STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI

PHILOSOPHIA

Beginning with 1/2017, *Studia UBB Philosophia* has been selected

for coverage in Clarivate Analytics products and services.

Studia UBB Philosophia will be indexed and abstracted

in *Emerging Sources Citation Index.*

S T U D I A

UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI

PHILOSOPHIA

3

CONTENT – SOMMAIRE – INHALT – CUPRINS

KNOWLEDGE-THAT/KNOWLEDGE-HOW:
BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

VARIA

BOOK REVIEWS

Introduction to
KNOWLEDGE-THAT/KNOWLEDGE-HOW: BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY –
Thematic Dossier

ADRIAN LUDUŞAN[*], MIHAI RUSU[**]

The ongoing debate surrounding know-how and skill is one of the most animated and diverse areas of contemporary philosophy. In fact, the inquiry is hardly limited to philosophical theories and arguments, as inputs from cognitive psychology and neuroscience, linguistics, computer science, and other fields have been regularly called upon and analyzed in the literature. Moreover, the range of philosophical theories and traditions that have been brought to bear on the debate is unusually vast, stretching from the ancient to the most novel, and from classical analytic philosophy to various strands of continental philosophy, of which the phenomenological tradition has probably been appealed to the most, whether to lend support to, or to criticize a certain idea. While the distinctions have been anticipated or mirrored in various approaches, the main source of the current debate is Ryle (1949)'s famous distinction between two types of knowledge: knowledge-that (i.e., propositional knowledge) and knowledge-how. Ryle criticizes what he calls, in a somewhat derogatory manner, *intellectualism*, that is, the view that all knowledge (including know-how) is propositional. The intellectualist position has been revived by Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson in their 2001 joint paper "Knowing How." This paper has elicited an impressive number of responses, both favourable and critical, and has stimulated new research and creative reappraisals of previously less problematized views of such fundamental notions as *knowledge*, *skill*, *proposition* and *propositional knowledge*, *intelligence*, etc. The subsequent

---

[*] Issue coordinator. Department of European Studies / Interdisciplinary Center for Data Science, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Emm. de Martonne 1, Cluj-Napoca, Email: adiludusan@gmail.com.

[**] Issue coordinator. Department of Environmental Engineering and Protection, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Calea Mănăştur, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; Department of Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 1 Mihail Kogălniceanu str., Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Email: mihaimcrusu@gmail.com.

contributions to the debate have developed various perspectives and strategies that intellectualists and anti-intellectualists could adopt in relation to Ryle's views and Stanley and Williamson's opposing arguments and tenets. Many of the most important works on these issues are cited and discussed in the papers in the dossier.

From our point of view, there are three main directions that the recent inquiries on knowledge-how have followed. The first and most substantial is the development of arguments for and against Stanley and Williamson's intellectualism which has branched off in various arguments and debates: the Rylean argument from regress, the sufficiency objection, the linguistic argument for intellectualism, the epistemological profile of knowledge-how, and others. While the majority of publications on these issues have developed inside the general framework defined by Ryle's distinctions and their dominant interpretation in analytic philosophy, there is another trend that has gained momentum more recently, in which various authors propose to reconsider the classical knowledge-that/knowledge-how distinction in various ways (starting with a reassessment of Ryle's own intentions concerning a strict separation of the two). It is here that alternative perspectives, such as the phenomenological tradition, can contribute the most. The intellectualists emphasize in various papers (notably, Stanley and Krakauer 2013, and Stanley and Williamson 2016) their critical stance on various phenomenological and phenomenologically inspired perspectives, such as the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980, 1986). However, innovative contributions such as Gallagher and Aguda (2020) illustrate the significant insights that we can extract from Husserl's work, coupled with recent results from the cognitive sciences, and seem to go beyond the altogether too restrictive conceptual limitations of the orthodox interpretations of the main framework. As for the last main thread of the current discussion, the relation of the philosophical theories and concepts about know-how with the theory and practice of other fields, such as social sciences, arts, humanities and sports is highly interesting and should reflect back substantially on the philosophical discussion. We remark with great satisfaction that the contributions to the dossier cover all three main directions and integrate different and highly creative perspectives on the subject matter.

(Felix 2020) is a novel contribution to the intellectualism – anti-intellectualism debate. The author uses slips as a key notion in an argument against the intellectualist reduction of knowledge-how to knowledge-that. A slip has the following traits: it is performed by an agent without her being aware of it, it is different from the action the agent intended to perform, but nevertheless it is guided by knowledge-how. The case of slips appears to show that knowledge-how is not properly reducible to propositional

logic, as it has a different epistemological profile: the knowledge-how manifested in slips is different from the knowledge-how the agent intends to apply. Such a phenomenon cannot appear in the case of knowledge-that.

Copoeru and Luduşan (2020) may be seen both as a contribution to the main debate, and as an attempt to reframe and redescribe the conceptual framework. The authors put to use Groenendijk & Stokhof's (1984) semantic analysis of embedded questions in order to highlight some of the difficulties and limits of Stanley and Williamson's account of knowledge-how. Nevertheless, they don't take a stance in the intellectualism – anti-intellectualism debate, but rather press the need for a more complex treatment of knowledge-how, to be done by adding a mereological layer to the semantic approach. The paper also explores the openings afforded by accounting for the role interrogation plays in communicative interaction and by assessing more thoroughly the significance of context for knowledge-how.

Marquez Sosa (2020) proposes a different approach to the problem of knowledge and experience. Inspired by McDowell, Cussins and Evans, he introduces the notions of mediational fields and dynamic situated senses, in order to argue for a two-dimensional analysis of the cognitive content of experience, which is, according to the author, both referential (truth-conditional) and mediational. Marquez Sosa argues that this emerging account should allow a bypassing of conceptual difficulties stemming from traditional epistemological perspectives, such as the controversies regarding the knowledge-how/knowledge-that distinction.

Miranda Medina (2020) illustrates the possible extension and application of the notion of knowledge-how to the philosophical analysis of performance. The author argues that Ryle's and Stanley and Williamson's conceptions are not necessarily opposing views, as their basic tenets and objectives are similar. The idea that the gist of Ryle's distinction has been misrepresented by its followers and adversaries alike has been expounded in other recent papers in the literature, but the author's perspective on Ryle's view is highly enriched by his practical knowledge and interests. Miranda Medina then compares different frameworks of analysis of notions such as performance, information and feedback, most notably from Greimas' semiotics, to the knowledge-how/knowledge-that framework and shows their similarities and the ways they may mutually extend and enrich each other's grasp and reach.

We are certain that the contributions to this dossier will move the debate forward in multiple directions and will add to an already lively, broad and creative exchange of ideas.

SOURCES

1. Copoeru, I., and A. Luduşan. "*We will figure it out*. Know-how, hybrid ways, and communicative (inter)actions." *Studia UBB Philosophia* 64.3 (2020): 33-50.
2. Dreyfus, H. L., and S. E. Dreyfus. "From Socrates to expert systems: the limits and dangers of calculative rationality." In *Philosophy and Technology II: Information Technology and Computers in Theory and Practice*, by Carl Mitcham and Alois Huning (eds), 111-130. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1986.
3. Dreyfus, S. E., and H. L. Dreyfus. "A Five-Stage Model of the Mental Activities Involved in Directed Skill Acquisition." University of California Berkeley Operations Research Center, Berkeley, CA, 1980.
4. Felix, C. "Intellectualism about Knowledge How and Slips." *Studia UBB Philosophia* 64.3 (2020): 11-31.
5. Gallagher, S., and B. Aguda. "Anchoring know-how: Action, affordance and anticipation." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 27.3-4 (2020): 3-37.
6. Groenendijk, J., and M. Stokhof. *Studies on the semantics of questions and the pragmatics of answers.* Amsterdam: Phd Dissertation, 1984.
7. Marquez Sosa, C. M. "Mediational Fields and Dynamic Situated Senses." *Studia UBB Philosophia* 64.3 (2020): 51-72.
8. Miranda Medina, J. F. "Rethinking Knowledge-that and Knowledge-how: Performance, Information and Feedback." *Studia UBB Philosophia* 64.3 (2020): 73-98.
9. Ryle, G. *The Concept of Mind.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1949.
10. Stanley, J., and J. W. Krakauer. "Motor skill depends on knowledge of facts." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience,* 7 (2013): 503.
11. Stanley, J., and T. Williamson. "Knowing How." *Journal of Philosophy*, 98.8 (2001): 411-444.
12. Stanley, J., and T. Williamson. "Skill." *Noûs*, 51.4 (2017): 713-726.

INTELLECTUALISM ABOUT KNOWLEDGE HOW AND SLIPS

CATHRINE V. FELIX[*]

ABSTRACT. This paper argues that slips present a problem for reductive intellectualism. Reductive intellectualists (e.g., Stanley and Williamson 2001; Stanley 2011, 2013; Brogaard 2011) argue that *knowledge how* is a form of *knowledge that*. Consequently, *knowledge how* must have the same epistemic properties as *knowledge that*. Slips show how *knowledge how* has epistemic properties not present in *knowledge that*. When an agent slips, she does something different from what she intended; nonetheless, the performance is guided by her *knowledge how*. This reveals a divide between the knowledge that actively guides behaviour: the *knowledge how* that the agent applies sub-consciously; and the *knowledge how* she intends to guide her behaviour in the first place, which she is under the illusion of acting on even as she slips. I argue that this divide between two levels of *knowledge how* operative in the slip case has no parallel when it comes to *knowledge that*. Therefore, *knowledge how* cannot be reduced to *knowledge that*.[1]

Key words: *Knowledge how, knowledge that, intellectualism, slips, Ryle, Stanley.*

Introduction

Knowing how to do things is a key part of everyday life. Posting a letter, tying one's shoelaces, and making coffee are all actions people know how to perform and *do* perform daily. How one should conceive of this knowledge, however, is notoriously hard to pin down. The field is roughly split between so-called anti-intellectualists who think that knowledge how and knowledge that are distinct kinds, and so-called intellectualists who think that knowing how to do something just is knowing a truth.[2]

---

[*] Norwegian University of Science and Technology, E-mail: cathrine.felix@ntnu.no
[2] Some radical anti-intellectualists defend the view that *knowledge that* is a species of *knowledge how* (Hetherington, 2006). I will not discuss that view here.

Gilbert Ryle introduced the distinction to contemporary philosophy when he described "the intellectualist legend" (Ryle, 2000 [1949]: 29): "champions of this legend are apt to try to assimilate knowing how to knowing that by arguing that intelligent performance involves the observation of rules, or the application of criteria". Ryle claimed that intellectualists are mistaken in regarding knowledge that as the quintessential foundation for all intelligent performances. He set out to show that knowledge how also bears the mark of intelligence, and that people routinely distinguish between knowledge how and knowledge that in everyday life, when thinking about behaviour. That is, one typically distinguishes between the truths people know and the things they know *how to do* (Ryle, 2000 [1949]: 28):

> Theorists have been so preoccupied with the tasks of investigating the nature, the source and the credentials of the theories that we adopt that they have for the most part ignored the question of what it is for someone to know how to perform tasks. In ordinary life, on the contrary, as well as in the special business of teaching, we are much more concerned with people's competences than with their cognitive repertoires, with the operations than with the truths that they learn.

The relation between knowledge how and knowledge that has been a heated topic ever since. Jason Stanley's recent work has stirred up debate once again.[3] In what follows, I therefore mainly focus on Stanley's position.[4]

The point of the argument defended here is that there is a difference between how awareness and lack of awareness is manifested in cases of knowledge how and knowledge that.[5] When an agent slips, I argue, the agent has to be, given Stanley's theory, split between the proposition the agent is conscious of, and the proposition the agent is actually practically manifesting, and *it is this split in itself that points to differing epistemic properties for the two forms of knowledge, because this split is unique to knowledge how. Section one* offers a brief introduction to

---

[3] A quote from Yuri Cath, 2019: 1, is telling: "Stanley and Williamson's paper helped to set off an explosion of new work on knowledge-how". He refers to their 2001 paper.

[4] This is a common strategy. Many scholars focus mainly on Stanley's approach.

[5] The backbone framework here is the famous Anscombean idea of so called "why"-questions. Stanley refers to this idea (see for ex. p. 185 in *Know How*). Anscombe writes "a certain sense of the question 'why' is given application; the sense is of course that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting." (Anscombe, §5 in *Intention*) Something is an intentional action, if it makes sense to ask the agent why she did it. If awareness is missing, the agent lacks non-observational knowledge of what she is doing. This is relevant because Stanley (mistakenly, I argue) holds that his account is compatible with the Anscombean idea. Slips are non-intentional actions the agent is unaware of performing, she does them subconsciously.

Stanley's intellectualism. *Section two* discusses a challenge against the intellectualist, the transferability problem. This challenge is relevant to the slip challenge as well. *Section three* explores another challenge against the intellectualist that is relevant to the slip case, namely epistemic luck. The epistemic luck case is important both because it shows some relevant cracks in the intellectualists' argument, and because it can be interpreted as an inverted case of a slip, thus help illuminate the nature of slips. *Section four* introduces and argues for the slip challenge against the intellectualist position. The final part of the paper discusses three possible objections to the argument from slips.

1. Reductive intellectualism toward knowledge how

Contra Ryle, Stanley claims (2013: 190) that "it is only when our behaviour is guided by intellectual recognition of truths that it deserves to be called 'intelligent'". He defends a reductive intellectualism[6] according to which knowledge how has the same epistemic properties as knowledge that: The two share a set of core characteristics, and the former can be seen as a variation on the latter. This is not to say that the two are exactly the same: Stanley allows that certain of their properties may differ; but such properties are not of a kind to challenge his reductive account, i.e. these differing properties do not undermine the view that knowledge basically consist in the grasp of a propositional truth.

Stanley's favoured example is swimming, claiming that, when someone learns to swim, what she learns is the propositional truth or truths about swimming. More generally, "knowing how to do something amounts to knowing a truth" (Stanley, 2013: 190) – which, for Stanley, means grasping a proposition. Knowing how to do something means grasping a proposition in a practical way. *Prima facie*, Stanley seems to offer a promising account of knowledge how: his distinction between a practical way of grasping a proposition and a theoretical way of doing so seems to do justice both to the differences between these ways of knowing and to their similarities: in particular, how they respond to the same facts. If knowledge how has the same epistemic properties as knowledge that, it requires no separate account, and knowledge receives a unified treatment: a clearly attractive consequence.

---

[6] I will often just refer to reductive intellectualism as "intellectualism" even though there are other forms of intellectualism: e.g., objectualist intellectualism (Bengson & Moffett, 2011).

2. Practical competence

That said, Stanley's account faces a basic problem that any version of reductive intellectualism needs to solve, namely that knowledge about how something is done does not transfer[7] directly into practical competence. Someone can know how something is done without knowing how *she* can do it.

Consider Jenny, who has observed her neighbour install a telephone – including all the necessary wall wiring – and so gained some knowledge about how this can be done. Nevertheless, she might not be able to do the same herself, if asked, even with a perfect memory of the event. She might read all the available manuals and still not manage it, because wiring and such demands practical skill.

Clearly, one can have propositional knowledge of how a thing is done without being able to put that knowledge into practical action. This poses a problem for Stanley, as his view seems to erase the distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical competence: both are propositionally structured and have essentially the same epistemic properties; one might therefore expect the one to transfer more readily into the other. The challenge Stanley faces is to allow them to have the same core epistemic properties; and, at the same time, explain why knowledge how cannot be transferred propositionally, in the same way as knowledge that.

Stanley's solution is to say that, for an agent to act skilfully, she must entertain "a practical way of thinking" (Stanley, 2013: 124-130) concerning the true proposition(s) she knows (i.e. her knowledge how). She must grasp in what way an action can be performed *and* be able to perform the action under relevant parameters of normality: Jenny must apply the information she has acquired "in a first-person way" (124)[8], that is, she must relate it to her own practical capacities. This requires more than acquisition of facts.[9]

Consider Stanley and Williamson's original account of knowledge how, according to which S knowing how to Φ consists in S knowing some means w such that w is a way to Φ, while entertaining the proposition that w is a way for S to Φ under a so-called *practical mode of presentation*. Stanley and Williamson write (2011: 37 n18):

---

[7] For a thorough treatment of this problem, see Glick, 2015. Note that he describes it as "the sufficiency problem".

[8] To "acquire facts" in the sense described here is, roughly, analogous to acquire information. More specifically, it is to think of a fact in "a practical way" and to relate it to oneself such that one can act practically on it (manifest it in action). Stanley takes inspiration from Peacocke and Frege see for ex. p. 124 *Know How*: "To think of an object in a first-person way is for that object to occupy a certain functional role".

[9] See also the discussion below regarding Stanley's claim that knowledge how need not consist of the ability to execute a skilled action.

if someone entertained a way of riding a bicycle by possessing a complete physiological description of it, that might also give them *de re* knowledge of that way, though not under a practical mode of presentation.

By making this distinction between *de re* and *de se* knowledge, Stanley and Williamson can capture the difference between knowing how some person can perform an action: *de re*; and how one can perform that action oneself: *de se* (see also Stanley, 2013: ch. 3).[10]

To recap: reductive intellectualism understands knowledge how as a form of knowledge that. The two have a shared core of epistemic properties, the most important of which is that both consist in grasping true propositions. Stanley meets the transferability problem faced by any reductive intellectualist by introducing the idea of a practical mode of presentation. This idea, however, has received much critical attention recently. Opponents of intellectualism have argued that the concept needs a more detailed definition before it can do the work the intellectualist demands of it (Glick 2015; Koethe 2002; Löwenstein 2017; Nöe 2005; Rosefeldt 2004; Schiffer 2002; Stalnaker 2012).[11] Thus, that the intellectualists have yet to give the theory of knowledge how that they claim to have given. Glick (2015 p. 546) sums the critique up neatly:

> Philosophers are familiar with the notion of a mode of presentation, but *practical* modes of presentation are an innovation. Critics of Stanley and Williamson have worried that it is simply unclear what PMPs [practical modes of presentation] could possibly be, and thus that a theory of know-how relying essentially on PMPs cannot be taken seriously.

This issue needs a more detailed investigation. The problem for the intellectualist is that *S* can know a proposition *p* without knowing how to transfer *p* into action, for example one could know that *w* is a way to ride a bike without being able to ride a bike oneself. In his defence of intellectualism Stanley (2013) suggests that knowledge how must comprise a certain kind of grasp: a "practical" grasp of a proposition enabling the agent to apply the truth she has acquired to her own agency ("a first person way of thinking" p. 85-86). So knowledge how does not consist of a propositional truth *per se* but rather a "practical" grasp of that propositional truth;

---

[10] The matter is actually more complex, but this brief description should suffice for my argument.

[11] In addition to Stanley and Williamson themselves, the notion has been defended by Brogaard, 2009, and Pavese, 2015. Brogaard argues that knowing how to Φ consists in knowing that one has a certain kind of ability, whereas Pavese's defence is based on an analogy between practical modes of presentation and computer programs.

and so the answer to a question about knowledge how does not consist of a proposition *per se* but of a "practical" grasp of that proposition, which is what constitutes the skill. Crucially, when an agent transforms her skill into practice, she does so under "a practical mode of presentation" (2011). The problem with this is that Stanley also argues (2013: 126-128) that knowing how to do something need not mean being capable of doing it i.e. knowledge how need not consist of the ability to execute a skilled action. So, what exactly is the 'practical presentation' in question?

A closer look at Stanley's claim is illuminating. It rests on three examples, two of which are taken from Carl Ginet. Ginet's eight-year-old son is not strong enough to lift a certain box; nonetheless, Ginet and Stanley think, he must be said to know how to lift it, because he knows how to lift boxes in general. Stanley writes (2013: 128): "Ginet's son knows how one *could* lift one hundred pounds off the floor… ." The second example concerns an expert skier who is unable to ski down a hill because of stomach cramps. Certainly, he knows *how* to ski down the hill, even though he cannot execute the ability at the moment. The third example, taken from Stanley and Williamson (2001: 416), concerns a concert pianist who loses both arms. Obviously she can no longer play the piano but, given her many years of practice, she still knows how to do so. Stanley believes that, together, these examples support the view that knowledge how need not entail the ability to execute a skill. However, it seems odd that this special, practical kind of grasping need not enable one to execute the relevant skill, and not just because of immediate circumstances such as being too young, having stomach cramps or losing one's arms. In other words, it seems odd that one can grasp a proposition "practically" without being able to act on it. Remember that the very reason for why Ryle separated knowledge how from knowledge that in the first place was to make room for the reality that is the practical execution of actions. What Stanley's intellectualism risks leaving one with is a notion of knowledge how that is practical only in name.

The discussion of practical modes of presentation is at the core of the intellectualist project. The philosophical explanation of knowledge how that the intellectualist argues for is missing a crucial element if she cannot offer a convincing explanation of what it means to relate to a proposition in a practical mode of presentation. Admittedly, this debate is given the briefest of presentation here; the interested reader should confer with the literature on the topic. I will, however, return to the issue in the section of the paper where I develop the argument from slips; an argument to the effect that the intellectualist project fails to account for the existence of slips of action. An important part of this argument is precisely the critique that the notion of a practical mode of presentation is supposed to do much explanatory work without itself having been spelled out properly.

3. Epistemic Properties

I would like both to elaborate the intellectualist's main points and investigate the principal criticisms against them. I begin with the matter of epistemic properties: Stanley argues that knowledge how and knowledge that have the same core epistemic properties, but what exactly does this mean?

A property is an attribute that inheres in an object: e.g., most printed books have the property of being rectangular. Knowledge how and knowledge that share the key property of being grasped by the agent as propositional truths. If knowledge how and knowledge that have the same epistemic properties, this means that they are equal in terms of how they are manifested in an agent.

A common criticism of reductive intellectualism is to argue that knowledge how and knowledge that do *not* manifest in the same way in agents, most commonly one argues that there are no Gettier cases for knowledge how (Poston, 2009). Stanley thinks this is mistaken, and in defence of his claim offers the aspiring pilot Bob (2011: 206):

> Bob wants to learn how to fly in a flight simulator. He is instructed by Henry. Unknown to Bob, Henry is a malicious imposter who has inserted a randomizing device in the simulator's controls and intends to give all kinds of incorrect advice. Fortunately, by sheer chance the randomising device causes exactly the same results in the simulator as would have occurred without it, and by incompetence Henry gives exactly the same advice as a proper instructor would have done. Bob passes the course with flying colours. He has still not flown a real plane. Bob has a justified true belief about how to fly. But there is a good sense in which he does not *know* how to fly.

Bob's situation is designed to be straightforwardly analogous to a standard Gettier case for knowledge that. Just as in the standard case, success follows from mere epistemic luck rather than epistemic agency. Bob makes all the correct moves by sheer accident, thus may be said not to know, genuinely, how to fly.

Poston has objected that the role played by sheer accident does not seem as devastating in cases of knowledge how as of knowledge that: there is a sense in which Bob does learn how to fly (Poston, 2009). That he has done so through a series of freak happenings is immaterial, and this case, at least, is not a convincing Gettier case for knowledge how. Stanley replies that Poston's rebuttal implicitly presupposes that there can be no Gettier cases for knowledge how. He extracts the following premises:

(P1) Gettier-cases for know-how, if they exist, require that the subject intelligently and successfully φ-s, where φ ranges over actions.
(P2) If one can intelligently and successfully φ, then one knows how to φ.

Stanley accepts P1 but rejects P2. He (2011: 13) quotes a case from Bengson, Moffett, and Wright (2009):

> Irina, who is a novice figure skater, decides to try a complex jump called the Salchow. When one performs a Salchow, one takes off from the *back inside* edge of one skate and lands on the *back outside* edge of the opposite skate after one or more rotations in the air. Irina, however, is seriously mistaken about how to perform a Salchow. She believes incorrectly that the way to perform a Salchow is to take off from the *front outside* edge of one skate, jump into the air, spin, and land on the *front inside* edge of the other skate. However, Irina has a severe neurological abnormality that make her act in ways that differ dramatically from how she thinks she is acting. So, despite the fact that she is seriously mistaken about how to perform a Salchow, whenever she actually attempts to do a Salchow (in accordance with her misconceptions) the abnormality causes Irina to unknowingly perform the correct sequence of moves, and so ends up successfully performing a Salchow.

Irina can perform the Salchow. She does it intelligently, reliably, and successfully based on her intentions. Yet, she does not really know how to perform the Salchow. In fact, a study reported by Bengson, Moffett, and Wright (2009) showed that 86% of test subjects asked about the case thought that Irina was "able" to do the Salchow while only 12% thought that she "knew how" to do it: thus, supporting Stanley's claim that Poston's second premise is false. Stanley's Irina anecdote is not without problems: one could e.g. complain that the example is nothing but a philosopher's construct and question the formulations in the questionnaire.[12] Moreover, the question under consideration is not of a democratic nature, so an appeal to test subjects opinion is not really revealing. What's philosophically interesting is rather the reasons behind the opinions.

In sum, there is a consensus in the debate that knowledge is incompatible with the epistemic luck present in Gettier cases, but the problem seems less devastating for knowledge how thereby revealing a split between the epistemic properties of knowledge that and knowledge how. This is a severe problem for the intellectualist, and must be replied to convincingly. Several scholars have argued

---

[12] Stanley is aware of this and addresses it in a brief footnote before setting it aside (Stanley, 2011: p. 235, n.6).

that a reply has yet to be provided by the intellectualist, for example Carter and Pritchard 2013, Cath 2011 and Löwenstein 2017.

The discussion is relevant to the project of this paper because it is illuminating to compare epistemic luck cases to cases of slips as the epistemic luck case can be interpreted as a case of an *inverted slip*. Every epistemic luck case is based on the premise of an unreliable epistemic process that through sheer coincidence ends up in a state of – at least, superficially – correct knowledge or competence. The slip, on the other hand, is a case where a subject with reliable knowledge how and competence, ends up making a mistake in performance, thereby acting without manifesting said competence. The structure of the epistemic luck case is the opposite of the structure of slip case, though defined through the same concepts of coincidence and reliability. I am not suggesting any form of deeper connection between the two phenomena. However, I believe it is important to emphasize that coincidence affects cases of knowledge that and knowledge how differently, and that this consideration strengthens the view that the two types of knowledge ought not be conflated.

4. The argument from slips

A slip is a non-intentional action that an agent performs without being aware of it. Slips exist along a spectrum of levels of inattention stretching from complete ignorance, to a vague sense of something being amiss, to a full realisation immediately following the act. However, in every case, full awareness is lacking at the time of the execution. At the time of the action the agent is under the illusion that she acts according to plan, otherwise, the slip would have been avoided.

Slips are crucially different from mistakes made because of false beliefs. Consider Donald Davidson's example of a man who mistakenly boards a plane heading to London, Ontario. The man is wrong about the plane's destination; he intends to go to London, England and falsely believes that the plane marked "London" is crossing the Atlantic (Davidson, 2001: 84-85). Slips are not like this. The agent who slips has no such false belief, in a misspelling, for example, one knows perfectly well how to spell the word one is accidently misspelling. The agent who slips acts on full-blown know-how with skill, but slips, nonetheless.

In the case of slips[13], an agent acts contrary to her governing intentions (Amaya, 2013; Anscombe, 2000; Peabody, 2005). Although the agent acts without

---

[13] In her 2005 paper Peabody remarks that: "Philosophers writing on action have not concerned themselves much with slips" (173). There were some exceptions to the rule when she wrote this, like Anscombe 2000; Eilan & Roessler 2003; and Peabody 2005 herself. More philosophers have written

awareness of what she is doing, she still exercises know-how. The agent who slips and grabs a pen instead of a spoon to stir her coffee is fully competent and succeeds in stirring the coffee with her pen; she in no way struggles with it – she correctly judges the distances involved, and the application of force. The agent who inadvertently says, "spank you!" is not producing gibberish but rather a like-sounding English word to the intended one. The agent who pushes the wrong elevator button successfully pushes a nearby button; she does not try to push the wall instead, nor does she, with the intention of pushing a button, play at leapfrog instead. Note that know-how need not be full-blown. Some things we do, we do automatically or semi-automatically. In the case of a slip however, the agent does not make the mistake because she has a false belief or lack proper knowledge. She has the knowledge she needs to pull off the intended action, and most of the time when she intends to Φ, she Φ-s, yet at time *t* she slips and Ψ-s nonetheless. However, the mistake in action is not wide of the mark concerning the intention in question; as Hofstadter and Moser (1998) write:

> most errors are not simply random intrusions of 'noise' into an otherwise clear and unambiguous flow of communication; they are almost always intimately connected with the speakers intended message, and reveal something of it.

Admittedly, cases exist where, in some substantive sense, what the agent does *is* far removed from her original plan: consider the agent who slips and drinks poison thinking it is water; surely, she did not mean to do *that*. At the same time, what she does has much in common with what she planned to do: drinking a glass of water-like liquid. It is not as though she throws the glass out the window or pours its contents over her head. Despite her mistake, she does not struggle to pull off any of her body movements; indeed, she displays her knowledge how of water-drinking in a way that closely resembles the success case. That aspect of resemblance is key to my argument against intellectualism.

---

on slips recently, Santiago Amaya, in particular (2013; 2014; 2015). See also Felix & Stephens 2020, Stephens and Felix 2020, Mele 2006 and Gjelsvik 2017. There is a rich literature on slips in psychology dating back to Meringer 1908. Some prominent scholars are Baars 1992; Freud 1966; Fromkin 1980; Norman 1981 and Reason 2007.

Consider Stanley's claim (2013: 190) that

> knowing how to do something amounts to knowing a truth. This explains both the human capacity for skilled action, as well as the fact that when we act with skill, we know what we are doing without observation.[14]

Stanley connects knowledge of one's own actions with the observation that skills are always informed by facts.

I believe that the existence of slips poses problems for multiple elements of an intellectualist account. First, slips run counter to the claim for a close connection between the propositional nature of skilled action and the way an agent comes to know what she is doing without observation. In the case of the pen and the coffee cup, the agent does not know what she is doing *as she does it*. If asked, "why did you put your pen in the coffee cup?" she would be surprised and answer something like, "Oh! I didn't know." She lacks non-observational knowledge of what she is doing yet acts with know-how. It is just that *per* the intellectualist theory, she ought to have known better, precisely because she manifests a proposition in a practical mode of presentation in her action.

Imagine asking the agent to repeat her performance deliberately: she performs the same movements; they reveal the same skills as before – with a tiny but crucial difference. Both times she performs a skill that is part of her action repertoire, but this time her act is intentional. This time, her coffee-stirring skill is applied deliberately; she knows what she is doing without any need to observe herself: she does exactly what she thinks she does. Knowledge how cannot be tied to non-observational knowledge in the way Stanley wants it to be because only on the repeated performance can one speak of the agent having non-observational knowledge of her actions.

Could Stanley reply that acting with skill is necessary but not sufficient for non-observational knowledge of what one is doing? Could he claim that one must also *intend* what one does? I do not think that such a reply can work. People do multiple things with the aid of their practical competencies without intending them first, *especially* the things Stanley writes about, like swimming and boxing. The

---

[14] Stanley mentions non-observational knowledge of action at the very last page of his book. Like practical modes of presentation this too is a highly controversial notion, and it is therefore surprising that he does not say more about it. Anscombe 2000 introduced the notion in *Intention*. Sarah K. Paul (2009: 1) calls the idea that we can have non-observational knowledge of our own actions "a provocative claim". I will not go into the debate here though, my discussion simply includes the fact that Stanley thinks his intellectualist account of knowledge how can explain non-observational knowledge of one's own actions (2011: 190).

expert swimmer and boxer can swim and box without any need to intend their actions: these are basic activities that they are able to do "just like that". As Löwenstein (2017: 77) writes: "not every exercise of know-how is an intentional action since there are entirely automatic and therefore non-intentional performances which nevertheless qualify as genuine exercises of know-how". He suggests unwelcome sign reading as an example of non-intentional action that nonetheless reveal knowledge how; while passing a sign with an advertisement you automatically read what it says. Maybe you did not want to read it because you think advertisements remove your attention from more important stuff, yet you exercise your knowledge how and read the advertisement automatically and correctly.

The above is not my main concern though. The bigger problem is the way the intellectualist is forced to conceptualize slips given that they clearly involve both knowledge how and skill. It is a trivial observation that, for multiple reasons, people often end up doing something different from what they have planned. Slips are different though from other unplanned doings – precisely because they involve no change of mind, self-deception, false belief, Freudian hidden belief, etc. The agent who slips has both the practical competence and the knowledge she needs to perform her intention – yet she does something bluntly contrary to it.

A worry might have popped up at this stage. An opponent to my view could complain that the argument from slips has no real effect against the intellectualist if her preferred explanation of them is that they are so called double capture errors: Imagine that you are driving your familiar route home from work intending to take an unfamiliar turn, say to inspect a new gym in your area. It is normal in cases like this that you forget about your plan and drive straight to your home. According to this view a slip is a kind of memory lapse or forgetfulness and the intellectualist can easily account for it. Sometimes people forget things that they know. There is nothing mysterious about that. Slips however, are different from cases of forgetfulness. According to Amaya these cases are not really slips at all: "There is no slip, for instance, when the agent has the intention, but simply misses the chance of acting on it." (2013: 564). Thus, these cases are not really slips, but slip- "look-alikes," apparently similar to slips, but not genuine slips (Amaya 2013: 559). Rather than interpreting forgetfulness cases as slips, they should be seen as failures of prospective memory.

Slips are without exception based on knowledge how: they necessarily involve a practical way of "knowing a truth"; it is only that they do not involve the truth that the agent believes she is at the time acting on.

The intellectualist could argue that actions are never informed by only one single proposition, but a cluster or set of propositions. This would allow the intellectualist to explain slips by stating that the agent fails to relate properly to a

couple of the propositions in this set, but is correctly guided by others, thus explaining the slip, and the action performed. For example, a man slips and picks up his pen instead of his spoon, and proceeds to stir his coffee with it. The intellectualist could then argue that he succeeds in making a stirring motion with his hand, he succeeds in grasping something, pinching it in a spoon-like fashion, and so forth. Thus, he does exercise a proper practical mode of presentation of several propositions.

This reply does not work, though, because the agent exhibits knowledge how of *the exact thing* that he does. In the spoon example, the agent knows what a spoon is like, he has the practical competence to grab a spoon and use it to stir his coffee in perfect accordance with his intention to do so. Moreover, a pen is not spoon-like when it comes to sensitive fingertips. It is round. It is differently balanced. The agent who slips and takes the pen, not the spoon, adjusts his grip to the round shape of the pen, and adjusts to its balance. A robot programmed to pick up a spoon would struggle if it was given a pen. The human agent, on the other hand, does not struggle, because he acts with knowledge how and skill without knowing that he does. He adapts unconsciously.

Put another way, to say that the agent succeeds in stirring with something spoon like (or something similar) introduces an element of vagueness into the propositions that the agent is meant to manifest, a vagueness that is not reflected in the agent's actual motor competence.

Moreover, the suggestion that the agent fails to act properly on some of the propositions in the cluster of propositions he is at present acting on, does not explain the "slip-propositions" *per se*, rather it explains them away like glitches in a machinery. If there are glitches in a machinery, it is not a satisfactory solution that the system works after all because most of the machinery is well functioning. One wants to understand the nature of the glitch.[15]

The challenge slips pose to the intellectualist is this: On the intellectualist view, when an agent slips, there must exist some substantive sense in which she is split between two levels of propositional knowledge: the subconscious propositional knowledge that guides her immediate behaviour, and the conscious (and false) propositional beliefs that follow from the knowledge intended to guide her behaviour. Again, the movements she performs non-intentionally require knowledge how and skill. For the intellectualist, these movements must originate from a mistake in regard

---

[15] See also Löwenstein's argument that it is a necessary condition for know-how that it is *possible* to intentionally engage in the activity (2017, 183). Ref., the spoon-slip (the agent does not intend the act under the exact description it counts as a slip. To slip is precisely to act against one's governing intention, and if your theoretical strategy to explain slips is to make them intentional under another description, then you do not account for slips *per se*, rather you explain them away).

to a practical truth: i.e., a truth she has grasped in a practical way. Prior to the movements that comprise her slip, she must have responded to a different truth than the one to which she intended to respond to, without her being aware. In other words, the intellectualist must hold that, when an agent slips, she is wrong about the proposition(s) guiding her behaviour. There is a mismatch between what she takes herself to be doing, given her intention and what she is actually doing, and so a divide between the knowledge how she thinks is guiding her behaviour and the knowledge how that is actually guiding it. This mismatch – between the (presumed to be propositional) knowledge the agent intends to manifest and the knowledge she actually manifests – is unique to knowledge how, finding no equivalent within knowledge that.

In a slip the agent unconsciously acts on a different proposition than the one she intends to. It is not possible to slip in the same way in relation to knowledge that. What would such a slip look like? Consider the following; Agent A intends to bring to her mind the proposition "Circles are round," but slips and thinks "Squares are square" instead, still believing herself to be thinking "Circles are round" – for, remember, a slip is an unconscious mistake made between two known propositions. The example makes no sense. A cannot believe herself to be thinking "Circles are round" while really thinking "Squares are square". If A brings to her mind the proposition "Circles are round" this is what she does. No slip can happen, because the agent would be aware of it. The proposition being in the forefront of her mind. If A *unconsciously* thinks "Squares are square," she does so – unconsciously. The two levels do not interact in the same way as they do in knowledge how. Note that the problem here does not relate to content externalism. The problem is not with the nature of the propositions, but with how the agent *relates* to propositions.

In the case of theoretical thinking, the agent can – of course – take herself to believe something without actually believing it, or only believing it in a very weak way. One example would be self-deception, another implicit bias; a third would be manifestations of the Freudian unconscious. What all these cases have in common is that the agent is wrong about a few or more of her own mental characteristics: she holds false beliefs about herself and her psychological makeup. By contrast, slips express nothing about underlying belief or desire.

To recap, the analogous case to a slip, in the theoretical domain, would be an agent who, thinking herself to be thinking about one proposition, is really thinking about another proposition, without being aware of it – not in the sense of active self-deception, but rather that of making a blunt mistake regarding what thought she is thinking.

Everyday slips are ubiquitous, for all one's practical competence to perform correctly. It makes sense that one sometimes wonders: "am I really doing what I take myself to be doing?" But can we make sense of the thought: "am I really thinking what I take myself to be thinking?" No. The capacity to get things wrong, in a skilful way, is a *sui generis* feature of knowledge how – setting it apart from knowledge that. Inasmuch as one tries to keep to Stanley's framework and accept knowledge how as a kind of relation to a proposition, that relation is not reducible to the relation informing knowledge that. Both are relations to propositions, but they are not alike. The existence of slips shows that knowledge *how* and *knowledge that* do not have the same epistemic properties, and so neither one can reduce to the other.

To recap, Stanley explains knowledge how in a way that makes it reducible to knowledge that; knowing how to do something amounts to knowing a propositional truth about the world, in a practical way. In technical terms:

[1] Knowing how to Φ is knowing some means *w*, such that *w* is the way to Φ.

When Stanley's agent acts with knowledge how, she does so by entertaining a proposition in a practical way. I have emphasized that slips involve behaviour based on knowledge how. In Stanley's terms it will perhaps look something like this:

[2] A slip involves thinking in a practical way of some means *w** as a way of Φ-ing while knowing that *w** is not a way of Φ-ing.

On a reductive intellectualist account, when one slips, one is guided by the practical grasp of a proposition that is not in line with one's knowledge or intentions. One sets out to perform one action based on knowledge how but ends up performing another: in blunt terms, one manifests one's practical grasp of one proposition while believing oneself to be manifesting one's practical grasp of another. One is guided by the proposition:

[3] *w** is a way of Φ-ing,

even as one thinks the guiding proposition to be:

[4] w is a way of Φ-ing.

How can this be? How can one unknowingly manifest a different proposition of theoretical knowledge from the one that one thinks oneself to be manifesting?

I have come to a different conclusion than the intellectualist. Slips, I hold, reveal knowledge how to be of a different nature than knowledge that. An agent simply cannot slip when it comes to knowledge that – only knowledge how.

It does not follow from my view that I must deny that what an agent thinks can add a dimension of truth to what she is aware of: it can. Nor am I suggesting that an agent's judgments about her inner states – unlike her judgments about the world – are error proof. I make no claim to full-blown mental transparency. Neither am I denying the possibility of false beliefs. Suppose I think my flight leaves tomorrow; but I am wrong. I am unaware that my flight has been moved to the day after tomorrow. Obviously, like in this case, one can be wrong about a proposition one entertains or what it refers to. Such a possibility is unproblematic for my view.

The insight I want to drive home is that one cannot be wrong about *which* proposition one believes oneself to be entertaining. Even though one might have a faulty grasp of the content of one´s own thoughts, one thinks the thought one thinks. Someone could object that the insight is trivial, and maybe it is. At the same time, if something that is trivially true of knowledge that does not transfer to knowledge how, it is not so trivial anymore – at least, if one wants to reduce all knowledge how to knowledge that.

The intellectualist could point out that there exist a set of established philosophical cases where the subject is wrong about the proposition she believes herself to be entertaining, namely the type of arguments mustered in defence of content externalism. Consider a person that unbeknownst to herself switches places with her twin on Twin-Earth. Waking up in her twin-cabin, she walks out to her twin-front porch, watches the morning sun glittering on the twin-lake, and thinks: "Ah, beautiful water!" It is not, however, water in the sense she thinks; the twin-lake being composed of XYZ and not H_2O (Putnam 1973).

The point is that the meaning of her proposition is dependent on external factors (physical properties of the world, and socio-linguistic norms present in that world), and thus it is possible to think that you think *p*, while in reality you are thinking *q* in a manner that seems similar to that of a slip; thus, aligning knowledge that with knowledge how.

The above type of argument is, however, not equal to that of a slip. In a slip an agent does something other than what she intends to do, and, true enough, in arguments like the one above, the agent does *de facto* mean something other than what she intends to mean, yet the latter is through no *mistake* of her own, but hinges on the external factors that help individuate the propositional content she entertains. The idea that drives content externalism is that our ideas and concepts are not contained inside our heads but are dependent on exterior factors. Put

differently, in a Twin-Earth-style argument, the sentence picks out something different than what the agent thinks that the sentence picks out. It is, however, never a question of whether she thinks "What beautiful water!", or not, but of what "water" means.

A slip is different. In a slip, there are two propositions operative simultaneously: one that the agent intends to act on, and believes herself to be acting on, and one that she is *actually* acting on. This twofold structure is *essential* to what goes on in a slip, as two propositions are active at the same time, though in different ways.

It is this state of affairs that does not translate into a coherent knowledge that-scenario. It is not present in the agent thinking "Ah, beautiful water!" thinking she is thinking about H_2O, but really thinking about XYZ – *that* agent simply has a false belief. An equivalent scenario to the slip would be if the Twin-Earth traveller was standing on her porch, looking at the lake, and thinking that she was thinking "What beautiful water!" while not really thinking it, but *actually* thinking "Ah, *brown* water!", she just did not know the she was thinking the latter. To recap, one cannot be wrong about which proposition one is holding, though one can, of course, be wrong about the full meaning of this proposition.

The intellectualist might still try to object that one *can* be wrong about what proposition one entertains and claim that this is exactly what happens in the case of slips: the agent's act is guided by proposition p while she thinks about proposition q, but fails to entertain q in a "practical mode". The proposed "solution" comes with a hefty price though. The notion of "practical mode" must do a great deal of explanatory work, even as it is unclear what exactly it amounts to. The risk is that a "practical mode" / "theoretical mode" distinction merely takes the place of the knowledge how/knowledge that distinction. Worse, the "solution" implies that what one might call *local transparency* – the inability to be wrong about what one takes oneself to be doing, when what one is doing is entertaining a certain proposition – does not hold for propositions entertained in the "practical mode"; but that would undermine a rationale for the reductive account, which is meant to explain non-observational knowledge of skilful actions. If the intellectualist's reply is that the principle holds in general – i.e., for full-blown intentional actions – but not for slips, then the "solution" seems *ad hoc*. Given the argument from slips, at least something in the intellectualist account must go.

