meaning to comprise the phenomenology connotation. They argue that the significance of phenomenology on film is the strong connection between the viewers' body and the film's body which also underlines the exchange position of a metaphor to experiencing the visual realm.

5. Philosophical Paradigm: Basic Assumptions of Film Phenomenology and Values of Hermeneutic to Film Phenomenology in Haptic Visuality

From the overall explanation of the definition and the concepts – prosthetic experience, prosthetic memory, and embodiment, I discuss the basic assumptions of film phenomenology and the values of hermeneutic to film phenomenology on which the concept of haptic visuality is built. The concept works on the basic assumptions as proposed by Heidegger's phenomenological framework. Moreover, the concept also emphasizes Paul Ricoeur's values of hermeneutic phenomenology. In this regards, several points of notions can be explained as the following.

First, the film is an object, a medium, and an experience that has embedded in the concept of human existence thus it is a thing that human existence already relates to and finds its meaning naturally (Loht 2017, 5). The film itself has its own being which includes its viewing and the viewer's relationship to it (ibid., 7).

Second, human consciousness is involved in film viewing refers to the intentionality concept. This consciousness always has the object of the mind that has a target meaning or sense. This film's intentionality centers on the character of viewing that involve more existential and predicated consciousness on the understanding of meaning and sense (Loht 2017, 8).

Third, filmic experience during viewing operates the receptive and intentional human mind and the disclosure of the work of the mind work (Loht 2017, 10). This can be seen in Marks's intercultural cinema account of the viewer's disclosedness and disclosure fostered in the process of viewing *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige*, by Rea Tajiri, winds back through the images of Japanese Americans in fiction films and government newsreels during and after World War II.

Fourth, phenomena are brought into view through the use of language. Language has the unique ability to let things be seen, to bring them into view by virtue of articulating their relationship with other things (Loht 2017, 11). As in the film, if a film talks about something, this means that the film can make it present for itself and others, and this is to an extent to which the subject the film talks about was not previously present or known.

Fifth, film that provides a universal way to see the world and to bridge distances between things reflects a modern tendency that regards all orientations in the world as "views" or "pictures" (ibid., 12). The role of visual language stipulates an account that film is inherently descriptive and provisional.

Sixth, describing the things manifested in experience is the emphasis (ibid., 11). Based on Ricoeur's assumptions, the manifested experience shows a redirected focus embodiment of film perception and film experience towards film language. Attention to the metaphorical and narrative resources residing in film language and its actual effect are presented in Marks's analysis.

Seventh, underlying the prosthetic experience and prosthetic memory in haptic visuality, further, based on Ricoeur's assumptions, the manifested experience that concentrates on the indirect or mediated interpretation of expression focuses on the reflective subject in relation to the embodiment experience and tends to accentuate matters of perception in the act of understanding and sense-making. Thus, there is a transition from an experience-expression to an expression-interpretation relation during the indirect encounter with the material world.

Eighth, the embodiment of experience in haptic visuality exercises language in which according to Ricoeur's assumptions, the close connection between meaning and significance in the interpretation of film language rests on the use of metaphor as a means of expression. The implemented meaning engages inter-subjectively and inter-objectively with the material and natural world. The world of things, nature, and body is enriched and broadened by the dimension of cultural symbols.

Ninth, seen in Ricoeur's assumptions, the embodiment experience of haptic visuality views the existence that neither divorces from the realities of concrete existence, nor voids of the clarity of rational insight, but rather embrace the indirect, mediated relation of self-knowledge to human existence.

6. Conclusion

Haptic visuality works on the basic assumptions of film phenomenology as proposed by Heidegger's film phenomenological framework. The concept also emphasizes Paul Ricoeur's values of hermeneutic to film phenomenology. The concept demonstrates that the body has a lived experience of senses and a mimetic relationship to the external world during film viewing. The body parallels memory which is cerebral and emotional. The concept also posits that film is a part of the external world which can also embody a many-sided sensory experience. The embodiment of memory through senses refers to what is called "mediated experience" through the film as the medium. It is the memory embodiment of images and objects contained in the film. Here, these images and objects parallel to symbols within a "container" called a "text," therefore, the film itself can be seen as this "container." Moving further to the central tenets of haptic visuality, prosthetic experience, and prosthetic memory identify the results of the relationship between viewers and film. Hermeneutic to film phenomenology provides a basis to understand this relationship. Hermeneutic to film phenomenology offers a meeting point between the producer (viewers) of the experience and memory, that is how the film world is perceived by the viewers as if they were being in the film world. The crossing philosophical paradigm dialogues the conscious and unconscious process of a film and signifies film from a natural science perspective.

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Philosophical Counselling: Examining the Meaning of Life from a Ricœurian Perspective

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Abstract

In this paper we attempt to present a case that the philosophy of otherness proposed by the French philosopher Paul Ricœur is of great relevance in philosophical counselling. The objectives of the present study are: (1) to hermeneutically survey the question of the self in the writings of the French philosopher; (2) to show that although not explicitly stated, a thesis concerning the meaning of life can be articulated thereof; and consequently (3) to show the practical implications of such a reflexive thought through its application towards a good life. The process by which we approach these issues is to deduce the structure of the Ricœurian texts, namely through hermeneutical analysis and phenomenological description of his concepts, and at the same time to carefully prevent any hermeneutical abuses. The conclusion of the following research is that Paul Ricœur's philosophy of otherness is of value in philosophical counselling because it is a response to the vulnerabilities and sufferings that human beings face in their everyday lives. The aim of philosophical counselling being precisely to overcome or at least to try to overcome these difficulties in order to strive to achieve the good life. And finally, this paper is useful to philosophical counsellors because it illustrates how an author's philosophy can be applied in counselling sessions.