Objections
There is no such thing as a genuine slip

One option for the intellectualist would be to deny the existence of slips altogether. This, however, would go against a long tradition in linguistics, in psychology, and in cognitive science, dating back at least to Meringer's 1908 report on his collection

of verbal slips, possibly to Freud (1966 [1901]). In more recent times, one should not forget Lashley's ground-breaking 1951 paper "The problem of serial order in behaviour". The list of researchers working in this area – all of whom accept the existence of slips as real – has grown so long that doing it justice would take far more space than I have available.

Slips do not imply knowledge how and skill

Alternately, the intellectualist could deny that slips imply knowledge how and skill. Such a move would erase the problematic propositional-knowledge split by making the motions comprising the slip unguided by propositional knowledge. The unfortunate consequence is that motions that seemingly *do* involve knowledge how and skill – like a verbal slip, where one word is substituted for a like-sounding word – must be seen as not representing knowledge how and skill; but this runs contrary to the fact that verbal slips are not mere gibberish.

Slips imply knowledge how and skill, but it is misdirected

The intellectualist could also deny that the agent who slips acts with knowledge how in the following sense: she intends to Φ but Ψ-s instead, while thinking she is Φ-ing: the appropriate skill is present but misdirected. The agent who slips and stirs her coffee with her pen uses her customary coffee-stirring skill but applies it to a pen rather than the more conventional spoon. The intellectualist can thus argue that there is no propositional-knowledge split in the cases of slips. The agent simply applies the *correct* propositional knowledge to the wrong object.

However, like in my counterargument against the argument appealing to clusters of propositions, this argument fails to take into account the intricacies of fine motor skills. The argument from misdirection can explain certain forms of slips, like, for example, pushing the wrong button in an elevator. It cannot however explain stirring your coffee with a pen instead of a spoon, for a pen and a spoon, when it comes to fine motor skills, are too different. What if, for example, an agent went for her spoon instead of her pen when intending to write something? If she misdirected her penmanship, the spoon would simply slip out of her grip as she lifted it, seeing as a spoon is thinner than a pen. Consequently, though the argument from misdirection can explain some instances, it is not a generalizable solution.

Conclusion

As expressions of knowledge how, slips lack any equivalent within knowledge that. Knowledge how is hence essentially different from knowledge that, and the one is not reducible to the other. I take it as an advantage of my argument that it

relies on ordinary real-life cases, compared to the highly contrived Gettier cases so often used in this debate. Gettier cases are the consequences of sheer epistemic luck: the hapless agent in a Gettier case lacks "genuine" knowledge. By contrast, the agent who slips does so not on freak chance but on knowledge how – just not the knowledge how she meant to apply.

One could object that I have not shown knowledge how to be non-propositional. Perhaps this is so. What I have at least shown though is that knowledge how is not reducible to knowledge that, even if both are propositional. This strikes at the core of reductive intellectualism by undermining one of its key motivations: namely, the attempt to deliver a unified theory of knowledge. The appearance of slips with knowledge how but not with knowledge that clearly shows that certain core epistemic properties of the one are not core epistemic properties of the other. Slips drive a wedge between knowledge how and knowledge that.

REFERENCES

Amaya, Santiago. 2013. "Slips" in *Nôus*, 47 (3): 559-576.

Amaya, Santiago & Doris, John M. 2014. "No Excuses: Performance Mistakes in Morality" in *Handbook in Neuroethics* by Jens Clausen and Neil Levy (eds.).

Amaya, Santiago. 2015. "The argument from slips" in Andrei Buckareff, Carlos Moya & Sergi Rosell (eds.), *Agency, Freedom, and Moral Responsibility*. pp. 13-29.

Anscombe, G. E. M. 2000. *Intention*. Harvard University Press: Harvard.

Baars, Bernard J. 1992. "The many uses of error: Twelve steps to a unified framework" in *Experimental Slips and Human Error: Exploring the Architecture of Volition* Baars, B.J. (ed.). Plenum Press: New York.

Bengson, John, Moffett, Marc A. 2011. "Non-Propositional Intellectualism" in *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind and Action* by J. Bengson and M. Moffett (eds.). Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Bengson, John, Moffett, Marc A. and Wright, Jennifer C. 2009. "The Folk on Know How" in *Philosophical Studies* 142 (3): 387-401.

Brogaard, Berit. 2009. "What Mary Did Yesterday: reflections on Knowledge-wh" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 78: 439–67.

Brogaard, Berit. 2011. "Knowledge-How: A Unified Account" in *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind and Action* by Bengsson and Moffet (eds.). Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Carter, J. Adam and Pritchard, Duncan. 2013. "Knowledge-How and Epistemic Luck" in *Nôus*, 47 (4): 1-18.

Cath, Yuri. 2019. "Knowing How" in *Analysis Reviews* 79: 487-503.

Cath, Yuri. 2011. "Knowing How without Knowing That" in *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind and Action* by J. Bengson and M. Moffett (eds.). Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Devitt, Michael. 2011. "Methodology and the Nature of Knowledge-How" in *Journal of Philosophy*, 108 (4): 205-218.

Davidson, Donald. 2001. *Essays on Actions and Events*. (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Eilan, Naomi & Roessler, Johannes. 2003. Agency and Self-Awareness: Mechanisms and Epistemology in Agency and Self-Awareness by Roessler & Eilan (eds.). Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Felix, Cathrine; Stephens, Andreas. 2020. "A Naturalistic Perspective on Knowledge How: Grasping Truths in a Practical Way" *Philosophies* 5, no. 1: 5.

Freud, Sigmund. 1966 [1901]. *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Ernest Benn: London.

Fromkin, Victoria. (ed.) 1980. *Errors in linguistic performance: Slips of the tongue, ear, pen, and hand*. San Francisco: Academic Press,

Gjelsvik, Olav. 2017. "Anscombe and Davidson on Practical Knowledge: A Reply to Hunter" in *Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy*, 5(6): 1-11.

Glick, Ephraim. 2015. "Practical Modes of Presentation" in *Noûs*, 538-559.

Hetherington, Stephen. "Knowledgeable Inquiry" in *Action in Context* by Anton Leist (ed.). de Gruyter: Berlin.

Hofstadter, Douglas .R. & Moser, David. 1998. "To err is human; to study error-making is cognitive science". Gurba, K. and Zarnecka-Bialy, E. (eds.), Philosophy & Error. Jagiellonian University Press: Krakow.

Koethe, John. 2002. "Stanley and Williamson on knowing how" in *Journal of Philosophy,* 99: 325–328.

Lashly, Karl. 1951. "The problem of serial order in behaviour" in L.A. Jeffres (ed.) *Cerebral mechanisms in behavior*. Wiley: New York.

Löwenstein, David. 2017. *Know-how as Competence: A Rylean Responsibilist Account* Vittorio Klosterman: Frankfurt am Main.

Hilary, Putnam. 1973. "Meaning and Reference" in: *Journal of Philosophy* 70: 699–711.

Meringer, Rudolf. 1908. *Aus den Leben der sprache*. B. Behr: Berlin.

Mele, Alfred R. 2006. "Practical Mistakes and Intentional Actions" in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 43(3): 249-260.

Norman, Donald. A. "Categorization of Action Slips," *Psychological Review*. 88, No. 1. (Jan., 1981): 1-15.

Noë, Alva. 2005. "Against Intellectualism" in *Analysis* 65: 278–290.

Paul, Sarah K. 2009. "How We Know What We're Doing" in Philosopher's Imprint, 9 (11): 1-24.

Pavese, Carlotta. 2015. "Practical senses" in *Philosophers' Imprint* 15: 1–25.

Peabody, Kay (pseudonym for Paprzycka, Katarzyna) 2005. "Trying Slips: Can Davidson and Hornsby Account for Mistakes and Slips?" in *Philosophia*, 33 (1-4): 173-216.

Poston, Ted. 2009. "Know How to be Gettiered?" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 79 (3): 743-747.

Reason, James. 1990. *Human Error*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Rosefeldt, Tobias. 2004. "Is Knowing-how Simply a Case of Knowing-that?" in *Philosophical Investigations*, 27: 370–379.

Ryle, Gilbert. 2000 [1949]. *The Concept of Mind*. Chicago Press: Chicago.

Schiffer, Stephen. 2002. "Amazing knowledge" in *Journal of Philosophy* 99: 200–202.

Stalnaker, Robert. 2012. "Intellectualism and the objects of knowledge" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85 (3): 754–61.

Stanley, Jason. 2013. *Know How*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Stanley, Jason. 2011. "Knowing (How)" in *Nôus* 45 (2): 207-238.

Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy. 2001. "Knowing-How" in *The Journal of Philosophy* 98 (8): 411-444.

Stephens, Andreas; Felix, Cathrine V. 2020. "A Cognitive Perspective on Knowledge How: Why Intellectualism Is Neuro-Psychologically Implausible" *Philosophies* 5, no. 3: 21.

WE WILL FIGURE IT OUT. KNOW-HOW, HYBRID WAYS, AND COMMUNICATIVE (INTER)ACTIONS[*]

ION COPOERU[**], ADRIAN LUDUŞAN[***]

ABSTRACT. The goal of this paper is primarily to pinpoint some substantial analytical and conceptual difficulties with the account of knowledge how proposed by (Stanley & Williamson, Knowing How, 2001) [henceforth S&W] and (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011), (Stanley, Know How, 2011) based on (Groenendijk & Stokhof, 1984) [henceforth G&S] semantic analysis of embedded questions. In light of such difficulties, (1) we propose supplementing their account with an integrated approach of knowledge how, and suggest adding a mereological layer to the semantic framework of embedded questions (2) we argue that the characteristics of what we call 'hybrid ways' and 'hybrid knowledge' strongly indicate reopening the issue of the proper account of questions towards the complementary relevant account of interrogation in communicative interactions, and the role of the context (in)forming knowledge-how. As a methodological principle, we remain neutral on the intellectualist *vs* anti-intellectualist debate. We also remain silent on the nature and explanation of the modes of presentations or ways of thinking that should be developed in order to adequately account for hybrid ways and hybrid knowledge.

Key Words: Know-how, Intellectualism, semantic analysis, embedded questions, wh-complements, mentions-some readings, de re knowledge, hybrid ways, communicative interactions; interrogation; context-sensitivity, situated pragmatics.

[**] Department of Philosophy/ Centre for Applied Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, M. Kogalniceanu 1, Cluj-Napoca, Email: ion.copoeru@ubbcluj.ro

[***] Department of European Studies / Interdisciplinary Center for Data Science, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Emm. de Martonne 1, Cluj-Napoca, Email: adiludusan@gmail.com

I. Introduction

Stanley and Williamson articulated and defended in their seminal paper from 2001, 'Knowing How'[1], an intellectualist stance in the epistemological debate concerning the nature of knowledge how. Intellectualism is characterized by the fundamental thesis that know how is a form of propositional knowledge associated with 'know-that' ascriptions[2]. Their view, which generated a large amount of work on knowledge-how, as well as vivid disputes, seems to finally circumvent the issue of the connection between knowing-how and action and eventually mischaracterized both knowledge-how and action.

In a series of subsequent papers, Stanley[3] defended this intellectualist stance, elaborating and clarifying some of the arguments presented in their 2001 paper as well as responding to objections and critiques that have been raised since. A core defense that they have amounted throughout their papers is that linguistic evidence seems to support intellectualism. Of course, this formulation needs unpacking. For our purposes, it is enough to unpack it along two intertwined[4] lines:

A) As a matter of cross-linguistic evidence, ascriptions of know-how (more generally, of know-wh) are introduced using the same verb as ascriptions of know-that.

B) Independently developed syntactical and semantical theories of natural language treat uniformly ascriptions of know-how and know-that (more generally, of know-wh, which are commonly taken to be species of know-that).

Now, (A) and (B) have been used to argue that the 'folk'[5] notion of know-how supports the intellectualist thesis. The argument based on (A) is that detectable differences in epistemic states would have been reflected by now in the linguistic behavior of at least some linguistic communities:

> "Surely, if humans thought of the sort of state expressed by ascriptions of the form 'X knows that p' and the verb "know" in sentences [involving know-wh and know-how] as clearly distinct, there would be many languages

---

[1] (Stanley & Williamson, Knowing How, 2001)

[2] (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011, p. 208) calls it *intellectualism about knowing how*.

[3] (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011), (Stanley, Know How, 2011)

[4] Intertwined because (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011) points that (B) could be used as an explanation for (A)

[5] As Stanley describes it, the 'folk' notion of know-how is "the one that plays a role in ordinary folk psychological explanations of action. This is the notion expressed by ordinary ascriptions of knowing how, such as "John knows how to ride a bicycle", or "Hannah knows how to swim." " (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011, p. 208).

in which different words were employed. The fact that we do not employ different words for these notions suggests they are at the very least intimately related concepts"[6].

The argument based on (B) is that according to some prevalent syntactico-semantic analyses, the same epistemic state is involved in ascriptions of know-how as in know-wh cases, which are uncontroversially[7] considered to be ascriptions of propositional knowledge. So, an essential task for intellectualists is to consolidate (B). This amount, according to Stanley, to showing "that *the same general analysis is called for in all [] cases[8]*", specifically that

> "[a]ll the intellectualist must show is that whatever complications exist for the semantics of embedded questions, the nature of PRO[9] and the interpretation of infinitives do not entail that [sentences involving know-how ascriptions] should be given a distinct analysis than [sentences involving know-why and know-when ascriptions]"[10].

Be that as it may, if the *same general analysis* proves to make wrong predictions or fail to account for consensually accepted legitimate instances of ascriptions of know-how, as we will argue, then something is definitely off with the analysis, and, as a consequence, it falls on the shoulders of the intellectualist to repair or change the analysis in order to properly address such cases.

As a preliminary step, we notice that both intellectualist and anti-intellectualist positions are built on the idea that one can and could and should *isolate* propositional knowledge, respectively abilities or dispositions. But it would be difficult and even counter-productive to separate the issue of kn-how from that of the action, on one side, and from that of meaning, i. e. of conversational interaction, on the other side. Our aim is not to entirely dismiss S&W linguistic argument, but to revert it by

---

[6] (Stanley, Know How, 2011, p. 38).

[7] "It is a common assumption between the Rylean and the Intellectualist that sentences involving constructions like "know where +infinitive", "know when + infinitive", "know why + infinitive", etc. all can be defined in terms of propositional knowledge. But given that ascriptions of knowing-how in English look so similar to such ascriptions, it is hard to see how they could ascribe a different kind of mental state. This provides a powerful argument in favor of the conclusion that our ordinary folk notion of knowing-how is a species of propositional knowledge." (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011, p. 208).

[8] (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011, p. 221) his emphasis.

[9] PRO is considered in the syntactical theories to which Stanley subscribes an unpronounced pronoun. For more on this see (Stanley, Know How, 2011, especially chapter 3, PRO and the Representation of First-Person Thought).

[10] (Stanley, Knowing (How), 2011, p. 211).

showing that their analysis of the structure of the meaning suggests that there is a fundamental *discontinuity* in the framework of "knowing how to" linguistic constructions connected to action. So, our goal is not to propose an alternative syntactico-sematic analysis in which ascriptions of know-how are treated differently than ascriptions of knowledge that, for we remain neutral on the intellectualist *vs* anti-intellectualist debate. We confine ourselves to pinpoint some difficulties with the account of knowledge how proposed by S&W and Stanley, based on such a general analysis. More precisely, we will challenge the account of knowledge how articulated by Stanley and S&W based on G&S's[11] semantical analysis of embedded questions, revealing that it raises substantial technical and conceptual difficulties. In light of such difficulties, (1) we propose supplementing their account by an integrated approach of knowledge how, suggesting adding a mereological layer to the semantic framework of embedded questions, although we remain silent on the nature and explanations of the presupposed modes of presentations or ways of thinking that should be developed in order to adequately account for hybrid ways and hybrid knowledge, (2) we argue that the characteristics of what we call 'hybrid ways' and 'hybrid knowledge' strongly indicate reopening the issue of the proper account of questions towards the complementary relevant account of interrogation in communicative interactions, and the role of the context (in)forming knowledge-how.

II. Linguistic evidence & arguments for intellectualism

Before concentrating on Stanley's tweaks of G&S's analysis of embedded questions in order to account for ascriptions of know-how, it is worth to briefly discuss the significance of the linguistic evidence and arguments for intellectualism. Suppose that we all agree that (A) and (B) are beyond dispute or doubt. Does this entail that intellectualism is, in fact, right? Well, it certainly follows that the folk notions of know-how and know-that support the intellectualist thesis, showing that there is just one folk concept of knowledge, but this, in itself, is not refutable evidence that the epistemic state ascribed to agents by sentences of the form 'X knows how to φ' is *of the same kind* with that ascribed to agents by sentences of the form 'X knows that p'. It may be that advances in neurosciences prove definitively that states ascribed by the latter are of a distinct kind than that ascribed by the former, that is, the scientific notions of know-how and know-that are different from their folk counterparts. So, the significance of the linguistic evidence is limited, pending upon scientific confirmation. But – and he is right – unless proven otherwise, the default assumption should be that the same kind of epistemic state is ascribed by the two notions. Stanley is certainly aware of all this:

---

[11] (Groenendijk & Stokhof, 1984)

"Of course, it could be that the fact that the same verb is used cross-linguistically for embedded question constructions as for attributions involving "that" clause complements is a kind of widespread error. Perhaps we have a single concept for propositional knowledge and the kind of knowledge ascribed in sentences [involving know-wh and know-how ascriptions], but science will reveal that in fact (say) propositional knowledge ascriptions and ascriptions of knowing-where or knowing-who are very different in kind. In short, perhaps the situation is similar to what happened with the concept corresponding to the expression "jade". Our single concept turned out to be a concept corresponding to two very different kinds, jadeite and nephrite. One concept of knowledge turns out upon further investigation to be fractured"[12].

"Of course, it may be that science will discover that our one concept of knowledge, like our previous concept of jade, answers to different kinds. But this does not show that the default position is that there are distinct kinds of knowledge. Even in the case of jade, the default position is that there was only one kind of jade. After all, we had a great deal of evidence that jadeite and nephrite were the same kind – they appeared to be the same. It took a definitive chemical discovery to undermine that default position. It should take a similar definitive scientific discovery to undermine the default position that all of the ascriptions in [sentences involving know-wh and know-how ascriptions] ascribe the same kind of state as ascriptions of the form 'X knows that P'"[13].

Critical responses to their arguments proposed alternative analyses of the logical form or the semantics of English know-wh ascriptions or invoked cross-linguistic data that invalidated the intellectualist analysis[14]. For example, languages like French and Italian where the sentences which translate English 'S knows how to Φ' ascriptions have a bare infinitive as the complement of 'knows', rather than an embedded question. (Stanley, Know How, 2011) responds to this kind of challenge by arguing that these sentences in other language are best interpreted as containing an implicit interrogative[15]. (Pavese, 2016), questions the significance of the cross-linguistic data, arguing that it does not support the conclusion that English 'S knows how to Φ' ascriptions are ambiguous between an interrogative and a bare infinitive interpretation. Methodological criticisms of S&W's linguistic argument often start with the thought that there is something wrong with using mere linguistic premises, about knowledge how ascriptions, to support substantive

---

[12] (Stanley, Know How, 2011, p. 38)
[13] (Stanley, Know How, 2011, p. 39)
[14] (Cath, Knowing How, 2019); see also (Ditter 2016), (Rumfitt 2003) and (Wiggins 2012)
[15] See (Abbott 2013) and (Ditter 2016) for criticisms.

conclusions about the nature of knowledge how itself. As (Cath, Knowing How, 2019) shows, the intellectualist argument does not rely exclusively on linguistic (syntactico-semantic) considerations. Therefore, it does not seem that empirical considerations in favor of the so-called anti-intellectualist position are providing strong or decisive arguments against the intellectualist position. Intellectualism is not threatened by the kinds of empirical considerations that have been claimed to support anti-intellectualism. These arguments may fail but they remind us that intellectualists have never just ignored the potential relevance of non-linguistic considerations. More positively, we think one can partially defend S&W's general linguistic approach to knowing-how—if not their linguistic argument per se—by pointing to the fruitfulness of this approach. Of course, the debate can then turn to these further premises. But the point remains that it is uncharitable to regard S&W's argument as committing some kind of methodological blunder. As we see it, the real value of Glick's[16] discussion of S&W is that it shows us how their argument crucially relies on these implicit premises, and how intellectualists sometimes lean on those premises in question begging ways when replying to opponents. In relation to the semantic uniformity premise, there has been a lot of discussion about whether intellectualists have provided good evidence for/against claims of this kind, and the difference between the evidence needed to reject a strict ambiguity claim versus a polysemy claim about knowledge-how ascriptions (for related discussion see e.g. (Abbott 2013), (Kremer 2016), (Löwenstein 2017), and (Sgaravatti and Zardini 2008)). There have been lots of other developments that do not fit neatly into the broad themes discussed above. This includes new arguments, and new replies to old arguments. For example, (Habgood-Coote 2018) argues that intellectualism faces a *generality objection* akin to the famous generality problem for reliabilism. On the intellectualist side, (Pavese 2017) convincingly shows how intellectualists can answer the *gradabiliy* objection that intellectualism is false because knowledge-how comes in degrees whereas knowledge-that does not ((Ryle 1949), (Sgaravatti and Zardini 2008)). Another development is the emergence of views of knowing-how that bend, or break out of, the familiar categories of 'intellectualism' and 'Ryleanism'. (Bengson & Moffett, 2012), for example, develop a view on which knowing-how is a (nonpropositional and non-dispositional) objective attitude to a way of Φ-ing. (Santorio 2016) offers a non-factualist view of knowing-how, influenced by expressivist views in metaethics, and (Hetherington 2011) develops a view according to which knowing-that can be analyzed in terms of knowing-how. A lot of work has also been done on relations between knowledge-how and other areas, including: epistemic injustice (Hawley 2011), the

---

[16] (Glick, 2011)

philosophy of education (Winch 2016, Kotzee 2016), 'what it is like'-knowledge (Tye 2011), the philosophy of sport (Breivik 2014), and knowledge of language (Tsai 2011, Devitt 2011). For a long time, this sort of view, which Hetherington calls practicalism, has been around in various ways. But the discussion of Hetherington is important for developing it in more depth, and also for considering this view in relation to more recent literature on know-how. And the advent of work based on questions about the importance and the role of know-how is a last trend worth noting ((Carter and Pritchard 2015), (Habgood-Coote, Know-How, Abilities, and Questions, 2019), (Hawley 2011), (Markie 2018)). One area that has not seen a lot of development is 'experimental philosophy' (X-Phi) on the intuitions appealed to in the knowledge-how debates. Experimental philosophy (X-Phi) on the intuitions appealed to in the knowledge-how debates is one field that has not seen a lot of progress. Some XPhi studies on knowledge-how have been performed[17], but still nothing like the number and variety of studies found in other epistemology fields. It's going to be fascinating to see if there is more work in the future in this area.

Our position is that a stronger argument against S&W position could be construed by tackling both the "linguistic argument" and its presuppositions. With that we gradually move the discussion on the terrain of "communicative interaction" (Gallagher 2020, ch 7) and introduce a more adapted methodology.[18] Our conviction is that defining knowledge-how in connection with answering a question is still a fruitful approach,[19] on the condition that one acknowledges that there are many ways of answering a question on knowing how to perform an action. Sometimes we are able to provide pertinent knowledge in a propositional form, sometimes not. In the last case, we may choose to perform the action that someone asks how to do it or give her some other kinds of indications. In these situations, we have to

---

[17] See (Bengson, Moffett, and Wright 2009), (Carter, Pritchard, and Shepherd 2019)

[18] We are pointing here to a multimodal and co-operative approach (Katila and Raudaskoski 2020), which promises to better describe knowing-how as co-produced by the agents in a specific physical context and intertwined with observable (inter)action. This method would enable us not only to identify somatic sequences of the interaction and locate knowing-how in a specific moment of it, but to uncover the ways in which the meaning is constituted in that type of interactive situation. With that, we hope we pertain to a micro-analytic level.

[19] However, there are cases when knowing-how consists in more than answering a question and they have to be seriously taken into account. Reading a book on swimming will not make you a swimmer. Neither you or other people will say that you know how to swim, although you might be able to answer some questions about swimming. In this case one may say that you don't know how to swim "in a practical sense." (Habgood-Coote 2019, p. 88) Indeed someone who has read a book on any activity requesting knowing-how might be able to answer the question of how to perform that activity, but she is most probably not able to effectively (physically) perform that activity in any context.

find a way to convey both the explicit and the implicit knowledge required by the performing of the respective action. In order to describe knowing-how in real-world communicative (inter)actions, we have to take into account the whole interactive situation.

Our aim is to capture knowing-how in interaction while being fundamentally *situated* in local interactions between the agents and to describe the way in which the meaning structure profiles the connection of knowledge (propositional or not) and action.

III. Stanley's semantical account of know-how

Given that (B) is, or at least was, the default position in linguistics, it is unsurprising to find several syntactico-semantic frameworks that were developed so as to provide a unified treatment of sentences ascribing know-wh and know-that. Stanley articulates a custom-made semantical account of knowledge how based on such a framework, Groenendijk and Stokhof's framework for the analysis of wh-complements, to be specific. Some of the details of Stanley's semantical account will prove essential for our analysis, so we begin by laying out those relevant details.

Groenendijk and Stokhof's semantical treatment of questions is couched in a two-sorted type theory (T2). The qualification 'two-sorted' comes from treating s as a basic, but different sort of type than the more familiar types e and t. Entities of type s are interpreted as possible worlds (Thus, the domain of constants and variables of type s is a set W of possible worlds.). Variables of type s are essential in T2 for formulating the context-dependent feature of expressions. More precisely, the context dependence character of expressions is technically preserved by supplying such expression with a variable of type s. Thus, *to walk*, in T2, is represented by W(a), in which a is of type s, and W is of type <s, <e, t>>, thus treating W(a) as a predicate, whose type is <e, t>. The heavy lifting of capturing the context-dependence of the expression is done by the assignment function g(a), for the value of W(a) is the value of W applied to the value of g(a), that is the extension of W applied to the extension of g(a), which, obviously dependents on the world assigned to a by g. With this setting in place, let us have a look at how a sentence such as *Hannah walks* would be represented in T2. In a first stage, the sentence would be translated by the formula W(a)(h), where h is a constant of type e, denoting Hannah. Now, W(a)(h) is an expression of type t, and such expressions are not considered propositions in T2, but formulas. Propositions, in T2, are expressions of type <s, t>, that is, functions from possible worlds to truth values. Thus, in order to render the sentence *Hannah walks* as a proposition in T2, thus completing the translation, we have to construct

it, in a second stage, as an expression of type <s, t>. This is done easily by lambda abstraction over *a*: λa(W(a)(h)). The semantic value of λa(W(a)(h)), with respect to model M and assignment g, denoted by ⟦λa(W(a)(h) ⟧$_{M, g}$, is that proposition p ∈ {0, 1}^{W} such that for every w ∈ W, p(w) = 1 iff ⟦(W(a)(h))⟧ $_{M, g[w/a]}$ = 1. As a technical note, g[w/a] is the assignment that agrees with g in all values with the (possible) exception of assigning w to a. As one can observe, p or λa(W(a)(h), denotes that function that takes every world in W in which Hannah walks to the true, and to the false every world in W in which Hannah doesn't walk, so λa(W(a)(h) or p is, in effect, a characteristic function for the subset of worlds in which it is true that Hannah walks. So, there it is, the expression λa(W(a)(h) denotes the proposition that captures the sentence *Hannah walks*; its sense is λaλa(W(a)(h).

Now, λa(W(a)(h) doesn't contain any free variables of type *s*, so, in the light of the above remarks, it's not context dependent. In order to capture the context dependent feature of expressions, we have to further transform the expression λa(W(a)(h) by equipping it with a variable of type *s*. To this end, G&S modify the expression λa(W(a)(h) in the following manner: λi(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h)). Let us look at the interpretation of this expression. According to the semantics of T2, ⟦λi(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h))⟧$_{M, g}$ expresses that proposition p ∈ {0, 1}^{W} such that for every w ∈ W, p(w) = 1 iff ⟦(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h))⟧$_{M, g[w/i]}$ = 1 iff ⟦(W(a)(h)⟧$_{M, g[w/i]}$ = ⟦(W(i)(h)⟧$_{M, g[w/i]}$ iff ⟦(W(a)(h)⟧$_{M, g}$ = [⟦(W(i)(h)⟧$_{M, g[w/i]}$]. So, at the world g(a), λi(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h)) is the characteristic function of all the worlds in W at which the truth value of the sentence *Hannah walks* is the same as at g(a). In other words, λi(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h)) denotes the proposition that Hannah walks at the worlds at which it is true that Hannah walks, and the propositions that Hannah doesn't walk at the worlds at which it is false that Hannah walks. Glossing, we can say that the semantic value of λi(W(a)(h) = W(i)(h)) is what we usually express by *whether Hannah walks*.

Now, the above analysis of the semantics of wh-complements is the building block for the semantical analysis of embedded questions as proposed by G&S. And it is the template that Stanley uses for his account of knowledge how. But he has to modify this template in order address some specific intuitions concerning different readings of embedded questions. The one intuition that is relevant for our endeavor here is that related to the mention-all mention-some distinction. Here's Stanley discussing the issue:

> "[T]he natural interpretation of most finite embedded questions is in fact the mention-all reading. To know who went to the party seems to require knowing, of each person who went to the party, that they went to the party […]. However, embedded questions with infinitival complements do not naturally give rise to mention-all readings:

(5)a. Hannah knows where to find an Italian newspaper in New York.
b. Hannah knows how to ride a bicycle.

The natural reading of the examples in (5) is not a mention-all reading. Example (5a) means that Hannah knows, of some place, that it is a place where she could find an Italian newspaper in New York. Example (5b) means that Hannah knows, of some way of riding a bicycle, that it is a way in which she could ride a bicycle. It is not necessary for the truth of (5a) and (5b) that Hannah know of *every* place that is a place she could buy an Italian newspaper in New York, that it is so, or that Hannah know [sic!] of every way that is a way in which she could ride a bicycle, that it is so. All that is required for the truth of (5a) is that Hannah knows, of *some* place, that it is a place where she could find an Italian newspaper in New York. Similarly, all that is required for the truth of (5b) is that Hannah knows, of *some* way of riding a bicycle, that it is a way in which she could ride a bicycle. But the Groenendijk and Stokhof semantics for questions […] was designed to deal with only the so-called "mention-all" readings of embedded questions, and so cannot explain the natural readings of embedded infinitival questions"[20].

Noting that "there is no commonly accepted proposal for treating mention-some readings of questions in the literature"[21], Stanley advances the following one:

$$[\text{wh-to-}\Phi] = \lambda j \lambda i (\exists p [(x \text{ can } \Phi (p, j) \& (x \text{ can } \Phi (p, i))])$$

Of course, this proposal needs to be appended with the context-sensitivity feature of questions; the treatment is similar to that of quantified noun phrases, the task of capturing context-sensitivity being delegated to a domain property assigned to a domain variable, F, in Stanley's notation. Thus, the proposal yields:

$$[\text{wh-to-}\Phi] = \lambda j \lambda i (\exists p [(F(p, j) \& x \text{ can } \Phi (p, j) \& (F(p, i) \& x \text{ can } \Phi (p, i))])$$

Now, besides the standard merits of his proposal – adequately addressing the mention-some reading, and the context sensitivity character of the questions – Stanley adds a further merit, namely that his proposal is compatible with what he explicitly calls *de re* ascriptions of know-wh and know-how:

"Sometimes, in order to know where to Φ or how to Φ, it is enough to know that there is some place or other at which one can Φ, or some way or other in which one could Φ. Dialogues like the following are quite natural:

(8) I know where to get a good Italian meal in this neighborhood. Steve told me that there was some really good place on Second Avenue. We will walk up and down until we find it.

(9) I know how to open this door. Hannah told me that there was some way of doing it that involves using a credit card. *We will figure it out* (our emphasis).

The semantic clauses I have given for mention-some readings easily capture these readings. But it is typically the case that, when one knows where to Φ or knows how to Φ, one has *de re* knowledge of a place to Φ or a way to Φ – when one knows where to get a good Italian meal, one knows of some place that it is a good place to get an Italian meal. This additional requirement comes from the domain associated with mention-some questions.

In those cases in which acquaintance is required for knowing where to Φ or how to Φ the context sets additional demands on the domain for the embedded question. In order for a place to Φ or a way to Φ to be sufficient for knowing where to Φ or how to Φ, the agent must be acquainted with that place or that way. So, in a case in which I utter, "Hannah knows where to find an Italian newspaper in New York City", where I mean Hannah knows of a specific place to find an Italian newspaper in New York City, I intend a domain F such that a place satisfies F only if Hannah has *de re* acquaintance with it; and *mutatis mutandis* for knowing how."[22]

Naturally, in what follows, we will call *de dicto* knowledge, the kind of non-*de re* knowledge of ways that Stanley describes in examples (8) and (9) above.

IV. Hybrid ways and situated communicative interaction

We are definitely agreeing with the legitimacy of the *de dicto* reading of where to Φ or know how to Φ. In some cases, the reference of an embedded question seems not to be a contextually relevant way *w* of φ-ing, for *w* has a particular and determinate character in a *de re* reading, as a highly contextualized method or recipe for φ-ing, and that seems to be at odds with knowledge how ascriptions claimed in a general manner. In such cases, the agent doesn't seem to imply that it knows a determinate *way* of φ-ing for every possible situation, but something along the line of a capacity to structure the information provided by the context in order to successfully perform φ: given a situation, I can incorporate the knowledge of the particulars characterizing the situation so that I, most likely, succeed in φ-ing. So, a more likely construal of this kind of knowledge is that the

---

[22] (Stanley, Know How, 2011, p. 121)

agent is highly capable of organizing its knowledge as a function of the context in order to successfully perform φ. However, as we will argue such cases often contain a hybrid way of knowing how to Φ.

Suppose that you are at a party and Hannah asks you to give her a ride home. You don't know where exactly Hannah lives, so you request indications. Hannah asks if you know how to get to the bus station on street M from where you are, and suppose you do. You know it in a *de re* manner. Next Hannah indicates that to get to her place you just need to keep going west from the bus station on M street, then make the first turn to the right, and then the second to the left, and the first building on the right is her home. So, according to Stanley's analysis, I know how to get to Hannah's home. But my knowledge of a way to Φ is neither completely de re, nor completely de dicto. It is a hybrid. And such hybrid ways are not captured by Stanley's semantical clauses, if we treat the ways w according to the semantic of T2, that is as indecomposable: Under this assumption embedded in the construction of T2's semantic it is clear that the domain F in such cases cannot consist of ways w, known completely in any de re/de dicto combination, for the knowledge of w involved is, as mentioned, hybrid. I don't know how to get to Hannah's home in a direct, de re manner, nor in a de dicto manner, but partially de re (up to the bus station), and partially de dicto (from the bus station to Hannah's home). Sure, if F consist of de re knowledge of ways w, it also consists of de dicto knowledge of ways, so F consists of ways w known in both readings. But this doesn't help in the above scenario. I don't know how to Φ completely de re and, as a consequence, de dicto, I know it partially de re, and partially de dicto. Stanley's familiar maneuver of sweeping under the rug of the domain F all the sensitive aspects of knowing how doesn't work either: suppose we allow F to consists of ways w known in a hybrid third way, partially de re and partially de dicto. As a consequence, the w's in the range of F have structure (how else to explain the hybrid knowledge *partially* de re and *partially* de dicto of the same way w?), and, as such, are decomposable, which runs counter to T2's semantic. In T2's semantic, the *w's* are expressions of type *e*, they are existentially quantified, and, as such, considered as distinct unitary elements composing a domain. We hope it's clear that as long as we consider the ways w to Φ to be indecomposable, no solution is available. And to allow the decomposition of ways opens a pandora's box of complications. Technically, one has to alter the semantics of T2 with a mereological component, and although we think this is feasible, it is by all means a task that eludes the scope of this paper. As a further, conceptual complication, an explanation of modes of presentations or ways of thinking that adequately account for hybrid ways and hybrid knowledge has to be articulated, for it is evident that the 'practical modes

of presentation', or 'practical ways of thinking' that Stanley, and Stanley and Williamson appealed to in response to the sufficiency objection are not up to the task.

So, the semantical clauses proposed by Stanley doesn't seem to adequately account for such cases. And such cases, we argue, are predominant. For example, when we say that someone knows how to entertain the public, we often mean a hybrid way w of knowing how to tell (some specific) jokes adjoined by a 'figure it out' kind of knowledge, based on the particular characteristics of the public, and, equally important, the interactions with it. When we ascribe to an agent the know-how of playing free jazz, or free improvisation, we again assume a hybrid way of a de re knowledge how of playing a specific musical instrument with a 'figure it out' knowledge based on the interaction with the other players. The same could be argued even for instances of know-how standardly addressed and discussed by intellectualists, such as know how to swim, to hit the ball, etc. These considerations, we think, reopen the issues concerning the proper account of questions.

Answering by doing

There are many ways in which one can provide an answer in an interrogative situation. We acknowledge that that individual has knowledge-how when the answer is action-oriented. Among the various answer someone could provide, there is a distinctive one, which consists in doing effectively that action. The answer is embedded in the action itself. We say then that the learner is learning by doing (like the cricket players).

Is that action still an answer or is it just an action? Someone could say: 'I was asking you to tell me how to do it, not to do it (in my place)'. Not always a real action is a real answer. When exactly qualifies an action as an answer to a question?

When someone perform an action as answer, can we say that she knows how to do it? Not all the time. She might have done it by accident or she might have a false belief about what she is doing, like the cricket players. We still feel the need, in these cases, to point to a "mental action" which is supposed to be the true locus of knowledge. The agent would keep her knowledge mentally stored. While not able anymore to perform the real action, she would still preserve the knowing how. This discussion leads us to a whole series of conundrums.

It seems that

[t]he appeal to answering by doing means that an ability to answer a question on the fly is both an ability to activate knowledge and an ability to do, producing both a successful action and an answer to a question (at least in good cases). The ability to answer the question *how to V?* on the fly is at the same time

an ability to answer the question *how to V?* by doing V, and an adverbial ability to V by answering the question *how to V?* (Habgood-Coote 2018b, p. 91)[23]

The problem with this description is that not all the time a successful action is an answer. The close proximity of the question and the answer by doing is not sufficient to say that that action was an answer to that question. When someone ask how to do it, explicitly or implicitly, she asks an explanation, not a mere description. She might instead look on internet or see a movie or read some equations. But she needs more than that. She needs to be not only verbally or visually (from distance) instructed, but to effectively learn how to do it, somehow from inside. It is obvious that that person needs to make an effort herself, but also coach has to provide relevant information for the internal conversion of the agent, i.e. information which goes deep, which resonates with body-in-action.

In this case, separating the piece of standing knowledge from the ability to apply that proposition to the action makes the work of the performer extremely difficult, because she has to bring them together in a very prompt manner. Spontaneous fluid action, which is in fact the mark of knowing-how, would be difficult to explain in this way.

In order to avoid these difficulties, we propose to let aside the discussion about the mental states of the individual agent and to take into account the whole interactive situation.

Relying on (Charles Goodwin 2000)'s ethnographic study of conversation, Gallagher[24] proposes a fuller description of the interactive situation (in which contexts are relational), that he frames as "a shared agentive situation", "a shared context within which <agents> encounter each other."[25] It includes:

- The gestures and facial expressions of the other person
- Their bodily movements, postures, and proximity
- The intonation of voice
- The other's attention—the means to grab it for joint attention
- The temporal flow/rhythm of interaction
- Instituted norms
- Social rules, roles, and identities
- Knowledge of completed actions
- Knowledge of person-specific traits, preferences, attitudes, etc.

---

[23] While entirely agreeing that one of the distinctive marks of knowledge-how is the performer's capacity to answer "on the fly", we do not share Habgood-Coote's abilitism. The structure of interrogation will lead us to an approach based on the concept of communicative (inter)action.

[24] (Gallagher, Action and Interaction, 2020, p. 159)

[25] *ibidem*

• The rich material environment[26].

One can see from this kind of analysis that this approach takes into account both the speech acts and the real actions of real-embodied agents. They are all placed in an encompassing semiotic context, which includes a variety of circumstances in which the agents are speaking and acting: the posture, movement, and position of embodied agents, the environmental arrangements, affordances, other persons, etc.

The model inspired by the conversational analysis offers not only a complete, virtually exhaustive model of the interactive situation, but also possibly a new way of understanding its *embedded plurality of ways of answering a question*. A single action brings together different kinds of resources. (Goodwin 2013) They are classified as it follows:

-Individual actions are constructed by assembling diverse materials, including language structure, prosody, and visible embodied displays.

-Semiotically charged objects, such as maps, when included within local action, incorporate ways of knowing and acting upon the world that have been inherited from predecessors.

-New action is built by performing systematic, selective operations on these public configurations of resources.

Finally, we have three categories of "objects" at hand (in the most general sense of the word): actions (of an embodied individual), objects (for the agent) and new actions (as an outcome of the interaction of the agent with the objects in the interactive field). It is worth to notice that the emergence of a new action is fully taken into account in virtue of the "we'll figure it out" way of knowledge.

Goodwin's interactionist model manages to capture not only the entirety of the situation but also its dynamics. He emphasizes that "visible, public deployment of multiple semiotic fields that mutually elaborate each other"[27]. "For example, spoken language builds signs within the stream of speech, gestures use the body in a particular way, while posture and orientation use the body in another, etc."[28]

---

[26] Goodwin adds an important qualification, if vision and "getting in each other's face" are important aspects of this example of dynamical interaction, "this is by no means a fixed array of fields. Thus, on many occasions, such as phone calls, or when participants are dispersed in a large visually inaccessible environment (e.g., a hunting party, or a workgroup interacting through computers), visual co-orientation may not be present". Contexts change over time; they may be enriched or impoverished, but they always count towards the production of understanding or misunderstanding.

[27] (Goodwin, Action and Embodiement within Situated Human Interaction, 2000, p. 1495)

[28] (Goodwin, Action and Embodiement within Situated Human Interaction, 2000, p. 1494); see also (Gallagher 2020)

There is here a complex *integration* of primary and secondary intersubjective capacities, situated within a pragmatic and social context, that is both supplemented with and supporting communicative processes[29]. We can map all of these rich details onto the model of a "meshed architecture" to help us understand how the various factors are *integrated* in social interaction[30]. Through their analysis, Gallagher and Varga showed how the model of meshed architecture, imported from performance studies and resonating with Merleau-Ponty's concept of intertwining, can specify and contribute in a substantial manner to how cognition plays a role in performance and how other factors situate performance[31]. Through a more detailed view of how functional integration (the coupling of agent and world) and task dependency (a notion that pertains to organization and coordination)[32] work in situated cognition, the concept provides a framework for taking into account the specific form of engagement of the agent in knowing how to perform an action as *simultaneously* motoric[33] and epistemic.

V. Conclusions

Resuming, we have shown that ascriptions of know-how such as 'I know how to get to Hanna's house' or 'I know how to get there' are not adequately handled by Stanley's account of know-how based on G&S's semantic analysis of questions. We have argued that in such ascriptions the ways w responding to the embedded question typically present in know-how ascriptions have a hybrid character. This hybrid character seems to be the norm in knowledge how ascriptions, not the exception. As such, we proposed an integrated approach towards know-how by gradually moving the discussion on the terrain of "communicative interaction" and introduce a more adapted methodology. In order to describe knowing-how in real-world communicative (inter)actions, we have to take into account the whole interactive situation. Our conviction is that defining knowledge-how in connection with answering a question is still a fruitful approach, on the condition that one acknowledges that there are many ways of answering a question on knowing how to perform an action. There is here a complex integration of primary and secondary intersubjective capacities, situated within a pragmatic and social context, that is

---

[29] (Gallagher 2020, p. 159).
[30] (Gallagher & Varga 2020, pp. 1-9).
[31] (Gallagher & Varga 2020, p. 7-8).
[32] See (see Slors 2019).
[33] (Gallagher and Aguda, 2020).

both supplemented with and supporting communicative processes. We can map all of these rich details onto the model of a "meshed architecture"[34] to help us understand how the various factors are integrated in social interaction.

REFERENCES

Bengson, J., & Moffett, M. A. (2012). Nonpropositional Intellectualism. In J. Bengson, & M. A. Moffett (Eds.), *Knowing How. Essays on Knowledge, Mind, and Action* (pp. 161-196). New York: Oxford University Press.

Carter, A., & Pritchard, D. (2015). Knowledge-How and Cognitive Achievement. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 181-199.

Cath, Y. (2015). Revisionary intellectualism and Gettier. *Philos Stud, 172*, 7-27. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-013-0263-y

Cath, Y. (2019). Knowing How. *Analysis, 79*(3), 487–503.

Ditter, A. (2015). Why Intellectualism still fails. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 500-515.

Gallagher, S. (2020). *Action and Interaction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallagher, S., & Aguda, B. (2020). Anchoring Know-How: Action, Affordance and Anticipation. *Journal of Consciusness Studies*, 3-37.

Gallagher, S., & Varga, S. (2020). Meshed Architecture of Performance as a Model Situated Cognition. *Front. Psychol*.

Glick, E. (2011). Two Methodologies for Evaluating Intellectualism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 83*(2), 398-434.

Goodwin, C. (2000). Action and Embodiement within Situated Human Interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 1489-1522.

Goodwin, C. (2013). The Co-Operative, transformative organization of human action and knowledge. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 8-23.

Groenendijk, J., & Stokhof, M. (1984). *Studies on the semantics of questions and the pragmatics of answers.* Amsterdam: Phd Dissertation.

Habgood-Coote, J. (2018). The generality problem for intellectualism. *Mind and Language*, 242-262.

Habgood-Coote, J. (2019). Know-How, Abilities, and Questions. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 86-104.

Hawley, K. (2003, January). Success and Knowledge-How. *American Philosophical Quarterly, 40*(1), 19-31. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20010094

Pavese, C. (2016). Skill in epistemology II: Skill and know how. *Philosophy Compass, 11*(11), 550-560.

Pavese, C. (2017). Know-how and Gradability. *Philosophical Review*, 345-383.

---

[34] see (Gallagher & Varga, Meshed Architecture of Performance as a Model Situated Cognition, 2020).

Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind.* London: Hutchinson.

Stanley, J. (2011). *Know How.* New York: Oxford Univeristy Press.

Stanley, J. (2011). Knowing (How). *Nous, 45*(2), 207–238.

Stanley, J., & Williamson, T. (2001). Knowing How. *The Journal of Philosophy, 98*(8), 411-444.

Tsay, Y. (2011). Relationship between Organizational Culture, Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction. *BMC Health Serv Res*.

Tye, M. (2000). Knowing what it is like: The ability hypothesis and the knowledge argument. In P. Preyer, *Reality and Humean Supervenience: Essays on the Philosophy of David Lewis.* Rowman & Littlefield.

MEDIATIONAL FIELDS AND DYNAMIC SITUATED SENSES[*]

CARLOS MARIO MÁRQUEZ SOSA[**]

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the notions of mediational fields and dynamic situated senses as a way to identify the structure of experiences, thoughts and their relations. To reach this purpose I draw some lessons from the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell about the structure of experience, from Cussins's conception of mediational contents, and from Evans's account of singular senses.

I notice firstly that McDowell's answer to Dreyfus consists in developing a practical and demonstrative notion of the products of our conceptual capacities. A conception that entails that human experience is not entirely characterised in terms of an abstract specification of truth-conditions. McDowell and Cussins endorse Evans's conception of singular senses. A specification that takes into account the dynamic and situated abilities involved in making reference. Whereas the first argues in favour of a conceptual conception of experience, the second one argues in favour of a nonconceptual conception. I introduce the notions of mediational fields and dynamic situated senses to argue that both converge in conceiving the contents of experience as mediational and not reducible to an abstract specification of truth-conditions.

My proposal is to define a bidimensional space orthogonal to the conceptual/nonconceptual, experience/thought, know-how/know-that dichotomies. Cognitive contents are ways to disclose the world both as mediational fields and as referential structures. The degree in which those elements are presented determine different varieties of cognition. I use the previous notions to develop the sketch of an account of singular, objective and contextual ways of cognition, and to argue that it is better to begin an enquiry about cognition with notions that do not presuppose a distinction between practical and intellectual capacities.

Keywords: Mediational Contents, Nonconceptual contents, Dynamic Thoughts, Singular Reference, Context-Sensitivity.

[**] University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. E-mail: cmmarquezs@usp.br.

1. Introduction

I will present an overview of what I call mediational fields and dynamic situated senses. My purpose is to show how these notions can be useful to characterise the structure of experiences and thoughts. Specifically, I will provide a first approximation, and show how these notions are useful to characterise singular ways of cognition.[1]

In order to introduce the topics, firstly, I will draw some lessons from the famous debate between Dreyfus and McDowell, and from Cussins's distinction between mediational and referential contents. Secondly, I will show why the notion of mediational fields is required to complete Evans's notion of dynamic situated senses, and how this conception is useful to account for situated cases of cognition. Finally, I will provide one reason to consider that the previous notions are more useful than the know-how/know-that distinction.

2. Mediational Contents and The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate

To begin with, I would like to note that even accepting McDowell's characterization of human experience as essentially permeated with conceptuality, that by itself is not a view -as McDowell recognises- against the possibility of postulating other kinds of cognition. Experiences of non-rational animals, although non-essentially permeated by conceptuality, are still animal-involved experiences that disclose for them an environment of mediational and motivational forces.[2] The experience of a non-rational animal may not disclose the world as a truth-conditional structure, but it could perfectly provide openness to the world as a motivational and mediational space. A domain presented as a fabric of affordances, solicitations, and sensorimotor patterns of guidance. A space of pulling and pushing -attractive and repulsive- forces, as Dreyfus would say (2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2013). A field of spatiotemporally situated structures of trails and rhythms of activity, as Cussins would say (1992, 2003, 2012). A realm of sensorimotor understandings, as Alva Nöe would say (2004, 2012).[3]

---

[1] By 'singular ways of cognition' I mean modes of presentation of particulars.

[2] See McDowell, 2007a, pp. 343-344.

[3] I do not pretend to reduce the three views to each other. What I am saying is that they converge in the conception of experience as motivationally and mediationally active.

McDowell (2007a, 2007b, 2013) points out that it is a quick and not a very good argument to move from the possibility of describing the structure of the experience of non-rational animals as permeated by a kind of knowledge that presents the world as a mediational field, to the ascription of nonconceptual contents as the ground of human experiences.[4] I will assume here that McDowell's view is, by and large, correct. That is, in order to make sense of the epistemological claim according to which *our* experiences of the world justify *our* judgments, we should admit that conceptual capacities exercised at the level of the constitution of thoughts are already operative and actualised at the level of the constitution of experiences.[5] Conceptual capacities can be actualised in experience in a different way from the way in which they are actualised in thought. For instance as thematic and propositional at the level of thoughts, and non-thematic or non-propositional -but categorial- at the level of experience.[6] That by itself, however, does not constitute an argument against the possibility of other ways of cognition in which the world is presented or disclosed as a space that is not or need not be truth-conditionally structured. Even accepting that human experience involves -and requires- passive exercises of conceptual capacities, that does not imply -as McDowell (2008) recognises- that the products of conceptual capacities in experience are truth-conditionally or propositionally specified.

How are those ways of experience in which the world is not presented as a truth-conditional structure? Is it *sui generis* and nonconceptual, or is it another way in which conceptual contents are presented? Those are genuine questions that are not solved by assuming McDowell's epistemological stance against the Given, and against detached conceptuality.[7] In order to tackle those questions I will derive in parallel some lessons from Cussins's distinction between mediational and referential contents.

Cussins (1990, 1992, 2003, 2012)[8] provides a positive characterisation of two varieties of modes of presentation relative to two different kinds of normative guidance, and relative two different kinds of epistemic commitments. Two kinds of 'being-answerable-to-the-world'. Truth-guided contents present the world as a realm of referents: objects, n-tuples, properties, relations, possible worls, etc. Environmental

---

[4] See McDowell, 2007a., p.343.

[5] That claim is disputable but I will not dispute it here.

[6] See McDowell, 2008.

[7] On the notion of detached conceptuality see McDowell, 2007a, p. 339, p. 341, p. 342, p. 349. McDowell, 2007b, p. 366, p. 367, p. 369; McDowell, 2013.

[8] For a critical revision see Murillo, 2019.

enactive guiding contents present the world as a realm of mediations: affects, affordances, solicitations, that are subject to glide-path normative feedback[9], and have subjectivity or Janus-faced valence.[10]

Mediational contents present the world as a NASAS-structure: an intertwined fabric of Normative feedback, Affordances, Solicitations, Affects, and Subjectivity-valence.[11] This corresponds to what I call mediational fields: a disclosure of an environment as a domain of guiding forces that relate agents with objects of their cognition as mediations and motivations for their activities. All of this without pre-determining an ontological distinction between objects, agents, mental contents, and the referents of mental contents. That is precisely one of my points for calling them fields.[12]

Examples of mediational contents are states that highly depend on their conditions of production, and are motivationally active from those conditions. Profiles of pain and joy, scratchy feelings, 'yummy' and 'yucky' experiences, are basic examples of NASAS-structures.[13] Those states drive the agent to behave in some specific way, and demand a punctual way to be committed with his surroundings. Those ways of behaving do not constitute merely reactive responses, but normative patterns linked to the environmental possibilities of action, and to the agent's bodily constitution.[14] A fabric of affects, affordances, and solicitations environmentally placed and embodied serve as mediations for developing cognitive activities, and guide the improvement of those activities.

---

[9] That is, the kind of guidance that a plane is subject to when an alarm is activated just in case it deviates from its route. On the notion of glide-path normativity see Cussins, 2012, p.29; Dreyfus, 2007a, p. 258, p. 362; 2005, p.107; 2013, pp. 30-31.

[10] That is, mediational contents face both mind and world at the same time. On Janus-faced valence see Cussins, 1992, p. 657. On subjectivity-valence see Cussins, 2012, p. 25, pp. 27-30.

[11] On NASAS-structure see Cussins, 2012, p. 29. The notion of mediational contents corresponds to Cussins's development of the notion of nonconceptual contents, firstly introduced in Cussins (1990), and derived from Evans's conception (1982, p. 123, pp. 157-158 and p. 227). Cussins (1992, 2003) provides a positive characterization in terms of stable mediations in activities. Cussins (2012) reviews the notion of nonconceptual contents, and introduces mediational contents as modes of cognition that present the world as a NASAS-structure. Although the characterization of nonconceptual contents as a NASAS-structure is explicitly presented in Cussins's (2012), it can be found through Cussins's entire work.

[12] I use the notion of field in the mathematical sense of vector field. The straightforward idea is that spaces of attractive and repulsive forces can be represented as tensors in vector fields.

[13] See Cussins, 2012, p. 24, p.29, p. 27 footnote 6, and p. 30.

[14] That at least is the idea: meditational contents are not dynamic reactive dispositions, but patterns of normative guidance.

It is useful to contrast the disclosure of an environment as a mediational field (*i.e.*, as a NASAS-structure) to a disclosure of a world as a referential domain (*i.e.*, as an extensional structure of objects and n-tuples). Mediational contents present the world as dynamic and situated patterns of trails and rhythms. Referential contents present the world as stable structures of truth-makers. Mediational contents change according to how the flow of activity in the environment changes. Referential contents are general and relatively stable: it is possible to recombine them in the construction of new thoughts. Mediational contents are punctuated and relatively unstable. They are open for all to be followed, but it is possible to follow them only from the particular situation and disposition in which the agent is related to them. Only for a particular agent in a particular position an affordance like *go out through this open space* solicits him to have an agent-involving experience of *going out through that open space*. Any other agent is able to have that experience but only the one who is placed in that specific condition is driven to do that.[15]

Cussins uses the distinction to draw a theoretic line between thoughts and experiences. The characteristic contents of judgments are susceptible to evaluations in terms of truth-conditions, and present the world as a realm of reference. The characteristic contents of experience are susceptible to evaluations in terms of skillful performance and activity guidance, and present the world as a realm of mediations. It seems to me, however, that in order to see the relevance of Cussins's points, there is no need to map his distinction neither onto the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual contents, nor onto the distinction between experience and thought. It is not necessary to argue in favour of the postulation of two kinds of content in opposition to two aspects of the same kind of content to see that both elements are required to characterise human cognition. It is also possible to conceive both aspects as involved in the constitution of both thoughts and experiences.[16]

McDowell's arguments against the postulation of a nonconceptual level of contents for explaining humans' cognitive ability to have world-involving experiences -and world-involving thoughts- leave untouched Cussins's -and Dreyfus's- characterization of a way to disclose or present the world as a mediational field.

---

[15] See Cussins 2012, pp. 23-29; Cussins, 2003, p. 134, pp. 149-159. For the distinction between 'affordance-facts' and 'affordance's solicitations', parallel to the point I am making here, see Dreyfus, 2007a, p.357.

[16] That is the main reason why I prefer to talk more about meditational fields than about nonconceptual contents. Other reasons are that I want to introduce the mathematical notion of fields as vector fields, and ethnogeographic descriptions of fields as extensions of territory, or extensions of carved lands (landscapes). But I will not pursue these developments here.

More crucially, it leaves untouched a view in which judicative contents are permeated by, and fundamentally grounded over, our abilities to disclose the world as a mediational field. The main reason is that the distinctions conceptual/nonconceptual, mediational/referential, experience/thought can be conceived as orthogonal. Since the distinctions are transversal, we can accept McDowell's characterization of human cognition as mediational and conceptual. That is, conceptual contents give us access to worldly objects -in experience and thought- as guidances in activity and as referents. McDowell explicitly denies that the contents of human experience are nonconceptual, but he accepts that they are mediational.

In the famous debate, Dreyfus is at pains to argue that mediational fields, or as he calls them following Merleau-Ponty, the *space of motivations* or the space of *motor intentionality*[17], constitute a *sui generis* space independent of the logical space of reasons and the logical space of causes. McDowell's line of defence consists mainly in noticing that his notion of conceptuality is not a notion of detached, un-situated and non-motivational contents. That is a notion that is not reduced to a specification of senses in terms of abstract and non-contextual determinations of truth-conditions. He shares with Evans a dynamic and situated conception of Fregean senses that permeates -together with his Aristotelian conception of practical rationality- his view about contents. So that, it is perfectly coherent for him to state the following:

> I do not dispute that perceptual responsiveness to affordances, necessarily bound up with embodied coping skills, is something we share with other animals. And I can accept that there is a sense in which familiarity with affordances is a background for our openness to objects. But I can still hold that our openness to affordances is part of the way of being that is special to rational animals.
> What perception discloses to human beings is not restricted to affordances (…) What is right about describing openness to affordances as providing a background is this: the fact that perception discloses a world to us is intelligible only in a context that includes the embodied coping competence, the responsiveness to affordances, that we share with other animals. (McDowell, 2007a, p. 344)

It seems also appropriate to continue McDowell's line of thought without disputing his point about practical and situated conceptuality adding the following:

---

[17] See Dreyfus, 2005, pp. 56-61, and footnote 47; Dreyfus, 2007a, pp. 362-364; Dreyfus, 2007b, p. 107; Dreyfus, 2007c, p. 375. Merleau-Ponty, 2002, pp. 126-180, pp. 203-211, p. 226, p. 238, pp. 244-246, pp. 291-292, p. 346, p. 370.

what perception discloses to human beings is not restricted to an *abstract specification* of truth-conditional structures. That is, human cognitive contents are not specifiable in terms of non-contextual assignments of objects and n-tuples. We can even deny that there are two *sui generis* kinds of content. As I said before, the distinction between mediational and referential contents can be orthogonal to the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual contents. It does not seem, however, a good idea to deny that there are two aspects manifestly present in the constitution of thoughts and experiences: the disclosure of a domain in terms of the structures required to determine the truth of a thought or the correctness of an experience, and the disclosure of the domain in terms of a field of cognitive guidance in the activities of speaking, thinking, perceiving, and moving through space. It is not necessary to argue that the spaces of reasons, causes and motivations are mutually disjoint, in order to accept that Dreyfus's and Cussins's phenomenological characterization of nonconceptual contents is not reducible to abstract specifications of truth-conditions. There may not be a way to draw a precise line between situated specifications of truth-conditional contents relative to mediational specifications. However, a mediational specification of contents is not reducible to an abstract specification of truth-conditions.

Dreyfus argues that to accept the involvement of conceptual capacities in the sensorimotor level implies to fall into the Myth of the Mental. McDowell argues that to deny the involvement of conceptual capacities in the sensorimotor level implies to fall into the Myth of the Given. I concede to McDowell that we do not need to deny the involvement of conceptual capacities at the sensorimotor and motivational level, and I concede to Dreyfus and Cussins that the sensorimotor and motivational level is not exhausted by an abstract specification of truth-conditions and correctness-conditions. That is the point in trading the notion of nonconceptual contents for the notion of mediational contents. Thus, the contents of our experience can be situated concepts motivationally active and mediationally driven. The point in trading the notion of mediational contents for the notion of mediational fields is to emphasise that the difference between referential and mediational contents is that we have available two mutually disjoint ways to structure a domain, not two mutually disjoint kinds of cognition.

3. Situated Concepts

The distinction in virtue of the type of ontology that is presented (as a mediational field or as a referential domain), or by the type of normativity that governs its structure (the normativity of truth or the normative of guidance in

activity), is useful to see that not all notions of conceptuality are situated enough to support the intrinsic motivational aspect of acting on behalf of an experience. Not all specifications of satisfaction conditions are situated enough to structure cognitions as guidances in activity.

Every animal accesses its environment through its own agent-involving way of cognition. Those different cognitions can be characterised as varieties of ways of structuring its surroundings. From more punctuated (structures anchored to one particular point of view) to more general ways (structures enforced through different points of view). A continuum that has at its *limiting points* ways of disclosing a world as a *pure* field of mediations, and as a *pure* domain of referents. Cognitions are attempts that have as their products items (contents or representations) whose structure is more or less close to one of those ways to disclose a domain. There may not actually be in the sublunary realm a form of cognition as *purely* referential or *purely* mediational. But environmentally situated specifications of mediational fields and abstract specifications of truth-makers can serve, in turn, as orthogonal dimensions to specify different varieties of *stable* kinds of cognition and representation. The characterization of a biological, artificial, or a socio-technical being as a cognitive being, and the way in which a being cognitively structures its environment, ought to be the end -not the beginning- of the enquiry. In this task, mediational and referential specifications can serve as orthogonal dimensions to empirically identify kinds of stable cognitions in different niches.

Evans developed the idea of relating having thoughts about particulars to the requirement of being cognitively able to discriminate one item from others of the same class (he called this idea Russell's Principle).[18] The point is to establish a connection between the objectivity of a mental state, and the intrinsic possibility for thoughts of being able to be decomposed. Evans claimed that, at least ideally, thoughts can be decomposed in states that can be recombined with states of the same type (he called this regulative principle the Generality Constraint).[19] So that, in order to be in a state that allows me to discriminate objectively a feature -a state that allows me to have a thought about that feature as an objective particular- it should be possible for my mental state to satisfy the generality constraint. The crucial points here are the following: firstly, thoughts are decomposable -at least in the ideal case-. Secondly, in order for a mental state to be directed to an objective worldly feature -a reality independent of the agent and its actual and dispositional states- that state should be able to interact with other mental states in a way that

---

[18] See Evans, 1982, p. 75, pp. 89-93.
[19] See Evans, 1982, pp. 100-105.

guarantees that it is not anchored to its situation of production. That is, a mental state about an objective worldly feature should be generalisable enough to be able to be had or applied in other situations.[20]

To the extent that [this pain], [this red], [that hue], [that cube] are concepts -constituents of propositions- it must be possible to articulate them with other concepts. Perceptual states -insofar as they are directed to independent items- should also be able to obey to a grammar of combination. In this context, it is important to note the following: a sensory state like [appears red], a physiological state like [irritation x in the retina] or a neurological state like [activation x in the brain] are states whose conditions of individuation are relative to the subject, or to the representational apparatus of the subject. Those states, like the first ones, can be conceived as internal. However, only the first ones are available in the experience of the subject as states that are about things independent of the subject's constitution. Evans demanded that in order for internal states to be available in the experience of the subject as states about things independent of the subject's constitution, they should be able to be articulated with other states that can be prompt in other situations.[21] The point is that the specification of objective states[22] depends on those states being part of a logical space. The sense of the thought [that cube is red] is determined by the position it occupies in a logical space as the point of intersection between two logical dimensions: (1) ..., [that sphere is red], [that cube is red], [that pyramid is red] ...; and (2) ... [that cube is red], [that cube is green], [that cube is blue] ....[23] The complete thought takes priority over the form of decomposition. That is, only in the context of a complete thought does it make sense to ask about the contribution or value of each constituent and about the form of composition. But the complete thought and its form of decomposition is dependent also on the dimensions of the logical space in which it appears.

To be able to satisfy the generality constraint should not be identified with being detachable. A content specified by an abstract condition clearly satisfies the constraint. An abstract specification of [cube], for instance, satisfies the constraint and can be detached from specific samples of particular cubes. But that is not true neither of all species of concepts nor of all species of contents. As McDowell

---

[20] See Evans, 1982, p.103.

[21] Evans prefers to talk about conceptual abilities, and not about episodes (see Evans, 1982, p.101). I do not see too much danger in talking about states only to introduce the general points.

[22] Objective states in the sense of being states about objective features of the world.

[23] See Evans, 1982, p. 104. For a similar requirement to the case of sense impressions see Sellars, 1991, p. 94.

explains, the *demonstrative* concept [that shade] exploits the present of the sample, and in virtue of its relation with the sample need not be characterised as detached –or as an abstraction- from its occasion of use. *Demonstrative* concepts are specified relative to their situated conditions of production but are not anchored to those situations. They are specified relative to the sample demonstrated, but can be recombined with other concepts in the conceptual-box of the subject.[24] Something similar can be said about McDowell's (2008) categorial characterization of the contents of humans' experiences. To be singular and situated does not necessarily exclude neither generality nor conceptuality.[25]

The generality constraint is useful to draw the limits of *conceptuality* (pure or impure, abstract or situated). A *concept* must be something capable of being recombined with other concepts in the conceptual stock of a subject. Purely referential contents satisfy the generality constraint. But it does not follows that the limits of mindedness and contentfulness are traced by the generality constraint. Purely mediational contents do not satisfy it. Since they are anchored, like neural and physiological irritations, to their situation of production. In their pure form, mediational contents are not recombinable with other contents or with contents in other situations.

It seems that human experience and thought is neither purely punctuated nor purely general. One feature of *our* experience and thought is that their contents are holistic. Human experiences are not reduced to punctuated perspectives nor to an objectivity from nowhere. We have the ability to develop more objective views from punctuated ones, but at every time situated from a point of view. A frisbee coming from here in this way and with this seeming circular shape can be perceived as the same frisbee coming from there in that way and with that seeming elliptic shape. We can react with a movement here and now, and with different movements there and a few seconds later, to capture the same stable perception and the same stable thought. The structure of the content is dependent to some extent on our abilities to transform *this* punctuated *feature here and now* to something more general and objective. Is *this feature here and now* something that can exclusively be experienced from a particular point of view and not be experienced from other points? The

---

24 Or so is argued in McDowell, 1990; and McDowell, 1996, ch. 2. For a counterargument see Anderson, P. and Murillo, A. 2011; and Kelly, 2001, 2003.

25 McDowell endorses the generality constraint even after clarifying the propositional conception that emerges from (1996, ch. 2) by making explicit his commitment with a non-propositional and categorial conception of the contents of experience in (2008). This can be appreciated in his reply (Lindgaard, 2008, pp. 258-267) to Travis's 'Reason's Reach' (Travis, 2013, pp. 118-143; Lindgaard, 2008, pp. 176, 169).

answer depends to some extent on the abilities we possess: if we are able to develop a more stable structure of objects and referents from the presence of features distributed through our surroundings.

McDowell's argumentation is directed to show that in order to guide our actions, the structure of our cognition does not need to exclude the postulation of conceptual guidance in the flow of activity. It should be so if we are able to justify our judgments based on our perceptions, and rationally respond for the consequences of our actions. *Demonstrative* concepts need not be detached from occasions of use. Furthermore, they play a practical role. That argumentation entails that the structure of our cognition does not exclude the disclosure of the world as a mediational field. But demonstrative concepts are still concepts. They constitute a *sub-region* of stable cognitions in a wider space of possibilities determined by our dimensions: mediational and referential specifications.

The characterization of conceptual contents in terms of situated truth-conditions entails to attribute a mediational role to them. Consequently, it should be possible to specify the product of conceptual capacities in terms of the relations and abilities that mediate and motivate activities relative to the embodied constitution of the agent and its environmental possibilities of action. Conceptual contents would not be entirely characterised as situated if they were not able to be -at least partially-specified in this embodied and ecological way.[26] But there is no need to oppose McDowell's view to a position that takes our abilities to disclose a motivational and mediational world as fundamental and essential to all animated kinds of cognition.

Reflecting about the notion of nonconceptual contents introduced in Evans's (1982, p. 123, pp. 157-158 and p. 227), McDowell (1996, p. 49)[27] notices that when Evans talks about perceptual experience he links the level of sensorimotor connections with our abilities to think, reason and apply concepts.[28] McDowell (1996, ch. 3) accuses him of falling into the Myth of the Given: 'in Evans's account of experience, receptivity figures in the guise of the perceptual element of the informational system, and his idea is that the perceptual system produces its

---

[26] If our understanding capacities were specified as independent to embodied and ecological abilities, there would be some reasons to insists in accusing McDowell of being intellectualist. McDowell's characterization of engaged intellects implies that the characterization of understanding capacities is dependent on embodied and ecological conditions. I use the qualification 'at least partially' to point out that conceptual capacities should be understood in the context of *a species* of embodied coping skills. There should be both rational and non-rational varieties of embodied coping skills. See McDowell, 2007a, p. 339.

[27] See also Cussins 1992, p. 655.

[28] See Evans, 1982, p. 158.

content-bearing states independently of any operations of spontaneity' (McDowell, 1996, p. 51). But McDowell also notices that precisely because Evans relates the sensorimotor level of nonconceptual contents with exercises of rational abilities, his account of perceptual demonstrative reference is compatible with McDowell's claim about the unboundedness of conceptuality.[29] The view that takes our abilities to disclose a motivational and mediational world as fundamental does not need to exclude the involvement of conceptual abilities. That is, the motivational and meditational level of cognition does not need to be conceived as 'an outer boundary of the conceptual realm' (McDowell, 1996, p. 107). Furthermore, it should not be conceived as an outer boundary if we are to avoid the Myth of the Given. What we need, if we would like to insist in the importance of the sensorimotor level, is to complete McDowell's story with the Evansian part, and to provide a notion of nonconceptual contents that does not introduce them as outer boundaries to the space of modes of presentation and normativity. That is precisely the point of resorting to Cussins's definition of nonconceptual contents.

4. Evans's on Singular Reference and Dynamic Situated Senses

Evans (1982, 1985) and McDowell (1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2005) argue that specifying cognitive forms of access to the world involves specifying the semantic structure accessed. As a consequence, they reject descriptivism, the postulation of senses as situation-independent criteria that serve as intermediaries in the determination of reference[30], and conceive the notion of object-dependent senses.[31] The reading according to which Fregean senses are equivalent to context-independent criteria of identification is no more than a surplus of the descriptivist view. They showed how to ascribe senses to indexicals and demonstratives[32] -the paradigm of context-dependent expressions and direct reference-, and to names[33] -the paradigm of rigid designation.

Evans's main point consists in arguing that speakers' knowledge of truth-conditions are intrinsically related to exercises of the dynamic abilities that allow them to maintain the same informational links to the same objects through successive

---

[29] See McDowell, 1996, pp.106-107.

[30] In this line of thought see McDowell, 2007a, p. 239, p. 342, p. 344, p.345 and footnote 13.

[31] Contrary to Searle (1980), Kaplan (1989), Perry (1977, 1993), Recanati (2004), (2005), (2009a), (2009b), (2010), Travis (2008), among others, who argue that context sensitivity entails abandoning the project of a Fregean theory of meaning.

[32] Evans 1982, ch 6; 1985, pp. 291-321.

[33] McDowell, 1998a.

experiences, and to locate the same objects through their changing sensibility to features distributed in the environment. This demand requires to specify the capacities and situated relations that allow speakers to maintain a stable relation with the referents of their perceptions, thoughts and actions, through spatiotemporal changes. He requests to provide a substantive characterisation of Russell's Principle. That is, a framework for enquiring about the links between the speaker's knowledge of truth-conditions and his ability to identify referents. Such framework corresponds to what Evans called the Fundamental Level of Thought. At the Fundamental Level, the difference between one object and another depends on a canonical discrimination in a *fundamental ground of difference.*[34] A fundamental identification that can be captured -in the case of thoughts about material objects- with a criterion like the following: 'the object of the category C located in (x, y, z, t)', since objects of the same type in different spatiotemporal positions can be qualitatively identical and numerically different.

Evans's view is to a good extent derived from Strawson's ([1959/2005], ch. 2). According to Strawson our ability to locate objects is a precondition for having states directed to items independent of those states. A conception of a universe of distributed features as an objective world requires for the subject to be able to identify and re-identify those features even when he is not experiencing them. The requirement of re-identification involves the development of a criterion that makes it possible to numerically distinguish states that are qualitatively identical. Strawson considers the case of a universe constituted exclusively by sounds, and argues that for the subject to be related to sounds as objective features it is necessary that he has something analogous to our experience of space. This analogous of our experience of space -a pseudo-space- can be extracted from purely auditory features if each experience is accompanied by the experience of a master-sound whose variations in tone allow to place sounds at different levels, enabling in this way the numerical distinction between qualitatively identical features. Under those conditions it would be possible to formulate hypotheses such as the following: sound M preserves its continuous existence in the tone (or position) l of the master-sound, although S (the subject) in position l-k does not perceive it. If S moves to position l of the master-sound from the position l-k he would be able to perceive the sound that is in l. Therefore, it would be possible for S to postulate the continuous existence of the sound M, whether or not experienced, because apart from the experience of M there is a condition that coincides with experiences of M.

---

[34] See Evans, 1982, p.107.

Evans objected to Strawson that the postulation of a pseudo-space is susceptible to a dispositional reduction,[35] and consequently cannot help us to derive the construction of objective properties from a universe of placed features.[36] He, however, did not question the general enterprise of relating wayfinding abilities (abilities to locate things in the world, and to locate himself relative to those things) with conditions of objective reference. In fact, he states the following: 'it is, then, the capacity to find one's way about, and to discover, or to understand how to discover, where in the world one is, in which knowledge of what it is for identity propositions of the form $[\pi = p]$ to be true consist' (Evans, 1982, p. 162). Where the identity proposition $[\pi = p]$ identifies, p, a non-fundamental identification of a place, with, π, a fundamental identification of a place. That is, to know the conditions of identity between an identification of a place relative to the sensorimotor dispositions of the agent, and the identification of that place as distinct from other places in the *fundamental ground of difference* (for instance, as a location in a cognitive map), is required in order to understand indexical thoughts about places (here-thoughts). Later he will extend this fundamental requirement to the understanding of demonstrative thoughts about concrete particulars (that-thoughts), and self-ascriptions of thoughts (I-thoughts).

The postulation of a fundamental level of thought is required to explain how a cognitive agent is able to develop an objective and stable representation of a domain from a subjective representation of distributed features. There are three elements in Evans's work from which it is possible to derive the main tenets of such explanation. The first element is the postulation of dynamic capacities. Reference to an object has as a precondition a propensity that manifests itself in the course of a series of experiences. The same singular content is preserved by exercising the dynamic ability of keeping track of the object.[37] The second element is the postulation of serial system of location. It is possible to distinguish between qualitatively identical objects by their position in a regular order based on travels; a map of courses whose order depends on both the way the world is arranged and the movements of the subject through the world. Those travel-based representations are subject to a degree of regularity such that they allow us to formulate conditionals of the following form: if I would like to have an experience of class e_3, and I am in an experience of class e_1, I would have to go through an experience of the class e_2, since every time I have an experience e_1, it follows a e_2 experience, and every time

---

[35] See Evans, 1985, pp. 249-290.
[36] See Evans, 1985, pp. 254-255.
[37] See Evans, 1985, p. 309; and Evans, 1985, p. 311.

I have an experience e_2, it follows a e_3 experience.[38] That is, experiences can be arranged dispositionally around the agent's actual experience in an egocentric stream. The third element consists in conceiving spatiotemporal relations as not reducible to the serial conception. That is, the postulation of a simultaneous system of relations in which the identification of each location depends on the relative positions occupied by objects, not of the place they occupy relative to the subject's motion. A system that allows to formulate hypotheses about the subject's routes from different positions, and that is not reducible to each route of the subject's motion.

If the features experienced count as objective, the subject should be able to locate them as independent to each dispositional arrangement of his experience. He can update such allocentric arrangement by taking into account changes in the things he finds through his navigations, but the allocentric arrangement is not reducible to his dispositional findings. Equipped with the serial system it is possible for the subject to formulate conditionals of the form: If I have an experience of class e_1 and I would like to have an experience of class e_3, I would have to go through an experience of class e_2. Equipped with a simultaneous system, it would be possible to know how to locate different streams of experience, so that he would be able to formulate conditionals confirmed by independent courses of experience.[39]

What I call dynamic situated senses corresponds to an intertwined conception of the previous conditions: (1) Objects' location in a travel-based order depends on the possibility of locating them in our conception of space as a field of simultaneous relations, and our ability to track dynamically each object in that field. (2) Objects' location in our simultaneous conception of the space is dependent on our travel-based serial system of location, and our dynamic ability to track them. (3) Our ability to track objects depends also on both our ability to develop a serial and a simultaneous system of location. Dynamic adjustments between a system of spatial egocentric travel-based representation and a system of spatial allocentric public representation, would allow the agent to be in possession of knowledge in virtue of which it is possible to discriminate objectively the referent as something independent of his states, and as something independent of an absolute frame of reference.

---

[38] see Evans, 1985, pp. 255-256.
[39] See Evans 1985, pp. 289-290.

5. Dynamic Situated Senses and Mediational Fields

Like Evans respect to Strawson, Cussins (1999) raised some internal objections to Evans's project without objecting to the general enterprise of relating wayfinding and tracking abilities with the conditions for having singular thoughts. His main point is the following: the identification of an object based on the *fundamental ground of difference* is frame-dependent. If the *fundamental ground of difference* is introduced as an absolute framework of reference, it will not provide a base to explain how to develop objective representations from distributed features. If the identification of an object depends on a frame of reference (*e.g.*, a predetermined cognitive map), it becomes difficult to draw a difference between cases of reference to real objects, and reference to fictional objects, since what counts as an object is determined by the frame.

The difficulty that Cussins raises lies in postulating a formal and absolute criterion to determine the difference between numerical and qualitative identifications. Just as in the case of Strawson's pseudo-space, the postulation of a *fundamental ground of difference* as a condition for objective cognition requires to determine discriminating profiles non-reducible to an absolute frame. That is, it is necessary to conceive the *fundamental ground of difference* as something that is constituted by their occupants, their relations, and their abilities, and not as something independently pre-given. It is crucial to develop a conception of fundamental identifications as something different of dispositional identifications, but also as something different of identifications dependent on a frame of reference. Here is where the notion of mediational fields becomes useful.

According to Cussins (1999) to avoid fame-dependent identifications, our ability to refer should depend on continuous adjustments of several mediational fields. That is, to refer to singular requires to develop stable referential cognitions through a fabric of adjustable mediational fields. The presentation of a stable world through situated structures that change is dependent on constantly adjusting different patterns of activity. Thus, fundamental identifications will be conceived as identifications dependent on the relations and the abilities of the occupants of the ground of difference.

The resulting view corresponds to the following: It does not make sense to enquire for the content of an item in an isolated way, or abstracted from the intertwined set of situations in which the tracking and locational capacities are exercised. Referential contents in a situation are determined relative to a series of situations. Through all those situations the agent keeps track of activity patterns to preserve the same referential content. Forms of thinking the referent are ways of

keeping track of the referent trough minor changes. So that, a subject is thinking about the same referent despite minor differences in the background, because the occasion in which he grasps a referential content depends on adjustments that stabilise the content to each situation. Referential contents are determined by how they are stabilised relative adjustments of mediational fields.

This view can be applied to different cases of situated cognition. Consider for instance the following cases:[40] (1) I perceive a cup in front of me, my perception carries information about the cup. But also about my position with respect to the cup, so that I am able to move my body to grab that cup. (2) It is raining and I utter the sentence 'It is raining'. My utterance carries information about the weather. To adequately understand the utterance -an act on behalf of its content- I should be able to determine the place where it is raining. (3) I drive avoiding obstacles without looking at the speedometer in my motorcycle. I have knowledge of the speed that guides me, even if I do not know that *I am going at speed x*. In the first case, I do not represent the position of my body as part of the content about which my perception is. In the second, I utter 'It is raining' but I do not register the place as part of the thought expressed. In the third, I have a practical knowledge of the speed that allows me to avoid obstacles without crashing. All these cases share something: it seems necessary to have a knowledge (of my position, of the place, and of the speed) that guides my actions, although it is not necessary to have a referential knowledge of it. What I know is not presented as an object about which the perceptual content is, or as an articulated constituent of the thought.[41] It is presented as something that allows me to carry out the action. To know my position allows me to move my arm properly to grab the cup. To know the place where it is raining tells me if it is necessary to take the umbrella. To environmentally know the speed draws me to drive skilfully in traffic. The knowledge of the positions of my body, the knowledge of the place where I am, and the knowledge of my speed relative to the grade of proximity with respect to other bodies, is crucial to determine the truth of the thoughts [I will grab that cup], [it is raining], [I am going too fast]. Nevertheless, it is not a knowledge that presents all features as objects of my experience or my thought. Neither the first content is about a position, nor the second about a place, nor the third about a determinate speed. If I want to grab the cup in front of me, I can move my hands in many ways avoiding obstacles. Adjusting my perceptual states to the pattern of activity is what allows me to keep the content stable despite changes in ways to reach the goal. By adjusting my sensorimotor

---

[40] The first two examples come from Perry (1993, pp. 205-226). The third example comes from Cussins (2003).

[41] The notion of 'articulated constituents' comes from Perry (1993, pp. 205-226).

states to the activity pattern, I have knowledge of my position relative to other objects. A knowledge that remains stable across adjustments required at every moment. What unifies the determination of the same content through minor changes is to adjust patterns that enable my activity in different ways, so that the same referential content is preserved. These adjustments allow me to group representations of different spatiotemporally distributed features as pointing to the same stable object of perception, action and thought. It would not be possible to assign referents to representational vehicles, if there were no such tendencies to preserve stable senses through different situations.

6. Concluding Remarks

Mediational contents can be specified resorting to the embodied abilities required to cope with the surroundings, not to the conditions of the world that makes the content true, correct, or accurate.[42] Mediational contents are 'correctings of activity' (Cussins, 2012, p. 30), not correctness-conditions.[43] They can be specified also as structures that mediate and improve the performance of an activity. Referential contents are usually specified by determining the conditions that make them true, correct, or accurate. They can be specified also as the products of ecological and mediational conceptual capacities.

Let us consider now the know-how/know-that distinction. Some philosophers believe that it is useful to describe the structure of experiences as the products of sensorimotor capacities in terms of know-how clauses, and to describe the structure of thoughts as the products of understanding capacities in terms of know-that clauses. Some of them think that a nonconceptual characterization of the contents of experience and a conceptual characterization of the contents of thoughts can be mapped onto the distinction between these two kinds of knowledge. So that we should say things like the following: the same person in different ways or in different states can have or exploit different kinds of knowledge about the same domains. That person is in one cognitive state when she is *doing* something, and is another cognitive state when she is *thinking* about or expressing what she is doing. An expert, for instance, has practical knowledge of his domain of expertise when he is *performing* the task, and intellectual knowledge when he is *explaining* what he is or was doing. When I catch a frisbee I am able to exhibit my knowledge simply by catching frisbees in different occasions; but I am also able to exhibit my knowledge

---

[42] See Cussins 1992, pp. 655-658.
[43] See Cussins, 2012, p. 26.

by explaining all the states and transitions of activity required to complete the task, from the initial move to the final one. Whereas non-human animals have practical knowledge of their surroundings and know how to perform a task according to what the environment affords and solicits, human animals have intellectual knowledge and know that something is the case.

Unfortunately, the know-how/know-that distinction will not settle the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists. Knowing how to catch a frisbee in the air, and knowing that that is a frisbee coming from there, can be characterised as cases of conceptual or of nonconceptual cognition. A nonconceptualist will say that when I and my dog know how to catch the frisbee, what is going on is that the frisbee affords or solicits to be caught. We both are able to perform the bodily movements required to catch the frisbee (maybe after a period of training). Only I know that those performances realise the concept [catching a frisbee], but that is the product of intellectual -not practical- capacities, and corresponds to another kind of knowledge. A conceptualist will say that whereas my dog is not able to, and does not need to, grasp the concept to be drawn by the affordances and solicitations of the situation, I am able to grasp the concept when I am thinking and when I am performing the activity. The point of dispute is if I grasp -or if I need to grasp- concepts to have experiences, and to know something. Since ascriptions of know-how will be compatible with a nonconceptual and a conceptual characterization of the contents of experience, the distinction will not be useful to determine if I need concepts to have experiences. Even more, knowing how to do something can be characterised as a mode of presentation under which states of the environment are presented as referents. My knowledge of how to catch a frisbee coming from there can be specified as the instantiation in my brain of a sentence of the language in which my sensorimotor system is programmed that is true just of the triple <I, Frisbee, There>. The distinction does not determine if what I know when I know how to catch frisbees is how to deal with n-tuples, or how to follow salient features placed in the environment.

My proposal is to define a bidimensional space. Cognitive contents are ways to disclose the world as mediational forces and referential structures. The grade of presence of those elements determine different varieties of cognition. Whether those varieties are instances of conceptual or nonconceptual contents, or instances of know-that or know-how, depends on presupposing a distinction between intellectual and practical abilities. A distinction we are not entitled to assume from the beginning of the enquiry.

REFERENCES

Almog, J., Perry J., and Wettstein, H. (eds.), 1989. *Themes from Kaplan.* Oxford University Press.

Anderson, P., and Murillo, A., 2011. «El contenido mental no-conceptual y la experiencia perceptual espacial». Revista Colombiana de Filosofía de la Ciencia. Vol. XI (23).

Bermudez, J.L. (ed.), 2005. *Thought, Reference, and Experience: Themes from the philosophy of Gareth Evans.* Oxford University Press.

Cussins, A., 1990. «The Connectionist Construction of Concepts». In Boden M. (ed.) *The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cussins, A., 1992. «Content, Embodiment and Objectivity: The Theory of Cognitive trails». Mind, 101(404), pp. 651-688.

Cussins, A., 1999. «Subjectivity, Objectivity and Frames of References in Evans's Theory of Thought». In *the Electronic Journal for Analytic Philosophy*. https://ejap.louisiana.edu/EJAP/1998/cussins98.html.

Cussins, A., 2003. «Content, Conceptual Content, and Nonconceptual Content». In Gunther Y. (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Cussins, A., 2012. «Environmental Representation of the Body». *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 3(1), pp. 15-32.

Dreyfus, H.L., 2005. «Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise». In *Proceedings and addresses of the American Philosophical Association.* Vol. 79, No. 2, pp. 47-65. American Philosophical Association.

Dreyfus, H.L., 2007a. «The Return of the Myth of the Mental». *Inquiry*, *50*(4), pp. 352-365.