Keywords: hermeneutics, the meaning of life, the good life, Paul Ricœur, philosophical counselling

1. Introduction

Philosophical counselling emerges towards the end of the 20th century as a reaction against what can be called academic philosophy (Achenbach 1984). Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the "practical" dimension of philosophy has ever been lacking (Iftode 2010). Moreover, in the last two decades, philosophical counselling has gained considerable traction within Romanian cultural space for several reasons (Hagiu and Bortoș 2022). For example, whether as a practical philosophy and a genuine promise for a "good life" (Iftode 2021). As a revival of the thesis supporting philosophy as a way of life (Iftode 2010). Through its specific interdisciplinary nature, as philosophical counselling is in close connection with dimensions related to communication and philosophy proper (Frunză 2018). Or, through the necessity and importance of ethical counselling (Cozma 2021). And many others that we do not mention explicitly here, but which we will discuss as we progress. We have to note that some important differences do exist between philosophical counselling and other types of counselling, such as psychological, spiritual and others. Philosophical counselling also possesses some methods of its own, even if these methods are themselves mostly borrowed and adapted. One such method is that of the "individual use of philosophers" (Segal 1995). Which simply consists of adopting "principles of life" following the perusal of philosophical texts. In this direction we can ask ourselves, for instance: what could we learn from reading the books of a philosopher like Paul Ricœur? Are there sufficient resources in these writings to allow us to affirm their fundamental character relevant to everyday life?

In this study we intend to show that there are indeed sufficient resources in Ricœur's thoughts to justify a thesis on the meaning of life. We deduce that in accordance with the indicated method of counselling – "the individual use of philosophers" – the French thinker's philosophy is suitable as a method to be used in philosophical counselling. In short, although Ricœurian philosophy is vast and covers a variety of themes, we will deal below only with the questions concerning the meaning of life. Therefore, this is the thesis we propose to develop in the following. We will attempt to justify said thesis through the following objectives: (1) to survey from a hermeneutical point of view the issue of the self and, implicitly, of the philosophy of otherness, from the perspective of the French thinker's "little ethics" (Ricœur 1995); (2) then to justify a corollary of our main thesis, namely that the issue of the meaning of life and, more generally, the issue of meaning is implicit in Ricœur's thought; (3) and this is precisely why Paul Ricœur's philosophy is useful in philosophical counselling. For which the last section of this paper will be illuminating.

Naturally, philosophizing about things such as these requires some precautions. A method of approaching and preventing possible hermeneutical abuses, which often appear in the exegesis dedicated to Paul Ricœur (Hagiu 2020). Namely the hermeneutical analysis of Ricœur's writings, with particular attention to the structure of these texts. And the phenomenological description of some of his specific concepts. Which is to say that the hermeneutical effort required by such research is commensurate with these precautions.

2. The good life. The hermeneutics of the self and the philosophy of otherness

As we have said before, Paul Ricœur's philosophical concerns covers a wide range of topics. For example, he explores areas such as phenomenology, linguistics, theology and religion, narrative theory, and many others. All with a focus on self-affirmation. Ricœur's hypothesis that the self cannot be known immediately demands that we find a way around it. In *Oneself as Another*, he returns to some of the issues discussed in the first part of his career and develops what might be called the "hermeneutics of the self". Of course, talking about the self also requires a discussion about otherness. Hence, the philosophy of otherness in Ricœurian thought reaches an important point in the chapters devoted to the "little ethics", where the "good life" alongside others is addressed. This argument for a "little ethics" can be traced back to the hermeneutic phenomenology of the capable human being, as Jean Grondin (2006) observes. And for Ricœur to be capable means first of all to be capable of enduring suffering (Ricœur 1986).

Hence, we will be discussing the revival of some of the French philosopher's earlier ideas expressed in The Symbolism of Evil, a book in which he mitigated human fallibility through confession. For it is only through confession that man becomes aware of his own faults. In brief:

> "The experience of which the penitent makes confession is a blind experience, still embedded in the matrix of emotion, fear, anguish. It is this emotional note that gives rise to objectification in discourse; the confession expresses, pushes to the outside, the emotion which

> without it would be shut up in itself, as an impression in the soul." (Ricœur 1969, 7)

The two concepts mentioned are therefore configured as symbols in what we might describe as the hermeneutics of confession. More precisely, they are symbolic expressions of suffering. And because they are such expressions, they are transfigured into the language of confession, which is meant to be the route to the problem of evil. Moreover, Vasile Cătălin Bobb (2015, 186) notes that, in fact, the language of confession entails a hermeneutics of experience that is fraught with absurdity, anguish and suffering.

Furthermore, against this suffering that occurs in everyday life, the French philosopher introduces into the philosophical meditation on what constitutes the self and the other, pursuing the good life (Ricœur 1995). Pursuing the good life calls attention to the distinction between ethics and morality, for what is at stake are actions (Greisch 2015, 387). The beings that are the subject of the hermeneutics of the self, and thus the self, are acting and speaking beings. Which means that in the form of advices, recommendations, instructions, and so on, people succeed or fail in exercising morally right actions (Ricœur 1995). An important observation to be made here is that the hermeneutics of the self, along the lines of Ricœurian thought, places narrative theory at the intersection of action theory and moral theory. But in order to understand these aspects of moral theory, it is necessary to see how the French philosopher refers to it. Since the distinction mentioned above reserves a certain meaning for ethics and a certain meaning for morality; consequently, what Ricœur does when he adopts these terms in his own discourse is a convention. For when he talks about attempting to seek out a fulfilled life, he adopts the term "ethics", and when it comes to the universality of norms, the term "morality" (Ricœur 1995). The Ricœurian approach pays particular attention to both the Aristotelian position on ethics and the Kantian one. As Jean Grondin (2013, 86) observes, he dialectically adopts Aristotle's teleological perspective and Kant's deontological perspective and argues for the supremacy of ethics over morality, because the norms of morality, which have the character of universality, only make sense within the framework of an ethical objectivity. Hence, the Aristotelian doctrine implies the Kantian one in the context of Ricœurian dialectics (Grondin 2013, 86).

For Paul Ricœur, the "moral problem" must be structured onto three levels, which are ethics, morality and practical wisdom, without however reducing ethics to the morality of duty. Which means that ethics requires a certain desire for fulfilment (Ricœur 2017). And this desire for fulfilment, or desire for achievement, or desire to live well always involves an *other*. Moreover, for the French philosopher ethics is defined by three components: 1) aiming for the good life; 2) with and for others; and 3) within just institutions (Ricœur 1991, 260). According to such a definition of ethics, and the distinction between ethics and morality, and also to the components of the moral problem, the French philosopher notes that self-esteem should take precedence before self-respect. Because the former arises within the norm, hence within morality (Ricœur 1995). However, it follows that the claim of ethical research at the level of self-attestation is that both self-esteem and self-respect contribute to an increase in *ipseity*.

We have to wonder what does this good life consist of for the French thinker? What does it mean to aim for the good life? We answer that to aim for the good life means, grammatically speaking, what would fall under the mark of the optative. Which is not yet an imperative. For the French thinker, the good life requires a threefold care: care for oneself, care for others and care for institutions. Referring to the above, self-esteem is the reflexive moment of *praxis*. By appreciating our actions, we actually appreciate ourselves as their authors, or rather as something other than mere forces of nature or simple instruments (Ricœur 1991, 260-261). Then, in order to clarify what it means to aim for the good life, that is, to move into the second stage of reflection on the good life, Ricœur introduces the concept of "solicitude". In addition, self-esteem and solicitude cannot be thought and lived one without the other. Which means that they are reciprocal, because the other can say "I" as I do. And likewise considers himself the author of his own actions for which he is responsible (Ricœur 1991, 261).

In another essay, the French philosopher remarks that through solicitude an axiological dimension is added to the self whereby each person cannot be replaced in our affection and esteem (Ricœur 1995). As such, the "miracle" of reciprocity consists precisely in the fact that people are recognized as irreplaceable to each other. As it happens, for example, in friendships, where one appreciates the other as much as the self (Ricœur 1991, 261). Reciprocity does not, however, exclude inequality. Such as when we speak of the inequality of the apprentice in relation to his master. But, on the contrary, inequality is corrected through the recognition of the master's superiority. However, this can also happen the other way round, with inequality arising from the other's weakness or from the other's suffering. The task of restoring "equality" falls to compassion, since for Ricœur the esteem of the other as another self and 'my' self-esteem are fundamentally equivalent (Ricœur 1995).

Further on, in order to understand what the French philosopher means by the good life in just institutions, we consider it necessary to present his following hypotheses. Because the vision of the good life encompasses the sense of justice, it is clear that the other is a being distinct from one's own being. Therefore, the good life, or living well, is not limited to interpersonal relations, as we might infer from the above, but living well must be extended to the "life" of institutions as well. In addition, the idea of justice has features that are not contained within the concept of solicitude, as justice requires the idea of equality. It is clear to us then that, for Ricœur, the idea of an institution is equivalent to a social structure, a historical community, and cannot be reduced to interpersonal relations alone (Ricœur 1995). In other words, the institution is characterized by common mores rather than constraining rules. At this level of philosophical reflection, the place of solicitude is appropriated by the concept of equality. Which is a proportional equality. And which operates at the level of the good life within just institutions as follows: to each in proportion to his own contribution or to each according to what he deserves (Ricœur 1991).

We have discussed earlier in this paper about ethics and the good life and we have tried to suggest that it is at this level that the dialectic of the self and *the other than the self* is thematized, whether we refer to the other as a person or the other as an institution. Also, important here is the Ricœurian thesis that self-esteem comes first in the relation with self-respect. Moving forward we will insist on several moral issues, since the good life must always be subject to moral obligations and norms. In short, the French philosopher thinks at this moral level of reflection through a kind of parallelism. In other words, if in his discourse on the pursuit of the good life he spoke of what it means to pursue the good life, in his discourse on morality he speaks, for example, of the pursuit of the good life and obligations. Likewise, regarding the good life together with others, solicitude will be discussed at the moral level of the discourse together with norms. Of course, the overview of the moral dimension should not be understood as a fragmentation or displacement of ethical discourse. On the contrary, the discourse on morality aims at enriching the discourse on ethics - assuming from the outset that ethics includes morality. By means of submissions to the moral norm, the French philosopher shows that self-respect, which is the correspondent of self-esteem in the ethical plane, acquires full significance because it is simultaneously for oneself and for another. Which means that it is fairly distributed and this justifies the proportional equality mentioned above (Ricœur 1995).

Accordingly, in *Oneself as Another*, a third ethical dimension of the self, that of practical wisdom, finds its place. The role of which is to clarify some issues that may arise. Ricœur considers that the morality of obligation produces conflicts. And to overcome these conflicts requires a certain kind of practical wisdom, which removes the seduction of moral situationism or arbitrariness. Therefore, the role of practical wisdom is to constantly remind us of the possibility of the good life with and for others in just institutions (Ricœur 1995). More precisely, as suggested above, the idea of the good life is opposed to the tragedy of action which includes suffering. The fundamental question in this context is: if action is sometimes tragic, is there any solution that may remove the ethical conflicts? The answer is practical wisdom. And so, the Ricœurian effort is to show the transition from the tragic *phronein* to the practical *phronēsis* (Ricœur 1995). As such, the Ricœurian reflection presented above provides an opportunity to open up to a meaningful life, and thus to the question of the meaning of life.

3. On the meaning of life from a Ricœurian perspective

Hermeneutics appears in Paul Ricœur's thought in several stages. And perhaps the best argument for this is to read his writings in chronological order. Of course, for each such stage hermeneutics represents a new step towards what it will eventually become. This is, a hermeneutics which has become an ethics in which the life of the self is configured in conjunction with others. Thematised and subject to reflection. So the earlier questioning of the self is overloaded by the "life of the self". In other words, for the French philosopher, the self is not distinct from life and seems impossible to be thought of in its absence. It follows from this that to thematize the problem of the self and the philosophy of otherness is to question the meaning of life itself. Therefore let us clarify a few issues.

The first challenge that any exegete of Ricœur faces when it comes to the question regarding the meaning of life is that the French philosopher did not explicitly write on this topic. Marc de Launay (2020, 25) notes that there are only three texts in which the French thinker seems to have thematized the issue of meaning. The same commentator points out that the Ricœurian texts explore meaning from different perspectives, however nowhere does he speak concretely about the meaning of life. In short, Ricœur writes about what a "text" might mean, in other words, about understanding, interpreting and sourcing meaning or translating texts (de Launay 2020, 25). In other words, there are five levels of discourse in Ricœurian philosophy, as Philippe Lacour (2020, 87-91) notes, namely (1) the analytical description of the ordinary, (2) composition, (3) self-understanding, (4) the anthropology of fundamental capabilities, and (5) the metaphysical level. Furthermore, Henry Venema (2002, 413) notes that the problem of meaning is fragmented, and that the configuration of the self in the writings of the French philosopher consists in a polysemy resulting from these levels of discourse. Which in turn justifies the various methodical detours in order to attest it.