Dreyfus, H., 2007b. «Detachment, Involvement, and Rationality: Are We Essentially Rational Animals?». *Human Affairs*, *17*(2), pp.101-109.

Dreyfus, H.L., 2007c. «Response to McDowell». *Inquiry*, *50*(4), pp. 371-377.

Dreyfus, H.L., 2013. «The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental». In Schear, J. (ed.), *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-world: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate* pp. 15-40*.* Routledge.

Evans, G., 1985. *Collected Papers.* Oxford University Press.

Evans, G., 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gunther, Y. (ed.), 2003. *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kaplan, D., 1989. «On Demonstratives». In Almog, J., Perry J., and Wettstein, H. (eds), *Themes from Kaplan.* Oxford University Press.

Kelly, S., 2001. «Demonstrative Concepts and Experience». *Philosophical Review* 110.3: 397-420.

Kelly, S., 2003. «The Nonconceptual content of Perceptual Experience: Situation Dependence and Fineness of Grain». In Gunther Y. (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lindgaard, J. (ed.), 2008. *John McDowell: Experience, Norm, and Nature*. Blackwell Publishing.

McDowell, J., 1990. «Peacocke and Evans on Demonstrative Content». *Mind*, *99*(394), 255-266.

McDowell, J., 1996. *Mind and World.* Boston: Harvard University Press.

McDowell, J., 1998a. *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Harvard University Press.

McDowell, J., 1998b. *Mind, Value, and Reality*. Harvard University Press.

McDowell, J., 2005. «Evans's Frege». Bermudez, J.L. (ed.) *Thought, Reference, and Experience: Themes from the philosophy of Gareth Evans*, pp.42-65.

McDowell, J., 2007a. «What Myth? ». *Inquiry*, *50*(4), pp. 338-351.

McDowell, J., 2007b. «Response to Dreyfus». *Inquiry*, *50*(4), pp. 366-370.

McDowell, J., 2008. «Avoiding the Myth of the Given». Lindgaard, J. (ed.) *John McDowell: Experience, Norm, and Nature*, pp.1-14. Blackwell Publishing.

McDowell, J., 2013. «The Myth of the Mind as Detached». In Schear, J. (ed.), *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-world: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate,* pp. 41-58. Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M., 2002. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. C. Smith. Routledge.

Murillo, L. A., 2019. «The Content of the Body Representations that Guide Everyday Action». In Organon F 1 (27).

Noë, A., 2004. *Action in Perception*. MIT Press.

Noë, A., 2012. *Varieties of Presence*. Harvard University Press.

Perry, J., 1977. «Frege on Demonstratives». In *Philosophical Review* 86(4) pp. 474-497.

Perry, J., 1993. *The Problem of the Essential Indexical and Other Essays.* Oxford University Press.

Preyer, G. and Peter, G. (eds.), 2005. *Contextualism in Philosophy: Knowledge, Meaning and Truth.* Oxford University Press.

Recanati, F., 2004. *Literal Meaning*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Recanati, F., 2005. «Literalism and Contextualism: Some Varieties». In Preyer, G. and Peter, G. (eds.) *Contextualism in Philosophy: Knowledge, Meaning and Truth.* Oxford University Press

Recanati, F., 2009a. «Compositionality, Flexibility, and Context-Dependence». In W. Hinzen, E. Machery, and M. Werning (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Compositionality*. Unpublished version available at http://jeannicod.ccsd.cnrs.fr/ijn_00222049/en/

Recanati, F., 2009b. «Varieties of Contextualism». In Achourioti, T., Andrade, E., And Staudacher, M., (eds.) *Proceedings of the Amsterdam Graduate Philosophy Conference —Meaning and Truth—*, Department of Philosophy/ILLC, Universiteit van Amsterdam: http://www.illc.uva.nl/Publications/ResearchReports/X-2010-01.text.pdf .

Recanati, F., 2010. *Truth-Conditional Pragmatics.* Oxford University Press.

Searle, J. R., 1980, «The Background of Meaning». In Searle, J. R., Bierwisch, M., and Kiefer, F. (eds.) *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics* (pp. 221-232). Springer, Dordrecht.

Searle, J. R., Bierwisch, M., and Kiefer, F. (eds.), 1980, *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics*. Springer, Dordrecht.

Schear, J. (ed.), 2013. *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-world: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate.* Routledge.

Sellars*,* W., 1991, *Science, Perception and Reality.* Ridgeview Publishing Company.

Strawson, P. F. [1959/2005]. *Individuals: an Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics.* Routledge.

Travis, C., 2008. *Occasion-Sensitivity. Selected Essays*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Travis, C., 2013. *Perception: Essays After Frege.* Oxford University Press.

RETHINKING KNOWLEDGE-THAT AND KNOWLEDGE-HOW: PERFORMANCE, INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK

JUAN FELIPE MIRANDA MEDINA[*]

ABSTRACT. This work approaches the distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that in terms of two complementary concepts: *performance* and *information*. In order to do so, I formulate Ryle's argument of infinite regress in terms of performance in order to show that Stanley and Williamson's counterargument has no real object: both reject the view that the exercise of knowledge-that necessarily requires the previous consideration of propositions. Next, using the concept of *feedback*, I argue that Stanley and Williamson's positive account of knowledge-how in terms of knowledge-that corresponds to the output of the comparison between an intention of action and the perceived outcome of performance. Then, I expound other theories of mind and cognition in which feedback and prediction play a fundamental role in order to explain other ways in which information intervenes in performance—i.e., information is construed as knowledge-that available at subject level that guides performance. Finally, I present some reflections on the impact of the concept of knowledge-how, and possible routes to continue our enquiry on the nature of knowledge.

Keywords: knowledge-how, knowledge-that, information, performance, feedback.

1. Introduction

Philosopher Gilbert Ryle firmly opposed the view that a performance can only be intelligent if the agent observes rules or criteria prior to performing. For Ryle, actions such as a clown tripping to make children laugh, a mathematician considering propositions to prove a theorem, a pianist improvising on a theme, are all intelligent performances in their own right. He proposed the distinction between

---

[*] Ph.D. in Telecommunications and independent researcher in music and dance, Peru. E-mail: juan.miranda@ntnu.no

knowledge-how and knowledge-that[1] in order to argue against what he referred to as the "intellectualist legend" (IL) or the "intellectualist doctrine", which, in Ryle's own words, amounts to the belief that:

> (IL) "A performance of any sort inherits all its title to intelligence from some anterior internal operation of planning what to do".[2]

Arguing that performance is equivalent to exercising knowledge, Ryle claims that knowledge-how is "logically prior" to knowledge-that.[3] His distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that seems to have been accepted uncritically until Stanley and Williamson[4] (referred to as SW henceforth) put forward a strong response asserting, first and foremost, that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that. In so doing, SW at the same time convincingly disproved the claim of some of Ryle's followers that these two forms of knowledge are different on linguistic grounds[5]—i.e., that sentences of the form "Hannah knows how to *F*" are grammatically different from sentences of the form "Hannah knows that *X* is the case". In *Knowing How*, SW present:

> (S1) A refutation of Ryle's argument of infinite regress against the "intellectualist legend".
> (S2) A refutation of Ryle's positive account of knowledge-how which SW take to rely on abilities.
> (S3) A positive account of knowledge-how as a species of knowledge-that.

This work is chiefly concerned with two concepts and their interplay, namely performance and information (i.e., knowledge-that in performance). Thus, I address (S1) and (S3) from different perspectives. Formulating Ryle's argument of infinite regress in terms of performance only (i.e., without resorting to the knowledge-how–knowledge-that distinction) I respond to SW showing that their

---

[1] Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* Vol. 46 / 1945, Oxford University Press, pp. 1-16; Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, Hutchinson University Library, 1949, pp. 26–60.

[2] Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, p. 31. Note that in this work, Ryle phrases consistently IL in a number of ways, for example: "Champions of this legend are apt to try to reassimilate knowing how to knowing that by arguing that intelligent performance involves the observance of rules, or the application of criteria". *Ibid*., p. 29.

[3] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", p. 4.

[4] Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy, "Knowing how", *The Journal of Philosophy 98*(*8*) / 2001, pp. 411–444.

[5] A claim referred to as "the linguistic distinction". *Ibid*., p. 417.

counterargument does not have any real object. Furthermore, I show that they too, perhaps inadvertently, reject IL—e.g., Ryle and SW's accounts agree in that exercising knowledge-that to open a closed door does not require the consideration of propositions *ad infinitum*. Next, I consider SW's positive account of knowledge-how as knowledge-that in the light of the concept of feedback. I argue that feedback is fundamental to understanding the dynamics of intentional action, and therefore of intelligent performance, and I support this argument with recent theories on cognition and intentional action, mainly from the fields of cognitive science and semiotics. Finally, I argue for the complementary nature of the concepts of performance and knowledge-that, and at the same time for the necessary role that knowledge-that, construed as *information* available at subject level, plays in guiding the subject's performance.

2. The (dis)agreements between Ryle and Stanley and Williamson

2.1 What Ryle and SW argue for

Are Ryle and SW's accounts on knowledge-how entirely incompatible? Fortunately, this is not the case since they agree in a number of important respects which will be progressively advanced. The differences and disputes between them, however, can only be made sense of by understanding their motivations. First, I shall address these motivations resorting to direct quotations; second, I present Ryle's argument of infinite regress, SW's counterargument, and an explanation of why the counterargument has no real object.

SW take the intellectualist doctrine to be "the thesis that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that".[6] Furthermore, they assert that Ryle only had one argument "against the thesis that knowing-how is a species of knowing-that" (i.e., the argument of infinite regress),[7] and that Ryle "presents his own positive view of knowledge-how, according to which, contra the 'intellectualist legend', it is not a species of knowledge-that" (ibid). It must be noted that Ryle never uses the expression "being a species of", and a patient reading of both his texts on the distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that[8] makes it clear that Ryle's

---

[6] *Ibid*., p. 412.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address"; Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*.

main concern is to refute IL in order to revalue the intelligent character of performance. Ryle's version of the intellectualist legend, namely IL, does not directly claim that knowledge-that is a species of knowledge-how, but rather unfolds into three propositions:[9]

(IL1) "Doing things is never itself an exercise of intelligence."
(IL2) Doing things is, at best, "a process introduced and somehow steered by some ulterior act of theorising".
(IL3) "Theorising is not a sort of doing".

References to the "intellectualist legend" that are consistent with this account abound in Ryle's chapter *Knowing How and Knowing That* in his book *The Concept of Mind*.[10] Thus, we see that SW and Ryle have different agendas. SW articulate their work in terms of arguing that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that, while Ryle first posed the distinction between the two to argue that the intellectualist legend (IL) "is false and that when we describe a performance as intelligent, this does not entail the double operation of considering and executing".[11]

2.2 Ryle's argument of infinite regress

In order to disprove the intellectualist legend, Ryle put forward an argument that aims at showing that accepting the premises of the intellectualist legend leads to an infinite regress. The fact that in his own account of the argument Ryle refers to the regress as "vicious", already indicates that he does not hold regress to be tenable, and therefore he rejects at least one of the premises of the argument. One version of Ryle's regress argument goes as follows:[12]

---

[9] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", p. 1.

[10] The intellectualist doctrine "tries to define intelligence in terms of the apprehension of truths, instead of the apprehension of truths in terms of intelligence", in Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, p. 27. In another formulation, the intellectualist doctrine states that "the agent must first go through the internal process of avowing to himself certain propositions about what is to be done ('maxims') 'imperatives' or 'regulative 1 propositions' as they are sometimes called); only then can he execute his performance in accordance with those dictates. He must preach to himself before he can practise", in *ibid.*, p. 29. Or, yet another example: "The absurd assumption made by the intellectualist legend is this, that a performance of any sort inherits all its title to intelligence from some anterior internal operation of planning what to do", in *ibid.*, p. 31.

[11] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, pp. 29-30.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 30, my emphasis.

The consideration of propositions is itself an *operation* the execution of which can be more or less intelligent, less or more stupid. But if, for any operation to be intelligently executed, a prior theoretical operation had first to be performed and performed intelligently, it would be a logical impossibility for anyone ever to break into the circle.

A more elaborate version of the argument, proposing a two-directional regress is the following:[13]

I argue that the prevailing doctrine leads to vicious regresses, and these in two directions. (1) If the intelligence exhibited in any *act*, practical or theoretical, is to be credited to the occurrence of some ulterior act of intelligently considering regulative propositions, no intelligent act, practical or theoretical, could ever begin. If no one possessed any money, no one could get any money on loan. This is the turn of the argument that I chiefly use. (2) If a deed, to be intelligent, has to be guided by the consideration of a regulative proposition, the gap between that consideration and the practical application of the regulation has to be bridged by some go-between process which cannot by the presupposed definition itself be an exercise of intelligence and cannot, by definition, be the resultant deed. This go-between application-process (...) must again be subdivided into one bit which contemplates but does not execute, one which executes but does not contemplate and a third which reconciles these irreconcilables. And so on for ever.

One can see that the first version corresponds to case (1) of the second version. In general, regress in this case takes place because an act/operation will always require a previous operation, *ad infinitum*. It is this case (which SW refer to as "more clear")[14] that SW analyze and refute, while leaving the second case out of their discussion. The second case points to the fact that the intellectualist legend requires a mediation between the "intelligent act" (the consideration of propositions) and the "non-intelligent act" (performance itself), but since the mediator can not be any of the two, the mediator in turn has a threefold structure of the form {intelligent act–mediator–performance}. Ryle's point is straightforward: if we regard an act to be intelligent, it is because the intelligence is in the act itself, not because it is endowed of intelligence by a previous act which is to consider regulatory propositions. In presenting his argument, Ryle makes no explicit mention of knowledge-how or knowledge-that.

---

[13] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", pp. 2-3.
[14] Stanley and Williamson, *Knowing how*, p. 412.

2.3 SW's counterargument

SW contest Ryle's regress argument claiming that: (1) regression misfires, (2) Ryle's positive account of knowledge-how in terms of dispositions is not the case, (3) in their positive account of knowledge-how, knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that.

According to SW, Ryle's argument has two premises:[15]

(X1)　　If one Fs, one employs knowledge how to F.

(X2)　　If one employs knowledge that p, one contemplates the proposition that p.

Furthermore:[16]

If knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that, the content of knowledge how to F is, for some φ, the proposition that $\varphi(F)$. So, the assumption for reductio is:

RA: knowledge how to F is knowledge that $\varphi(F)$.

Furthermore, let '$C(p)$' denote the act of contemplating the proposition that p. Suppose that Hannah Fs. By premise (1), Hannah employs the knowledge how to F. By RA, Hannah employs the knowledge that $\varphi(F)$. So, by premise (2), Hannah $C(\varphi(F))$s. Since $C(\phi(F))$ is an act, we can reapply premise (1), to obtain the conclusion that Hannah knows how to $C(\varphi(F))$. By RA, it then follows that Hannah employs the knowledge that $\varphi(C(\varphi(F)))$. By premise (2), it follows that Hannah $C(\varphi(C(\varphi(F))))$s. And so on.

SW's argument continues by realizing that (X1) can only apply to *intentional actions*, and this excludes involuntary actions such as digesting food, or accidental actions such as winning the lottery. They continue by denying that "manifestations of knowledge-that must be accompanied by distinct actions of contemplating propositions".[17] They take as an example the action of opening the door by exercising *knowledge that* first one must turn the knob, and then push it. They argue that the only way of saving (X2) would be to argue that knowledge-that is being employed unintentionally, but this would render (X1) false. Thus, the truth values of (X1) and (X2) seem to be mutually exclusive.

---

[15] Stanley and Williamson, "Knowing how", p. 414.

[16] *Ibid*.

[17] *Ibid*., p. 415.

2.4 Reconsidering infinite regress: look out for performance

Whereas at first it may appear that SW have given a definite blow to the regress argument, I will show that *performance* is the key concept on which to defend and actually understand the regress argument. What is a performance? It is a doing, an operation, an act, an exercise of knowledge, as used in Ryle's and SW's writings.[18] Performing can be defined as the bringing about of a change in the state of affairs that is in accord with the agent's intention to do so. Thus, opening the door, contemplating propositions,[19] playing basketball or calculating my next move in chess are all examples of performances.

Contrasting Ryle's formulation of the regress argument (Section 2.2) with SW's formulation in their counterargument, we notice that SW, and not Ryle, introduce the distinction of knowledge-how and knowledge-that into the argument. Let us leave aside this distinction and reformulate case (1) of the regress argument as follows: Let $C(p)$ denote the act (i.e., the performance) of contemplating a proposition p, and let $\varphi(F)$ denote the proposition that must be contemplated in order to F. Therefore, $C(\varphi(F))$ denotes contemplating the proposition required for F-ing. Then, Ryle's argument can be restated in three premises without resorting to the distinction of knowledge-how and knowledge-that, relying on the notion of performance only:

(Y1) F is an intelligent performance,

(Y2) A performance G is intelligent if and only if before G one performs $C(\varphi(G))$,

(Y3) $C(p)$, for any p, is an intelligent performance.[20]

Substituting (Y1) in (Y2) we get that performing F will previously require performing $C(\varphi(F))$, but given (Y3) we have that $C(\varphi(F))$ in turn requires $C(\varphi(C(\varphi(F))))$, and so on to infinity. Thus we end up with an identical expression to the one presented by SW without resorting to the knowledge-how vs knowledge-that distinction. Since the argument is posed to illustrate the "vicious regress" that results from endorsing IL, we know that Ryle must reject at least a premise of the argument. It can not be

---

[18] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", 1945; Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, 1949; Stanley and Williamson, Knowing how, 2001.

[19] When Ryle says that "the consideration of propositions is itself an operation the execution of which can be more or less intelligent, less or more stupid", given that he uses "operation" and "performance" interchangeably, he makes it clear that he regards considering propositions as a performance. See "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, p. 30.

[20] Notice that in asserting (Y3), Ryle is denying (IL3): considering propositions is taken as a sort of doing/performing.

(Y1), for the view that some *F*-ings are intelligent are what led Ryle to advance the concept of knowledge-how—as SW point out, intelligent *F*-ings would correspond to intentional actions.[21] Neither can it be (Y3), for Ryle explicitly says that considering propositions is an intelligent performance.[22] The proposition Ryle rejects is (Y2), which is compatible with SW's rejection of (X2). This is illustrated with clarity in SW's example of opening a door:[23] Opening the door requires us to *know that* the door is there, and *that* it can be opened by turning the knob and pushing it. SW rightly point out that this exercise of knowledge-that (i.e., this intelligent performance) can be performed automatically and unaccompanied of a previous consideration of propositions. This does not disprove Ryle's regress argument in any way; if anything it reinforces it, for Ryle would say that in general, exercising knowledge-that is a case of intelligent performance, and therefore does not require any ulterior act of considering propositions—contrary to the IL claim. Thus we have that SW in their counterargument inadvertently refute IL when performance comes to the exercise of knowledge-that. Their counterargument, however, does not necessarily compromise their view that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that.

3. A semiotics of performance: intentional action and feedback

This section will engage in understanding performance and intentional action from the standpoint of Algirdas Julien Greimas's semiotics, relating it to the concept of *feedback*. The next section will strengthen this account drawing from cognitive science and current theories of mind and cognition.

Greimas's approach to intentional action is interesting because it is developed on an entirely different empirical basis than that of analytic philosophy—it is based on the study of fairy tales, stories, films and in general any object or collection of objects that can be thought of in narrative terms. Yet, it continues to have a large import in current semiotic theories such as cognitive semiotics.[24]

---

[21] Stanley and Williamson, "Knowing how", p. 415.
[22] See footnote 19 in p. 6.
[23] Stanley and Williamson, "Knowing how", p. 415.
[24] Paolucci, Claudio. "Social cognition, mindreading and narratives. A cognitive semiotics perspective on narrative practices from early mindreading to Autism Spectrum Disorder", *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 18.2 / 2019, pp. 375-400; Brandt, Per Aage. "What is cognitive semiotics? A new paradigm in the study of meaning", Signata. Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics 2 / 2011, pp. 49-60.

Greimas's schema of the *subject on a quest* is a model of how action processes take place in narratives in general.[25] It is a refinement of the models proposed by Vladimir Propp (constructed after studying a vast corpus of fairy tales) and Levi Strauss's model of the *mytheme* (based on his anthropological studies of mythologies).[26] The schema of the subject on a quest combines four ordered stages (manipulation, competence, performance and sanction) which are given by the interaction of six actants.[27] The actants, grouped into pairs, are Subject and Object, Helper and Opponent, and Sender and Receiver. The schema will be best understood taking Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* as an example.

In *Hamlet*, Prince Hamlet (the Receiver) seeks out the Ghost of King Hamlet (the Sender) who in turn manages to persuade him of avenging him so that he may rest in peace by killing his uncle, King Claudius. *Manipulation*, i.e., the process of interaction between Sender and Receiver where the former persuades the latter, corresponds to the first stage. The outcome of manipulation is that Prince Hamlet accepts the Ghost's bidding and in so doing becomes a Subject on a quest for an Object of value; that is, he acquires an intention of action (avenging his father) which can be formalized in terms of wanting-to-do or having-to-do. Hamlet now enters the second stage, *competence*, which corresponds to the process of acquiring external and internal means in order to fulfill his intention—these are formalized in terms of the modalities being-able-to-do and knowing-how-to-do, respectively. In the case of Hamlet, faking madness is an important Helper, for it gets him into the situation of being-able-to-kill Claudius. This process of building competence can also be thought of as the progressive fulfillment of conditions that enable the third stage: *performance*. When Hamlet engages in duel with Laertes all of the conditions necessary for performance have been met. Next Hamlet performs: even when weakened by Laertes's poisoned sword he manages to thrust Claudius. Then comes the next stage, *sanction*, by which Claudius dies and thus the Ghost of King Hamlet is avenged. The outcome of sanction is that Prince Hamlet, even if dead, is said to be *realized* or *conjoined* with his Object of desire, and so is the Ghost of his father, the Sender. A fictional alternative ending, and not a very merry one, would have been that Claudius does not die even if thrust by Hamlet's sword because it turns out that he has superpowers, and Claudius kills Hamlet instead, leaving King

---

[25] Greimas, Algirdas Julien, *On meaning: Selected writings in semiotic theory*, translated by Paul J. Perron, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

[26] Schleifer, Ronald, and Alan Velie. "Genre and Structure: Toward an Actantial Typology of Narrative Genres and Modes." *MLN* 102.5 / 1987, pp. 1122-1150.

[27] Greimas, Argirdas Julien. "Reflexiones acerca de los modelos actanciales", in *Semántica estructural: investigación metodológica*, 1987, pp. 263-293; Martin, Bronwen and Ringham, Felizitas, *Dictionary of semiotics,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000, p. 11.

Hamlet's Ghost without redemption. In this case we would say that Prince Hamlet as a Subject ends up being disjoined from his Object of desire (the intention of action). The alternative ending of *Hamlet* highlights the fact that performance and the sanction of performance are two distinct processes.

There are some key points to draw from the application of the schema of the subject on a quest.

1. *Intention* functions as the subject's *projection towards a desired state of affairs* (i.e., attaining an Object of desire). *Performance*, therefore, constitutes the subject's *means* to realize an intention, and not an end in itself. In Shakespeare's narrative, Hamlet does not thrust Claudius for the sake of thrusting him, the purpose/intention that drives the thrusting (and the sequence of Hamlet's actions that precede it) is to avenge his father. In fact, we see that intention biases/conditions/guides the subject's actions to pursue especially those that are relevant to performance, and to pursue a performance that is relevant to intention. In the case of *Hamlet*, this is evinced by the fact that Prince Hamlet abandons the good name he had among his people, and even the love of Ophelia, in order to realize his intention.

2. In intentional action, the realization of an intention presupposes performance, but performance does not presuppose the realization of intention (it does not guarantee it, as it were), hence the distinction between *performance* and *sanction* in Greimas's theory. Sanction requires *perceiving* the outcome of performance and *comparing* it with intention: the subject's performance has an outcome, it is sanctioned favorably (and thus the Subject becomes conjoined with the Object) if the perceived outcome of performance corresponds to the intention that motivated it. Note that perception in this case is *not* being restricted to sense-perception only, but to the Subject's impression or awareness of the changes in the state of affairs brought about by performance. Thus, thrusting Claudius may or may not be enough to avenge King Hamlet. It is the narrator at the end of the story that provides the reader with the information that Claudius in fact dies from the thrust, which realizes Hamlet's intention. In other narratives, the figure of the Sender reappears to perceive the outcome of performance and sanction the Subject accordingly; for example when the king sends a prince to perform several stunts and in the end judges the prince to be worthy of a price.

3. The double intervention of intention in motivating the quest and intervening in the comparison process at the end gives intentional action (as described by Greimas) the form of a feedback loop.[28] Although not explicit in the narrative of Hamlet, given the outcome or sanction of the performance, the subject may be able to consider

---

[28] Miranda Medina, Juan Felipe, "Competence, Counterpoint and Harmony: A triad of semiotic concepts for the scholarly study of dance", *Signata. Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics* 11 / 2020.

adjustments in performance and perform again. In fairy tales, the hero suffering a temporal defeat in a qualifying test may adjust his strategies and train harder. Note, however, that the required adjustments follow from the comparison between intention and the perception of performance. The contrary case would lead our hero to modify his performance erratically, which goes against §1, since intention biases behavior, including adjustment.

The semiotic account exposed so far can be articulated into a systemic elementary model of intentional action in the form of a feedback loop, as shown in Figure 1. Once the subject acquires an intention (which takes the form of an envisioned and desired state of affairs), the subject performs. The performance has an outcome, that is, it affects the world (the state of affairs) in a certain way which the subject forms a perception of (again, perception in this context is *not* restricted to sense-perception only). The perceived new state of affairs is then compared to the subject's intention. The output of this comparison process (which for Greimas corresponds to sanction) is what I refer to as *assessment*, a term borrowed from education theory.[29] Assessment constitutes information that enables the subject to determine the extent to which the goals set by intention are being met so as to adjust performance in accord with intention.
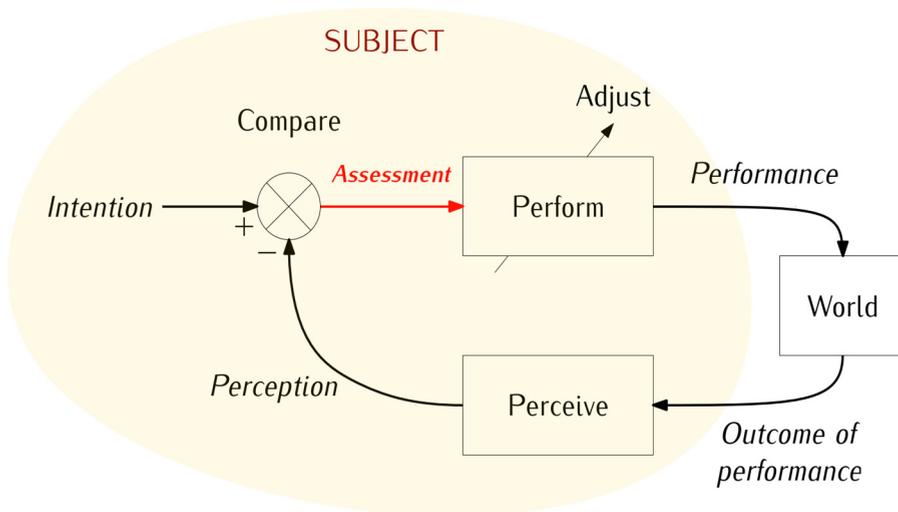
Figure 1. The feedback loop as a systemic elementary model of intentional action.

---

[29] Sattler, Jerome M., *Assessment of children* (3rd ed.), Jerome M. Sattler, 1988; Huba, Mary E., and Jann E. Freed. *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning*. Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

4. Knowledge-that: feedback in SW's positive account on knowledge how

In *Knowing How*,[30] SW suggest several manners in which knowledge-that intervenes in performance. Let us go back to the example of opening the door, but let us imagine that it only unlocks with the digits of your year of birth input in reverse order:

1. You *know that* there is a door when you see it. *Perceptual input* thus provides you with information of what is in your environment. However, you must remember your year of birth to open it (i.e., you also require cognitive input). Both perceptual and cognitive inputs provide you with information (i.e., with knowledge-that) so that you may, from previous experience, identify possibilities of action respect to these inputs.

2. Once you form the intention of opening the door, from previous experience you devise a *plan* on how to realize your intention by means of performance, or of a series of performances:[31] You know that a certain kind of door can be opened in a certain kind of way. There may be cases, however where you do not have such a plan, or your plan fails. For example, this door is controlled by a sophisticated digital interface that may take you a while to figure out until, by intelligent trial and error (i.e., using feedback) you *learn how* to open the door. This applies to the case of *Hamlet* as well. Prince Hamlet did not formulate a precise plan on how he would avenge his father, but each action opened new possibilities of action for him to pursue further his quest for vengeance—in Section 5, I explain how this can be understood as navigating affordances.

Thus we have that perceptual and cognitive inputs can be regarded as knowledge-that insofar as they are *information* that *guides performance*[32] and hence intentional action—a view that SW expose with greater clarity in later writings.[33] How SW's positive account of knowledge-how guides intentional action, however, is much less clear. I will explain their account of knowledge-how according to

---

[30] Stanley and Williamson, *Knowing how.*

[31] The reader interested in further elaborations on the concept of *plans* is referred to Bratman, Michael, *Intention, plans, and practical reason*, Vol. 10, Harvard University Press, 1987; and Brand, Myles. "Intentional actions and plans", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10 / 1986, pp. 213-230.

[32] A robust account on how perceptual information available from attention guides intentional action is provided by Wayne Wu: "Shaking up the mind's ground floor: the cognitive penetration of visual attention", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 114.1 / 2017, pp. 5-32.

[33] Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy, "Skill", *NOUS* 51:4 / 2017, pp. 713–726; Stanley, Jason, and John W. Krakauer. "Motor skill depends on knowledge of facts", in *Frontiers in human neuroscience,* 7 /2013), pp. 1-11.

which ascriptions of knowledge-how result in ascriptions of knowledge-that. Next, I advance the claim that SW's positive account of knowledge-how corresponds to the output of the comparison process between intention and perceived outcome of performance.

SW's positive account of knowledge-how results from applying Karttunen's semantics to propositions that ascribe knowledge-how in order to map them to propositions that ascribe knowledge-that preserving the same truth content. Take SW's favorite example:

(1)   Hannah knows how to ride a bicycle.

After conducting a linguistic analysis, SW conclude that four interpretive possibilities result from (1), namely:

(1a)   Hannah knows how she ought to ride a bicycle.
(1b)   Hannah knows how one ought to ride a bicycle.
(1c)   Hannah knows how she could ride a bicycle.
(1d)   Hannah knows how one could ride a bicycle.

SW regard (1c) and (1d) to be most relevant to philosophical discussion, particularly (1c), because it is the "paradigm reading" of (1). [34] Conversely, propositions (1a) and (1b) ascribe knowledge-that to Hannah in a more explicit manner and are therefore less interesting—e.g., "how one ought to ride a bicycle" could refer to riding slowly, or carefully. Thus, relying on Karttunen's semantics, SW bring forward proposition (PA):

(PA)   Proposition (1) is true "if and only if, for some contextually relevant way W which is a way for Hannah to ride a bicycle, Hannah knows that W is a way for her to ride a bicycle".

Note that for SW *ways* refers to ways of engaging in actions, or more specifically, to properties of token events.[35] PA can be colloquially phrased as: in a certain situation in which Hannah is riding a bicycle, she knows that the way in which she is doing it is a "proper" way to ride a bicycle.

Hannah might know of several different ways in which to ride a bicycle, but SW's positive account on knowledge-how does not imply that Hannah needs to know all possible ways to ride a bicycle, only some that are contextually relevant. SW further distinguish between *demonstrative* and *practical* modes of presentation.[36]

---

[34] *Ibid*., p. 425.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 426.
[36] *Ibid*, p. 428.

If, for example, Hannah sees John riding a bicycle and she knows that that way (i.e., John's way) is a way for her to ride a bicycle this would correspond to a demonstrative mode of presentation, while (1) interpreted as (1c) corresponds to a practical mode of presentation. This distinction is analogous to the distinction between demonstrative and first-personal mode of presentation in ascriptions of knowledge-that. In some situation John might know that a man's pants are burning (demonstrative mode), as opposed to knowing that his own pants are burning (first-person mode).

SW make some important clarifications regarding their positive account on knowledge how. First, for (1) to be true "there need be no informative sentence of the form 'I ride the bicycle by *F*-ing'".[37] That is, in their account, ascriptions of knowing-how-to-*F* to a subject do not entail that the subject must be able to provide a verbal description on how one *F*s. Second, knowledge-how can be ascribed to animals and babies in spite of being propositional,[38] for example when I say that my dog knows how to catch a frisbee, or that human babies know how to suck. Interestingly, SW suscribe to the more controversial view that basic actions in the Alvin Goldman's sense (e.g., babies sucking) are in general valid ascriptions of knowledge how.[39]

In what follows I expound on how SW's positive account of knowledge-how can be understood in terms of feedback, and in Section 5 I explain how doing so actually integrates SW's account with current theories of intentional action.

Let us first examine SW's example of a Gettier case[40] for knowledge-how:[41]

Bob wants to learn how to fly in a flight simulator. He is instructed by Henry. Unknown to Bob, Henry is a malicious imposter who has inserted a randomizing device in the simulator's controls and intends to give all kinds of incorrect advice. Fortunately, by sheer chance the randomizing device causes exactly the same results in the simulator as would have occurred without it, and by incompetence Henry gives exactly the same advice as a proper instructor would have done. Bob passes the course with flying colors. He has still not flown a real plane. Bob has a justified true belief about how to fly. But there is a good sense in which he does not know how to fly.

The first question to answer is: why does Bob have a justified true belief about how to fly? From SW's example the most plausible reply would be that it is because "Bob passes the course with flying colors". Thus we see that, in Greimas's terms, there has been a process of sanction (i.e., comparison) by which someone

---

[37] *Ibid*., p, 432.
[38] *Ibid*., p. 438.
[39] *Ibid*., p. 440-441.
[40] Gettier, Edmund L., "Is justified true belief knowledge?", *Analysis* 23.6 / 1963, pp. 121-123.
[41] Stanley and Williamson, *Knowing how*, p. 435.

determined that Bob should pass the course, most likely on the basis of Bob's successful performance in the flight simulator. Given his success in the flight simulator, Bob knows that his way to fly in the simulator is a way to fly. In relation to the feedback loop (see Figure 1), this corresponds to the *output of the comparison process* between Bob's intention to fly and the perceived outcome of his flying in the simulator, in other words, it is an *assessment* of success. Poston actually refers to this as "the success condition" for knowing-how to F.[42] In his argument against the possibility of Gettier cases, Poston examines SW's example and dismisses it based on the success condition: Bob can fly just as well as all the others that trained in a different simulator. Poston maintains that "one knows how to F, if one can intelligently and successfully F".[43] In this case, then, the success condition is met if the comparison between the perceived outcome of performance and the intention to fly is favorable.[44]

The assessment of success, however, is gradable, rather than binary. Consider once again the case of Hannah riding a bicycle. There are indicators of success in this task such as moving forward when riding, and that the bike is relatively stable as one rides. If Hannah, after her first days learning to ride a bicycle, rides her bicycle successfully, she comes to know that that is a way for her to ride a bicycle (a practical mode of presentation). Imagine, however, that novice as she is, Hannah manages to hop on the bicycle but advances only a few meters before falling down and hurting her knee. Would she entertain the proposition that that is a way for her to ride? Insofar as this way of riding did not comply with any criteria of success, she would not. In later publications,[45] SW and Stanley are explicit about the role that propositional knowledge plays in guiding behavior in intentional action. If Hannah thought that the way in which she rode the bicycle that led her to fall down is a way for her to ride, there is hardly any chance of Hannah learning to ride. If that were the case, the positive account of knowledge how that SW propose would fail to guide performance as they maintain it does, and as theories of intentional action posit feedback does.

---

[42] Poston, Ted. "Know how to be Gettiered?", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79.3 / 2009, pp. 743-747.

[43] *Ibid*., p. 744.

[44] Although it is not central to this discussion, he seems to be right in denying the possibility of Gettier cases, since given that F-ing intelligently and successfully is the analogous of the justified belief condition and the truth condition in Gettier cases of knowledge-that, the intelligence and success conditions must be met in the Gettier case for it to be a Gettier case (*ibid*.).

[45] Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy, "Skill"; Stanley, Jason and John W. Krakauer. "Motor skill depends on knowledge of facts".

This can be generalized to behavior in human and non-human animals alike: we need to form ways to do things in order to do them consistently, and in order to do so we need to have feedback information that allows us to know when our performance (our way of doing things) is actually achieving the intention that moved it; to know when it does not, and to know when performance requires adjustment and what sort of adjustment it can require. Imagine an intermediate scenario, were Hannah is a fast learner, but inexperienced in riding bicycles. She has managed to hop on the bicycle and starts pedaling. More than a minute has passed and she is moving forward, but she senses that the bicycle feels unstable. Then Hannah might think that that is a way for her to ride a bicycle, but a way that requires adjustments: she pedals a little faster and grabs the handlebars with a tighter grip, and thus manages to continue riding. As she gains experience, Hannah will also come to *know that* when one comes to a bumpy road a tighter grip is required in tandem with a reduction in speed—i.e., she will come to know that for a certain perceived context c_0 she can perform in a certain way W_0 (or adjust her current performance to perform in way W_0).

Next, consider knowledge ascription to babies. Why would SW endorse the view that babies knowing how to suck is legitimate knowledge-how?[46] Imagine that baby Jane is hungry and is therefore crying. Once her mother puts her breast in her mouth and she manages to suck, however, the crying stops. Baby Jane *knows that* the way in which she is sucking *is* a way to suck: she senses and enjoys the milk she was so hungry for—i.e., a criteria of success for sucking is met. If she, however, for some reason fails to extract the milk from the breast, her crying is likely to continue.

In this section I have argued that SW's positive account of knowledge how is identical to the output of the comparison process in the feedback loop that contrasts intention with perception, i.e., to *assessment*. This feedback loop corresponds to a high-order psychological level of the subject: it is used to assess whether the intention was met or not, and whether adjustments are required, as opposed to, for example, regulating lower-order sensory-motor processes. Assessment results from the comparison between current performance and intention in practical modes of presentation, but this comparison is gradable rather than binary (true or false). Thus, performing (i.e., the act of *F*-ing) may result not only in the propositional knowledge that *W* is a way for one to *F,* but that *W* is *not* a way for one to *F*, or alternatively that *W* is a way for one to *F*, but a way that requires a set of adjustments *A* in performance.

---

[46] Stanley and Williamson, *Knowing how*, p. 440-441, footnote 46.

5. Feedback, prediction and knowledge-that in theories of cognition and intentional action

The concept of feedback is, to the best of my knowledge, not commonplace in discussions on knowledge-how and knowledge-that, but nevertheless it has been present in theories of psychology[47] and perception[48] for several decades. Furthermore, given that feedback is extensively deployed in control engineering[49] and in the more recent discipline of signal processing,[50] and that the potential link between control theory in machines and animals was noted more than half a century ago,[51] it is rather striking that it has only recently began to make its way to theories of cognition and intentional action.[52]

Recent theories of mind rely on the principle of feedback in tandem with another concept: *prediction*. Such theories postulate that the application of both concepts is not limited to specific sensory-motor control functions, but that feedback and prediction (otherwise known as *expectation*) establish a link between decisions at the highest level (the level to which intentions correspond) all the way down to the subject's sensory systems. The combination of feedback and prediction allows for top-down and bottom-up control of intentional action.

In their study on the abnormalities in the awareness of action, Blakemore et al.[53] present a model of the motor control system that includes feedback and prediction. Their model relies on three fundamental magnitudes that result in three feedback loops:

1. The *desired state D*, which holds the instant goal of the system (where the goal is derived from intention).

2. The *estimated actual state E*, inferred from motor commands, predictions of motor commands and sensory feedback.

3. The next *predicted state P* of the system based on predictors.

---

[47] Dewey, John, "The reflex arc concept in psychology", *Psychological review* 3.4 / 1896, p. 357.

[48] Powers, William Treval, and William T. Powers. *Behavior: The control of perception,* Aldine, 1973.

[49] Altmann, Wolfgang, *Practical process control for engineers and technicians,* Elsevier, 2005.

[50] Haykin, Simon, *Adaptive filter theory*, Fifth Edition, Pearson Education, 2014.

[51] Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. MIT Press, 2019. Original publication 1948.

[52] Pezzulo, Giovanni, and Paul Cisek, "Navigating the affordance landscape: feedback control as a process model of behavior and cognition", in *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 20.6 /2016, pp. 414-424.

[53] Blakemore, Sarah-Jayne, Daniel M. Wolpert, and Christopher D. Frith. "Abnormalities in the awareness of action", Trends in cognitive sciences 6.6 / 2002, pp. 237-242.

The controllers that issue motor commands are adjusted on the basis of comparing D against E, and D against P. The predictors that calculate P are adjusted from the comparison of E and P. The model Blakemore et al. propose is attractive because it explains how specific faulty interactions between these processes result in abnormalities in the control and awareness of action, such as optic ataxia (difficuly grasping objects), "anarchic hand" sign (where the subject can not control at all the movement of the hand) and phantom limbs (feeling the presence of a limb after amputation). Although it is not straightforward to determine which processes in the motor control are actually available to awareness, it is clear that *not all* processes are available to awareness. This is particularly consequential in regards to performance, because it shows that from all of the processes that are taking place during performance, only some of them are issuing information that is available at subject-level (i.e., actual knowledge-that). For example, Blakemore et al. hypothesize that the motor commands issued to the motor system, as well as the predictors and the actual state of the system are not available to awareness. This provides compelling evidence for the case that performance can not be reduced to information about performance. Along the same line, SW themselves acknowledge that performance involves non-cognitive factors (e.g., stamina and strength for a boxer),[54] but they leave them aside arguing that, for example, stamina and strength might enable a boxer to win a match without possessing the skill to box. This is a mistake. Information is about knowing what resources are available to the agent (including the non-cognitive ones) in order to exploit them optimally in performance. The veteran Muhammad Ali defeating George Foreman, a fearfully strong and young boxer in an epic match in 1974, and Michel Jordan developing his fade-away shot to compensate for the loss of his jumping abilities are both examples of this. Hence I embrace the moto: know what you have, envision how to use it, learn how to use it, and develop it further.

The role of feedback and prediction is even more prominent in Pezzulo and Cisek's theory of intentional action.[55] In their view, the theoretical principles of feedback control "govern all biological systems".[56] Since agents are situated in dynamic yet structured environments, adaptive action control is a central paradigm to understand feedback cognition. Pezzulo and Cisek construe intentional action as the purposive navigation of an "affordance landscape", where *affordance* refers to "action possibilities

---

[54] Stanley and Williamson, "Skill", p. 717.
[55] Pezzulo, Giovanni, and Paul Cisek, "Navigating the affordance landscape".
[56] *Ibid*., p. 415.

provided to the actor by the environment".[57] According to the affordance competition hypothesis, the agent's cognitive system simultaneously specifies the set of desirable actions based on perceived available affordances, and opts on which behavior to pursue resolving a "competition between representations of these actions, biased by the desirability of their predicted outcomes".[58] The selected action is then executed through continuous feedback control permanently relying on sensory information on the environment as well as expected feedback to adjust and if necessary, update the ongoing action until it is completed. The affordance competition hypothesis can be extended to intentional action if one acknowledges that agents are continuously generating predictions on possibly available affordances rather than only reacting to the affordances that are readily available—e.g., as you are playing basketbal the immediately available affordance is to pass the ball, but you dedide to drible further to your right, and then you spot a new affordance: if you move fast enough you may be able to shoot a three-pointer. It must be pointed out that new research in cognitive science,[59] artificial intelligence and philosophy of mind is also propounding feedback and prediction as core components in the framework of a theory of mind and agency.[60]

But how to relate feedback and prediction to knowledge-that? As argued in Section 4, feedback at the level of intention (i.e. SW's positive account of knowledge that) provides information on the success of performance that can be used to adjust it. Prediction, i.e., opting for one possibility of action over another, however, is also a form of knowledge-that, often arising from experience. The ability to navigate the affordance landscape, i.e., the ability to design, modify or

[57] Kaptelinin, Victor, "Affordances", in *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, Interaction Design Foundation*, 2014, ch. 44.