As we have attempted to show thus far, in his thought, Paul Ricœur's had the ambition to develop a philosophy of otherness, which is not complementary to a philosophy of ipseity. Instead the relationship between otherness and ipseity is dialectical. The self "intertwines" with the other. Moreover, each self has the task of internalizing the *praxis* of its own life (Jervolino 2000, 93). This task is a demanding one, since the French philosopher has sought to create a nuanced relationship between the self and otherness and also between the self and public life, taking into account faith and religion, culture and politics, and others as such (Doran 1973, 457). We can summarize by saying that this is Paul Ricœur's affirmation of life and, implicitly, of philosophy (Abel 2010).

Reflecting on the writings of the French philosopher, we see that the question of the meaning of life appears in an implicit way. It is at work, invoked without prior clarification. Suffice to consider that Ricœur's idea of criticizing the Cartesian *cogito* – of suggesting rather a narrative or hermeneutic *cogito* (Greisch 2000), of throwing the self "into life" and only then attempting to attest it – is in fact about "approximating a meaning". If we understand Ricœur's attempts correctly, he is betting on the distance of the self from itself. And those methodical detours are meant to reclaim or minimize this distance. Moreover, in everyday life, the self is always together with its other, but not only at this level, but at the ontological level of attestation. As Romanian philosopher Ștefan Afloroaei observes:

> "[...] the ordinary flow of life binds in the first instance all manner of experienced facts and events, which most often escape subjective will. We easily allow ourselves to be drawn into this flow, to the point of a kind of sinking into the dense and elementary flux of ordinary life. The distance from the self – after all, from the primary flux of life – is no longer evident, it does not make perceptible that distinct presence of each of us in a community of life." (Afloroaei 2018, 203)

It follows, then, that the portrait of the man capable of acting and suffering, of striving for the good life "with and for the other", outlined by Paul Ricœur in his writings, is constantly accompanied by his other. And seems to be the man who prepares or finds himself faced with the question of the meaning of life, in the most common, banal and everyday way possible. However, this question is in many ways problematic. Although it is certain that the source of this question is not the desire to clarify it, but simply an uneasiness or fear that takes hold of the senses and the life of the self (Afloroaei 2021, 49). The most terrible thing is that, more often than not, this anxiety overcomes the will to understand or the enthusiasm to clarify what troubles someone:

> "It comes to the forefront on its own, it announces itself in full force and irrevocably. [...] It encloses within itself a negative certainty, the sense of the absence of any meaning. Is it not the same as when the certainty, again definitive, is given by the feeling of the total presence of meaning?" (Afloroaei 2021, 49)

We find ourselves, therefore, in a difficult position. The problem of the meaning of life arises not only from a sense of questioning, and by extension from an interrogative or reflexive activity concerning one's own life, but also from the perspective of a sense of life (Afloroaei 2021, 47). On the other hand. Jean Grondin (2003) has found that to feel that life is meaningless means simultaneously an expectation of filling it with meaning. When the question regarding the meaning of life arises, it is clear that this meaning is not self-evident. It is not obvious, but requires a comprehensive hermeneutical effort (Grondin 2003). Invoking all these questions concerning the meaning of life in the context of the Ricœurien texts puts us in the privileged position of being able to assert that in the writings of the French philosopher, the meaning of life appears as a leftover, or rather in the sense of "meaning as a leftover". Although it can be argued that following Paul Ricœur's thought the reflexive sense of meaning exists, which is that kind of practical wisdom that synthesizes experience and reason as a form of natural simplicity (Grondin 2003). Since the French philosopher wrote only about the dimensions of the good life, we are in a position to argue in favour of the thesis of the meaning of life as the leftover of these philosophical reflections, taking into consideration here that:

> "*the rest*, as a principle of things, is and is not part of the whole, that it constitutes a regime of the different real [...]." (Baumgarten 2021, 162)

Following such an observation, to reflect on this rest, thus to reflect on the thesis of the meaning of life as a leftover is to argue that this leftover does not fit into the models of classical ontology. That it defies the principles of reality and that it represents a challenge for philosophical reflection (Baumgarten 2021, 162). It is therefore relevant to argue that the Ricœurian detour through the interpretation of symbols, myths, civilizations, religions, and so on, as well as some deviations through analytic philosophy in order to attest the self, again together with its other, and the assumption that only at the end of these forays is the self gained are sufficient arguments to argue that in Ricœurian writings the thesis of the meaning of life is at work and is closely related to his reflections on the good life.

Therefore, the self configured by Paul Ricœur is one who can answer the question "who?". This self can, however, in the intersubjectivity of its world, question itself. Raise the question of meaning concerning its own life. But in relation to others and in relation to public life, that is, to institutions. And the outcome of this questioning consists in certain remnants of meaning that configure the meaning of life. Finally, if we were to conclude on this fact, we believe that Ricœur's suggestion to love the other, in other words, the one who "will outlive [us]" (Ricœur 2007), is enough.

4. Conclusions and practical implications

Paul Ricœur's philosophy of otherness is, as we have justified in the above sections of this study, the occasion for a fulfilled life, a good life. The question concerning the meaning of life is implicit throughout his philosophy. We have also established that the meaning of life, for the French thinker, manifests itself rather in the leftover of our reflections on life. Of course, it is not our interest in this study to formulate an explicit answer to the question of what the meaning of life is. In fact, Paul Letsch (2019) has recently summarized several such hypotheses. Often the meaning of our lives lived with and for the other is assumed by our actions. Which is why the Ricœurian perspective on the meaning of life is useful in philosophical counseling.

Since for the French thinker the purpose of the hermeneutics of the self turned ethics is to justify an increase in ipseity. It is clear that this increase in ipseity is an initial argument for why Ricœurian philosophy is an inspired proposal for use in philosophical counselling. Considering that most often the clients of a philosophical counsellor want to overcome the discomfort (Marinoff 1999) they face in their everyday lives, the Ricœurian demands for a good life, for a life lived with a certain practical wisdom, are useful.

And then, because most often in everyday human life, even if not engaged with philosophy, the question of the meaning of life inevitably arises. This is after all one of those great questions that are addressed in philosophical counselling (Marinoff 2003). The Ricœurian answer, discreet in formulation, but explicit from a practical perspective, that it is the consequence of the desire to live well with others in just institutions, requires practical wisdom. The client who sees the need for practical wisdom turns to a philosophical counsellor precisely in order to establish certain guidelines for living a fulfilled life (Lahav 2001).

Another aspect through which the Ricœurian philosophy of otherness is useful in philosophical counselling, according to the method outlined above (Segal 1995), is that of trying to permanently reduce the distance of the self from itself. Counselling from a Ricœurian perspective is therefore first and foremost an attempt to understand the client's world and only then a configuration of the client's self. So that finally the need to live well can be justified. At the same time, the French philosopher's hermeneutic effort to outline the portrait of human capabilities susceptible to suffering, that is, of the vulnerable human being, and thus the understanding of human weakness, is another reason why it can be incorporated into a philosophical counselling programme. Just as the hermeneutics of confession, discreetly mentioned in the second section of this paper, brings to light the client's anguish and suffering in the form of the language of confession.

In conclusion, the above is sufficient to support the argument that the philosophy of otherness constituted by Paul Ricœur in his writings, in which the meaning of life is configured as the leftover of reflections on what a good life lived together with others in just institutions could be, and thus to ascertain the usefulness of these questions in philosophical counselling, in affirming that man's everyday life is nothing less than an attempt to overcome both vulnerability and suffering, the two dimensions of existence that justify any act of counselling the self. With all this being said, the thesis advanced in this study is vindicated.

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Unité et Trinité chez Achard de Saint-Victor. Un traité original du XIIe siècle et sa signification

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Lystopad, Iryna, *Un platonisme original au XIIe siècle: Métaphysique pluraliste et théologie trinitaire dans le De unitate et pluralitate creaturarum d'Achard de Saint-Victor* : Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2021, 442 p.

Title: Unity and Trinity in Achard de Saint-Victor: An Original 12th-Century Treatise and its Significance

Keywords: unity, Trinity, theology, exemplar, idea, Achard of Saint-Victor

Achard de Saint-Victor († 1171) n'est pas un auteur médiéval très connu, malgré son génie spéculatif.

Longtemps injustement oublié en tant qu'auteur d'une étonnante synthèse entre la réflexion trinitaire et la métaphysique platonicienne dont Jean de Ripa extrait des citations dans son *Commentaire des Sentences* en les attribuant à saint Anselme, il était encore inconnu en tant que penseur spéculatif, dans la première moitié du XXe siècle (Mgr. André Combes, en 1944, croyait encore à l'origine anselmienne des citations utilisées par Jean de Ripa).

Grâce à un heureux hasard, ce fut Marie Thérèse d'Alverny qui, en 1954, put formellement attribuer à Achard de Saint-Victor le traité *De unitate et pluralitate creaturarum* qui se trouve entre les pages 177r et 188v du manuscrit *Padova 89*

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(Biblioteca Antoiniana, MS Schaff. V, 89), reconnaissant l'identité de l'auteur grâce à deux fragments christologiques que Jean de Cornouailles (dans *Eulogium ad Alexandrum papam tertium)* avait attribués à *Magister Acardo in libro suo de Trinitate* et que Jean Chatillon avait déjà signalés en 1948 (Chatillon 1948). La présence dans le manuscrit de ces deux fragments dont l'origine était déjà connue servit comme heureux indice grâce auquel le *De unitate et pluralitate creaturarum*, placé dans le manuscrit padouan de 1352 entre deux œuvres de saint Anselme (ce qui brouillait les pistes de tout médiéviste), fut enfin attribué à Achard de Saint-Victor, né en Angleterre en 1100 et qui fut évêque d'Avranches entre 1161 et 1171.

Mais l'unique manuscrit conservé à Padoue dut atteindre encore le travail d'Emmanuel Martineau (Martineau 1987), qui en fit la premier l'édition et la traduction. Malheureusement, un incendie détruisit avant toute sauvegarde électronique cette première édition (qui passa presqu'inaperçue – on enregistre aujourd'hui uniquement 19 exemplaires dans toutes les bibliothèques universitaires françaises) et ce ne fut qu'en 2014 que les Presses Universitaires de Caen reprirent le facsimilé de l'édition de 1987 dans la collection *Fontes & Paginae.*

Ainsi, comme le disent les éditeurs du livre *Achard de Saint Victor métaphysicien. Le De unitate Dei et pluralitate creaturarum,* la possibilité d'une lecture moderne de cet auteur médiéval éblouissant « résulte-t-elle de plusieurs événements, que nous pourrions qualifier de miracles dans l'ordre de la pensée ». (Carraud, Olivo, Porro, 2019)

Ce n'est pas le résultat d'un miracle, mais le fruit d'un acharné travail universitaire (une thèse rédigée sous la direction de l'éminent médiéviste Dominique Poirel) que Mme. Iryna Lystopad propose au lecteur sous forme d'un livre de 442 pages publié chez Brepols, sous un titre très séduisant pour les médiévistes qui s'intéressent aux mutations intellectuelles survenues au XIIe siècle en particulier et dans l'histoire de la métaphysique occidentale en général.

Il faudra, dès le début, saluer le courage d'Iryna Lystopad qui n'a pas hésité à se frayer un chemin dans ce paysage achardien qui réunit, à la fois, spéculation et mystique, platonisme et théologie trinitaire et qui comporte très peu de recherches antérieures.

Iryna Lystopad passe d'ailleurs en revue les recherches auxquelles elle rend ce qu'il se doit, à savoir le mérite de la restitution des textes (Jean-Barthélemy Hauréau, Germain Morin, Nicolas Häring, André Combes, Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, Jean Châtillon et Emmanuel Martineau) et celui de l'interprétation, fragmentaire ou intégrale, de la doctrine (Jean Châtillon, Emmanuel Martineau, Mohammad Ilkhani, et Dominique Poirel).

On le voit bien, la liste n'est pas longue et l'inscription courageuse de cet ouvrage d'Iryna Lystopad dans celle-ci ne peut que réjouir le médiéviste désireux de mieux comprendre les changements survenus dans le paysage intellectuel du XIIe siècle, avant les condamnations de 1241 qui sonneront le glas du « misérable syncrétisme » dont parlait Chenu (1947) pour décrire (injustement !) cette théologie pré-thomiste qui résonnait encore aux concepts et aux images issus du legs augustinien, platonicien et byzantin.