[58] Pezzulo and Cisek.

[59] Haggard, Patrick. "Human volition: towards a neuroscience of will", *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9.12 / 2008, pp. 934-946; Gallagher, Helen L., and Christopher D. Frith. "Functional imaging of 'theory of mind'", *Trends in cognitive sciences* 7.2 / 2003, pp. 77-83; Morris, Sarah E., et al., "Learning-related changes in brain activity following errors and performance feedback in schizophrenia", *Schizophrenia research* 99.1-3 / 2008, pp. 274-285; Bubic, Andreja, D. Yves Von Cramon, and Ricarda I. Schubotz, "Prediction, cognition and the brain", *Frontiers in human neuroscience* 4 / 2010, p. 25.

[60] Jeannerod, Marc. *Motor cognition: What actions tell the self*. No. 42. Oxford University Press, 2006; Friston, Karl, "The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory?", *Nature reviews neuroscience* 11.2 / 2010, pp. 127-138; Clark, Andy, *Surfing uncertainty: Prediction, action, and the embodied mind*, Oxford University Press, 2015; Linson, Adam, et al., "The active inference approach to ecological perception: general information dynamics for natural and artificial embodied cognition", *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* 5 / 2018, p. 21; Wiese, Wanja and Thomas Metzinger, "Vanilla PP for Philosophers: A Primer on Predictive Processing", in T. Metzinger & W. Wiese (Eds.). *Philosophy and Predictive Processing*: 1. MIND Group, 2017.

improvise a plan also corresponds to knowledge-that. Demonstrative modes of presentation can also provide the agent with valuable information (e.g., when learning from others' success and failures). Nonindexical descriptions (e.g., verbal descriptions from a teacher or coach) can also be determinant in guiding performance. As SW note, better performances result from (and result in) faster information pick-up, gathering more information as one performs, and improving the quality of information that one acquires in and for performance.[61]

As an example of how affordances, prediction and feedback may come to play in a practical scenario, imagine basketball legend Michael Jordan playing in the 1990s. He started the night driving to the basket hoping to dunk, but his expectations were denied by the intense defense of the Knicks that were not shy to foul him hard when he was close to the basket. His own feedback tells him that his intention to dunk is difficult to realize, but Jordan is intelligent, he resorts to a different action: in every chance he gets, he drives as if he were to dunk, but instead he passes the ball to his teammates enabling them to score. He takes advantage of the false predictions of the Knicks defenders to achieve his goal. In a specific situation, he is surrounded by Knicks defenders, but the lack of an immediate affordance to score does not stop him: he fakes a turn and a defender follows him, then he dribbles a crossover leaving the other defender behind and rises high up and dunks over Patrick Ewing. Jordan, however, does not only rely on the information his experience provides him with, he knows that he can jump higher and stay longer in the air than most players, hence he takes advantage of his physical qualities. Instead of passing the ball (the affordance that was most readily available), he was capable of improvising a plan that uncovered other affordances which he exploited in an emphatic slam dunk; an exquisite demonstration of intelligent performance.

Some worries may arise from the account on feedback, prediction and performance this work has provided. The first one is that the criteria for success in an intentional action might not be explicitly given, or not clear enough, which complicates ascriptions of knowledge-how to oneself or others. The first worry is legitimate in the sense that in many situations (many *F*-ings) there is no explicit criteria given for success. When learning dance by imitation, one imitates as close as possible the movements of those one takes to have knowledge of the dance, but these experienced dancers may not provide any sort of criteria or explicit information about what they are doing. Moreover, the criteria for successful performance is often context specific. A singer learning *bel canto* might be highly appraised in her city for her singing skills, but upon arriving to the conservatory receives a very

---

[61] Stanley and Williamson, *Skill*.

different feedback from her teachers and must almost re-learn the basics of how to sing (this is not an infrequent scenario among artists). The second worry is about the reliability of the comparison process: is it possible that comparison is faulty thus leading us to believe that we are realizing our intention but that actually our performance is lacking? This worry is well grounded. A singer might hold his skills in high esteem, but they fail to realize that he sings notoriously out of tune. Both of these worries highlight the nature of knowing how to *F* and of intentional action more generally, but do no harm to the case that ascriptions of knowledge how correspond to assessments, i.e., to the output of the comparison between intention and perceived performance. A third worry is that the feedback loop model put forward in Section 3 did not include prediction, and is thus too elementary to adequately describe intentional action. The condition for feedback is comparison, and the condition for adjustable prediction is that there is feedback. The model accounts for adjustment of performance at subject-level (i.e., at the top level of the hierarchy of intentional action), but lower level feedback and prediction processes may be incorporated based on the literature presented in Section 4. A fourth worry is that my account of feedback and prediction relies on affordance theory, which is not necessarily accepted by all philosophers or researchers. Affordance theory is an account for the role that feedback and prediction play in intentional action; other theories, such as predictive processing, may propose alternative accounts, but this does not undermine the fact that feedback and prediction are at the core of intentional action. A fifth worry is that the account of feedback I provide (represented in Figure 1) relies on the input-output model, which has lost currency in theories of mind. Even if the representation method I provided for feedback is in terms of processes interrelated by their inputs and outputs, this in no way corresponds to the input-output model of perception and action, according to which the mind passively awaits for input in the form of raw data, processes it, and rests again.[62]

6. Conclusion: performance, information and knowledge

The knowledge-how vs. knowledge-that debate is heated even today. Although the acceptance of other notions of knowledge such as knowledge-how, tacit knowledge, practical knowledge and embodied knowledge have become wider among the

---

[62] Clark, Andy, "2014: What Scientific Idea is Ready for Retirement?", *Edge*, https://www.edge.org/response-detail/25394 . Accessed December 8, 2020.

philosophical community in the last decade,[63] there still seems to be a predisposition to favor propositional knowledge (e.g., in newer trends of intellectualism)[64] as being prior to, or encompassing, other notions of knowledge. Ryle's concept of knowledge-how, however, has had a valuable impact, for example in Stanley and Williamson who advocate for the importance of the concept of skill in epistemology sixteen years after their first response to Ryle.[65] Nevertheless, the reliance on "truth", the view that "the goal of inquiry is to acquire knowledge of truths about the world", and that "knowing how to do something amounts to knowing truths about the world"[66] might, in my view, hinder more than favor an understanding of the nature of knowledge. In particular, engineers and computer scientists, who are playing a key role in research on mind and cognition, do not hold the notion of "truth" in any special regard. *Information* is the concept most valuable to them, and information is always relative to a system or to a process, it is more or less reliable (as given by statistics), it is useful but always subject to update and flow, and always related to the function of a system, that is, to its performance.

This would therefore be the last step in my argument: let us conceive of knowledge-that or propositional knowledge as information, so that we might free ourselves of unnoticed burdens that historical commitments to truth may bring in our new scientific and philosophical inquiries on knowledge. The result is that we step out of the knowledge-how–knowledge-that conundrum, and advocate for *performance* and *information* as two fundamental and complementary concepts. As I hope to have argued convincingly for, neither of them is reducible to the other: information guides performance, but not every aspect of performance can be encoded into information at the subject level in intentional action. Intention articulates performance and information playing a pervasive role: it is not a ballistic efficient cause, but it rather biases the perception of sensory and cognitive information, how it is potentially related to a number of performances, and it follows through performance in the form of feedback and predictions that are constantly updated. Stated otherwise,

---

[63] Steup, Matthias and Ram Neta, "Epistemology", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.); Farkas, Kataline, "Know-how and non-propositional intentionality", in M. Montague, A. Grzankowski (eds)., *Non-propositional intentionality*, Oxford University Press, 2018, 95-113.

[64] Pavese, Carlotta, "Know-how, action, and luck", *Synthese* / 2018, pp. 1-23; Wallbridge, Kevin, "Subject-specific intellectualism: re-examining know how and ability", *Synthese* / 2018, pp. 1-20; Borges, Rodrigo, "Introduction to the special issue 'knowledge and justification: new perspectives'", *Synthese* / 2020, pp. 1-8.

[65] Stanley and Williamson, *Skill*.

[66] Stanley, J., *Know How*, Oxford University Press, 2011; Yale University, Department of Philosophy, K*now how,* https://philosophy.yale.edu/publications/know-how . Accessed December 8, 2020.

there is no arguing against the fact that intelligent performance requires the guidance of information in order to be intelligent; not as an anterior operation, as the intellectualist legend would have it, but as being integrated in real time with performance. Perhaps the future of epistemology lies in the understanding and development of the interplay of these two concepts, information and performance, and of the disciplines that study them. Ryle goes a step further when he says:[67]

But when I have found out something, even then irrespective of the intelligence exercised in finding it out, I can't be said to have knowledge of the fact unless I can intelligently exploit it.

That is, for Ryle, the "folk conception" of knowledge-that as facts that one can memorize and recite is useless. Knowledge is only knowledge if it has a part to play in performance, that is, knowledge is always knowledge-in-action. This view seems to continue to find support in Greimas's pragmatic semiotics and in research on intentional action. Pezzulo et al.,[68] for example, say that "the brain is a feedback control system whose primary goal is *not to understand the world*, but to guide interaction with the world". This interaction-centered view of knowledge might be more compatible with other characterizations of knowledge, for example the one being propounded by semiotics, that considers action and information as being interrelational, situated, symbolic, affective and performative;[69] or decolonial theories of knowledge[70] that seek to revalue indigenous epistemologies.

---

[67] Ryle, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", p. 16.
[68] Pezzulo, Giovanni, and Paul Cisek, "Navigating the affordance landscape".
[69] Williams, James, *Process philosophy of signs,* Edinburgh University Press, 2016.
[70] Grosfoguel, Ramón, "The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms", *Cultural studies* 21.2-3 / 2007, pp. 211-223.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altmann, Wolfgang, *Practical process control for engineers and technicians,* Elsevier, 2005.

Blakemore, Sarah-Jayne, Daniel M. Wolpert, and Christopher D. Frith. "Abnormalities in the awareness of action", *Trends in cognitive sciences* 6.6 / 2002, pp. 237-242.

Borges, Rodrigo, "Introduction to the special issue 'knowledge and justification: new perspectives'", *Synthese* / 2020, pp. 1-8.

Brandt, Per Aage. "What is cognitive semiotics? A new paradigm in the study of meaning", *Signata. Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics* 2 / 2011, pp. 49-60.

Bubic, Andreja, D. Yves Von Cramon, and Ricarda I. Schubotz, "Prediction, cognition and the brain", *Frontiers in human neuroscience* 4 / 2010, p. 25.

Clark, Andy, *Surfing uncertainty: Prediction, action, and the embodied mind*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

Clark, Andy, "2014: What Scientific Idea is Ready for Retirement?", *Edge*, https://www.edge.org/response-detail/25394. Accessed December 8, 2020.

Dewey, John, "The reflex arc concept in psychology", *Psychological review* 3.4 / 1896, p. 357.

Farkas, Kataline, "Know-how and non-propositional intentionality", in M. Montague, A. Grzankowski (eds.), Non-propositional intentionality, Oxford University Press, 2018, 95-113.

Frankfurt, Harry G. "The problem of action", in *American philosophical quarterly* 15.2 /1978, pp. 157-162

Friston, Karl, "The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory?", *Nature reviews neuroscience* 11.2 / 2010, pp. 127-138.

Gallagher, Helen L., and Christopher D. Frith. "Functional imaging of 'theory of mind'", *Trends in cognitive sciences* 7.2 / 2003, pp. 77-83.

Gascoigne, N. and Thornton, T., "Knowing how and knowing that", in *Tacit knowledge*, Acumen, 2013, pp. 51–79.

Gettier, Edmund L., "Is justified true belief knowledge?", *Analysis* 23.6 / 1963, pp. 121-123.

Greimas, Argirdas Julien. "Reflexiones acerca de los modelos actanciales", in *Semántica estructural: investigación metodológica*, 1987, pp. 263-293.

Greimas, Alrgirdas Julien. *On meaning: Selected writings in semiotic theory*, Translated by Paul J. Perron, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Grosfoguel, Ramón, "The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms", *Cultural studies* 21.2-3 / 2007, pp. 211-223.

Haggard, Patrick. "Human volition: towards a neuroscience of will", Nature Reviews Neuroscience 9.12 / 2008, pp. 934-946.

Haykin, Simon, *Adaptive filter theory*, Fifth Edition, Pearson Education, 2014.

Huba, Mary E., and Jann E. Freed. *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning*. Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

Jeannerod, Marc. *Motor cognition: What actions tell the self*. No. 42. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kaptelinin, Victor, "Affordances", in *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, Interaction Design Foundation, 2014, ch. 44.

Linson, Adam, et al., "The active inference approach to ecological perception: general information dynamics for natural and artificial embodied cognition", *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* 5 / 2018, p. 21.

Paolucci, Claudio. "Social cognition, mindreading and narratives. A cognitive semiotics perspective on narrative practices from early mindreading to Autism Spectrum Disorder", *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 18.2 / 2019, pp. 375-400.

Parviainen, J. "Bodily knowledge: Epistemological reflections on dance". *Dance Research Journal 34*(*1*)/2002, pp. 11–26.

Poston, Ted. "Know how to be Gettiered?", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79.3 / 2009, pp. 743-747.

Martin, Bronwen and Felizitas Ringham, *Dictionary of semiotics,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000.

Miranda Medina, Juan Felipe, "Competence, Counterpoint and Harmony: A triad of semiotic concepts for the scholarly study of dance", *Signata. Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of Semiotics* 11 / 2020.

Pezzulo, Giovanni, and Paul Cisek, "Navigating the affordance landscape: feedback control as a process model of behavior and cognition", in *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 20.6 /2016, pp. 414-424.

Powers, William Treval, and William T. Powers. *Behavior: The control of perception,* Aldine, 1973.

Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that: The presidential address", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* Vol. 46 / 1945, Oxford University Press, pp. 1-16.

Ryle, Gilbert, "Knowing how and knowing that", in *The concept of mind*, Hutchinson University Library, 1949, pp. 26–60.

Sattler, Jerome M., *Assessment of children* (3rd ed.), Jerome M. Sattler, 1988.

Schleifer, Ronald, and Alan Velie. "Genre and Structure: Toward an Actantial Typology of Narrative Genres and Modes." *MLN* 102.5 / 1987, pp. 1122-1150.

Stanley, J., *Know How*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Stanley, Jason, and John W. Krakauer. "Motor skill depends on knowledge of facts", in *Frontiers in human neuroscience,* 7 /2013), pp. 1-11.

Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy, "Knowing how", *The Journal of Philosophy 98*(*8*) / 2001, pp. 411–444.

Stanley, Jason and Williamson, Timothy, "Skill", *NOUS* 51:4 / 2017, pp. 713–726.

Steup, Matthias and Ram Neta, "Epistemology", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/epistemology/

Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. MIT press, 2019. Original publication 1948.

Wiese, Wanja and Thomas Metzinger, "Vanilla PP for Philosophers: A Primer on Predictive Processing", in T. Metzinger & W. Wiese (Eds.). *Philosophy and Predictive Processing*: 1. MIND Group, 2017.

Williams, James, *Process philosophy of signs,* Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Wu, Wayne, "Shaking up the mind's ground floor: the cognitive penetration of visual attention", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 114.1 / 2017, pp. 5-32.

Yale University, Department of Philosophy, K*now how,* https://philosophy.yale.edu/ publications/know-how . Accessed December 8, 2020.

EIN *LOGOS* FÜR DAS SEIN UND DEN GOTT.
HEIDEGGERS AUSEINANDERSETZUNG MIT DER THEOLOGIE
AB DEN DREISSIGER JAHREN
II*

ROSA MARIA MARAFIOTI**

ABSTRACT. A *Logos* for Being and God. Heidegger's Confrontation with Theology from the 1930s. II. Heidegger's entire itinerary is characterised by the search for a living relationship with God, and thus for a *Logos* able to think and name the divine without objectifying its divinity. Getting into a dialogue with Western philosophers and theologians and distinguishing the fields of thinking, faith and science one from the other, since the 1930's Heidegger claims that, if the traditional theology has seen God as the supreme being, metaphysics, on its part, has identified it with Being as such. According to Heidegger, the "onto-theo-logical" constitution of metaphysics has developed itself by means of the reception of the Jewish-Christian concept of an almighty God as creator. This process has led to the "fulfilment" of the "machination" in the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Heidegger speaks about the "poverty" of thought and about the consequent impossibility of building an onto*logy* as well as a theo*logy*. Nevertheless, he still waits for the hint of a "last God", in so far as he assumes that a renewed manifestation of the divine must be prepared through the "overcoming" of the "forgetfulness" of Being and God.

Keywords: God, faith, thinking, theology, metaphysics.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Die Suche nach einem lebendigen Verhältnis mit Gott und deshalb auch nach einem *Logos*, der imstande sei, das Göttliche zu denken und auszudrücken, ohne es zu vergegenständlichen, prägt den ganzen heideggerschen Denkweg. Während Heidegger ein fruchtbares Gespräch mit Philosophen und Theologen der abendländischen Tradition führt und die Sachgebiete von Denken, Glauben und Wissenschaft voneinander abgrenzt, ab den 1930er Jahren vertritt er

---

** Postdoctoral researcher (Ph.D. in "Philosophical Methodology", National Scientific Habilitation as associate professor on History of Philosophy and on Theoretical Philosophy), University of Messina, rosamarafioti79@gmail.com.

die Ansicht, dass die traditionelle Theologie Gott für das höchste Seiende gehalten habe, das wiederum von der Metaphysik mit dem Sein als solchen identifiziert worden sei. Die „onto-theo-logische" Verfassung der Metaphysik habe sich gleichzeitig mit der Rezeptionsgeschichte des jüdisch-christlichen Begriffs vom allmächtigen Schöpfergott gestaltet, die in die Vollendung der „Machenschaft" während der Totalitarismen des 20. Jahrhunderts gemündet sei. Heideggers Anerkennung der „Dürftigkeit" des Denkens und damit der Unmöglichkeit, eine Onto*logie* sowie eine Theo*logie* auszuarbeiten, hindert ihn daran nicht, auf den Wink eines „letzten Gottes" zu warten, indem er durch die „Verwindung" der Seins- und Gottesvergessenheit die Vorbereitung einer erneuten Erscheinung des Göttlichen bezweckt.

Schlüsselwörter: Gott, Glaube, Denken, Theologie, Metaphysik.

Es begehrte nie ein Mensch so sehr nach einer Sache, als Gott begehrt,
den Menschen dazu zu bringen, ihn zu erkennen.
Gott ist allzeit bereit, aber wir sind sehr unbereit;
Gott ist uns nahe, aber wir sind ihm ferne;
Gott ist drinnen, aber wir sind draussen;
Gott ist zu Hause, wir sind in der Fremde.

Meister Eckhart, *Von der Erkenntnis Gottes*

1. Die Kritik an der „Vergegenständlichung" Gottes: Die eigentliche „Verweltlichung"

Nach dem Vortrag *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (1927) äußert Heidegger sich nicht mehr über Gegenstand und Methode der Theologie. Denn ab der Mitte der 1930er Jahren arbeitet er die Seinsfrage nicht „fundamentalontologisch", sondern „seynsgeschichtlich" aus: Statt bei der Existenz als Sein des Daseins als des „ausgezeichneten" Seienden anzusetzen, um dann aus dem Befund seiner phänomenologischen Beschreibung für das Sein der anderen Seienden und das Sein überhaupt geltende Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen, fragt Heidegger nach dem Sein selbst (Seyn), dessen Wahrheit er als ein sich durch das Da-sein ereignendes Geschehen auffasst. Indem Heidegger die Grundzüge seiner seynsgeschichtlichen Besinnung bestimmt, bezeichnet er sie im Vergleich zu den anderen Vollzugsweisen des Denkens als ursprünglich; auf einer anderen Ebene verortet er deshalb auch die Philosophie als Metaphysik (die zum Seyn nicht gelange, zumal sie das Seiende als solches und im Ganzen untersuche) und die Theologie (die am Leitfaden der Metaphysik Gott mit dem höchsten Seienden identifiziere). Heidegger grenzt das Seynsdenken von diesen ab und betont, dass es eine unfruchtbare Verwirrung der

Aufgaben und ein Missverständnis bezüglich der Befähigungen des Denkens und Glaubens gäbe, wenn sich das erste auf den Gott und das zweite auf das Sein richten würde.

Auch wenn Heidegger sich hauptsächlich an die Denker wendet, können seine Hinweise auch die Theologen zu einer sachgemäßen Methode hinführen. Heideggers Ansicht nach sei sich die Theologie der Nachkriegszeit ihrer Voraussetzungen und Aufgaben weniger denn je bewusst. Sie bediene sich implizit der Begrifflichkeit der aristotelisch-scholastischen Tradition,[1] verwechsele das Christentum – die »Metaphysik, die den christlichen Glauben als Wissen ausgibt« – mit der Christlichkeit – »der Glaube an Christus in Christus«[2] – und begehe die größte Verfehlung, wenn sie das Heilige mit der „Transzendenz" zusammenfallen lasse. Heidegger verwirft die Auffassung Gottes als etwas Transzendentes und auch das allgemeine Konzept der Transzendenz – das er selbst jedoch während der Marburger Zeit verwendet hatte, um das Verhältnis zwischen Dasein und Sein zu beschreiben[3] –, insofern es den Bezug zwischen Gläubigem und Gottheit vergegenständliche: Der Transzendenzbegriff stelle Gott als ein höchstes Seiendes vor, mit dem der Mensch sich wieder zusammenschließen müsse, wobei er „über" das übrige Geschaffene „hinaus" gelange.

Heideggers Meinung nach irre auch diejenige theologische Auffassung des Verhältnisses zwischen Gott und Mensch, gemäß der keine tiefe Kluft die beiden trenne, soweit Gott als das Anwesendste und der Mensch als der zu ihm Anwesende vorgestellt werden. Nach Heidegger bleibe der ganze Sachverhalt »grundlos«, sofern das, was dem so verstandenen Gott und dem Menschen zugrunde liege, d. h. das Anwesen selbst, das Wesen des Seyns, »ver-stellt«[4] sei. Das »Grundlose« dieser theologischen Beschreibung verrate den metaphysischen Ansatz der Theologie, die

---

[1] Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, in *Gesamtausgabe*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main (= GA), Bd. 97, 2015, 193. Heidegger polemisiert gegen die „Pontificia Accademia di San Tommaso d'Acquino", die 1879 vom Vatikanstaat gegründet wurde.

[2] Ebd., 204.

[3] Heidegger erklärt, warum auch seine Transzendenz-Auffassung zu überwinden sei, in M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 65, 2003³, 217, 320. Die Unzulänglichkeit des Transzendenzbegriffes für die Erfassung des Verhältnisses von Sein und Gott wird festgestellt in *Vier Hefte I und II (Schwarze Hefte 1947–1950)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 99, 2019, 63. Zum „Überspringen der Transzendenz" und zu der „Überwindung des Horizontes" während der Kehre des heideggerschen Denkens Mitte der 1930er Jahre vgl. F.-W. von Herrmann, *Transzendenz und Ereignis: Heideggers „Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)". Ein Kommentar*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2019, 77–86.

[4] M. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen VI–IX (Schwarze Hefte 1948/49–1951)*, hrsg. von Peter Trawny, GA 98, 2018, 139. Gegen das »durchschnittliche metaphysische Vorstellen«, nach der das Sein (gedacht als Seiendheit) zwischen Gott und Mensch „dialektisch" vermitteln müsse, äußert sich Heidegger in M. Heidegger, *Zum Ereignis-Denken*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 73.2, 2013, 1389.

die Beziehung zwischen Gott und Mensch ähnlich wie den Bezug des Seins zum Seienden, d. h. im Sinne einer „ontologischen Differenz" denke.[5] Somit unterwerfe die Theologie den Gesetzen des Seins – z. B. dem Satz vom Widerspruch – Gott, obwohl sie behaupte, dass das Göttliche das „Absolute" „sei".[6] Nach Heidegger sei auch der »anthropologische Ausweg« der Theologie und der daraus kommende Einfluss der Psychologie nicht angemessen. Entsprechend der anthropologischen Vorstellung sei das Verhältnis von Gott und Mensch »als ein personales«, d. h. in Form einer »Ich-Du-Beziehung«[7] zu beschreiben. Diese „Hinabwürdigung" des Göttlichen in das Menschliche[8] sei nur möglich, weil das Wesen von Gott und Mensch zusammen mit dem Wesen des Seins selbst bzw. der Wahrheit des Seyns als Ereignis vergessen worden sei, weswegen »der Anspruch des Göttlichen und das Entsprechen des Menschlichen aus«[9] bleibe, zumal es keine wesentliche Sprache geben könne.

In den *Anmerkungen* der *Schwarzen Hefte* vom Ende der 1940er Jahre, die auf diese Problematik eingehen, bezieht sich Heidegger wahrscheinlich schon auf Martin Buber, der das „dialogische Prinzip" in seiner Schrift *Ich und Du* (1923) eingeführt hatte, auf die eine Notiz der *Vigilia I* im Jahr 1953 anspielt.[10] Heidegger denkt vielleicht auch an Ernst Troeltsch, nach dem die Überlegenheit des Christentums gegenüber den anderen Religionen in seinem personalistischen Charakter liege.[11] Er war auf Troeltschs Religionsphilosophie im Wintersemester 1920/1921 ausführlich

---

[5] Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Vigiliae und Notturno (Schwarze Hefte 1952/1953–1957)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 100, 2020, 130, 215.

[6] Vgl. ebd., 226 – wo Heidegger Thomas von Aquin, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 10, a. 5 (dt. Übers. von C.M. Schneider, *Summe der Theologie*, Verlagsanstalt von G. J. Manz, Regensburg, Erster Hauptteil: *Über Gott und seine Werke in der Natur*, Bd. 1, 1886, 192) zitiert und kommentiert: »Gott steht unter dem Satz der Widerspruchslosigkeit als einem Grundzug des Seins.« – und 74 – wo der philosophische Begriff von Gott auf Platos „ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας" zurückgeführt wird, die noch auf die οὐσία bzw. auf das Sein bezogen bleibt.

[7] GA 98, 139. Heidegger verweist auf Carl Gustav Jungs Psychoanalyse und verurteilt die gegenseitige Beeinflussung von dieser und der katholischen Theologie. Gegen die christliche Vorstellung der Beziehung zwischen Mensch und Gott in Form eines „Ich-Du"-Gesprächs vgl. M. Heidegger, *Zum Wesen der Sprache und Zur Frage nach der Kunst*, hrsg. von T. Regehly, GA 74, 2010, 142.

[8] Vgl. GA 97, 244.

[9] GA 98, 140. Vgl. GA 74, 131, wo geschrieben ist: »Das erste Gesagte ist das *Ungesagte*, d. h. *das Sein* […]. „Gott" – Ausruf, Anruf.«

[10] Vgl. GA 100, 81. In M. Buber, *Ich und Du* (1923) (in Ders., *Das dialogische Prinzip*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, München 2006[10], 9–138) wird die konstitutive Rolle des Verhältnisses (des Menschen zu Gott und zum Mitmenschen) dargestellt.

[11] Vgl. E. Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902–1912). Mit den Thesen von 1901 und den handschriftlichen Zusätzen*, hrsg. von T. Rendtorff in Zusammenarbeit mit S. Pautler, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York 1998.

eingegangen und hatte den troeltschen »vierfachen Wesensbegriff von Religion« diskutiert, indem er die Einbeziehung der Psychologie und der Erkenntnistheorie in der Betrachtung des Phänomens des Glaubens kritisiert hatte.[12] Ein anderer Theologe, an den Heidegger wohl in den *Schwarzen Heften* gedacht haben wird, ist Friedrich Gogarten. Heidegger kannte Gogartens Theologie vor allem aus Schriften der 1920er Jahre. Einige bemerkenswerte Übereinstimmungen lassen sich jedoch auch zwischen den *Anmerkungen* und dem Werk Gogartens *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt* feststellen, das erst 1952 erschienen ist.[13] Es mag sein, dass Heidegger über die dort ausgeführten Thesen durch Rudolf Bultmann schon informiert worden war, der seit den 1920er Jahren sowohl mit Gogarten als auch mit Heidegger einen Briefwechsel führte.[14]

In seinem Buch beschreibt Gogarten das Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Mensch als eine personale Beziehung, die durch den Zuspruch des Wortes Gottes entstehe, das sich in Jesus Christus verkörpere. Diese Idee entwickelt Gogarten im Werk *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit. Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem*[15] (1953) weiter, indem er in die Debatte eintritt, die nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg begonnen hatte und nach einer Antwort auf die Frage suchte, wie es dazu hatte kommen können, dass Deutschland dem „Hitler-Wahnsinn" vefallen war. Gegen die gängige Auskunft, laut der die Säkularisierung – d. h. das Verschwinden der christlichen Prägung der europäischen Kultur – dazu maßgeblich beigetragen habe, stellt Gogarten die These auf, dass der Mensch als freier Sohn Gottes, durch den Glauben in persönlicher Beziehung mit ihm, „weltisch" auf der Erde leben müsse. Durch die Säkularisierung komme die Welt zu ihrer Freiheit, da sie vom Glauben an

---

[12] Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, hrsg. von M. Jung, T. Regehly, C. Strube, GA 60, 2011², 19–30. Unter anderem zitiert Heidegger E. Troeltsch, *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie in der Religionswissenschaft*, Mohr, Tübingen 1905. Im SS 1921 zieht Heidegger die Augustinus-Auffassung von Adolf von Harnack derjenigen von Ernst Troeltsch vor, indem er Troeltschs Betrachtungen für zu „kulturgeschichtlich" orientiert hält (vgl. GA 60, 160–163).

[13] Vgl. F. Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, Vorwerk, Stuttgart 1967⁴. Unter den vorherigen Schriften Gogartens wird wohl *Die religiöse Entscheidung* (Diederichs, Jena 1924) von besonderem Belang für Heidegger gewesen sein, da die Entscheidung für Gott in ihr als zentrale Frage der menschlichen Existenz in der Form »entweder wir oder die Ewigkeit« (9) entworfen wurde.

[14] Heideggers Einfluss auf die beiden Theologen lässt sich in ihrer Korrespondenz erkennen (vgl. R. Bultmann/F. Gogarten, *Briefwechsel 1921–1967*, hrsg. von H. Götz Göckeritz, Mohr, Tübingen 2002). Der Name „Gogarten" taucht oft in Bultmanns Briefen an Heidegger auf, zumal er Bultmanns „entmythologisierende" Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments im Anschluss an Heideggers Auslegung der Neuzeit und des Wahrheitsbegriffes weiterführt (vgl. vor allem F. Gogarten, *Entmythologisierung und Kirche*, Vorweg-Verlag, Stuttgart 1953).

[15] Vgl. die Auflage vom Jahr 1958 von F. Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit. Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem*, Siebenstern, München 1966.

Götter, Teufel und allerlei magische Zwischenwesen befreit (entmythologisiert) werde. Die Welt lasse sich nunmehr als Schöpfung Gottes eigentlich denken und werde zum Raum des freien Handelns des Menschen, der sie jedoch bewahren müsse. Denn der Mensch habe die Welt als Erbe erhalten, dergestalt, dass er für sie vor Gott Verantwortung tragen solle.[16] Eine solche „Säkularisierung" als gottoffene Form der Weltlichkeit, als verantwortliche „Verweltlichung", grenze Gogarten von einem atheistischen „Säkularismus" ab.[17]

Heidegger verfolgt die ganze Diskussion, die im Hintergrund von Gogartens Schriften steht, und hält sie für nicht radikal genug, da sie zum Grund der Säkularisierung – zur Seinsvergessenheit der Metaphysik – nicht gelange und demzufolge das Wesen der Welt als Geschehen der Seynswahrheit – welches die eigentliche „Verweltlichung" sei – nicht erfassen könne. Gegen Ende der 1940er Jahre merkt Heidegger deswegen an: »*Säkularisierung und Verweltlichung* – sind nicht das Selbe. […] Verweltlichung: daß das Sein in das Welten von Welt einkehrt; dafür muß erst Welt sich ereignen, ihr Wesen sich lichten […]. Säkularisierung: daß innerhalb von Metaphysik und Christentum das bloß menschliche Tun und Herstellen die Oberhand gewinnt und sich in seiner Weise die christliche Offenbarung zunutze macht und in eine Sittenlehre einbildet. […] Alle Säkularisierung bleibt hinter dem Wesen von Welt zurück«[18]. Dasselbe gelte für die „Entchristlichung": man bedaure moralistisch, dass sich das individuelle und das gemeinschaftliche Leben entchristlicht habe, ohne ahnen zu können, was dem Verlust an Kraft der vermeintlichen »ewigen Wahrheit«[19]

---

[16] Vgl. die letzte Formulierung dieses Gedankens in F. Gogarten, *Jesus Christus – Wende der Welt. Grundfragen zur Christologie*, Mohr, Tübingen 1966, 92.

[17] Zu diesem Sachfeld im Allgemeinen vgl. C.F. von Weizsäcker, *Säkularisierung und Säkularismus*, Jugenddienst-Verlag, Wuppertal 1968.

[18] GA 98, 102. Vgl. 42, 132, wo Heidegger mit den zwei Bedeutungen des Wortes „Welt" – die eine entspreche der Seynswahrheit und die andere dem Saeculum – spielt und schreibt: »Was jetzt […] geschieht, ist eine Weltgeschichte ohne Welt«; »Wir sind vermutlich sehr weltlich, aber nirgends weltisch«. In den *Schwarzen Heften* aus den 1930er Jahren wird die Welt oft mit den Göttern und der Geschichte in Verbindung gebracht (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 94, 2014, 31, Nr. 86; 209, Nr. 1; 214, Nrn. 26–27; 218, Nr. 37b; 442, Nr. 38; *Überlegungen VII–XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 95, 2014, 51, Nr. 55; *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 96, 2014, 123, Nr. 83). In diesen *Überlegungen* besitzt die Welt jedoch noch die Bedeutung des Möglichkeitsbereiches eines geschichtlichen Volkes, das „seinen" Gott hat.

[19] GA 98, 106. Vgl. GA 94, 62, Nr. 159. In GA 98, 285–286, verurteilt Heidegger die Kirchenpolitik, die unter „Rettung des Abendlandes" die „Rettung der christlichen Kirche" (gar nicht des Christlichen) verstehe. Der eigentliche »Untergang der Welt« sei gerade »der Untergang […] in das Christentum« (Heidegger nennt diese Feststellung »*christliche Spenglerei*« ebd., 133). Schon in GA 96, 266, hatte Heidegger die »„Rettungsaktionen" für die „geistige Überlieferung"« kritisiert, durch die sich die »kirchlichen „Kreise"« dem »von ihnen festgestellten Niedergang der „Kultur"« entgegensetzten.

des Christentums bzw. dem Nihilismus zugrunde liege. Heidegger erwähnt den „Rettungsversuch" der Theologie: die „Entchristlichung" im Rahmen des Christentums zurückzubringen, indem sie als Verwirklichung irgendeines unerkennbaren Plans Gottes gedeutet werde. Somit maßt sich die Theologie an, durch philosophiehistorische Beobachtungen die Weltgeschichte auf Gott als unerschütterlichen Grund zurückzuführen, um die Weltgeschehnisse kalkulieren und unter Kontrolle bringen zu können. Sie leiste der Kirche deswegen gute Dienste,[20] deren Herrschaft jedoch nicht ewig – was so viel heißt wie unbestreitbar – sei.

2. Zum „Wesen" des Christentums: Die Rückkehr in das „Jesumäßige"

Indem Heidegger schreibt, man dürfe »auch einmal der Entstehungsgeschichte der Kirchenherrschaft nachgehen«[21], greift er auf mehrere Autoren zurück, die die kirchlichen Einrichtungen „genealogisch" entmachten wollten. Unter diesen sind vor allem Franz Overbeck und Adolf von Harnack zu nennen. Den Aufzeichnungen zu einem „Kirchenlexikon" von Overbeck ist zu entnehmen, dass die einzige Aufgabe einer echt wissenschaftlichen Theologie darin liege, eine „profane Kirchengeschichte" zu schreiben, um zu zeigen, dass sich der christliche Glaube durch eine solche Geschichte gar nicht erklären lasse. Dies könne indirekt die Unmöglichkeit einer christlichen Theologie beweisen. Overbeck nimmt Abstand von Adolf von Harnack, auch wenn dieser den griechischen und römischen Katholizismus samt dem Protestantismus (d. h. die gesamte kirchliche Institution mit ihren Riten, Dogmen und Gesetzen) vom „Wesen" des Christentums unterschieden hatte.[22]

Dabei hatte Heidegger die „Bekenntnisfront" erwähnt, d. h. die Widerstandsbewegung der evangelischen Kirche gegen die Nationalsozialisten und die „Deutschen Christen" von 1934 bis 1945. Gogarten hatte sich im August 1933 den „Deutschen Christen" angeschlossen. Doch schon im November 1933 hatte er sich entschieden von dieser nationalsozialistisch geprägten „Glaubensbewegung" getrennt.

[20] Vgl. die Notiz aus dem Jahr 1954, wo Heidegger den »Gnostizismus« kritisiert, der »den Willen Gottes zu kennen (γνώμη) meint« (GA 100, 120), und diejenigen, die das Wort „Gnostizismus" verwenden, ohne seinen Sinn zu klären. Heidegger spielt wahrscheinlich auf die „Gnosis-These" Eric Voegelins an, der in der Moderne eine Wiederkehr der Gnosis in Form einer politischen Religion sah. Voegelins Auffassung wird ausführlich dargestellt in *Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis* (Kösel, München 1956). Sie ist auch dem Buch *Die politischen Religionen* (1939) (Fink, Paderborn/München 2007³) zu entnehmen, das Heidegger nicht unbekannt gewesen sein dürfte. Zur Vielfältigkeit des alten und des modernen Gnostizismus vgl. A. Magris, *La logica del pensiero gnostico*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2011².

[21] GA 98, 106.

[22] Im *Nachwort* zur zweiten Auflage von *Über die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1903) schreibt Overbeck, dass ihm Harnacks »Saecularschrift« die »"Unwesentlichkeit" des Christentums weit eindringlicher bewiesen« habe als »das „Wesen", dessen Erweisung auf ihrem Titelblatt angekündigt ist.« (317–318).

Harnack und die Stellvertreter der liberalen Theologie – neben Nietzsche, dessen *Antichrist* (1888) die Inspirationsquelle von allen ist – sind offenbar die impliziten Gesprächspartner Heideggers, wenn er Ende der 1940er Jahre eine *Anmerkung* mit dem Titel *Das Christliche* verfasst und schreibt: »Verstehen wir darunter Leben und Predigt Jesu, das von Jesu erfahrene und ausgetragene Gottes- und Welt-Verhältnis, dann liegt dieses „Christliche" vor aller Umdeutung der Person Jesu zum Christus. Das Christliche ist in Wahrheit dann das Vor-Christliche«[23]. In seinem Werk *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1899-1900) hatte Harnack Jesus als historische Verwirklichung des Evangeliums dargestellt, das seiner Meinung nach aus keiner Doktrin bestehe, sondern aus der Verkündigung des Reiches Gottes als lebendiger Beziehung mit ihm im herzlich-hilfreichen Miteinander der Menschen. Harnack hatte Jesus von der Figur des Messias als des Erlösers der ganzen Menschheit (letzterer aufgefasst im Sinne des Weges zu einem überhimmlischen geistigen Leben nach dem Tod) stark unterschieden.[24] Ebenso hatte Harnack die Differenz zwischen dem historischen Jesus und der griechischen Auffassung des Messias, d. h. Christus, hervorgehoben, indem er der allmählichen Vergottung Jesu nachgegangen war,[25] die bei der christlichen Urgemeinschaft (die der Auferstehung

---

[23] GA 98, 103. In seinem Werk *Der Antichrist* hatte Nietzsche Jesu vom Christentum bereits unterschieden, indem er ausgeführt hatte, dass Jesus, ein »heilige[r] Anarchist« (F. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, hrsg. von G. Colli und M. Montinari, De Gruyter, München/Berlin, Bd. 6, 1999², 165–254, hier 198), nicht so stark wie die christliche Mitleidsethik, die Theologie, die davon abhängige (deutsche) Philosophie und der jüdisch-christliche Gottesbegriff zu verurteilen sei.

[24] Vgl. A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, hrsg. von T. Rendtorff, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Kaiser 1999, 146–149. Nach Harnack eignete sich Jesus den Titel „Messias" an, um absolute Anerkennung bei dem Volk zu gewinnen. „Messias" hatte jedoch bei den Juden keine feste Bedeutung und war mit nationalistischen Hoffnungen streng verbunden. Erst nach dem Tode Jesu wurde der Messias als Gottesmensch gepriesen und Jesus nicht mehr nur als einer der »großen Propheten und Offenbare[r] Gottes, sondern als de[r] göttlich[e] Lenker der Geschichte, als der Anfang der Schöpfung Gottes« (162) gewürdigt.

[25] Der Unterschied zwischen Jesus und Christus samt der Infragestellung der Zweinaturenlehre Jesu, manchmal bis zur Verneinung seiner göttlichen Natur, wurde zum Topos der Tübinger und Göttinger theologischen Schulen. Gegen die Verneinung der doppelten Natur Jesu Christi betont die katholische Theologie, dass die Göttlichkeit eine Eigenschaft nicht nur von Christus sei, sondern auch von Jesus. Außerdem bedeute „Christus" nicht unmittelbar „Gott": es sei einfach die griechische Übersetzung von „Messias", „dem Gesalbten", und bezeichne die Mission Jesu, nämlich die Erlösung der ganzen Menschheit. Der „Mensch" Jesus sei von Anfang an göttlicher Natur gewesen, da er von einer Jungfrau kraft des Heiligen Geistes zur Welt gekommen sei. Jesus habe immer ein Bewusstsein seiner Göttlichkeit gehabt, weil er sich mit dem Namen Gottes bzw. mit dem Ausdruck »Ich bin« (vgl. Markus, 14, 62; Johannes, 8, 58, in *Die Bibel*, übers. von F.E. Schlachter, Genfer Bibelgesellschaft, Genf 2002, 1054, 1114) bezeichnet habe und zu Maria und Joseph im Tempel von Jerusalem gesprochen habe: »Weshalb habt ihr mich gesucht? Wußtet ihr nicht, daß ich in dem sein muß, was meines Vaters ist?« (Lukas, 2, 49, ebd., 1062). Schon 1947 setzte sich die katholische

eine zentrale Bedeutung für den Glauben beimaß) begonnen habe, von Paulus (der auf das griechische Symbol des „θεῖος ἀνήρ" zurückgriff) bestätigt worden sei und sich im Hellenismus (durch den Austausch des Begriffes des „Messias" mit demjenigen des „Λόγος") vollendet habe.[26] Harnack hatte den Übergang von Jesus zu Christus mit der Entstehung einer katholischen „Lehr- und Gesetzeskirche" in Verbindung gebracht[27] und für eine Rückkehr zum „Wesen" des Christentums, d. h. zur ursprünglichen Botschaft Jesu plädiert, die er als lebendigen Glauben verstanden hatte, dessen Kern von ethischer Natur sei.