Au niveau de la structure, le livre est composé d'une *Introduction générale*, de trois parties ayant chacune avec ses conclusions (*Achard de Saint-Victor et son De Unitate* ; *Les voies de la multiplication en Dieu* ; *La pluralité dans les créatures*) et une *Conclusion générale*, le tout assorti d'une bibliographie quasi-exhaustive. Il manque, cependant, dans cette bibliographie, une thèse soutenue en 2013 par Csaba Németh à l'Université de Budapest, intitulé *Contemplation and the Cognition of God. Victorine Theological Anthropology and its Decline* et publiée en 2021, toujours chez Brepols, sous le titre *Quasi aurora consurgens. The Victorine theological anthropology and its decline*, qui contient un bref chapitre sur Achard et Walther de Saint-Victor, ainsi qu'une réflexion sur la question de la *vision* de Dieu dans la *Sermo XII* d'Achard, décrite grâce au syntagme patristique « *quantum possibile est*, oculum mentis intuetur ».

Dans son *Introduction générale,* Iryla Lystopad affirme que le but de son ouvrage est de « rétablir les principales thèses exposées par Achard de Saint-Victor dans son livre *De unitate et pluralite creaturarum*, pour montrer que les capacités métaphysiques de ce penseur ne le cèdent pas aux philosophes plus connue comme Abélard et Gilbert de Poitiers » (p. 11). C'est donc un travail de *restitution métaphysique* dont le but consiste en la réhabilitation philosophique d'Achard, longtemps vu comme un « rejeton d'une tradition platonicienne » (*ibid.*). Or, loin d'appartenir à une « période obscure » du Moyen Age (celle qui s'étendrait entre Boèce et saint Thomas d'Aquin), pour reprendre une expression d'A. Piazzoni (1996), Achard représente un penseur original dont la réflexion sur l'unité et la pluralité « finit par prendre son indépendance par rapport à la question théologique de départ, qui portait sur la Trinité » (p. 15). Ainsi, Achard peut être tenu pour le fleuron le plus métaphysique de cette école victorine et la question à laquelle le volume veut répondre concerne la condition de possibilité de cette œuvre, dans son contexte historique et doctrinal : « Comment donc l'école de Saint-Victor a-t-elle pu produire une œuvre aussi profondément métaphysicienne que le *De unitate* ? » (p. 15).

Toujours dans *l'Introduction générale*, Iryna Lystopad soutient une thèse qui vaut la peine d'être mentionnée, à savoir la valeur intrinsèque de l'œuvre d'Achard, qui appartient au premier âge de la métaphysique médiévale, avant qu'Aristote ne soit traduit en introduit en circulation généralisée. Un ouvrage hautement métaphysique (rarissime) de cette époque-là permettrait de mieux évaluer le platonisme de l'école de Saint-Victor et de mieux déceler les autres courants qui l'ont influencée – par exemple, Domnique Poirel parle du confrère d'Achard, Hugues de Saint-Victor comme d'un auteur original qui sort du cadre du platonisme (Poirel 2011, 196-197).

L'analyse accepte la supposition du platonisme d'Achard (p. 32) ; Iryna Lystopad se propose d'en distinguer même *les platonismes* qui sont à l'œuvre dans le *De unitate* et, ceci faisant, de rebrousser chemin jusqu'à leurs sources (les textes platoniciens connus au XIIe siècle), pour vérifier en quelle mesure celles-ci ont été acceptées et reprises par Hugues et Richard de Saint-Victor. Cela permettrait, ensuite, de mieux « valoriser le constituant métaphysique et surtout platonicien de la pensée victorine » (p. 33) et de souligner la spécificité d'Achard dans le cadre de cette école. C'est donc tout naturellement que l'emboitement des trois parties de l'ouvrage se fait : ainsi, la première, qui replace le *De unitate* dans son contexte historiographique, le soumet à une approche codicologique, littéraire et historiographique ; la deuxième et la troisième, qui sont réunies thématiquement par le rapport entre *l'unité* et la *pluralité* en Dieu lui-même et ensuite dans les créatures, suivent six axes conceptuels développées par Achard lui-même (p. 33)

La première partie de l'ouvrage est consacrée à une lecture très détaillée du plan de l'œuvre, afin d'en faire ressortir la structure interne, les thèses-charnières et les notions principales. Il s'agit donc d'une lecture en pointillé, qui tient compte de ce qui a été déjà acquis dans la cadre des études achardiennes, pour déceler les problèmes qui sont restés sans réponse (satisfaisante). Après un chapitre biographique consacré à Achard et un autre chapitre qui se penche sur le manuscrit de Padoue et évalue le travail d'éditeur de Martineau, le *De unitate* est placé dans le cadre doctrinal plus large configuré aussi par la théologie implicite achardienne des *Sermons* et du manuscrit *De discretione animae, spiritus et mentis.*

On remarquera aussi, dans le troisième chapitre (qui est le plus étendu): la proposition de l'auteur en faveur d'un nouveau découpage des chapitres I, 19-20 (alternatif à celui fait par E. Martineau), l'hypothèse métaphysique générale[1] et l'analyse stylistique, lexicale et doctrinaire du traité, conduite avec acribie et attention aux plus petits détails. On ne saurait ignorer le très utile historique des recherches sur le *De unitate* – des fragments cités par Jean de Ripa et attribuées par A. Combes en 1944 à saint Anselme jusqu'au colloque de Caen tenu le 9 et le 10 avril 2015 à l'occasion de la réédition du traité *De unitate* par les Presses Universitaires de Caen – qui permet à l'auteure de trouver sa direction de recherche dans le cadre des études victorines, à savoir l'approfondissement de la doctrine trinitaire achardienne et le problème de l'identité des êtres intelligibles et sensibles. Le choix inhabituel d'un tel passage en revue à la fin de la première partie, après une bonne centaine de pages (en règle générale, l'historique des recherches sur le sujet est placé au début d'une thèse) est toutefois justifié par le rôle que ce passage remplit, à savoir celui d'étayer des conclusions sur ce qui a été déjà dit et sur ce qui peut encore faire avancer les recherches achardiennes.

La deuxième partie du livre (*Les voies de la multiplication en Dieu*) s'ouvre sur l'originalité théologique de l'auteur victorin: « Achard y répond en définissant la Trinité en tant qu'Unité, Ce qui lui est Egal et Egalité. De cette façon, il propose le moyen très précis de décrire la pluralité en Dieu. Cette approche est unique [...] En outre, la doctrine trinitaire d'Achard diffère des autres car non seulement il démontre que Dieu peut avoir trois personnes, mais il explique pourquoi elles ne sont que trois » (p. 133).

Avant d'arriver à l'originalité de la conception trinitaire d'Achard (dans le second chapitre nommé *Les personnes de la Trinité*), Iryna Lystopad descend, dans le premier chapitre intitulé *Unite et pluralite en Dieu,* aux sources de cette doctrine trinitaire (notamment saint Augustin, qui reprend d'Aristote et de Boèce la doctrine de la prédication, qu'il appelle *participation)* et suit le fil qui relie saint Augustin à d'autres auteur médiévaux, à savoir Jean Scot Erigène, Hugues et Richard de Saint-Victor.

La spécificité de la doctrine trinitaire d'Achard (*Unitas-Pluralitas-Aequalitas*) sera analysée d'un point de vue *métaphysique* et d'un point de vue *logique* (y compris à l'aide des instruments de la logique moderne). Par exemple, la notion de *similitude*, qui désigne la manière dont la pluralité première existe en Dieu offre un aperçu de cette originalité : « L'originalité d'Achard consiste dans le fait qu'il prend la similitude tantôt comme sujet (une substance particulière), tantôt comme prédicat (un accident universel). Pourtant, elle reste toujours en Dieu comme dans son objet. Aussi, il suppose que la prédication dans le cas des créatures est imparfaite (la prédication) et dans le cas de Dieu est parfaite (l'égalité) » (p. 166). Il en est de même pour la notion d'*unité*, qui « a l'air d'être néoplatonicienne », mais qui est en réalité bien originale : « Pourtant, cette unité accepte la pluralité en elle-même au niveau supérieur (en Dieu), elle se multiplie en Dieu. Et selon ce modèle, les unités dans le monde consistent également en de multiples éléments » (p. 161). Le point d'orgue de la spéculation métaphysique achardienne est résumé par Iryna Lystopad à la page 174, où elle analyse le chapitre I, 1-11 du *De unitate,* saisissant le dépassement du néoplatonisme et l'avancée en territoire spécifiquement chrétien du penseur victorin : «Pourtant, Achard n'accepte pas un tel caractère distinctif du néoplatonisme comme la primauté absolue de l'unité. L'unité est présente en Dieu avec la pluralité primaire, ce qui donne la Trinité ». Cela permet d'expliquer les personnes trinitaires en termes de prédication, comme bien le remarque l'auteure à la fin du second chapitre.

On appréciera également l'évaluation générale de la théologie trinitaire d'Achard (« En définitive, la solution du problème trinitaire d'Achard de Saint-Victor peut être appelée « logique » car il s'agit de la prédication de l'unité et de l'égalité, mais elle est différente de la solution logique d'Augustin (le Père et le Fils se prédiquent selon la catégorie de la relation). Elle est plus proche, à notre avis, de la solution que Thierry de Chartres appelle mathématique » (p. 177) et le fait que l'auteure prête attention à la doctrine de participation que le maitre victorin hérite d'Augustin et d'Erigène, deux auteurs qui « ne comptent pas uniquement sur l'outillage platonicien » (p. 176).

Toutefois, l'analyse de la doctrine trinitaire chez Achard ne serait pas complète sans un examen détaillé du problème du nombre et des définitions des personnes divines (y compris chez les autres auteurs de la même école, à savoir Hugues et Richard de Saint-Victor). Ce n'est qu'après avoir analysé la procession et le nombre des personnes chez ces auteurs victorins qu'Iryna Lystopad se penche sur ce qu'elle appelle « la vraie question » d'Achard – « quels sont les critères de la pluralité personnelle en Dieu ? » (p.196) – et qu'elle peut enfin évaluer la nouveauté introduite par Achard. Celui-ci, mécontent de la définition boécienne de la personne (« rationabilis naturae individua substantiae ») qui n'assure pas un critère suffisant pour prouver une pluralité en Dieu, « introduit le nouveau critère de la pluralité personnelle en Dieu : il faut que chaque personne puisse être dite par elle-même personne prise isolément » (p. 196).

Ce premier critère n'est pas le seul introduit par Achard en I, 14, il en fait valoir encore deux autres (en I, 15). Iryna Lystopad les relève avec attention : que les personnes reçoivent séparément le nom de personne ; que d'une personne procède une autres, et des deux une troisième. Dans l'économie du livre, le bref mais très dense sous-chapitre où l'auteure présente (à l'aide des schémas graphiques très suggestifs) les arguments d'Achard qui font état de l'impossibilité d'une quatrième personne (une thèse qu'il obtient par l'application à la Trinité des règles boéciennes du *De arithmetica*, soutient Iryna Lystopad) nous semble aussi très important. On mesure donc, à la fin du chapitre, l'entière originalité de la doctrine trinitaire achardienne (« la définition de la personne divine d'Achard ne suit ni celle d'Augustin, ni celle de Boèce, ni celle de Hugues »), qui, aussi surprenant que cela puisse paraître, rappelle – selon l'auteure – celle d'Erigène, notamment lorsqu'il s'agit de la description de l'action extérieure de la Trinité (« La vie intérieure de la Trinité est le modèle de sa procession extérieure : les causes exemplaires sont dans le Fils et le Saint-Esprit dirige les distributions de ces causes dans le monde », p. 208).

La deuxième partie este close par un troisième chapitre, dont l'objet est la pluralité des raisons dans le Verbe (qu'Achard repartit en trois catégories : finales, formelles et déployantes). Achard retiendrait donc d'Aristote uniquement « la nomination des raisons finales et formelles » (p. 220), ignorant les causes matérielles et efficiente, ajoutant la cause déployante (*explicatrix*) dans le *De unitate* et la cause judiciaire (dans les *Sermons*). On soulignera aussi l'importance de la doctrine des formes pour le développement de sa christologie et, en retour, la valeur opératoire, sur le plan théologique, de sa christologie (« la doctrine christologique du *De unitate* comprend la doctrine de l'incarnation et la doctrine qui décrit le Verbe en tant qu'Intellect de Dieu qui contient les raisons éternelles des choses », p. 236). C'est donc avec justesse qu'Iryna Lyapad insiste sur ce problème des raisons ou des idées chez le maitre victorin, puisque c'est ici que l'on peut circonscrire un autre élément de son originalité *i.e.* la conjonction « de la doctrine des trois sortes de raisons avec la doctrine des attributs de Dieu » (p. 254).