Trotz der Nähe einiger Ideen Harnacks zu Heideggers Auffassung des christlichen Glaubens, ist die Stellungnahme des Theologen mit derjenigen des Denkers nicht zu verwechseln. Denn Heidegger hatte bereits im Wintersemester 1920/1921 klar verneint, dass der Sinn des Neuen Testaments bloß ethisch sein könne.[28] In der *Anmerkung* über das Christliche vom Ende der 1940er Jahre hält er auch »die rationale Erklärung der christlichen Offenbarungslehren«[29] für nicht ausreichend. Heidegger gibt zu verstehen, dass die Christlichkeit einen unableitbaren, echt religiösen – auf das Göttliche verweisenden – Zug enthalte, den er nun „Vorchristliches" oder „Jesumäßiges" nennt und sogar vom Urchristentum unterscheidet.[30] Wenn Heidegger schon im Jahr 1943, im Aufsatz *Nietzsches Wort*

Theologie mit den einzelnen Thesen der liberalen Theologie im Buch von Michael Schmaus *Vom Wesen des Christentums* auseinander (vgl. die dritte erweiterte Auflage von Schmaus' Werk, veröffentlicht im Jahr 1954 beim Buch-Kunstverlag).

[26] Harnack gibt zu, dass Jesus sich „Gottessohn" genannt habe, aber er glaubt, dass Jesus unter dieser Benennung nur eine zu erfüllende Pflicht verstanden habe (vgl. A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, a. a. O., 144). Nach Harnack habe sich die Vergottung Jesu Christi vollzogen, alsbald der Begriff des Messias, unverständlich im hellenistischen Kontext, durch das Konzept des Λόγος ersetzt worden sei. Der Λόγος-Begriff habe die historische Figur von Jesus verdeckt, indem er die Christologie begründet und das Verhältnis Christi »zur Gottheit […], Kosmos, Vernunft und Ethik in eine Einheit gefaßt« (196) habe.

[27] Zur Entwicklung des christlichen Glaubens zum Katholizismus und zu seiner Verkörperung in einem kirchlich-politischen Gemeinwesen vgl. ebd., 188–200. Nach Harnack sei die Hellenisierung des Christentums (2.–4. Jahrhundert) ein Wendepunkt gewesen, da sie die Verwandlung der Kirche in eine Einrichtung und die Definition eines strengen Kults sowie die Formalisierung einer Ethik und Religionsphilosophie verwirklicht habe. Obwohl der »Sinn von der Einfalt des Evangeliums [damit] abgezogen« (197) wurde, hält Harnack die Begegnung des Christentums mit dem Griechentum für die Basis der abendländischen Zivilisation und behauptet, dass wir alles, was wir besitzen und schätzen, dem Bunde zwischen Christentum und Antike verdanken. Zu beiden Aspekten von Harnacks Einschätzung vgl. P. Stagi, *Che cos'è il cristianesimo? Introduzione a* L'essenza del cristianesimo di Adolf von Harnack, Stamen, Roma 2013, 114–117.

[28] Vgl. GA 60, 120, wo Heidegger auch Nietzsches Auslegung der Paulus-Briefe als Ausdruck von „Ressentiment" ablehnt.

[29] GA 98,103.

[30] Vgl. *ibidem*.

»Gott ist tot«, »das christliche Leben […] vor der Abfassung der Evangelien«[31] verortet und ihm eine kurze Dauer zugemessen hatte, differenziert er Ende der 1940er Jahre ein solches Leben und das Urchristentum im Allgemeinen – das er nunmehr als der Metaphysikgeschichte zugehörig erachtet – vom »Vor-Christliche[n]«, das »in gewisser Weise […] außerhalb des Metaphysischen«[32] liege. Heidegger schreibt: »Vermutlich muß der heutige Mensch, wenn er noch gesonnen ist, „christlich" zu sein, in das Vor-christliche Leben Jesu zurückkehren.«[33]

Jesus, der als Mensch in Angst versetzt worden sei, gelitten habe und am Kreuz gestorben sei, um ein Leben zu vollenden, währenddessen er „eigentlich" – d. h. seinem eigenen Sein gemäß und somit im bergenden Verhältnis mit dem Sein selbst – existiert habe, dürfte nach Heidegger in besonderer Weise auf das Göttliche – und allerdings in der Form des Gottes der Christlichkeit – verwiesen haben. Heidegger wird wohl in Jesus das Wesen des Menschen als des „Sterblichen" anerkannt haben, d. h. als desjenigen, der sich dem Tod – in dem das Nichts des Seyns einbreche – aussetze und sich dadurch dem Entzug des Seyns öffne, um dessen Verborgenheit zu hüten und den Wesensraum für die Gottheit vorbereiten zu können. Der Gott, der Jesus verkündet habe, sei jedoch nur eine der möglichen Erscheinungen des Göttlichen, welches in Zusammenhang mit der Wahrheit des Seyns und innerhalb der Seynsgeschichte noch nie erfahren wurde. Deshalb schreibt Heidegger, dass »das Vor-Christliche« – was so viel heißt wie das „Jesumäßige" – noch keine »seynsgeschichtliche Verwindung«[34] des Metaphysischen sei. Erst das seinsgeschichtliche Denken, das die Etappen der Seynsgeschichte zwecks der Vorbereitung auf die Verwindung der Metaphysik nachvollziehe, könne »zum helfenden Anlaß« für die »Rückkehr in das Vorchristliche« mittelbar werden und dabei »hilfreicher sein als alle Theologie«[35], mag es auch als „einfältig" gegenüber den metaphysischen Beweisen der Theologen aussehen.[36] Heideggers indirekte Hilfe für das Aufblühen eines lebendigen Glaubens bzw. eines „jesumäßigen"

---

[31] M. Heidegger, *Nietzsches Wort »Gott ist tot«*, in *Holzwege*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 5, 2003², 209–267, hier 219.

[32] GA 98, 103.

[33] *Ibidem*.

[34] *Ibidem*. Vgl. GA 99, 139, wo Heidegger den »Gott des christlichen Glaubens, der Gott in Christus lehrt«, vom »Göttlich[en]«, das »aus dem Wesen von Welt« bzw. aus der Seynswahrheit zu erfahren sei, unterscheidet.

[35] GA 98, 103. In M. Heidegger, *Zu eigenen Veröffentlichungen*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 82, 2018, 233, notiert Heidegger, dass auch das »gedankliche Fundament« des Christlichen erst mit der Metaphysik ausgehend von der Seinsfrage durchdacht werden könne.

[36] Für Heideggers Kritik an den Gottesbeweisen vgl. GA 94, 240, Nr. 104; 457, Nr. 60; GA 95, 8, Nr. 7; GA 96, 39, Nr. 19. Zu den Charakterzügen des einfältigen Denkens vgl. GA 98, 63, 66–67.

Verhältnisses mit dem Göttlichen beginnt bereits kurz vor der Ausarbeitung des seinsgeschichtlichen Denkens, alsbald er anfängt, die „Genealogie" des theologischen bzw. metaphysischen Konzepts von Gott zu umreißen.

3. Die „Destruktion" des jüdisch-christlichen Gottes*begriffs*: nihilistische Allmacht

Die auf die antike Philosophie zurückgehenden Voraussetzungen des traditionellen Gottesbegriffs werden von Heidegger bereits in der Vorlesung *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (SS 1927) umfassend untersucht, währenddessen das griechische Denken als Quelle der Idee vom Menschen betrachtet wird, die sich in der philosophischen Tradition gefestigt habe. In dieser Vorlesung zeigt Heidegger, dass die cartesianische Subjektvorstellung sich ausgehend von der antiken und mittelalterlichen Ontologie erklären lasse, die implizit durch eine »Interpretation des Seienden mit Rücksicht auf das herstellende Verhalten«[37] geleitet worden sei. Gemäß dieser Interpretation sei Gott *summum ens*, *causa sui* und Schöpfer des Seienden im Allgemeinen.

Die „phänomenologische Destruktion" des christlichen Gottesbegriffs, die Heidegger Ende der 1920er Jahre vornimmt, verweist ihn auf den jüdischen Ursprung des Christentums – auf die jüdisch-christliche Idee eines Schöpfergottes –, welchen er in den Vorlesungen über die Phänomenologie der Religion (1920–1921) zugunsten des in den Paulusbriefen vorherrschenden Gedankens eines *„neuen* Menschen"* übergangen hatte.[38] Heidegger betrachtet das Christentum und das Judentum jedoch nicht in ihrer Komplexität und ihrem Reichtum an religiösen Phänomenen, sondern beschränkt sich auf die Rolle, die ihre Rezeption im Lauf der Geschichte der Metaphysik

---

[37] M. Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 24, 1997[3], 147. Für Descartes' Metaphysik-Vorstellung vgl. C. Perrin, *Entendre la métaphysique. Les significations de la pensée de Descartes dans l'œuvre de Heidegger*, Éditions Peeters, Louvain/Paris 2013. Zu einer Kritik an Heideggers Auslegung von Descartes und mit ihr an seiner Vorstellung der Neuzeit vgl. L. Messinese, *Heidegger e la filosofia dell'epoca moderna. L'"inizio" della soggettività: Descartes*, Lateran University Press, Roma 2004[2].

[38] Am Anfang der Vorlesung, als »Einzelbemerkung« zum Galaterbrief, hatte Heidegger gesagt: »Voller Bruch mit der früheren Vergangenheit, mit jeder nicht christlichen Auffassung des Lebens.« (GA 60, 69). Außerdem hatte Heidegger vorausgesetzt, dass der »Urtext« des Neuen Testaments in griechischer Sprache geschrieben wurde (vgl. 68). Zu diesem »unbewussten antisemitischen Vorurteil« sowie zur sachgemäßen Betrachtung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem Neuen Testament und der hebräischen Torah nach der Entdeckung der Qumran-Manuskripte (1947) vgl. E. Giannetto, *Un fisico delle origini. Heidegger, la scienza e la Natura*, Donzelli, Roma 2010, 16–20, 71–75.

spielt[39] und tendiert dazu, ihre Charakterzüge vor dem Hintergrund der Deutung zu rezipieren, die Nietzsche ihnen gegeben hatte.

Insoweit der Gottesbegriff, der sich in der Wirkungsgeschichte des jüdischen Denkens durchgesetzt habe, derjenige des aus dem Nichts schaffenden Yahwehs gewesen sei, eignet sich Heidegger diesen Begriff an und konzentriert sich auf die Rolle, die er im Prozess der „Inkubation" der Machenschaft – die Auslegung des Seins als etwas Machbares und Beherrschbares –[40] gespielt habe. Die Entstehung und die Entfaltung der Machenschaft wird von Heidegger in den *Beiträgen zur Philosophie* (1936–1938) rekonstruiert und in den übrigen seinsgeschichtlichen Abhandlungen präzisiert.[41] Heidegger zufolge habe die *mono*theistische Auffassung eines *befehl*enden all*mächtig*en *Schöpfer*gottes, die sich im Mittelalter mit dem griechischen Verständnis der φύσις als einer Weise der ποίησις (Mache) vereinigt habe, das Hervortreten der bei den Griechen noch verhüllten Machenschaft ermöglicht.[42] Indem im Mittelalter das Seiende im Ganzen zum von Gott *als summum ens* und *causa sui* hervorgebrachten *ens creatum* und der Mensch zum Ebenbild Gottes erklärt worden seien, habe sich ein solcher Ursache-Wirkungs-Zusammenhang in der Neuzeit mathematisch bzw. „rechnerisch" gestalten können.[43] In der Vorlesung *Die Frage nach dem Ding* (WS

---

[39] Daraus wird die Antwort Heideggers an Paul Ricœur ersichtlich, der gegen das Seinsdenken einwendet, dass es dem jüdischen Erbe keine Beachtung schenke und die Beziehungen zwischen jüdischer und griechischer Welt vernachlässige (vgl. den Bericht in J. Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger*, Minuit, Paris, vol. IV: *Le chemin de Heidegger*, 1985, 40).

[40] Vgl. GA 65, 107–109; GA 66, 173.

[41] Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, hrsg. von M.S. Frings, GA 54, 20183, 59, 75; GA 65, 54, 126–128, 132; *Besinnung*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 66, 1997, 239–241, 374; *Metaphysik und Nihilismus*, hrsg. von H.-J. Friedrich, GA 67, 2018², 161–166; *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 69, 2012², 46–47; *1. Die Metaphysischen Grundstellungen des abendländischen Denkens (Metaphysik). 2. Einübung in das philosophische Denken*, hrsg. von A. Denker, GA 88, 2008, 67.

[42] Zu den genauen Stationen, an denen sich der Anfangscharakter der φύσις bzw. ἀρχή als Gott der ontologischen Metaphysik ausgestaltet habe und sich, vermittels seiner Synthese mit dem alttestamentlichen Schöpfergott, im Umkreis des hellenistisch-römischen Denkens in den allmächtigen christlichen Schöpfergott verwandelt habe, vgl. I. Schüßler, *Blick – Allmacht – Wink. Zur Gottesfrage bei M. Heidegger*, in H. Seubert/K. Neugebauer (Hrsg.), *Auslegungen. Von Parmenides bis zu den Schwarzen Heften*, Alber, Freiburg/München 2017, 243–271, hier 259–260.

[43] Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, hrsg. von P. Jaeger, GA 41, 1962, 110–111, wo Heidegger sagt, dass beide Wesensmomente der neuzeitlichen Metaphysik, d. h. die Auffassung des Seienden als Geschaffenes und die der μάθησις, nicht einfach Gehalt und Gestalt dieser Metaphysik seien, weil die μάθησις, als Form, selbst zum christlichen Inhalt des metaphysisch-neuzeitlichen Weltgebäudes gehöre. Silvio Vietta beweist die Richtigkeit der heideggerschen Ausführungen über den Rationalismus der Neuzeit, die in die Globalisierung der heutigen Welt gemündet habe, obwohl er bemerkt, dass Heidegger die Bedeutung der Descartes'schen Rationalität überschätze, sofern er nicht ganz wahrhaben wolle, dass Descartes' Philosophie von der „Revolution der Rationalität" ermöglicht worden sei, die sich bei den Griechen vollzogen habe und die ihrerseits der „Revolution des Neolithicums" gefolgt sei (vgl. S. Vietta, *»Etwas rast um den Erdball…«. Martin Heidegger: Ambivalente Existenz und Globalisierungskritik*, Fink, München 2015, 141–148, 181–184).

1935/1936) sieht Heidegger deshalb bezüglich der Machenschaft und der von ihr ausgeübten Kontrolle und Manipulation alles Seienden das jüdisch-christliche Kulturgut und das rechnende, funktionale Denken als zu einer einzigen Tradition verbunden an.

In der Abhandlung *Besinnung* (1938–1939) präzisiert Heidegger, dass der »christlich-jüdische Gott«, als *causa sui*, »die Vergötterung nicht irgendeiner besonderen Ursache einer Bewirkung, sondern die Vergötterung des Ursacheseins als solchen«[44] sei. Dass Kausalität und Gottheit zusammenfallen, bringt eine »Entgötterung« – einen Verlust des eigentlich Göttlichen – mit sich und »leistet […] dem in der Neuzeit erst beginnenden Wandel der Erklärung in den planend-einrichtenden Betrieb alles Seienden und seines Vorstellens und Erlebens die besten Dienste.«[45] In dieser entgöttlichenden Vergöttlichung »herrscht eine einzigartige Zugehörigkeit des Menschen zum Seyn, die am ehesten mit dem Namen der Seinsvergessenheit bezeichnet werden kann.«[46]

Dieses Vergessen sei der Metaphysik eigen, die das Sein als das allem Seienden Gemeinsame denke und das Seiende im Ganzen ausgehend vom höchsten Seienden – verstanden als einheitliches und totalisierendes Prinzip – aufgreife: Die Metaphysik habe eine „onto-theo-logische" Verfassung. In der Vorlesung *Schelling: Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809)* (SS 1936) vertritt Heidegger die These, die offizielle Theologie gründe in der Philosophie, die eine durch Platon eröffnete und in sich metaphysisch gefügte Denkungsart sei. Er stellt fest: »Jede Philosophie als Metaphysik ist Theologie in dem ursprünglichen und wesentlichen Sinne, daß das Begreifen (λόγος) des Seienden im Ganzen nach dem Grunde (d. h. der Ur-sache) des Seyns fragt und dieser Grund θεός, Gott, genannt wird. […] Man darf die in der Philosophie liegende Theologie aber niemals abschätzen nach irgendeiner dogmatisch kirchlichen [...]. Wahr ist vielmehr umgekehrt, daß die christliche Theologie die Verchristlichung einer außerchristlichen Philosophie ist«.[47]

---

[44] GA 66, 240; vgl. GA 100, 37.

[45] GA 66, 240.

[46] *Ibidem*.

[47] M. Heidegger, *Schelling. Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, hrsg. von I. Schüßler, GA 42, 1988, 87. Vgl. *Einleitung zu: »Was ist Metaphysik?«*, in *Wegmarken*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 9, 2004³, 365–383, hier 379. Heidegger bezeichnet die Metaphysik zum ersten Mal als „Ontotheologie" – ein Begriff, den er aus dem Werk Kants übernimmt (vgl. I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, hrsg. von J. Timmermann, Meiner, Hamburg 1998, A 632/B 660, 597) – im WS 1930/1931, in der Vorlesung über Hegels *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (vgl. *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, hrsg. von I. Görland, GA 32, 1997³, 140–145). Er spricht ihr einen „theologischen" und einen „logistischen" Zug in der *Vigiliae II* zu (vgl. GA 100, 147, 151, 159) und in *Besinnung* gibt er zu verstehen, dass die ontotheologische Verfassung der Metaphysik sich vor dem Horizont des jüdisch-christlichen Monotheismus klar bestimmen lasse (vgl. GA 66, 374). Nach István Fehér habe Heidegger die Grundzüge der Ontotheologie vor der Ausarbeitung der Auffassung der Metaphysik als Seinsgeschichte definiert (vgl. I.M. Fehér, *Heideggers Kritik der Ontotheologie*, in A. Franz/W.G. Jacobs (Hrsg.), *Religion und Gott im Denken*

Die Antwort auf die Frage, »wie der Gott in die Philosophie kommt«, die Heidegger im Vortrag *Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik* (1957) stellen wird, lautet deshalb, dass das der Philosophie eigene Untersuchungsfeld, das Sein des Seienden, »im Sinne des Grundes gründlich nur als causa sui vorgestellt« werde, womit »der metaphysische Begriff von Gott genannt«[48] sei. Zu dem Gott, der, indem er sich selbst begründet, dem Seienden im Ganzen eine unauslöschbare Grundlage bietet, »kann der Mensch weder beten, noch kann er ihm opfern. Vor der Causa sui kann der Mensch weder aus Scheu ins Knie fallen, noch kann er […] musizieren und tanzen. Demgemäß ist das gott-lose Denken, das den Gott der Philosophie […] preisgeben muß, dem göttlichen Gott vielleicht näher«, d. h. »es ist freier« für einen „lebendigen" Gott, der die Existenz des Menschen beseelt – »als es die Onto-Theo-Logik«, gemäß ihrem theoretischen Ansatz, »wahrhaben möchte.«[49]

Heidegger sieht die Rezeptionsgeschichte des alttestamentarischen Gottesbegriffes als entscheidend für die Durchsetzung des „ontotheologischen" Denkens und folglich für die Entstehung des Nihilismus an, dessen Wesen er als »die Geschichte« bestimmt, »in der es mit dem Sein selbst nichts ist.«[50] Da der Nihilismus in die Totalitarismen des 20. Jahrhunderts mündet, merkt Heidegger Mitte der 1940er Jahre an: »Die modernen Systeme der totalen Diktatur entstammen

---

der Neuzeit, Schöningh, Paderborn/München/Wien/Zürich 2000, 200–223, hier 220–223). Augustinus Wucherer-Huldenfeld behauptet, dass Heidegger seine These ausgehend von einer neuscholastisch orientierten Rezeption der Ontologie ausgearbeitet habe, gegen die sich eine durch Heidegger selbst beeinflusste Relektüre der Metaphysik des Thomas von Aquin entwickeln lasse, die zeigen könne, dass nicht alle Philosophie und Theologie „ontotheologisch" sei (vgl. A.K. Wucherer-Huldenfeld, *„Fußfassen im anderen Anfang". Gedanken zur Wieder-holung der denkgeschichtlichen Überlieferung philosophischer Theologie*, in P.-L. Coriando (Hrsg.), *„Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft"*. Martin Heidegger und die Gottesfrage. Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 1998, 159–181, hier 166–181).

[48] M. Heidegger, *Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik*, in *Identität und Differenz*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 11, 2006, 67. Vgl. GA 99, 71, 139–140.

[49] M. Heidegger, *Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik*, a. a. O., 77. Mit der Bevorzugung des „göttlichen Gotts" vor dem „Gott der Philosophie" will sich Heidegger nicht zur religiösen Anschauung Pascals bekennen, die er ausschließlich als »Ergänzung« (GA 96, 39, Nr. 18; vgl. GA 95, 343, Nr. 63; GA 100, 223) Descartes' betrachtet. Pascals „Logik des Herzens" sei nicht jenseits des Begriffsrahmens von Descartes' „Logik der Vernunft" zu verorten, da das pascalsche »christliche Denken« »die tiefste *Rettung* des Cartesianismus durch das Christentum und dadurch die verfänglichste Bejahung der Neuzeit durch das Kulturchristentum« (GA 95, 344, Nr. 63; vgl. GA 96, 18, Nr. 9; GA 97, 409) sei. Auf Pascals Gegenüberstellung von einer „Logik des Herzens" und einer „Logik der Vernunft" bezieht Heidegger sich auch in *Wozu Dichter?*, in GA 5, 269–320, hier 306, 311. Zu einer diametral entgegengesetzten Auffassung des Verhältnisses von Pascal und Descartes vgl. C. Ciancio, *Cartesio o Pascal? Un dialogo sulla modernità*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 1995.

[50] M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, hrsg. von V.B. Schillbach, GA 6.2, 1997, 304. Zu dieser »seinsgeschichtliche[n] Bestimmung des Nihilismus« im Unterschied zur gewöhnlichen und nietzscheanischen vgl. 301–361 und R. Morani, *Essere, fondamento, abisso. Heidegger e la questione del nulla*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2010, 167–177.

dem jüdisch-christlichen Monotheismus«.[51] In dieser Notiz spielt er darauf an, dass die Tradition der abendländischen Metaphysik zu der Machtpolitik geführt habe, die in Hitlers und Stalins totalitären Regierungen gipfele.[52]

Auf das Symbol des Vernichtungsvermögens einer solchen Politik, nämlich auf die Schoah, verweist Heidegger in einer fast gleichzeitigen *Anmerkung*, die lautet: »Wenn erst das wesenhaft „Jüdische" im metaphysischen Sinne gegen das Jüdische kämpft, ist der Höhepunkt der Selbstvernichtung in der Geschichte erreicht.«[53] Mit dem Ausdruck »wesenhaft „Jüdische"« (in Anführungszeichen) meint Heidegger die metaphysische Überlieferung und die Technikzivilisation, die sich in ihr zugespitzt habe, wohingegen er dem Wort „Jüdische" (ohne Anführungszeichen) die Bedeutung der wirklichen Juden gibt, gegen welche sich die totalitäre Machtpolitik durch technische Mittel in den Vernichtungslagern wende.[54] Da sich ein solches vernichtendes

---

[51] GA 97, 438; vgl. GA 99, 116. Zu einer Auslegung dieses Satzes im Kontext von Heideggers Kritik an der Politisierung des Christentums vgl. F. Brencio, *Dalle* Überlegungen *alle* Anmerkungen*. La critica alla tradizione giudeo-cristiana nei* Quaderni *heideggeriani*, in N. Cusano (Hrsg.), *Verità e individuo. Discussione su Heidegger e i* Quaderni neri, Sonderausgabe von „La filosofia futura", 4 (2015), 69–85, hier 82.

[52] Heidegger nennt Hitler „Verbrecher" in der Mitte der 1940er Jahre (vgl. GA 97, 444, 460). Für Heideggers Äußerungen nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg über Hitler vgl. 98, 128, 150, 230, 250, 258, 460; GA 98, 21, 77; über Stalin vgl. GA 97, 156, 250, 461.

[53] GA 97, 20. Diese ist eine von den 14 Aufzeichnungen der *Schwarzen Hefte*, die von vielen Heidegger-Forschern als „antisemitisch" bezeichnet wurden. Auf die riesige Debatte um den vermeintlichen Antisemitismus Heideggers, der seine nationalsozialistischen Überzeugungen bestätigt hätte, soll hier nicht eingegangen werden. Es ist dennoch angebracht, mindestens auf die Monographien zu verweisen, deren Verfasser die zwei gegensätzlichen Stellungen gegenüber der letzten Phase des „Falls Heideggers" eingenommen haben und auf die sich die meisten anderen Autoren berufen: P. Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2015[3] (in dem die These eines „seinsgeschichtlichen Antisemitismus" vertreten ist), D. Di Cesare, *Heidegger, die Juden, die Shoah*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2016 (in dem die Idee eines „metaphysischen Antisemitismus" dargestellt ist); F.-W. von Herrmann/F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger. Die Wahrheit über die* Schwarzen Hefte, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 2017 (in dem von einem „reinen seinsgeschichtlichen Denken" die Rede ist), F. Fédier, *Martin Heidegger e il mondo ebraico*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2016 (in dem eine Erklärung derjenigen vermeintlich antisemitischen Notizen gegeben ist, die von der Auslegung Trawnys gerade umgekehrt ist).

[54] Seit dem Zeitungsartikel von Donatella Di Cesare *Heidegger-Enthüllung. „Selbstvernichtung der Juden"* („Hohe Luft. Philosophie-Zeitschrift", 10.02.2015, auf http://www.hoheluft-magazin.de/ 2015/02/heidegger-enthuellung/ (27.03.2020)) haben mehrere Interpreten dieses Satzes ihm die Bedeutung einer „Selbstvernichtung der Juden" zugesprochen. Heidegger gebraucht jedoch nie diesen Ausdruck und will auf keinen Fall behaupten, dass die Opfer des Holocausts zugleich Täter von etwas seien, wegen dessen sie es „verdient" hätten, zum Tode verurteilt zu werden. Es ist aber zuzugeben, dass die Bezeichnung der seinsvergessenen Technikzivilisation mit dem Wort „Jüdisches" etwas merkwürdig ist. Zur „Grenzstellung" von Heideggers *Anmerkung* über die „Selbstvernichtung" (sie befindet sich zwischen einigen philosophisch nicht relevanten *Überlegungen*, in denen Heidegger den Neuzeitgeist mit dem „Jüdischen" identifiziert und judenfeindliche Klischees aufnimmt, und anderen Notizen, die dem Judentum eine grundsätzliche Rolle in der Metaphysikgeschichte zuweisen) vgl. R.M. Marafioti, *Die Seinsfrage und die* Schwarzen Hefte. *Zu einer Ortbestimmung der judenbezogenen Textstellen*, in H. Seubert/K. Neugebauer (Hrsg.), *Auslegungen*, a. a. O., 117–136, hier 133–134.

Wesen der Technik hätte entfalten können, weil der Charakterzug der einen herstellenden Macht das gewesen sei, was sich während der Metaphysikgeschichte vom alttestamentarischen Gottesbegriff geltend gemacht habe, gebraucht Heidegger die reflexive Wendung „*Selbst*vernichtung". Er versteht darunter sowohl die Selbstvernichtung der von der Technik gestalteten neuzeitlichen Weltzivilisation als auch die Selbstvernichtung des Seins selbst. Denn im Holocaust werden die Juden durch eine „Tötungsmaschinerie"[55] in einer *wesen*haften Weise „liquidiert"[56], weil sie in ihrem Meschen*wesen* selbst verkannt werden: in ihrer Ausrottung wende sich darum das Seyn durch sein *Un*wesen – die sich der Technik bedienende Machenschaft – gegen sich selbst, weswegen es mit ihm selbst *nichts* sei.

4. Die Verwindung der ontotheologischen Götterlosigkeit im Wink des „letzten" Gottes

Anfang der 1930er Jahre hatte Heidegger gedacht, dass der *Nihil*ismus und die Weltzivilisation (die in der Metaphysik ihre Wurzeln hat) mittels einer geistigen, durch eine Universitätsreform einzuführenden Erneuerung und kraft der Unterstützung einer politischen Bewegung überwunden werden könnten. Deshalb hatte er sich am 21. April 1933 zum Rektor der Universität Freiburg wählen lassen und war am 1. Mai 1933 in die NSDAP eingetreten.[57] Das Scheitern seines Plans (Heidegger tritt von seinem Amt schon am 23. April 1934 zurück)[58] hatte eine Überlegung angeregt,

---

[55] Das Wort „Tötungsmaschinerie", das von Heidegger nicht zur Bezeichnung der Konzentrationslager gebraucht wird (vgl. GA 97, 148, 151, 156), lässt sich dennoch darauf beziehen.

[56] Dieser Ausdruck kommt 1949 in den letzten der zwei einzelnen Stellen vor, an denen sich Heidegger über die Schoah öffentlich äußert, nämlich in den Bremer Vorträgen *Die Gefahr* und das *Ge-Stell* (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, hrsg. von P. Jaeger, GA 79, 2005², 27, 56).

[57] Von den mehreren Studien, die den „Fall Heidegger" in Betracht gezogen haben, vgl. zumindest H. Zaborowski, *„Eine Frage von Irre und Schuld?": Martin Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 2010. Zu der Hoffnung und der Enttäuschung Heideggers gegenüber der Nazi-Bewegung, die sich in den *Überlegungen* und *Winken* der *Schwarzen Hefte* widerspiegeln, vgl. R.M. Marafioti, *Gli Schwarze Hefte di Heidegger. Un "passaggio" del pensiero dell'essere*, einleitender Aufsatz von I.M. Fehér, il nuovo melangolo, Genova 2016, 64–80.

[58] In einer *Überlegung* von 1939 gesteht Heidegger: »Rein „metaphysisch" (d. h. seynsgeschichtlich) denkend habe ich in den Jahren 1930–1934 den Nationalsozialismus für die Möglichkeit eines Übergangs in einen anderen Anfang gehalten und ihm diese Deutung gegeben. Damit wurde diese „Bewegung" in ihren eigentlichen Kräften und inneren Notwendigkeiten sowohl als auch in der ihr eigenen Größengebung und Größenart verkannt und unterschätzt. Hier beginnt vielmehr und zwar in einer viel tieferen – d. h. umgreifenden und eingreifenden Weise als im Faschismus die Vollendung der Neuzeit – [...]. Aus der vollen Einsicht in die frühere Täuschung über das Wesen und die geschichtliche Wesenskraft des Nationalsozialismus ergibt sich erst die Notwendigkeit seiner Bejahung und zwar aus *denkerischen* Gründen. Damit ist zugleich gesagt, daß diese „Bewegung" unabhängig bleibt von der je zeitgenössischen Gestalt und der Dauer dieser gerade sichtbaren Formen.« (GA 95, 408, Nr. 53; vgl. M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, hrsg. von P. Jaeger, GA 40, 1983, 208). Für einen

die es ihm gestattete, eine „Kehre" in seinem Denkweg zu vollziehen, seine Interpretation des Christentums zu präzisieren und sich dem Phänomen des Göttlichen (das er vom Wesen Gottes als *causa sui* stark unterscheidet) erneut anzunähern. Der Schmerz, verursacht durch die im Brief an Karl Jaspers vom 1. Juli 1935 in Anspielung auf Paulus' „Stachel im Fleisch" so bezeichneten »zwei Pfähle, nämlich die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Glauben der Herkunft und das Mißlingen des Rektorats«[59], hatte darum einen einheitlichen Weg eröffnet. Auf ihm gelang Heidegger dazu, den Nationalsozialismus als eine Erscheinung der höchsten Seinsvergessenheit zu betrachten und »[d]ie Formen des *neuzeitlichen Christentums* als die eigentlichen Gestalten der Gott-losigkeit«[60] anzusehen.

Indem Heidegger das »Gottlose« als Eigenschaft der offiziellen Religionen und ihrer Doktrinen auffasst, greift er den Glauben des Einzelnen dennoch nicht auf.[61] In der Nachfolge Nietzsches unterstreicht er vielmehr, dass die Religionen ihre geschichtsgestaltende Macht ab der Neuzeit verloren haben und nur „leere Hülsen" geblieben seien, die das Unvermögen des Menschen verdecken, das eigentliche Göttliche zu erfahren und sogar nach ihm zu fragen.[62] In Aufzeichnungen der *Schwarzen Hefte* aus dem Ende der 1930er Jahre und der Mitte der 1940er Jahre notiert Heidegger deshalb, dass die Frage, »wer denn ein Gott sei?«, nicht zu den „theologischen" gehöre, da sie eher »der Schrecken aller „Theologie"«[63] sei.

Die traditionelle Theologie habe bereits Gott mit dem höchsten Seienden identifiziert und dieses mit dem Seyn verwechselt. Aber zum einen sei »das Seyn [...] mehr als Gott«, falls Gott bloß als höchstes Seiende aufgefasst werde; zum anderen sei »das Sein zu wenig für Gott, gesetzt, daß Gott Gott ist und nicht das

---

Einwand der These, nach der Heidegger sich nie gegen den Nationalsozialismus ausgesprochen habe, vgl. R.M. Marafioti, *Heideggers vielsagendes "Schweigen"*, in A. Heidegger/W. Homolka (Hrsg.), *Heidegger und der Antisemitismus. Positionen im Widerstreit. Mit Briefen von Martin und Fritz Heidegger*, Herder, Freiburg/München 2016, 277–288.

[59] M. Heidegger/K. Jaspers, *Briefwechsel (1920–1963)*, hrsg. von W. Biemel, Piper, München/Zürich 1992, 157. Vgl. den *Zweite[n] Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Korinther*, 12, 7–10, in *Die Bibel*, a. a. O., 1218.

[60] GA 94, 522, Nr. 180. Heidegger listet den Katholizismus, die „Bekenntnisfront" und die „Deutschen Christen" in diesen Formen auf. Seine Einstellung zur Bekenntnisfront ist auch mit seiner Kritik an Karl Barth (Mitbegründer der „Bekennenden Kirche") und seiner dialektischen Theologie in Verbindung zu bringen (vgl. GA 94, 51, Nr. 132; GA 95, 395, Nr. 42).

[61] Vgl. GA 94, 398, Nr. 140, wo geschrieben ist: »Die Vielen vergessen [...] das Seyn [...]. Und deshalb müssen für die Vielen stets „*Religionen*" sein – für die Einzelnen aber ist *der Gott*.« Vgl. 331, Nr. 38.

[62] Vgl. ebd., 240, Nr. 104; GA 95, 302–303, Nr. 36; GA 96, 17–18, Nr. 9; 148, Nr. 146.

[63] GA 95, 302, Nr. 36. In GA 73.2, 1000, unterstellt Heidegger der traditionellen Weise des Fragens nach Gott, dass es nicht nur das eigentliche Gotthafte verfehlt habe, sondern auch, dass es unbestimmt gelassen habe, wonach zu fragen sei. In der Frage »was ist Gott?« solle zunächst präzisiert werden, welcher sei der Gott, um den es gehe: »Der Gott der Bibel? Oder der Gott der Fundamental-theologie – der „natürliche Gott"?« Oder wesentlich anders?

vorgestellte Erste einer Erklärung und Deutung des Seienden als eines solchen«[64], d. h., dass Gott das von der Theologie als höchstes Seiendes gedachte Sein nicht ist. Die Erwägung der Differenz und des Verhältnisses von Seyn und Gott falle unter die Aufgaben des „Denkens des Unterschiedes"[65], mit dem sich das heideggersche Denken decke, soweit es die Verwindung der Onto-theo-logie samt der Metaphysik bezwecke, die zuerst die Differenz zwischen Sein und Seiendem und folglich die Unterscheidung von Sein und Gott vergessen habe.

Gegen die Anklage, nach der sein Entwurf einer „Überwindung der Metaphysik" die Beseitigung des Glaubens zugunsten des Atheismus sei, verteidigt sich Heidegger, indem er darauf aufmerksam macht, dass der »seynsgeschichtliche A-theismus« – was so viel heißt wie die Überwindung der ontotheologischen Gottesauffassung – für viel höher als die »kultur-christlich-kirchenhaft[e] Gläubigkeit«[66] gehalten werden sollte, wenn er überhaupt mit dieser auch nur verglichen werden könnte. Letzteres sei aber unmöglich, weil der Atheismus, neu gedeutet auf der Basis der Seynsgeschichte bzw. der Wahrheit des Seyns, die Offenheit für die eigentliche „Gottschaft des Gottes" ausmache, welche wesensverschieden von allen religiösen und theologischen Behauptungen sei.

In der Vorlesung *Parmenides* (WS 1942/1943) kehrt Heidegger die Perspektive um und bezeichnet die traditionelle Auffassung des Glaubens selbst als „atheistisch", indem er schreibt: »Der „A-theismus", recht verstanden, ist die seit dem Untergang des Griechentums die abendländische Geschichte übermächtigende Seinsvergessenheit […]. Der „A-theismus" ist nicht der „Standpunkt" sich hochmütig gebärdender „Philosophen". Der „A-theismus" ist vollends nicht das klägliche Gemächte der Machenschaft der „Freimauer". Die „Atheisten" solcher Art sind selbst bereits nur der letzte Auswurf der Götter-losigkeit.«[67] Um diesen ursprünglichen Atheismus (nämlich den noch nicht erfahrenen „Gottes Fehl"[68]) zu überwinden, bedarf es einer

---

[64] GA 97, 356. Vgl. 118, 357; GA 99, 37, 62, 140; GA 100, 130. Ab den 1930er Jahren denkt Heidegger, dass auch Eckharts Gottesauffassung nicht verschieden von derjenigen der traditionellen Philosophie sei (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Zum Ereignis-Denken*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 73.1, 2013, 593–594; GA 73.2, 995–997).

[65] Vgl. GA 73.2, 1000.

[66] GA 96, 23, Nr. 11; vgl. 24. In seinem Buch *Martin Heidegger – zwischen Phänomenologie und Theologie: Eine Einführung*, übers. von C. Schuster, Edition Hagia Sophia, Wachtendonk 2015, hält der orthodoxe Theologe Remete die Bezeichnung Heideggers als „Atheist" für die »allerschlimmste Anschuldigung«, in der eine »völlige Blindheit und die eklatante Ungerechtigkeit gegenüber Heidegger« (95) liege, da der deutsche Denker einer Art überkonfessionellem Urchristentum angehangen habe (vgl. 161–164).

[67] GA 54, 166–167. Vgl. GA 66, 249; GA 100, 130.

[68] Für Heideggers Auslegung dieses Ausdrucks Hölderlins vgl. M. Heidegger, *Wozu Dichter?*, a. a. O., 269–270. Heidegger zitiert aus F. Hölderlin, *Dichterberuf*, in *Gedichte nach 1800*, in *Sämtliche Werke* (Kleine Stuttgarter Ausgabe), im Auftr. des Kultusministeriums Baden-Württemberg hrsg. von F. Beißner, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, Bd. 2, 1963, 46–48, hier 48. Günter Figal bemerkt dazu, dass die Erfahrung des „Fehls Gottes" als Folge einer „Götterflucht" ein Sich-Verweigern zur Erscheinung bringe, das auf das „Sich-Entziehen" des Seyns verweise und es somit sich ereignen lasse (vgl. G. Figal,

Vorbereitung auf die »Entscheidung über Götterlosigkeit und Göttertum«, für die es unverzichtbar ist, dass »das Sein und das Wesen der Wahrheit aus der Vergessenheit in das An-denken kommt«[69].

Da die denkerischen Bestrebungen des heideggerschen Denkens auf die Erfahrung der Seinsvergessenheit und die Erinnerung der Wahrheit des Seyns gerichtet sind, wirkt Heideggers Ausarbeitung der Seinsfrage dem Atheismus indirekt entgegen. Sie weckt und wahrt die Bereitschaft für die mögliche Ankunft eines „letzten" Gottes – ganz anders als die vorherigen, »gegen die Gewesenen, zumal gegen den christlichen«[70] –, indem sie den Raum für ihn durch die Erläuterung freihält, dass der Gott der Philosophen und der Theologen keine ausreichende Antwort auf die Gottesfrage geben kann.[71]

Eine endgültige Antwort auf sie zu geben wagt Heidegger auch nicht, genauso wie er darauf verzichtet, das Sein ein für alle Mal zu beschreiben.[72] Heidegger ist davon überzeugt, dass kein Wort das Sein selbst unmittelbar ausdrücken könne, da dieses sich in der Art entziehe, dass die „Sigetik" (die „Erschweigung" des sichverbergenden Seins)

Gottesvergessenheit. Über das Zentrum von Heideggers Beiträgen zur Philosophie, in Ders. (Hrsg.), *Zu Heidegger. Antworten und Fragen*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2009, 145–162, hier 154–155). Dies gilt umso mehr, wenn man bedenkt, dass Heidegger den »Fehl (der Gottheit)« mit der »Einebnung von Erde und Himmel in das Gegenständliche der Machenschaft« (GA 99, 34) verbindet: somit hält er den „Gottes Fehl" für ein ausgezeichnetes Zeichen des (Nicht-)Geschehens der Seynswahrheit im Geviert.

[69] GA 54, 167. In GA 66, 242–245, bezeichnet Heidegger als „Vorgeschichte" der Gottschaft des Gottes die Gründung der Wahrheit des Seyns, die erst die Entgegnung der Götter und des Menschen ermögliche, welche wesentlich anders als die Begegnung beider innerhalb einer „Religion" (einer »Form der Vergötterung des Seienden«, 243) sei. Weiterhin lässt Heidegger die offiziellen Wege zum Gott – »Kulte« und »Kirche« – unter »die verfänglichste Form der tiefsten Gottlosigkeit« (GA 65, 416–417) fallen, da sie voraussetzen, dass der Mensch auf den Gott warten müsse, wohingegen eben dieser für seinen „Vorbeigang" die Gründung der Seynswahrheit durch den Menschen bedürfe. Hiermit kritisiert Heidegger implizit die Gnadenlehre, ohne die Aufwertung des Beitrages der Gesinnung und des Handelns des Menschen bei seiner Rettung, die das Christentum verwirklicht, ins Auge zu fassen.

[70] GA 65, 403. Auf S. 411 schreibt Heidegger: »Der letzte Gott […] steht außerhalb jener verrechnenden Bestimmung, was die Titel „Mono-theismus", „Pan-theismus" und „A-theismus" meinen. „Monotheismus" und alle Arten des „Theismus" gibt es erst seit der jüdisch-christlichen „Apologetik", die die „Metaphysik" zur denkerischen Voraussetzung hat.« Vgl. dazu H.A. Krop (Hrsg.), *Post-theism: reframing the judeo-christian tradition*, Peeters, Leuven 2000.

[71] Vgl. dazu H.-G. Gadamer, *Sein Geist Gott*, in *Neuere Philosophie I: Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, Mohr, Tübingen, Bd. 3, 1987, 320–332, hier 331. In einem unveröffentlichten Brief an Hermann Heidegger vom 22.12.1997 (aufbewahrt im DLA Marbach, A: Gadamer, Inv.-Nr. HS.0022.10535) betont Gadamer, dass Heideggers Denken von Anfang an auf der Suche nach Gott gewesen sei.

[72] Vgl. GA 73.2, 1000, wo Heidegger unterstreicht, dass sein Denken nur beansprucht, ein »*Bedenken*« über das Sein »*zu erwecken*«, ohne das Verhältnis von Sein und Gott erklären zu können. Für die Zugehörigkeit der Gottesfrage zum seinsgeschichtlichen Denken vgl. P.-L. Coriando, *Zur Er-mittlung des Übergangs. Der Wesungsort des „letzten Gottes" im seinsgeschichtlichen Denken*, in Ders. (Hrsg.), *„Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft"*, a. a. O., 101–116, hier 103.

die einzige Logik des Denkens sein könne, die das Erfassen seiner Wahrheit vermöge.[73] Dementsprechend wird er wohl auch geglaubt haben, dass der λόγος, der auf den Gott hindeuten solle, sich nur als ein „beredetes" Schweigen verwirklichen lasse.[74] Wenn Heidegger durch seinen Denkweg zum Ergebnis kommt, dass die „Dürftigkeit" des Denkens nicht mehr gestattet, eine Onto*logie* oder eine Theo*logie* auszuarbeiten, bleibt seine »theologische Herkunft« für ihn dennoch »stets Zukunft«[75]. Denn ihm wird bereits während der Zeit der Kehre klar, dass das Sein »zu seiner Reife« bzw. zu seiner »Verschenkung«[76] im Er-eignis erst durch den Wink eines „letzten" Gottes gebracht werden könne, dessen Zuruf vorzubereiten sei. Nur dank dieser Vorbereitung lasse sich ein „anderer" Anfang der Geschichte einführen, dank dessen der Mensch nicht mehr im Dienst eines vernichtenden Willens zur Macht stehe, sondern sich auf seine »Zugehörigkeit […] in das Seyn durch den Gott«[77] einlassen und somit sein eigenes Wesen, das „Da-sein", empfangen könne.

---

[73] Vgl. GA 65, 79–80; GA 99, 154–155. Die Benennung „Sigetik" kommt aus dem griechischen Wort „σιγᾶν", das Heidegger mit „erschweigen" übersetzt. Zur Eigenartigkeit der Sigetik, die keine „Logik" im Sinne einer philosophischen Disziplin sei, sondern das Entstehen selbst des Wortes aus der Stille, vgl. P. David, *De la logique à la sigétique?*, „Heidegger Studies", 25 (2009), 143–155.

[74] Vgl. GA 100, 70, 126; GA 74, 131. Für das Problem, den „letzten" Gott zu „nennen", vgl. E. Forcellino, *L'ethos dell'altro inizio: appunti sulla filosofia dell'ultimo Dio nei "Contributi alla filosofia (dell'evento)" di Heidegger*, Etica & Politica, XI, 1 (2009), 69–91, hier 73–76, 88. Zu der Unmöglichkeit, über Gott als solchen zu sprechen, die Heidegger dazu veranlasst habe, die Figur des „Göttlichen" als eine Erscheinungsweise der Gottheit einzuführen, mit der sich der Mensch in Verbindung setzen könne, vgl. M. Steinmann, *Die Offenheit des Sinns*, Mohr Tübingen 2008, 349–354.

[75] M. Heidegger, *Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache*, in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 12, 2018², 79–146, hier 91. Trotz Heideggers Ablehnung des Wortes „Theologie" als Bezeichnung seines Redens von Gott haben einige Interpreten von einer „seinsgeschichtlichen Theologie" als von einem „anderen Weg" zu Gott gesprochen, den der späte Heidegger eingeschlagen habe. Vgl. dazu P. Brkic, *Martin Heidegger und die Theologie. Ein Thema in dreifacher Fragestellung*, Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, Mainz 1994, 24–26, 233–304, 318–320.

[76] GA 65, 410. In GA 98, 411, nennt Heidegger »*[d]er* Gott im Weltalter des Ereignisses« mit dem griechischen Wort „Ἀλήθεια" und kennzeichnet diese als »die Göttin«, deren »Zögerung […] die Hut mehrt und aus der sich mehrenden Hut die innigere Scheu verschenkt.« Er spielt somit auf die „Göttin" des Lehrgedichtes Parmenides' an, um die früheren Gestalten des Göttlichen und den „letzten" Gott bzw. den ersten und den anderen Anfang in Verbindung zu bringen. Zu vergleichen sind die *Anmerkungen* aus dem Jahr 1951 (GA 98, 401–412), in denen Heidegger auf den „Gott" und die „Göttin" eingeht, mit der heideggerschen Auslegung von Parmenides' Versen über die „Göttin Ἀλήθεια" (vgl. GA 54, 6–9, 13–23, 240–243) und mit seiner Aneignung von Pindars Auffassung der „Göttin" als „Mutter der Götter" (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Der Spruch des Anaximander*, hrsg. von I. Schüssler, GA 78, 2010, 95–94, 146–150).

[77] GA 65, 413. Zum geschichtlichen Vermögen des „letzten" Gottes vgl. P.-L. Coriando, *Der letzte Gott als Anfang. Zur abgründigen Zeit-Räumlichkeit des Übergangs in Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie"*, Fink, München 1998.

POURQUOI DEVONS-NOUS ABANDONNER - AVEC PRUDENCE - LE CONCEPT CARTESIEN D'ÂME ?

JEAN-JACQUES SARFATI[*]

ABSTRACT. Why Should We Abandon - With Caution - the Cartesian Concept of Soul? In this text, the author proposes to show that we must abandon the Cartesian approach to the soul while remaining cautious. He recalls the context in which this thesis was defended. This thesis is based on an interpretation of Genesis that condemns knowledge. It shows how this interpretation is wrong.

Keywords: Soul, spirit, Descartes

RÉSUMÉ. Dans ce texte, l'auteur propose de montrer qu'il faut abandonner l'approche cartésienne de l'âme tout en restant prudent. Il rappelle le contexte dans lequel cette thèse a été soutenu. Cette thèse repose sur une interprétation de la Genèse qui condamne la connaissance. Il montre en quoi cette interprétation est erronée.

Mots-clés : Âme, esprit, Descartes

A quoi pourrait bien servir la philosophie si elle ne permettait pas de penser - et de panser - notre présent ? A notre sens, telle est une de ses missions premières. Sinon pourquoi philosopher ? Pour épater les salons ? Cela serait une manière d'étouffer le projet qui est sien : faire lien avec la *sophia*.

Pour penser le contemporain et ses maux, il est possible de partir de ce que l'on pourrait appeler des symptômes en considérant qu'ils forment un tout qu'une philosophie « circulariste » que nous défendons pourrait mettre en valeur.

---

[*] Professeur et docteur en philosophie, juriste et ancien Avocat à la cour d'Appel de Paris. Il est actuellement professeur dans l'Académie de Versailles et chargé de cours à l'Université Paris Dauphine. Email : jean-jacques.sarfati@wanadoo.fr

Nous entendons par philosophie « circulariste », une philosophie qui considère que les événements que nous vivons ne sont que des cercles autonomes reliés à plus grand ensemble, chacun nourrissant l'autre en boucle et de manière circulaire.

Toutes les boucles ne sont pas en lien de la même manière. Certaines forment des boucles moyennes qui en nourrissent de plus importantes et de plus visibles et ce sans doute à l'infini et en retour perpétuel. Certaines boucles tournent dans le bon sens : ce sont les boucles qui conduisent vers la vie saine et d'autres sont inversées et perverses : elles tournent dans le mauvais sens. Ce sont celles qui conduisent vers la mort, le mal et l'ignorance. Il existe aussi des boucles neutres dont nous pouvons creuser le sens pour mieux comprendre d'autres phénomènes.

C'est le cas de la boucle à partir de laquelle nous voudrions partir dans ce texte. Celle-ci relie des événements que l'observateur (non philosophe ou non circulariste) tiendrait pour isolés l'un de l'autre. Pourtant ces éléments ont (selon nos analyses et intuitions) un lien entre eux et ce lien constitue une cause qui peut être mise en valeur afin de mieux nous aider à comprendre ce que nous vivons.

Ces éléments sont les suivants :

- d'un côté celui-ci semble manquer de souffle. De manière immatérielle cela se traduit par un sentiment de perte de sens, une perte de dynamisme, ce que d'aucuns appellent un vide. Au niveau plus physique, l'apparition du COVID 19 semble une manifestation « corporelle » de cette tendance car le symptôme de ce virus qui frappe actuellement le monde est la privation de souffle du malade [1];

- d'un autre côté, à l'opposé ce manque de souffle est associé à la montée d'une montée d'une pathologie contemporaine que l'on appelle la perversion narcissique[2] qui se caractériserait par le fait que les personnes (de plus en plus nombreuses) qui en souffriraient ne manqueraient pas d'air - donc de souffle -.

En conséquence un manque d'un côté et un trop-plein de l'autre.

Selon nous ces différents phénomènes : vide et narcissisme sont liés par une même cause qui est en lien avec une perte de sens de la notion d'âme. Un premier élément confirme cette intuition. Dans plusieurs langues, l'âme est associée au souffle. Selon cette première acception, le manque de clarté de l'âme renverrait au manque de clarté dans notre souffle.

Ce trouble, quelle en est la cause profonde ? Pour l'expliquer, il n'est pas rare de nos jours de lire sous la plume de différents auteurs, le fait que ce serait la faute à Descartes si nous en serions arrivés à cette confusion.

---

[1] C'est notamment le cas de G. Lipovetsky dans un texte qu'il a intitulé *L'ère du vide*. Gallimard, 1983.

[2] Fort bien analysée par C. Lasch dans son texte, *La culture du narcissisme*, Flammarion, 2008, Préface J. C. Michéa.

La thèse que nous allons soutenir ici est que - s'il nous semble certain qu'il importe de pas suivre Descartes sur la définition de l'âme qu'il nous a proposé - il n'en demeure pas moins que nous ne devons pas pour autant tomber dans l'excès que le penseur rationaliste voulait éviter à savoir : un mépris du savoir et de la science.

En effet, il nous semble qu'à trop attaquer le rationalisme - via Descartes notamment et son idée de l'âme - le risque nous semble grand de tomber dans un irrationnel obscurantiste et un mépris du savoir et de la science.

Un tel mépris existe aujourd'hui et derrière les critiques cartésiennes se dissimulent parfois des relents de retours à un obscurantisme inquiétant qu'il convient de ne pas favoriser.

Avant d'expliquer plus précisément notre propos, il convient au préalable d'écouter ceux qui s'opposent à l'auteur du Discours de la méthode.

I) C'est la faute à Descartes ?

Cette affirmation est (notamment) celle développée par un auteur - par ailleurs extrêmement intéressant - Anselm Japp. Dans un très bon livre intitulé La société autophage[3], notre auteur rappelle que Descartes est détesté par de nombreux anti-modernes qui font de lui le fondateur de la modernité et donc la cause de tous les maux de la société post-moderne en guerre avec la Modernité.

Voulant éviter ces excès, il nous indique cependant que l'on ne peut nier l'importance de ce penseur dans la fondation Moderne. Il soutient notamment que sa distinction entre la chose pensante (l'âme ou l'esprit) et la chose étendue (la matière ou le corps) a séparé le sujet du reste du monde. Elle a construit un sujet tout de divisions et centré autour d'un moi abstrait qui a mis à l'écart le corps. Pour Descartes, c'est effectivement et surtout la pensée qui fait l'humain[4].

Ce sujet séparé serait ainsi pour Jappe, une des origines du narcissisme contemporain car le cartésianisme - par le solipsisme qu'il propose et son auto-centrage autour de l'égo pensant - verrait nécessairement le monde, l'autre et le corps comme hostiles[5]. De plus, il serait restreint à une pensée trop rationnelle et peu ouverte aux sentiments.

---

3 A Jappe, *La société autophage. Capitalisme, démesure et autodestruction*, La Découverte, 2017. Le passage qui nous intéresse ici débute p. 27,

4 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Dans une autre veine - moins philosophique et disons plus poétique - F. Cheng, semble également se faire l'adversaire de Descartes. En effet, il évoque une terreur intellectuelle qui régnerait en France - terre du cartésianisme - dans laquelle on tenterait

> d'oblitérer, au nom de l'esprit, en sa compréhension la plus étroite, toute idée de l'âme afin que ne soit pas perturbé le dualisme corps-esprit[6].

Descartes et sa coupure entre le corps et l'esprit, serait-elle donc la cause du trouble actuel ?

Il nous semble que la question est plus complexe. Avant d'incriminer Descartes, il convient d'être prudent car cet auteur entendait lutter contre une misologie (ou haine de la raison) ainsi que contre une certaine confusion qui existait à son époque. Or cette confusion semble de retour aujourd'hui car plus personne n'entend plus rien sur ce sujet et sur beaucoup d'autres où tout un chacun se bat contre l'autre en voulant éviter le dé-bat.

En effet, avant de critiquer notre auteur - Descartes - il nous faut tenter de rappeler le contexte qui a légitimé l'approche « restrictive » de celui-ci relativement à l'âme et son souci de réduire celle-ci à la seule pensée.

II) Le contexte historique et philosophique expliquant la théorie cartésienne de l'âme : la haine de la pensée et du raisonnement

Descartes a réduit l'âme à la pensée et il a donc confondu esprit et âme. Nul ne peut le nier. Cependant rappelons préalablement que ce penseur avait une conception plus ouverte que celle que nous avons aujourd'hui de ce terme car pour lui penser consiste en :

> tout ce qui se fait en nous de telle sorte que nous l'apercevons immédiatement **par nous-mêmes** : c'est pourquoi non seulement penser c'est **entendre, vouloir, imaginer mais aussi sentir**[7].

L'âme était donc pour Descartes le siège - non étendu et non matériel - à partir duquel nous faisons surgir tout ce qui n'était pas corporel : donc les idées tout autant que les désirs et les sentiments ou le produit de notre imagination.

---

[6] F. Cheng, *De l'âme*, Albin Michel,2016, p. 11.
[7] R. Descartes, *Les principes de la philosophie,* Première partie, Vrin, Article 9, p. 49.

Descartes ne fit donc pas de détail. Il voulait une philosophie simple et qui soit facilement compréhensible. Cependant d'une part, il n'a jamais exclu les sentiments de son analyse (puisque penser c'est sentir et imaginer pour lui) et d'autre part, il a toujours voulu soutenir que l'âme était un centre autonome et singulier à partir duquel le sujet construisait son monde

Cette thèse contenait des éléments fort intéressants qu'il conviendra de reprendre pour mener à bien notre recherche actuelle de re-délimitation de la notion d'âme. Cependant, pour la comprendre, il nous faut rappeler des éléments liés à l'époque qui fut la sienne et qui expliquaient sa position. Ceux-ci étaient au nombre de trois.

- En premier lieu, Descartes - en développant la vision de l'âme qui fut sienne - voulait lutter contre la scolastique dominante à son époque. Or celle-ci n'avait de cesse de philosopher en interprétant Aristote et la Bible. Une telle approche n'était guère philosophique car peu créative et peu adaptée aux besoins et aux maux du moment. Descartes eu donc raison de vouloir la remettre en cause. De plus, elle a eu pour effet de produire de la confusion et d'éloigner les lecteurs néophytes non philosophes du sujet qui nous intéresse. En effet, à quoi peut bien servir une philosophie qui ne parle plus qu'aux philosophes professionnels ?

- En deuxième lieu, en soutenant cette thèse de l'âme comme centre et comme pensée, Descartes - nous l'avons indiqué - voulait réhabiliter une philosophie pratique, concrète et de nature à panser certains des maux de son époque. Sur ce point, il ne peut être contredit. L'œuvre de Galilée, grand savant, avait été bannie parce qu'elle contredisait une herméneutique biblique dominante (mais fausse selon nous nous le verrons).

- En troisième lieu, pour réhabiliter la science, Descartes devait s'attaquer - sans le dire - à ce qui légitimait la thèse de ses opposants. Or celle-ci trouvait son fondement dans l'interprétation de la Genèse (chapitre II). Ce passage rappelons-le, indique qu'après avoir créé Adam et Eve, le Dieu de la Bible a placé ses créatures dans le jardin d'Eden et qu'au centre de ce jardin il a planté deux arbres : l'un de la vie et l'autre de la connaissance du bien et du mal dont ils ne devaient pas se nourrir au risque de mourir. A l'époque de Descartes (et encore aujourd'hui nous semble-t-il) la thèse herméneutique dominante de ce passage était que le mal surgissait (et la mort avec lui) lorsque l'homme se mettait à juger par lui-même du bien et du mal en ignorant la Bible.

Pour Descartes - et d'autres - une telle interprétation était la cause de la misologie (ou haine de la raison) qui régnait à son époque. Il fallait donc lutter contre cette approche biblique en rappelant ce que devait être la source de la vie et du savoir selon lui. Or celle-ci ne pouvait se trouver que dans la science qu'il

associait à la sagesse. Ce ne fut donc pas par hasard, que l'un des textes majeurs qui exposait la thèse cartésienne de l'âme-pensée débutait par la métaphore d'un arbre.

Pour Descartes, rappelons-le :

Toute philosophie est comme un arbre dont les racines sont la métaphysique, le tronc est la physique et le branches qui sortent de ce tronc sont toutes les autres sciences[8].

Selon notre auteur, c'était donc à l'arbre de la connaissance seule (et de la science réhabilitée) qui se devait de nourrir le philosophe et cette connaissance seule pouvait rendre la vie plus heureuse et donc la servir et non conduire à la mort. Descartes soutenait donc la connaissance et son arbre contre ceux qui - au nom de leur vision de la Genèse - voulait la réduire à néant car mortifère.

Pour aller plus loin encore dans son approche « révolutionnaire » du problème Descartes soutenait même que les branches les plus pratiques de la connaissance (mécanique, médecine ou morale) étaient les plus nourricières. Ayant mis au cœur de sa métaphysique, le sujet pensant, Descartes devait considérer que c'était donc bien cette pensée de l'homme qui devait en priorité nourrir ce savoir pratique. L'âme - substance première de l'humain- ne pouvait donc être que le siège de cette pensée autonome destinée à rendre le sujet plus libre.

La thèse cartésienne trouvait donc son origine dans une volonté de lutter contre la Genèse en s'écartant de ceux qui faisaient de la Bible la source de tout savoir et qui excluaient ainsi l'homme de la production de celui-ci et qui risquait ainsi de l'asservir.

Elle plaça donc l'âme au centre de la Modernité mais il ne pouvait s'agir que d'une âme réduite à la pensée par soi-même qui devint rapidement le crédo de toute philosophie moderne.

On peut comprendre ce point de vue et - pour cette raison - il nous semble périlleux de s'attaquer sans nuance à Descartes. Car le risque est grand qu'en s'attaquant à lui, on ne refasse surgir une misologie qui nous semble fort développée de nos jours. Beaucoup en effet, aujourd'hui sous prétexte de guérir l'âme, nous demandent de ne plus trop penser.

Cependant même si l'on peut comprendre Descartes, il convient malgré tout de l'abandonner pour quatre raisons :

- En premier lieu, parce qu'il ne s'agit plus aujourd'hui de défendre avec autant de vigueur la science qui est au contraire devenue la religion moderne ;

---

8   *Ibid.*, p. 36.

- En deuxième lieu, parce que la physique de Galilée à bien été remise en cause par la physique einsteinienne et que les Mathématiques ne peuvent plus être le seul fondement de la physique ;

- En troisième lieu, parce que la confusion et la haine de la raison que voulait contenir Descartes a malheureusement rétabli sa toute-puissance notamment en s'appuyant sur les paradigmes Cartésiens (mal compris mais réels car notre Modernité est bien en crise) ;

- Enfin, parce qu'il est indéniable qu'en faisant de l'homme le seul centre de l'univers, on a fini par mépriser celui-ci qui nous prie instamment de repenser à nouveau à lui.

Toutefois, comme nous l'avons dit, il importe de remettre en cause avec prudence la pensée Cartésienne car le risque demeure grand de favoriser un nouvel obscurantisme en revenant à une lecture Biblique sans garde-fou. Or la religion - on ne le sait que trop - peut parfois rendre fous certains si elle n'est pas bien comprise.

Il faut donc repenser la notion d'âme en nous rappelant que l'erreur de Descartes ne fut pas d'avoir réintégré l'intelligence et la sensibilité au cœur de l'âme et de l'homme. Son erreur fut plutôt d'avoir - selon nous - construit son analyse à partir d'une lecture de la Bible dont nous savons qu'elle fut extrêmement réductrice.

En conséquence, avant de proposer une nouvelle approche de l'âme, il convient sans doute de revenir sur une interprétation plus judicieuse - selon nous et nous ne faisons ici que proposer pas imposer - du Texte qui a motivé la pensée Cartésienne : le tout début du Livre dit de la Genèse (*Béréchit*).

III) Revenir à une interprétation selon nous plus ouverte de Genèse II.

Descartes voulait la simplicité et la clarté. Cependant, en ouvrant comme il a pu le faire, il a - selon nous - confondu l'un et l'autre. La clarté n'implique pas en effet la simplicité. On peut et l'on doit être clair sans oublier le complexe qui est au cœur du fonctionnement de l'humain. Popper nous l'a judicieusement rappelé.

De plus, la psychanalyse et les apports contemporains de la psychologie nous ont montrés que la notion d'âme était loin d'être simple et qu'il y avait bien une part autre que rationnelle en nous.

Toutefois, en allant vers le complexe, nous ne devons pas nous éloigner de la lumière car ce faisant - et c'est selon nous ce que nous avons fait - nous risquons de nous éloigner de l'âme qui n'est autre - selon nous - qu'une ombre qui est continuellement en demande de lumière. La nourriture de l'âme c'est la lumière.

Or, la psychanalyse ayant démenti la vision cartésienne trop simpliste   et trop rationnelle de l'âme nous a troublée et ce trouble (fécondant et heureux) a semé la confusion.

Il faut donc écouter les leçons de la psychanalyse mais sortir de la confusion contemporaine car celle-ci risque de nous conduire à nouveau vers des ténèbres.

Ceux-ci s'approchent d'ailleurs peu à peu et ce sont eux qui nous éloignent progressivement de l'âme donc de la source du souffle ce qui peut expliquer (en tous les cas c'est ici l'hypothèse que nous proposons à nos lecteurs) les excès et les pathologies que nous constatons sur le sujet et qui ont été évoqués en introduction (à savoir mauvaise circulation du souffle et recherche de plus de nature).

Alors comment redonner un sens à l'âme ? Il ne faut pas rejeter Descartes en bloc mais il ne faut pas le suivre. Il faut écouter la psychanalyse mais tenter de dépasser les formidables intuitions Freudienne.

Partant de ces postulats, il convient - selon nous - de revenir à la source du « problème » (ou de la Lumière) à savoir la Genèse II.

Pourquoi ? Parce que celle-ci est la cause de la pensée cartésienne - nous l'avons vu. Or cette pensée est bien à l'origine du trouble que nous vivons aujourd'hui autour de l'âme car comment mieux nous étouffer qu'en rétrécissant l'âme à la seule pensée, ce que Descartes a fait ?

Pour dépasser Descartes - sans nuire à la science - et donc pour éclaircir à nouveau la notion d'âme, la nourrir à nouveau et retrouver notre souffle - il nous faut revenir à la cause première du mal et des Ténèbres : une herméneutique erronée - selon nous - du Texte Biblique où à tout le moins un refus d'autres interprétations possibles de ce Texte qui doit pourtant rester toujours ouvert dans ses lectures.

Un tel retour est d'autant plus important que ce Texte se situe au commencement d'un Livre qui ne doit pas se traduire par Genèse mais plus par commencement (*Be-Reschit).*

De plus, il se situe au commencement de ce commencement. Or qu'est-ce que l'âme ? Pour Descartes - comme pour nous - celle-ci n'est autre que cette ombre qui requiert la lumière ; ce centre caché à partir duquel la vie s'initie et s'anime. Les latins le savaient bien puisque pour eux, l'âme c'était l'*anima* ou l'« animante » pourrions-nous dire.

Pour l'exprimer autrement, l'âme est le commencement et l'ouverture de toute vie animale. Il est donc logique de chercher une part de sa détermination dans ce passage qui commence un livre qui ne veut traiter que du commencement.

Or celui-ci que nous indique-t-il ?

Il précise bien, en effet, qu'après avoir créé l'homme, Le Dieu Créateur a planté un jardin en Eden, vers l'orient, dans lequel il a fait pousser :

toute espèce d'arbres, beaux à voir et propres à la nourriture et l'arbre de la vie au milieu du jardin avec l'arbre de la connaissance du bon et du mauvais[9].

Comment interpréter ce passage ? Faut-il nécessairement considérer que la volonté de connaître ce serait la mort et ce Texte veut-il si clairement nous conduire vers une telle conclusion ?

Comme nous l'avons indiqué, cette interprétation est majoritaire. En philosophie, elle a même été utilisée par les contempteurs de la religion comme Nietzsche.

Pour lui en effet, il ne fait pas de doute que le Texte puisse être interprété autrement et il en déduit ce qu'il appelle :

La peur infernale (et selon nous infondée) que Dieu a pour la science[10].

Mais une telle interprétation se trouve également sous la plume d'herméneutes qui considèrent que la sagesse réside uniquement dans la crainte de l'Eternel. Mais cette approche nous semble discutable.

Plusieurs raisons justifient de revenir sur cette interprétation qui ne se prétend nullement excluant à l'égard des autres :

- En premier lieu, si nous reprenons par exemple un Texte biblique majeur concernant le sujet qui nous préoccupe à savoir Le Livre des Proverbes (*Sefer Michlei*) celui-ci ne fait pas du *Yirat Hachem* la fin de toute sagesse. D'une part parce que *Yirat Hachem* ne renvoie pas à la crainte mais à la révérence, au respect (pour certains) de l'Eternel et d'autre part parce que ce Texte reprend précisément le mot *Réshit* qui signifie commencement. En d'autres termes, pour le Livre des Proverbes ; donc pour une herméneutique autorisée de la pensée Biblique, la sagesse ne consiste pas dans la seule crainte de l'Eternel. Pour la Bible, la révérence à l'Eternel est le commencement - nullement la fin ou la seule voie - de la Sagesse. Le respect, la crainte si l'on veut n'en est donc pas le seul constituant sinon Salomon - considéré comme l'auteur de ce grand Texte - ne serait pas donné la peine d'écrire autant de pensées si profondes pour décrire cette ou ces sagesses qu'il ne cesse de louer et d'appeler de ses vœux. Le *yirat Hachem* (écoute, crainte du Divin) est le début de la sagesse pas sa fin.

---

[9] *Genèse II. 9* nous prenons ici pour partie la traduction de E. Munk.

[10] Elle est même considérée comme une évidence. Ainsi justifie-t-elle la haine nietzschenne des prêtres. Nietzsche, L'*Antéchrist*, § 48, trad. J.C. Hémery.

- En deuxième lieu, parce que le Texte de la Genèse qui nous intéresse et qui a justifié l'hermeutique à laquelle s'est opposée Descartes, utilise le mot *Rets Hahaim* qui peut tout aussi signifier : arbre, bois, poteau de la vie, du santé, du bonheur[11] et *Retz Hadayat Tov ve Rats* qui renvoie à l'arbre, le poteau, le bois du sentiment, de la réflexion, de l'esprit, de la science du mal, du mauvais du laid et du méchant. Ce second arbre est souvent associé - toujours dans une interprétation majoritaire - au pommier. Or tout vient précisément de cette inversion car le pommier est au contraire l'arbre de la vie et de l'âme pour les penseurs de cette culture. En effet, dans le Cantique des Cantique - autre Texte majeur pour interpréter les Ecritures Biblique puisque tenu peur une référence indiscutable pour les croyants sur le sujet - il est indiqué

Comme un pommier entre les arbres, tel est mon bien-aimé[12].

Le pommier ne peut donc être un arbre qui conduit à la mort sinon, la bien aimée qui veut la vie n'aurait pas assimilé son amant à cet arbre. En conséquence, si elle l'aime c'est qu'il donne la Vie. D'ailleurs - une interprétation dominante - considère que le Cantique des Cantiques (*Chir a chirim)* identifie l'amant au Dieu de la Bible. Or celui-ci est source de vie. De plus, le fruit de cet arbre : la pomme, coupée à l'horizontal - comme le savent ceux qui travaillent sur une certaine herméneutique Biblique - donne une étoile à cinq branches qui est considérée comme le sceau de Salomon, roi de sagesse et de paix. Enfin, au vertical il ressemble à un sexe de femme qui renvoie donc à la naissance - l'origine du monde pour Courbet - mais aussi l'amour comme *éros, philia et Agapé*. Le pommier n'est pas l'arbre de la mort. Il est arbre de vie. En conséquence, si le pommier est l'arbre de la connaissance, la connaissance ne peut donner la mort. S'il n'est pas cet arbre - ce qui est de plus en plus soutenu - il est donc plutôt ce qui aiderait à saisir la nature de l'arbre de vie.

En troisième lieu, il nous semble impossible de retenir l'interprétation qui est généralement proposée de la Genèse chapitre II car - si l'on s'efforce de relire avec attention ce Texte - nous pouvons constater qu'il nous indique que la mort surgira - donc la vie disparaîtra et le souffle avec elle - si Adam et Eve mangent**, consomment, dévorent, jouissent** de cet arbre. En effet le terme qui est utilisé par les écritures est *Hakol* qui renvoient à ces significations. Hakol en effet c'est manger, dévorer, jouir...

Il n'est donc pas question d'ignorer la connaissance et la science. Au contraire : manger, jouir, dévorer cette connaissance c'est la faire disparaitre, l'absorber, la faire

---

[11] Je me référé ici au dictionnaire de M. Ennery, Colbo, 1976.

[12] *Cantique des Cantiques*, II 3, trad. J. Y. Leloup, Albin Michel, 2019, p. 106.

sienne : adopter un comportement excessif à son sujet. C'est donc un tel comportement qui provoquera la mort selon la Genèse et non pas la connaissance en tant que telle.

Mais que pourrait-être une « dévoration » de la science ? Plusieurs interprétations sont ici possibles : utilisation du savoir, de la connaissance du bien pour humilier, pour tromper, pour manipuler, pour se cacher, pour introduire l'ignorance mais surtout pas : rejeter cette science. C'est précisément le contraire de l'interprétation dominante que semble proposer ce Texte.

E Munk soutient quant à lui que ce Texte signifie que

> La condition de toute vie morale est la subordination de notre nature physique à la volonté divine…Que c'est par la maitrise des tentations des sens que l'homme devient homme…[13]

Or - même s'il convient sans doute de revenir sur cette interprétation - qui limite le « tov » au seul bien, comment être dans cette « maitrise » sans sagesse et connaissance ?

Descartes a donc eu raison lorsqu'il a relié la vie à une connaissance sage et qu'il s'est opposé à ceux qui soutenaient le contraire. La faute ne revient donc pas à Descartes mais à ceux qui se sont lancés dans une telle herméneutique.

Toutefois, il ne faut pas - selon nous - se faire cartésien car Descartes a eu tort, lorsqu'il a séparé et fait naitre cette connaissance du seul sujet et donc des véritables arbres et donc de la nature et donc du Divin. Spinoza et Pascal l'ont bien pressenti et l'engouement actuel pour l'écologie trouve peut-être aussi sa cause dans cette intuition contemporaine sur le sujet. Nous devons revenir vers la source de la vie : la nature pour ceux qui ne croient pas en la Bible, la Transcendance pour les autres.

Les horreurs écologiques contemporaines nous le montrent que trop. Les excès auxquels la science a mené également. Science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme. Ce truisme est une évidence.

Toutefois Descartes a œuvré de la sorte en réaction et il n'en aurait pas été de la sorte si le Texte avait été bien lu ou si à tout le moins, ceux qui soutiennent cette interprétation avaient admis qu'il puisse y en avoir d'autres. Car c'est la volonté d'imposer une interprétation dominante (fausse selon nous) de ce Texte qui est à l'origine du rétrécissement de l'âme à la seule pensée par Descartes et ce rétrécissement est la cause de notre plongée actuelle dans des ténèbres qui nous privent de notre souffle.

---

[13] E. Munk, *La voix de la Thora. La genèse*, 1992, p. 28.

Il faut donc reprendre notre souffle. En conséquence, l'autre thèse et l'autre herméneutique que nous proposons est la suivante : la Bible récuse l'ignorance et la haine de la science et de la sagesse. Le Livre des Proverbes ne fait d'ailleurs que de louer celle-ci et l'Ecclésiaste lui-même y revient et cette science ne peut être que produite par l'homme qui doit travailler pour l'obtenir en partant de la vie et de la nature ou plus précisément de l'arbre de vie. Nous y reviendrons.

En conséquence le mal n'est pas la science mais une science qui ne détache l'arbre de la connaissance de l'arbre de la vie et de tous les autres arbres du jardin situé à l'orient : le jardin d'Eden.

En conséquence - ce furent ici les intuitions de Pascal et de Spinoza qui ont cependant selon nous l'un et l'autre trop peu creusé cette notion d'arbre de vie - cette science ne doit pas s'auto-centrer autour de la seule pensée humaine. Elle doit être plus ouverte.

En conclusion pourquoi une bonne part des interprètes continue à penser comme Descartes et Nietzsche ? Pourquoi cette interprétation plus en lien, plus reliée de notre être - selon notre approche- n'a-t-elle pas été faite ou au moins retenue et pourquoi même souvent a-t-elle été écartée ?

Pourquoi avons-nous simplifié à outrance ? Parce que le juste milieu est toujours difficile à penser et parce que les philosophies se construisent souvent par réactions à ce qui les a précédés.

La psychanalyse nous a montré qu'il existait - dans notre esprit -des parties animales mais aussi que nos souffrances passées nous faisaient avancer. Elle a remis en évidence le désir. La sociologie nous a montré que nous étions mus par nos habitus de classe. Cependant, nous sommes toujours restés avec cette vision rétrécie et incorporelle ou rationnelle (cartésienne) de l'ame et nous avons séparé désir et raison, corps, cœur et esprit.

Ce hiatus a créé un conflit et ce conflit a alimenté notre crise actuelle. Nous savons bien que l'approche trop rationnelle de l'âme n'est plus acceptable mais nous continuons à donner le primat à l'intellect. Certes, beaucoup critiquent Descartes et l'intellect aujourd'hui mais ce n'est pas ainsi qu'il faut s'y prendre selon nous.

Le Texte que beaucoup de philosophes ont mal compris, nous le rappelle, il faut une connaissance qui part toujours de la vie, qui - non pas la maitrise - mais l'accompagne afin de la garder, de la préserver et de l'aider à croitre et embellir le monde.

"THINKING POLITICALLY, SEEING HISTORICALLY". HANNAH ARENDT ON THE METHOD OF POLITICAL THINKING

ATTILA M. DEMETER[*]

ABSTRACT. In my paper, I try to summarize Hannah Arendt's reflections on the method of political thinking, following them through their genesis. My fundamental assumption is that although she had been preoccupied with the issue before (at least from 1957), she became more seriously interested in it after the controversy following the publication of the Eichmann volume. It is generally known that Arendt believed to have found the pattern for the method of political thinking in Kant's third critique, the one about judgment; more precisely in the Kantian description of the reflective judgment. This served as a pattern for Arendt for what she sometimes called representative thinking or opinion. If, on the other hand, we examine Arendt's referring thoughts in their genesis we also come to realize why that was the case. In my opinion, Arendt looked in Kant's work for a form of political thinking that remained impartial, in other words, it was not committed to one political cause or another, yet did not break its relations to politics, remaining entirely political.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, Immanuel Kant, impartiality, political thinking, ideology, reflective judgment, representative thinking.

On the summer of 1957, just like in other years, Hannah Arendt and her second husband, Heinrich Blücher withdrew to Palenville to escape the sweltering heat of New York. These were the weeks and months of the year when Arendt could undisturbedly devote herself to the pleasure of reading. She read all sorts of things at such times, even crime stories – as we learn from her best biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl.[1] Yet, on the 29th of August, she related in a letter to her former teacher, master and friend, Karl Jaspers, that she was reading Kant's book, the *Critique of Judgment* [Kritik der Urteilskraft], with an "increasing fascination". Although,

---

[*] Hungarian Department of Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, E-mail: marton.demeter@ubbcluj.ro

[1] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World* (Second Edition), Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2004, 399.

she wrote, this had always been her favorite of the three critiques of Kant, she had never felt before so "powerfully spoken to"; and that this was the work and not the *Critique of Practical Reason* [Kritik der praktischen Vernunft] where Kant's real political philosophy was "hidden". Then she quickly listed the thoughts in which she believed to discover the so-called "political philosophy" of Kant: for example his praise for "common sense", so often scorned and despised, or the description of the "expanded mode of thought", which was part (and parcel) of judgment; and which always made it possible for us to think from someone else's point of view.[2]

Years later, on the 29th of November 1964, she wrote again (this time from the University of Chicago) to Jaspers (and his wife) that in the *Critique of Judgment*, of which she happened to be lecturing at the time, she believed to discover "a possible conceptual structure for history and political science", and that "representative thinking", which was based on judgment, may be a form of political thinking. This hasty (and somewhat superficial), passing observation could most likely be an answer to one of the earlier critical remarks formulated by Jaspers: that Arendt's political thinking lacked a method. Although this criticism has no specific written trace in their correspondence (Jaspers must have probably said it during one of their personal meetings in Basel), it can still be deduced from the fact that Arendt mentions in her letter that she had made progress in the area of "method". More concretely, she writes that she "had learnt" a lot during her teaching activity in Chicago, particularly in the area of method, which her thinking, at least according to Jaspers, had always been "somewhat lacking".[3] (Nevertheless it is a fact that Jaspers mentioned Arendt's "errors" in one of his earlier letters dated on the 31st of December 1958, although he immediately added that political thinking, unlike mathematical knowledge, was always exposed to possible objections, and that he "felt" Arendt's "impulse" was still true, even when she herself was in error.[4]) Jaspers was not the only one at the time to feel the lack of method in Arendt's political thinking: several reviews following the appearance of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951 or *The Human Condition* in 1958 also considered it the error of these books.

The mere fact that Jaspers and others felt her thinking lacked method would perhaps not have been enough reason for Arendt to get a 7-year old idea out of the drawer and dust it off in 1964. Something happened that made her interest turn to this direction: in 1963, her book came out about the Jerusalem trial of Adolf Eichmann, resulting in the so-called "controversy" connected to her person. Thus,

---

[2] Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: Correspondence, 1926-1969* (translated by Robert and Rita Kimber), A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London, 1992, 318.

[3] Ibid. 576.

[4] Ibid. 359.

Arendt started to be preoccupied more seriously by the issue of an adequate method of political thinking only because of the scandal that followed the appearance of the book about Eichmann. As a matter of fact, the controversy resulted in a considerable loss for Arendt also in her personal connections as some of her friends broke their relationships with her. She was most affected perhaps by her break with Gershom Scholem, who in a letter dated the 23rd of June 1963 (made public later) even accused her that not only her book, but even her own personality strikingly lacked "love for the Jewish people".[5] And although Arendt answered that she only loved her friends, and was quite incapable "of any other sort of love"[6] (she, as she writes, had never in her life loved any nation or collective: not the German, French, or American nation, or even the working class), yet the question gave her no respite: what had she done in fact, when according to her best endeavor she reported for the readership of New Yorker about the trial of Eichmann in Jerusalem (these articles were gathered later on into the volume) *impartially*? True, her impartiality turned into a curse upon her, but could she have acted differently, as a historian and as a political thinker?

The first among the more important texts (quite a few in line) in which she struggles with these questions – turning them more and more methodological than personal –, is her essay entitled *Truth and Politics*, appearing in its form as it is known today in 1967 in the New Yorker. She mentioned to Jaspers for the first time that she was working on a "long essay", "a by-product of the Eichmann mess" on the 25th of July 1965: "Should one, may one simply speak the truth in politics?"[7] She mentioned it for the second time a year later, on the 10th of August 1966, talking about it as a finished lecture to be delivered on the 7th of September at the annual meeting of the *American Political Science Association*.[8] Yet, Arendt had several lectures bearing this title between these two times, as a guest speaker at various universities, such as Emory University, Eastern Michigan University, St. John's College in Annapolis and Wesleyan University. She faced new reactions at every stage of her lecture route as the controversy around the Eichmann book created more and more waves, and she tried to incorporate these reactions, and her reflections about them, into the text of the essay.[9]

---

[5]   Marie Luise Knott (ed.), *The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem* (translated by Anthony David), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2017, 202.

[6]   Ibid. 206.

[7]   Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: Correspondence, 1926-1969, op. cit.,* 607.

[8]   Ibid. 648.

[9]   Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World*, *op. cit.,* 397-398.

Naturally, she mentions right in the beginning of the essay (in a footnote) that she was urged to write her text by the "so-called controversy" connected to her book about Eichmann, and that one of the questions she would like to clear in it was "whether it was always legitimate to tell the truth"?[10] She addresses the issue of impartiality in the last chapter of the essay (V), where, as she says, she "returns to the questions she had raised at the beginning of her reflections". Impartiality, she writes, is the precondition of truthtelling, and as such, it is the privilege of philosophers, scientists, artists, historians, judges, witnesses, and reporters. It belongs to the positions of those pursuing such occupations, because philosophers, just like scholars and artists, are outside the political realm, and in order to effectively practice their occupations, they indeed need to be outside of that: as long as one pursues these occupations, "no political commitment, no adherence to a cause, is possible".[11] Homer was the first one, she writes, who was able to look with equal eyes upon friend and foe, who decided "to sing the deeds of the Trojans no less than those of the Achaeans".[12]

Therefore, as long as she wrote about the trial of Eichmann as a reporter or a historian, she had to remain impartial right from the very beginning (whether or not she felt love for the Jewish people), because that was pertaining to the calling, or the occupation pursued right then and there. In 1964 she gave a longer television interview to Günter Gaus, who asked her, among other things, about her correspondence with Scholem (known to the general public by then), and thus the issue of impartiality came inevitably up during the conversation. Here too, just like later in her essay about truth, Arendt brings up the example of Homer, but she immediately adds that Homer was followed by Herodotus, who spoke about "the great deeds of the Greeks *and* the barbarians". Not only history, but all sciences come from this spirit, the spirit of impartiality, tells Arendt to Gaus, and if someone was "not capable" of this impartiality, because "he pretended to love his people so much", and "paid flattering homage to them all the time", then there was nothing to be done against that, but in her opinion "people like that" were not "patriots". If someone set off to report or write history, like she had done in Jerusalem, then they must remain impartial.[13]

---

[10] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Penguin Books, 2006, 223-259, 223.

[11] Ibid., 255.

[12] Ibid. 258.

[13] Hannah Arendt, *What Remains? The Language Remains. A Conversation with Günter Gaus*, in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, *1930-1954* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 1994, 1-23, 20; see also: Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, *op. cit.,* 258.

However, by this impartiality – and this is in fact the main topic of her essay about truth –, she immediately excluded herself of politics. For, "looking upon politics from the perspective of truth", writes Arendt, as she herself had done as a reporter or when writing the essay, means "to take one's stand outside the political realm". Homer's impartiality or the impartiality of the poet is different from the impartiality of the person thinking about politics *inside* the political realm, and who is only expected to form a "qualified, representative opinion" about its issues.[14] These two types of impartiality must necessarily be different, because the impartiality of political thinking, as it is *political*, cannot be achieved *outside* politics: the impartiality of the representative opinion is always only possible inside the world of politics. The question Arendt asks therefore is how at all we can form an impartial judgment about the issues of politics, without placing ourselves outside its realm? Like all Arendt's other questions formulated in this essay, this one is also deeply personal in nature: how could she as a reporter in Jerusalem place herself outside politics, when she in fact had always considered political action as a supreme form of human activity? What is the political position (if there is one at all) of the person *merely* reporting about reality, without aiming to change it? Is impartial judgment a political activity at all? And so on.

These are the questions (above all obviously the one about the impartiality of political thinking) to which Arendt, as she herself affirmed, believed to find the answers in the *Critique of Judgment*. As we know, in this third (and last) critique, Kant made a distinction between the so-called "determinant" and "reflective" judgments. In his view we practice the first one when there is a given universal principle, law or rule (or notion, as he says it elsewhere), and we only have to subsume the particular, the specific under the general rule (or notion): for instance, being aware of the canonical rules of beauty we have to decide about this or that object if it is beautiful or not. This is not a simple case either, for as Kant himself remarked in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the application of the rule (i.e. the passing of judgment) cannot have a rule itself (because that would again require judgment in the application of the rule), therefore, in his perception, judgment "is a peculiar talent which can be practiced only, and cannot be taught". "Deficiency in judgment", he wrote, "is just what is ordinarily called stupidity, and for such a failing there is no remedy".[15] If, on the other hand, there is no such rule given, the task becomes a different one; in this case the aim will be to create a general rule, principle or law (i.e. a notion) that can serve as a

---

[14] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 255.

[15] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (translated by Norman Kemp Smith), London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., New York, St. Martin's Press, 1963, 177-178.

general measuring scale for the judgment of the unusual, namely starting from the particular. This is the process that Kant called reflective judgment, and this was the idea that Arendt considered to be the most important political novelty of Kant's aesthetics.