La troisième partie (*La pluralité dans les créatures*), composée de trois chapitres, continue l'analyse des platonismes au XIIe siècle, pour trouver une réponse à la question « comment l'unité et la pluralité coexistent-elles ?» (p. 258) dans le cadre de la relation entre les êtres sensibles et ceux intelligibles. Chez Achard, l'emboitement entre les différents niveaux de la hiérarchie des formes se fait grâce au couple conceptuel *in intellectu / in actu*. Ce couple permet « d'établir la similitude *exemplaire* entre l'unité-prototype et l'unité-copie, mais aussi de définir ce qui est unique » (p. 258), une thèse qui constitue le fil rouge de la recherche dans cette partie qui traite (sur trois chapitres) la question de l'identité dans le monde sensible, telle qu'elle a été vue par les philosophes de l'antiquité tardive et du début du Moyen-Age (Apulée, Calcidius, Augustin, Boèce, Erigène et Abélard), puis par les penseurs de l'école de Saint-Victor, pour en venir, à la fin, par Achard lui-même. La progression de l'analyse est naturelle et permet au lecteur de comprendre la manière dont le concept de *forme* est passé des écrits antiques jusqu'aux œuvres victorines et comment la jonction d'un concept antique (« qui absorbe des éléments du platonisme et de l'aristotélisme », p. 266) et de la doctrine chrétienne (Iryna Lystopad invoque à juste titre les travaux d'Edouard Jeauneau sur Erigène, le premier auteur médiéval qui utilise l'expression « forma prima », qui sera reprise par Achard de Saint-Victor, p. 272) a rendu possible l'essor de l'originalité théologique victorine. Par exemple, l'auteure signale que Hugues de Saint-Victor « se sert de la notion de forme pour développer la doctrine de la rédemption » (p. 282) et qu'Achard « est allé plus loin [que Hugues] dans la construction d'une doctrine propre inspirée par le platonisme » (p. 304). La doctrine des formes et l'utilisation du couple *in intellectu/in actu* employé dans la deuxième partie du *De unitate* « explique la relation entre les unités intelligibles et leurs copies sensibles » (p. 349) et permet à Achard de résoudre le problème de l'identité d'une chose en choisissant une autre solution que Erigène et Hugues de Saint-Victor (« Pour établir l'identité d'une chose Achard prend le même paradigme qu'Erigène et Hugues : l'identité dans les changements. Tandis que les deux premières choisissent la réponse traditionnelle – l'identité est définie à travers une forme principale – Achard écarte ce paradigme. Une chose corporelle est identique grâce à une certaine unité matérielle qui lui est propre", p. 401). Achard est d'ailleurs le seul, selon l'auteure, pour lequel « la notion de forme est comme une des sortes de raisons éternelles » – position théologique qui n'apparaît chez aucun autre auteur victorin (p. 408).

La *Conclusion générale* du livre permet d'inscrire Achard dans le « schéma élaboré par les Pères de l'Eglise et transmis par

Augustin ») selon lequel la « pluralité des êtres intelligibles a été conçue par Dieu dans le Verbe » (p. 409), tout en soulignant son originalité achardienne, qui consiste dans l'usage des outils de la *Logica vetus* et de nouveaux éléments métaphysiques, notamment la définition de la Trinité comme *Unité, l'Egal* et *l'Egalité* (qui modifie la formule augustinienne *l'Unité*, *l'Egalité* et la *Connexion*). Si au niveau de la définition des personnes trinitaire on peut mesurer l'originalité achardienne par rapport à saint Augustin et à Hugues de Saint-Victor, au niveau de la vision du monde Iryna Lystopad soutient que le penseur victorin « adopte une vision du monde médioplatonicienne selon laquelle Dieu a les exemplaires des choses comme prototypes des êtres dans son Verbe-intellect » (p. 413). L'adoption de cette vision du monde ne signifie pas qu'il est réellement un auteur medioplatinicien, mais qu'il en reprend certains éléments de la doctrine (à travers Sénèque, Calcidius et Augustin). Toutefois, il ne faut pas oublier qu'il s'agit d'un penseur *chrétien*, dont les thèses métaphysiques centrales du traité *De unitate* correspondent à celle de Hugues de Saint-Victor (p. 419), même si chez ce dernier celle-ci sont marginales.

En somme, nous pouvons dire que cet ouvrage vient combler un grand manque, à savoir une étude systématique (métaphysique, théologique et doctrinale) sur le traité *De unitate Dei et pluralitate creaturarum*, un des très rares ouvrages médiévaux qui permet de mieux comprendre cette période antérieure aux condamnations de 1241 et 1277 et, en général, de la scolastique classique dont les *Summae* s'articuleront autour de l'idée de *théologie comme science*. L'école victorine n'a pas été animée par cet idéal (fort heureusement !) et ses membres ont fait preuve d'une réelle originalité doctrinaire, tout en sachant assumer et retravailler le legs antique et patristique.

Le travail exemplaire d'Iryna Lystopad peut donc être tenu pour un de ces outils indispensables à tout médiéviste intéressé par l'essor de l'école victorine. Ouvrage rare par sa profondeur spéculative, le *De unitate* est un repère incontournable pour la métaphysique et la théologie au XIIe siècle, désormais impossible à ignorer. Le mérite en revient non seulement à l'éditeur et au traducteur moderne (Emmanuel Martineau), mais aussi à ceux qui, comme le prouve le livre d'Iryna Lystopad, ont relevé avec succès le défi d'une analyse si nécessaire et enrichissante.

NOTES

[1] « En effet, la pointe de l'ouvrage n'est de distribuer l'unité (à Dieu) et la pluralité (aux créatures), mais bien au contraire de montrer que l'unité et la pluralité, présentes dans les créatures, ont en Dieu toutes deux leur origine » (p. 73).

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