Why this Kantian idea was so important for Arendt is relatively simple to understand. She was convinced (and she hardly missed any opportunity to tell it), that because of certain events in the 20th century, fundamental categories of our political and moral thinking lost their validity; therefore we are forced to replace them with others. Thus, the rules or measures we have applied before for the phenomena of our political or moral life are no longer effective. When in June 1972 she was asked to deliver lectures at the University of Aberdeen within the framework of *The Gifford Lectures* (these were the lectures from which *The Life of the Mind,* her last work remaining unfinished because of her death, grew out), she used that series to popularize what she commonly called "thinking without a bannister".[16] In the 20th century, we have been left no other choice, opined Arendt, than to think without a banister. Thus, for instance, by the totalitarian regimes (both right- and left-wing) such new forms of government came into existence in Europe that had no antecedents in history, therefore our notions meant to describe forms of governments, primarily inherited from the ancient Greeks, were no longer suitable to name them. She herself tried to describe this new form of government in her book entitled *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Similarly, she was convinced that the historic experience of the death camps endangered the validity of all our traditional moral categories, and therefore the issues of sin or personal responsibility had to be fundamentally reconsidered (among other things, this, *too,* was one of the topics of her book written about Eichmann's trial). Arendt's question was (and as she was analyzing the fate-turning events of the 20th century, she inevitably had to raise it for herself), how in fact we could think without a banister at all?

The Society of Christian Ethics dedicated its 14th annual general assembly on the 21st of January to the oeuvre of Hannah Arendt. Arendt, who was also present, reacting to the lectures delivered, briefly summarized how she saw this entire "business" of thinking. Thinking, she said, was one way to confront the crises of our age. Not because by thinking we could get rid of them, but because it prepared us to observe things with a fresh eye: to overcome our old prejudices and habits. After thinking one remains "empty" in a way, just like all the conversation partners of Socrates in Plato's dialogues: they remain without evidences. (In fact, the only real

---

[16] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World, op. cit.,* 453; see also: Mary McCarthy, Editor's Postface, in: *Hannah Arendt: The Life of the Mind* (ed. by Mary McCarthy), A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., San Diego, New York, London, 1977, 1978, 241-254, 242 (second volume).

outcome of Socratic thinking is doubt; it is by no chance that Socrates himself declared he knew only one thing for sure, namely that he knew nothing.) That is why, tells Arendt to the audience, there are in fact no dangerous thoughts: "thinking itself is dangerous enough". On the other hand, she adds, this "enterprise" of thinking is the only one that corresponds to the "radicality" of the current crisis. Because once one remains empty, they are prepared to "judge" without having any previous collection of rules under which the special, particular cases could be subsumed, and one could say that "This is good," "This is bad," "This is right," "This is wrong," "This is beautiful," "This is ugly". And the reason why she "believes" so much in Kant's critique of judgment, she says, is not because she is interested in aesthetics, but because she is convinced that the way in which we determine what is good and what is bad is not essentially different from the way we decide what is beautiful and what is ugly. Consequently, by thinking we become prepared to face the phenomena itself, the issue itself, without prejudices, "head-on", and judge it impartially.[17]

Thus, aesthetic judgment, as this capacity had been described by Kant, is suitable for Arendt to be applied in the sphere of politics for two reasons. (Let us add, however, that Kant himself would not have restricted the functioning of reflective judgment to the judgment of beauty, either: he claimed this could also be helpful in finding our ways in the worlds of proprieties and lawfulness.) On the one hand, because in our political judgments, just like in the case of aesthetic ones, we must always deal with the unique, the one-time, the "real". The procedure described by Kant can be especially useful, opines Arendt, in judging those political or historical events that are without precedent, like totalitarianism, as in such cases we inevitably have to find the new concepts needed to describe them. These are therefore the situations when we must follow the practice of representative thinking and judgment. On the other hand, reflective judgment (more exactly getting ready to it by thinking) helps us to get rid of our *prejudices*. The latter, i.e. unprejudiced political thinking was so important for Arendt that she didn't only consider it imperative for herself at all times, but she also didn't even tolerate anyone thinking in a prejudiced way, or "ideologically" about political matters in her personal entourage.

In November 1972 the *Toronto Society for the Study of Social and Political Thought* organized a conference in honor of Hannah Arendt, in the presence of her friends (e.g. Hans Jonas and Mary McCarthy), members of her narrower and wider intellectual circles, professionals she had great regard for.[18] She was originally invited as a guest of honor, but instead of that she wished to participate actively in

---

[17] Hannah Arendt, *Remarks*, in Hannah Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister. Essays in Understanding 1953-1975* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 2018, 476-484, 481.

[18] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World, op. cit.,* 450, 452.

the proceedings of the conference, and she lengthily reacted to some of the lectures delivered, and answered the questions she was asked. At one moment Hans Morgenthau fired the somewhat impolite question "What are you? Are you a conservative? Are you a liberal? What is your position within the contemporary possibilities?" (He could do it because they were good friends and former colleagues at the University of Chicago). "I don't know," answered Arendt laconically. She really did not know, she said, and she had never known. The left thought she was a conservative, and the conservatives thought she was left or a maverick, "God knows what". She had to say, she added, that she could not care less, and she did not believe that the "real questions" of the century could get an illumination by these kinds of ideologies. And just to entertain the audience, she even told an anecdote to illustrate that: when she had come to America, she said, she wrote an article about Kafka, in her very "halting" English at the time, which the *Partisan Review* tried to "English" (*Englishing*: this was Arendt's all-time word for this activity). When she visited the editorial office to review the improved version, she was surprised to discover the word "progress" coming up frequently in the text. When she asked what that meant, as she had never used that word in the original article, the editor went to another colleague in another room, and she overheard him whispering in despair: "She doesn't even believe in progress".[19]

Although Arendt's aversion for ideological thinking may seem to be deeply personal in nature, it undoubtedly had reasons related to matters of principle. If we want to discover the latter ones, we should browse her text entitled *Ideology and Terror*. (This is mostly known as the epilogue of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, but in fact it was still missing from the 1951 American edition, and Arendt included it only in the second, 1958 edition.) The first versions of the text must have been produced some time during 1952, when Arendt delivered several lectures with the same title at various German universities, like Tübingen and Heidelberg.[20] The original, German language version of the text must have been completed based on these lectures. It appeared in the *Festschrift* compiled in honor of Jaspers in 1953, but the same year a somewhat longer version came out in English, too, in the July issue of the *Review of Politics*. (Arendt, for that matter, as she related to her husband in her letters at that time, had mixed feelings after the lectures: in Tübingen, for instance, she was charmed by the interest and intellectual susceptibility of his young students in their twenties, who, as she wrote, "only now are beginning to understand their

---

[19] Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt*, in Hannah Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister. Essays in Understanding 1953-1975, op. cit.,* 443-475, 470.

[20] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World, op. cit.,* 283.

experiences";[21] on the other hand, she was horrified by the "Sectarianism" of the university milieu of Heidelberg,[22] and, as she wrote to her husband, she was basically happy "to be getting out".[23] Both of these letters are good evidence to show what high regard she had for intellectual openness.)

Arendt's premise in her text is that one of the characteristics of totalitarian government, which makes it be without precedent, is the rule of ideology. Yet, one must not understand ideology (idea + logos) as the science of ideas (like the science of biota in the case of biology), but rather what the word 'ideology' directly suggests: the logic of an idea. The fundamental premise of ideological thinking is that there is a direct correspondence between the logic of an idea (i.e. the logical process unfolding from an idea) and the *real* or *actual* course of history (because *history* is in fact the subject matter of all ideologies, says Arendt). Thus, the course of history can be calculated in advance, simply based on the logic of the idea: empirical observations are no longer needed to learn the course of history. For instance, if we accept as a premise that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles", then history indeed becomes a series of struggles of classes for us, no matter what the empirical observation of history shows (which can, in the best case, only convince us that there *had indeed been* class struggles in history). And because history is a series of class struggles, therefore this must also be true for the future; in other words: new and new class enemies will be needed for the party and for the working class led by it, to get even with, or otherwise the whole course of history would obviously be stuck. This is how *terror* becomes the engine of history according to Arendt, and this is how in her interpretation ideology and terror become connected.[24]

Thus, according to Arendt, the bottom line is that ideologies in totalitarianisms are not simply systematic lies used by totalitarian leaders to deceive the masses, but tools by which thinking can be freed from the "burden of experience". Hence, ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality that we perceive "with our five senses", and "insists on a »truer« reality concealed behind all perceptible things", requiring a sixth sense to make us aware of it: in totalitarian systems this

---

[21] Lotte Kohler (ed.), *Within Four Walls. The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blücher, 1936-1968* (translated by Peter Constantine), Harcourt, Inc., New York, San Diego, London, 2000, 187.

[22] Ibid. 205.

[23] Ibid. 206.

[24] See Hannah Arendt, *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., San Diego, New York, London, 1994, 460-479.

sense was attempted to be developed in people by indoctrination.[25] Therefore, the ideal subject of totalitarian rule according to Arendt is "not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist", but the people, for whom the distinction between "true and false", "fact and fiction" no longer exist.[26] It is not incidental that when in the penultimate chapter (IV) of her essay on truth she gets back to these thoughts from 14 years earlier, it is exactly this "emancipating" character of ideology, its function to eliminate the dichotomy of true and falsehood she wishes to emphasize again: the "consistent and total" substitution of lies for factual truth occurring in totalitarian systems, she writes here, does not only result in "lies accepted as truth, and the truth be defamed as lies", but also in "that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world – and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end – is being destroyed".[27]

Hence, if Arendt personally rejected ideological labels and did not tolerate people thinking ideologically about political matters in her company, beyond personal aversion this was also the result of the fact that in her conviction nobody thinking ideologically for any reason could be able to see reality as it appeared in front of their eyes. (Ideologies, she said, "are never interested in the miracle of being".[28]) In her letter dated the 21st of May 1966 sent to Jaspers from Chicago, she recounts that she had spent a "very pleasant" evening in the company of a young German man, a certain Klaus Wagenbach. He, she writes, is a member of the Gruppe 47, and "has written and excellent biography of Kafka". Yet the "stereotypical" nature of his political judgment is incredible, she adds. "Still so young," writes Arendt in plain irony and of course with regret at the same time, "and already totally incapable of learning anything". He sees in everything only "more support for his prejudices", and cannot absorb anything "concrete, factual" anymore.[29] (Although in her text entitled Ideology and Terror Arendt only speaks about totalitarian ideologies, she remarks that originally these had not been more totalitarian in nature than the other 19th century ideologies: they all had contained "totalitarian elements", insofar as they all had claimed "total explanation", and made thinking "independent" of all experience, from which they "cannot learn anything".[30])

---

[25] Ibid. 470-471.

[26] Ibid. 474.

[27] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics,* in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 252-253.

[28] Hannah Arendt, *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism, op. cit.,* 469.

[29] Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: Correspondence, 1926-1969, op. cit.,* 639-640.

[30] Hannah Arendt, *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government,* in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism, op. cit.,* 470.

Turning back to the issue of political impartiality, it can be seen that Arendt had quite high demands from what she sometimes called representative thinking or opinion, the patterns of which she thought to have discovered in Kantian reflective judgment and the enlarged way of thinking: although representative thinking was supposed to be impartial, it was not allowed to break its relations to politics; in fact it had to remain entirely political itself. At the same time, it had to avoid the trap of ideological thinking, not only because thinking without a banister, which was the condition of impartial judgment, automatically questioned the validity of all preliminary principles or rules, but also because all types of ideological thinking covered reality, and retained us from seeing the things themselves, political events or phenomena in their concrete factuality.

Arendt saw that all these conditions are met by the operation of Kantian judgment. Kant described the practice of judgment, as it is well-known, in his famous paragraph 40 of the *Critique of Judgment*. If we wish to avoid the difficult philosophical language he used and his complicated phrase structures, we can summarize his thoughts expressed there in the form of the following statements: 1. although we are inclined to think it otherwise (and we usually speak like that), there are no such things as *sense* of "beauty", "honesty" or "justice" etc.; 2. these are all the *results* of the functioning of judgment, and as such, they bear from the outset an element of "reflection"; 3. as they contain the element of reflection, in their functioning they automatically infer a higher faculty of cognition (i.e. they cannot rely on mere sensory impressions), which is called "common sense" (*sensus communis*); 4. although *common* in many European languages is a synonym for vulgar (just like the German word of *gemein*), there is nothing vulgar, or trivial in common sense according to Kant: on the contrary, it is what helps us in our orientation in the human world of beauty and justice; 5. thus, if it is common at all, it is only so insofar as it is the least to be expected from everyone "claiming the name of man" to have it.[31]

The sensus communis thus is a "common sense", affirms Kant, which is functioning in a way so that when we carry out a judgment – at least in our thought – we try to compare it with the "collective reason" of all humanity, we try to take into account the judgments of "everyone else". Obviously, we are not guided by the *actual* judgment of all the people, but rather try to consider, by some act of *imagination,* the *possible* judgments of others. Like this we succeed to avoid the mistake to consider all that is "subjective" in our judgments (e.g. our personal attractions, emotions) "objectively" true, otherwise judgment could not formulate "general rules" starting from the individual (in that case the judgment would not be anything else but *my*

---

[31] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (translated by J. H. Bernard), Hafner Publishing Co., New York, 1951, 135-136.

special opinion). In other words: when we pass a judgment, we need to put ourselves in thought in the place of everyone else, we need to place ourselves at the "standpoint of others", because this is the only way our judgments can gain objective validity – and according to Kant this is exactly the maxim of the "enlarged" way of thinking.[32] (Arendt, for that matter, who liked to read with a pencil, underlined almost every sentence of this paragraph in her own, English language copy of Kant's work, and wrote in English the following on the bottom of the page: "enlarged – everybody: only imagination and disregard of his own interests".[33])

Although it is completely clear that these are the Kantian thoughts that served as a source of inspiration for Arendt, she visibly handles them with relative freedom when forming her own ideas regarding representative thinking: she passes over certain parts of Kant's train of thoughts, while reinterpreting others. Although in the texts written in the last decade of her life, in her university and other types of lectures, she often speaks about representative thinking, she gives the most complete and concise definition for it in her essay about truth and politics. Political thought, she writes here, is always "representative" in nature. This means that we form an "opinion" about a given political issue by trying to recall with the help of our imagination the standpoints of "those who are absent", i.e. to *represent* them in our own minds. It is not that we perform some kind of "counting of noses" of those standing somewhere else, she adds, or that we blindly adopt the actual view of the majority, but we rather simply put ourselves in others' positions: try to see the world with their eyes. We may be inclined to call this some kind of an intellectual *empathy*, but Arendt outspokenly rejects that: in her view it is not our *empathic* ability, but our imagination that becomes active, and by no means do we emotionally identify ourselves with the standpoints of others, or even try to be and feel like them, but we are rather "being and thinking" in our own identity, where actually we are not, in the place of some people that we are not – and we obviously cannot be. "The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind," she writes, "while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking, and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion."[34] (It can be seen that the Kantian demand for the universality of judgment, the maxim of thinking "for everyone else"

---

[32] Ibid. 136-138.

[33] Hannah Arendt's personal library is owned by the Bard College, the digitization of the stock is being carried out. The Critique of Judgment can be reached at the following link: *https://blogs.bard.edu/ arendtcollection/kant-critique-of-judgement/*

[34] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 237.

is relegated to the background in Arendt's opinion, and is replaced by the demand for the mental representation of "the most people": yet under such circumstances the "validity claim" of the judgment can never be extended beyond those, whose place the judging person has put himself into for his considerations either, as she herself admits that in her essay about crisis in culture.[35])

Of course, Arendt also tells in her essay about the truth (just like almost everywhere, where she deals with these issues), that this capacity of enlarged mentality making "human judgment" possible was discovered by Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*; but she immediately adds (as always), that Kant himself did not recognize the "political and moral implications" of his own discovery. Furthermore, she affirms (in complete harmony with her pencil notes at the bottom of the page), that the only condition for this exertion of the "imagination" is disinterestedness, and "the liberation from one's own private interests".[36] (Which is remarkable, as Kant does not speak about private interest in his famous paragraph 40, but about "prejudices", and the necessity of "deliverance" from them: in his view prejudices cannot be "enlightened".[37] Arendt, however, here and in her later lectures about Kant's political philosophy, mentions *self-interest*.[38])

Let us add nevertheless, that Arendt (as opposed to Kant) did not have too many illusions about human inclination to representative thinking (or the human desire for "enlightenment", in other words). As she wrote, she was aware that this procedure, the practice of impartial judgment was uncommon even among highly educated people who usually formed an opinion about political issues taking into account only their own interests, or the interests of the groups to which they belonged. But wherever, among any kind of people it occurred, she affirmed convincingly, it was always rooted in "lack of imagination" and the inability to pass reflective judgment, therefore it was nothing else but the stubborn pursuance of self-interest. The quality of a political opinion, she wrote, as of a judgment, always depended upon "the degree of its impartiality". Those that refuse this practice of representative thinking, even if they are the most sophisticated people, also refuse to get rid of

---

[35] Hannah Arendt, *The Crisis in Culture. Its Social and Its Political Significance,* in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Though, op. cit.,* 194-222, 217.

[36] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 237.

[37] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment, op. cit.,* 136-137.

[38] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (ed. by Ronald Beiner), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, 7-77, 43.

self-interest in their judgments, and as such, prove "blind obstinacy".[39] The ability of impartial judgment is not connected to erudition, and therefore it is not the exclusive possession of educated individuals, as it is the ability of the most common human sense. (That is why Kant affirms that it cannot be learned, and that its lack is stupidity, for which there is no remedy: even educated people can be stupid.)

Although Arendt always said about the enlarged way of thinking that it was Kant's discovery, she has got a few texts leading us to the conclusion that she regarded it more as a rediscovery, rather than a proper discovery. In 1955 she promised Klaus Piper (introduced to her by Jaspers) to write a short volume about politics for Piper Verlag, like the one written by Jaspers in 1953, *Introduction into Philosophy*. (She mentions this to Jaspers for the first time on the 29th of December 1955[40].) In the second half of the 1950s Arendt worked on the book continuously (asking for newer and newer postponements from Piper), but the book was never finished. Still, there remained certain fragments that the publisher eventually published, under the editorship of Ursula Ludz in 1993. In one of these fragments left behind Arendt affirms that what Kant called sensus communis, was nothing else but the *phronesis*, i.e. the mental ability of (political) insight, considered by Aristotle "the cardinal virtue" of the political man. For the Greeks this meant, writes Arendt, "the greatest possible overview of all the possible standpoints and viewpoints from which an issue can be seen and judged".[41] (That the thought about the sameness of the *phronesis* and the enlarged way of thinking, as perplexing as it may seem at the first hearing, was not just a superficial idea for Arendt, is proven by the fact that she repeated it in her essay about the crisis of culture.[42] It is also true however, that she may have worked simultaneously on these two texts, as she also published the original version of the essay about the crisis in 1960, under the title of *Society and Culture*.[43])

Even more interesting is how Arendt perceived the *actual* functioning of this enlarged way of thinking or thinking in the place of others. This is illustrated by an example in a university lecture about judgment, held on the 24th of March 1965, during the spring semester of the New School for Social Research, and published

---

[39] Hannah Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 237.

[40] Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: Correspondence, 1926-1969, op. cit.,* 271.

[41] Hannah Arendt, *Introduction into Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 2005, 93-200, 168.

[42] Hannah Arendt, *The Crisis in Culture. Its Social and Its Political Significance*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought, op. cit.,* 218.

[43] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World, op. cit.,* 542.

after her death. (The lecture was part of a series entitled *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*; although she kept similar lectures in 1966 at the University of Chicago, under the title of *Basic Moral Propositions*.) Let us suppose, she says in her lecture, that I look at a specific slum dwelling that I perceive within the general notion of poverty and misery, although the circumstances of dwelling do not by themselves carry directly the *notion* of poverty, neither that of misery. What I see are merely certain living conditions that *I myself* judge as miserable. Yet, I arrive by them at the notions of poverty and misery because I try to imagine for myself "how I would feel" if I had to live in that dwelling. In other words, I try to think in the place of others, the dwellers of the slum. The judgment that I create however, will by no means be the same as the inhabitants of the slums judge their own situation: the passing of time and hopelessness may have dulled in them the outrage for their living conditions. They may feel resigned, or sunken in apathy due to their hopelessness, i.e. they may have entirely different *feelings* about their situation than the ones I had. Therefore, empathy would not be extremely helpful in understanding their situation. Their situation could nonetheless serve as an example for me, and help me perceive the situation of slum-dwellers *in general*, or to understand *poverty* itself, so it can be a means – as Kant put is – "to find the general for the specific" insofar as the situation of the dwellers there is in some sense *exemplary*. In this case, it would serve for me as an "outstanding example" of the judgment of similar situations, an example that can help me understand poverty itself in its generality.[44]

There are examples, says Arendt at the last gathering of her lectures series about Kant's political philosophy held in the autumn semester of 1970 at the New School, which are characterized by "exemplary validity". In principle it may seem that when we make a judgment, we only have two alternatives: either we subordinate the particular to the general (i.e. to the notion), carrying out what Kant called a determinant judgment, or the other way round: starting from the many particular cases we find the general pertaining to the particulars. If we take the most common philosophical example, the example of the table, says Arendt, then we either subordinate this or that table to the concept of table (independently whether we perceive the concept of the table as the *ideal-typical* table according to Plato's ideas or a *schematic* table, according to Kant's schemes), or we set off from the images of the many different tables we had come across over time, strip them of their secondary qualities, and what remains, is the "generally accepted table", the *abstract* table,

---

[44] Hannah Arendt, *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Shocken Books, New York, 2003, 49-146, 140-141.

which will include all the minimum qualities common to all of them.[45] The latter procedure, albeit it indeed sets off from the particular, the peculiar, and reaches the general, it carries the disadvantage of stripping the particular tables of their specific uniqueness. The only way for us to reach the general is to disregard everything that makes the specific tables unique. And yet in politics (just like in aesthetics), we must always deal with the unique, the one-timed, because all the political events are one-timed, in the sense that they had never occurred before. In political thinking we can reach nowhere if we disregard the uniqueness and one-timedness of the occurring events.

However, theoretically there is also a third alternative, and this is the one that offers the solution for Arendt in the above dilemma: the case of model-like or exemplary validity. We can say, affirms Arendt, that a specific, well-defined table is the "best possible table", and we can consider it to be an exemplary table, which shows "how tables actually should be". (That is also indicated by the origin of the word, too, she says, as the English word *example* is coming from the Latin *eximere*, which means to single out something special.) This example is special and it remains so: by its particularity and uniqueness it represents something general that could not be defined without it.[46] Therefore, we can judge something, draws the conclusion Arendt, without destroying what makes it special, and we can still reach the general from the particular. The impartial judgment of a special historical event (totalitarianism, for exemple) can result in general concepts, a special historical example can help us understand something in its generality, and, according to her, this is exactly the task of political thinking or, in other words, of the enlarged way of thinking, or representative thinking. At another one of her seminars, also in the autumn of 1970 at the New School, held about imagination, she even affirms that "most concepts" in our political and historical thinking are restricted in nature: "they have their origin in some particular historical incident, and we then proceed to make it »exemplary« – to see in the particular what is valid for more than one case".[47] (Such concepts are in her view Caesarism and Bonapartism for instance, none of which would make too much sense without the personalities of Caesar and Napoleon – i.e. the particular, the unique.)[48]

---

[45] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy, op. cit.,* 76-77; see also: Hannah Arendt, *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy,* in: Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment, op. cit.,* 143-144.

[46] Ibid. 77.

[47] Hannah Arendt, *Imagination*, in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy, op. cit.,* 79-85, 85.

[48] Ibid. 84; see also Hannah Arendt, *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment, op. cit.,* 144.

If we observe Arendt's thoughts in this form, following their *genesis*, we can easily reach to the conclusion, after all this, that although she had been preoccupied with the issue of the method of political and historical thinking before, she became more seriously interested in it after the publication of the Eichmann volume. The answer to the question how it could be effective to think about politics in an age without banisters to guide us, she believed to have found in the *Critique of Judgment*, more precisely in the thoughts she had already mentioned in her letter to Jaspers in 1957: the praise of the common sense, and the description of the enlarged way of thinking. It may seem that Jaspers was right after all: as long as she had not found Kant, one could indeed affirm that Arendt's thinking had been lacking a method. Still, what may have happened was simply that Arendt found enforcement, or a foundation in Kant's third critique for the way she had always thought about political matters. During the Second World War Arendt and Jaspers lost contact for quite some time: they did not even know about each other whether they had survived at all. They established contact again in 1945, and Jaspers asked Arendt to write a few words about herself: she was obviously a literary presence in American public life, he wrote, but who was her husband, in what kind of circumstances was she living, what was her personal life like at all, for he did not even know what her "last name" was.[49] In spite of that, Arendt felt it was necessary to better describe her literary existence, or her existence as a thinker, and in connection to that she felt it most important to remark that thanks to her husband she had learned to "think politically and see historically".[50] Writing that in a moment when she had not yet published any of her more significant political or historical works.

REFERENCES

1. Arendt, Hannah, *The Life of the Mind* (ed. by Mary McCarthy), A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., San Diego, New York, London, 1977, 1978.
2. Arendt, Hannah, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (ed. by Ronald Beiner), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, 7-77.
3. Arendt, Hannah, *Imagination*, in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (ed. by Ronald Beiner), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, 79-85.

---

[49] Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner (eds.): Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: Correspondence, 1926-1969, op. cit., 25.

[50] Ibid. 31.

4. Arendt, Hannah, *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., San Diego, New York, London, 1994, 460-479.
5. Arendt, Hannah, *What Remains? The Language Remains*. *A Conversation with Günter Gaus*, in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 1994, 1-23.
6. Arendt, Hannah, *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*, in Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Shocken Books, New York, 2003, 49-146.
7. Arendt, Hannah, *Introduction into Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 2005, 93-200.
8. Arendt, Hannah, *The Crisis in Culture. Its Social and Its Political Significance*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Though,* Penguin Books, 2006, 194-222.
9. Arendt, Hannah, *Truth and Politics*, in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Penguin Books, 2006, 223-259.
10. Arendt, Hannah, *Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt*, in Hannah Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister. Essays in Understanding 1953-1975* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 2018, 443-475.
11. Arendt, Hannah, *Remarks*, in Hannah Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister. Essays in Understanding 1953-1975* (ed. by Jerome Kohn), Schocken Books, New York, 2018, 476-484.
12. Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason* (translated by Norman Kemp Smith), London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., New York, St. Martin's Press, 1963.
13. Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgment* (translated by J. H. Bernard), Hafner Publishing Co., New York, 1951.
14. Knott, Marie Luise Knott (ed.), *The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem* (translated by Anthony David), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2017.
15. Kohler, Lotte and Saner, Hans (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, Correspondence, 1926-1969* (translated by Robert and Rita Kimber), A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London, 1992.
16. Kohler, Lotte (ed.), *Within Four Walls. The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blücher, 1936-1968* (translated by Peter Constantine), Harcourt, Inc, New York, San Diego, London, 2000.
17. Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World* (Second Edition), Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2004.

CRITICAL HISTORY, SUBVERSION AND SELF-SUBVERSION: THE CURIOUS CASES OF JEAN MABILLON AND RICHARD SIMON (II/II)

VERONICA LAZĂR[*]

ABSTRACT. Jean Mabillon and Richard Simon were both eminent seventeenth-century scholars who practiced contextualizing critical philology in order to forge unbeatable scientifical instruments against the skeptics and reinforce the authority of historical documents. But Simon's work produced a mutation of the meaning of authenticity that would prove subversive and would generate outrage. His sociological and institutionalist understanding of the history of sacred texts not only merged both their production and their transmission into a common, ontologically homogenous historical process, but also included a survey of the sociological and cultural circumstances that transformed the text into a real authority. Furthermore, this anti-essentialist understanding of the gradual formation of the text allowed a positive reevaluation of the tradition as a continuous practice aiming at keeping alive an already historical truth.

Key words: historical criticism, biblical hermeneutics, Richard Simon, Jean Mabillon, Spinoza

3. Richard Simon and the sociology of the revelation

A Catholic scholar with a serious – and rather uncommon - knowledge of the Hebraic language and Hebraic philological tradition, and certainly a person less prone to those violent anti-Judaic prejudices so common among his contemporaries[1], even or

---

[*] University of Bucharest, veronica.lazar1@unibuc.ro

[1] Simon had a few friends among Jewish scholars, among whom Jona Salvador, businessman and theologian, who proposed Simon to translate together the Talmud. Moreover, in 1670 Simon made a successful public plea in favor of the Jews from Metz accused or ritual murder, invoking juridical reasons against their prosecution; significantly, he argued that the anti-Jewish hatred itself had taken various shapes from one age to another, compared the modern Jews with the early Christian

especially among theologians, Richard Simon (1638–1712) was a member of the Oratorian order and considered himself a follower of a so-called critical tradition of Origen and Saint Jerome. A tradition that he knew well and to which he dedicated two important studies, the third book of his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* and a *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs.*[2]

Moreover, not only had Simon intellectual friends and collaborators among Huguenots, he also envisioned a new translation of the Scriptures able do justice to the original text and, thereby, build a foundation for interconfessional consensus. In 1676, he was invited to participate in a collective translation initiated by several protestant scholars, but the collaboration failed due to some obscure disagreements.[3] Nevertheless, Simon did not abandon the project and envisaged to translate the New Testament in the vernacular. But his plans were delayed, because before finishing his own version of it, Simon decided to published a historico-philological critical commentary of the Old Testament[4]. Furthermore, he composed this critical work in French.

His explicit intentions were to produce a critical translation able to restore and recover the original text of the Scriptures and, therefore, to revive its authority on a basis more abiding than the historical tradition appropriated by the Catholic Church, whose monopoly over interpretations had been continuously disputed[5]. For theological conflicts, according to Simon, were most of all intellectual dissensions that could be resolved by means of shared critical instruments.

Simon's restitutive translation needed, therefore, a prolegomenon and a theoretical complement designed to explain the translator's choices based on

---

martyrs, praised the Jewish theological, philosophical and scientific accomplishments and examined the liturgy and religious customs of Jews and Christians. From Simon's passionate interest for Judaism arose his Cérémonies et coutumes *qui s'observent aujourd'hui parmi les* juifs (1681), although the admiration was toned down by Simon's discontent with Jewish alleged superstitions, religious formalism, hatred for the Christians and other bothersome vices. (See Henri Margival, *Essai sur Richard Simon et la critique biblique au XVIIe siècle,* Maillet, 1900. Rééd. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970, 49-59.)

2 *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament depuis le commencement du Christianisme jusques à notre temps* (1693) was the last part of the *Histoire critique du Nouveau Testament* trilogy and a sequel to the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*.

3 Paul Auvray, *Richard Simon (1638-1712). Étude bio-bibliographique avec des textes inédites*, Paris: PUF, 1974, 36-38.

4 *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*. The 1685 edition is, according to Auvray, the most conforming to the original. It is the one I use for the present article (*Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, Rotterdam, 1685, reprinted: Frankfurt, 1967).

5 One of the great aims of this work was to `résoudre les plus grandes difficultés de la Bible et pour satisfaire en même temps aux objections qu'on a accoutumé de faire contre l'autorité des Livres sacrés' (« Préface de l'auteur »). Spinoza was one of these main denigrators.

historico-philological principles; these principles had to allow for a true comprehension of the Bible and illuminate, accordingly, the Bible's original writing and production, its transmission and, implicitly, the relation between its reconsidered authenticity and the immutable authority of the Catholic Church.[6]

Moreover, Simon discovered Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* while he was working on his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*[7] and attempted, in a gesture of touching naiveté and benevolence, to integrate part of Spinoza's objections and critical principles into his work, without willing to concede anything to his impious theological or metaphysical conclusions or even to Spinoza's "mistakes" – often deriving from Spinoza's metaphysical ideas.[8]

Simon took on to resolve the riddle of the authorship of some of the Scripture's books – for example, to solve the by then notorious and uncomfortable case of Moses's Pentateuch – in order to reconfirm the authority of a contested tradition.

In 1678, Richard Simon was granted the privilege of publication for his *Histoire critique*. He printed it in the then substantial circulation of 1300 copies. But, although it passed by both official censorship and the superior of his order, his work drew the rage of the future bishop Bossuet. Bossuet ordered the destruction of every copy – but, as it happens, some of them made their way to England and Amsterdam, were translated and reprinted there in several languages and disseminated with speed. To Bossuet's horror, Simon's book came back to France as smuggled goods and *livre scandaleux*, while the rumors of its suppression only nourished its popularity. – Simon was immediately expelled from the Oratorian order and, despite his further substantial contributions to the biblical studies, and despite his later efforts to reintegrate in his ancient intellectual and religious environment, he ended his days in poverty and neglect, after burning almost all his working papers and manuscripts.

What happened? Why did Bossuet find the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* so deeply disturbing?

---

[6] As he stated in the *Préface*, "Premièrement, il est impossible d'entendre parfaitement les Livres sacrés, à moins qu'on ne sache auparavant les différents états où le texte de ces livres s'est trouvé selon les différents temps et les différents lieux, et si l'on n'est instruit exactement de tous les changements qui lui sont survenus."

[7] According to Auvray, at the time Simon read Spinoza's *Treatise*, his critical ideas had already been crystalized. Pierre Gibert downplays as well Spinoza's influence on the *Histoire critique* (Pierre Gibert, *L'invention critique de la Bible – XVè-XVIIIè siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 2010).

[8] Pierre Gibert noted that Simon's later *Lettre sur l'inspiration* (1686-1687) would treat Spinoza in a more attentive and nuanced manner (Pierre Gibert, 179).

Simon certainly did not consider himself to be a skeptic[9], and he opposed the libertine consequences of Spinoza's and La Peyrère's positions. Like Mabillon, what he intended was, explicitly, to forge unbeatable instruments against the skeptics and against the usual objections that undermined the authority and the authenticity of the Scriptures. The wriggle itself was not too great, since, as already noted, the term *critique* was, at the time, even in the research developed by theologians, often understood in relation to a positive intellectual practice that aimed at reconstructing the letter or the meaning of ancient texts (either by direct confrontation of proofs, or by conjectures). *Critique* was seen as a very useful instrument against skepticism, error, false appearances, not as an intrinsically destructive or incontrollable device – and Jean Mabillon's work, his good intentions and good results are proofs that such a critical practice could indeed still be theologically and socially successful in Simon's times. As such, it was not to be received automatically with mistrust.[10]

On the other hand, in France the historico-philological examination of the Bible was either known as a Protestant endeavor, or through the works of philosophers who often had the ill reputation of being dangerous libertines - Hobbes, La Peyrère or Spinoza - and rather less through some consistent contributions of local catholic scholars. The fact that Simon's critical commentary was in French and not in Latin did not help him much with his cause. It only signaled for the defenders of orthodoxy like Bossuet a license made public, impiousness made available to women and to the less educated.[11] Nor did help his assumption that a correct understanding of Scriptures depended on the deep historico-philological knowledge, or the implication that a correct rendering of the text of the Scriptures was obliquely necessary to the pious practice of the good Christian.

Nevertheless, as for the method, Spinoza himself had not invented something radically new with his analysis of the Scriptures. Perfect knowledge of the language – Hebrew – with its history and with its successive historical alterations, the examination

---

[9] Patrick J. Lambe, "Biblical Criticism and Censorship in Ancien Régime France: The Case of Richard Simon," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 149–77.

[10] At worst, it was regarded with condescendence, as a part of the tedious work of the *erudites,* as in La Bruyère : "La critique souvent n'est pas une science, c'est un métier où il faut plus de santé que d'esprit, plus de travail que de capacité, plus d'habitude que de génie. Si elle vient d'un homme qui ait moins de discernement que de lecture, et qu'elle s'exerce sur de certains chapitres, elle corrompt et les lecteurs et l'écrivain." (« Des ouvrages de l'esprit », *Les Caractères*, 63. VII).

[11] For an enraged Bossuet, Simon's erudition serves only "à éblouir l'esprit et à le rendre vain et présomptueux » (quoted in Margival, 10). This deficit of humbleness was certainly aggravated by Simon's vicious idea of bringing his impieties out from the small and controlled circle of scholars to the simple-in-spirit general audience.

of the internal coherence of the text, and awareness of its external history and circumstances were the three main conditions and principles of his critical reading, but each of them was already an exercised practice among biblical scholars.

Instead, it was the link Spinoza had established and the ruptures he intended to produce between faith, politics and theology that were perceived as (and were genuinely) dangerous for the theological tradition. Secondly, it was indeed Spinoza the philosopher who transformed the sacred text into a natural object, an object created by men and knowable like any other thing of nature. Contrary to the old principles of the protestant critical philology, Spinoza's analysis did suppress the opposition between the essential origin – the divine revelation – and the history of the text. Origin and history conspicuously melded into one and the same earthly substance – and, thence, the door to a future transformation of the natural object of the Scriptures into a cultural object (a shift that would effectively be accomplished during the Enlightenment) was opened.

Unlike Spinoza's, Simon's intention was neither to break down this foundation of religious authority, nor to conflate the human and the divine. But in his *Histoire critique* he produced a mutation of the meaning of authenticity that, eventually, would reinforce and radicalize Spinoza's subversive point that both dimensions of the Scriptures were substantially human and historical.

For Simon as well, Scripture must indeed be studied in both its dimensions, in order to recompose its truly authentic core: its writing-up, on the one hand, and its transmission, on the other – so all kind of alterations, essentially contingent, should be identified and named as such, from vowel-points to errors in transcriptions and translations. Although in theory a good catholic, Simon indirectly accepted the Lutheran principle that there is a truth of the text to be discovered in its letter proper, rather than in the patristic interpretative tradition or in some decisions taken much later by catholic synods. However, understanding what this "letter" meant was mediated, in practice, by a thorough inquiry into the history of the text that not only merged the writing with the transmission into a common and epistemically homogenous historical process, but also included a survey of the historical and cultural circumstances that transformed the text into a real authority. Furthermore, this anti-essentialist understanding of the gradual formation of the text allowed a positive reevaluation of the tradition as a continuous practice aiming at keeping alive an already historical truth.[12]

The tripartite structure of the *Histoire critique* is in itself an indication: while the first part deals with the successive transformations suffered by the Hebraic text

---

[12] Whence his almost dialectic relation with both protestant hermeneutics and catholic tradition, that eventually satisfied neither the Catholics, nor the protestants.

from the Mosaic era onwards (including the scandalmonger chapter on the authorship of the Pentateuch and the inquiry into the obstacles that might give birth to ambiguities in deciphering the Hebrew Scriptures), and the second with the Vulgate, the Septuagint and several vernacular or oriental translations of the Scriptures, the last part is a complex critical and historical assessment of the Bible's commentaries and an evaluation of the historical accuracy of various opinions professed by reputed theologians.

Significantly, the main assumption underlying Simon's equal attention to the history of the writing and reception of Scriptures is that revelation itself was brought to men via historical and cultural textual forms. The historical time that supported this transmission was, moreover, not an intra-Judaic time, but an open temporal framework, which allowed a confrontation with the secular history of other ancient nations.[13]

Although his work is not meant to be a theological reflection on the Bible, its implications are that religious ideas were always proportioned to the human spirit, that theology is a science, and, accordingly, that it cannot deprive itself of the erudite means of understanding the historical circumstances of the human reception of revelation.[14] The result is not only a radical historicizing of the original text, but also a historicizing of the text's posterity and of the *Tradition* itself.[15]

Nevertheless, if Simon's analysis might be close to some of the boldest insights from Spinoza's *Treatise*, there is a way in which Simon's historical interest in the Scriptures put a limit to historical relativism. As a good historian of biblical interpretations and translations, Simon thought to be his mission to discriminate between good translations of the Scriptures – like the Vulgata – and inappropriate versions – like the silly French translation that employed an anachronically gallant language to render the love verses of the Song of Songs[16], or the innumerous fallacious versions of those translators that ignored ancient languages, historical insight and grammar.

From another point of view, though, his analysis of scriptural authorship proper went even further than Spinoza's.

---

[13] François Laplanche, *La Bible en France entre mythe et critique : XVIe – XIXe* siècle, Paris: Albin Michel, 1994, 16.

[14] Margival, 75-76.

[15] The infamous fifth chapter of the first book that provoked Bossuet's ire asserts that a holy father of the Church like Saint Jerome did not assume the complete Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and that Moses himself could not have written about his own death in the third person. Instead, according to Simon, this belief in the absolute authorship that Catholics were nowadays imposing as a dogma had been borrowed from the rabbinic tradition, together with other exegetic rabbinic principles.

[16] *Histoire Critique*, II, 21, 325.

The historical research would, of course, according to Simon, acknowledge that all the books in the Scriptures had been written by prophets – and only a malicious spirit like Spinoza was capable to use the benign principles of critical hermeneutics in order to deny this elementary fact -, but not necessarily by the prophets who gave their names to those books. The "Hebrew republic", as Simon called it, never went short of prophets. But we can call those prophets *public scribes*[17], he suggested, in order to distinguish them from private authors, for they belonged to a professional class. The prophetic writing, then, was collective, institutionally organized, based on a division of labor and, importantly, relying on public archives. Therefore, Moses himself was one among many legitimate authors.

Moreover, the public scribes were being officially allowed to intervene over the written text in order to harmonize it with the older archive sources, and their job was then similar to the task of the modern critical historian, without hereby diminishing the sanctity of its result. Their corrections needed to be respectful first of all to the old manuscripts, not to something identified as revelation. – This could also explain, argues Simon, some of the factual errors to be found in the Old Testament, which might be due to the national perspective embraced, presumably, by some Jewish scribes-historians updating the narratives.

Furthermore, given the known fact that no original manuscripts of the Scriptures survived until the modern age, the meaning of the "original" and "authentic" defining sacred manuscripts should be, holds Simon, implicitly de-essentialized and disconnected from that image of the stone or parchment touched directly by the hand of God – at least if the faith in the divine inspiration of the text is to outlive critical intelligence. The surviving manuscripts are in themselves, as in the case of the secular archives, summaries and adaptations operated by professional scribes and only the awareness and serene acceptance of this trivial fact can save theology from the dissolutive conclusions that Spinoza had turned into libertine unfaithfulness.[18] The Scripture has survived its own history – and cannot be left now to be dissolved by historians.

A first consequence of this proto-sociological mutation in the historical explanation is that, in the terms that Jonathan Sheehan's employed to describe the philological philosophy of the Lutheran biblical scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel, instead of depicting public scribes as imperfect Xerox machines, the critical historian assigned a general rationale to their practices[19]. This rationale was completely dependent on

---

[17] *Histoire Critique*, ch. viii. Simon's argument was probably based on an implicit analogy with the Babylonian and Chinese civilizations and their use of public clerks.

[18] Gibert, 180-181.

[19] Sheehan, 97.

historical circumstances, and moreover, even some of the historical errors could be deduced from it[20]. – But, if for Bengel the Lutheran, or even for Erasmus, once reconstructed, the circumstances could be expurgated and could therefore make place for the resurrection of the original text, ready to be revered as a divinely inspired message, an unexpected and undesired consequence of Simon's method was that the text was no longer there as a revealed essence waiting to be discovered and worshipped. Instead, it tended to convert into an open-ended collective practice of inspired writing.

A second major consequence is that, according to the solution Simon opposed to the critical threat, authenticity proper should no longer be a challenge to the modern theologian; on the contrary, the historian can attest that authenticity is equally distributed between all the books of Scriptures, in spite of their distinct lineages, as equally distributed is their sanctity as well. The sanctity and the divine inspiration were then disjoined from the nominal authenticity. Moreover, as Simon understood the authentication as a legitimate stamp emanating from the social function of the scribe, o procedure reminding of a notary seal, later reformers and later interventions on the biblical text could have only been rejected from the professional club of prophet-scribes, and their work could correctly be regarded as apocrypha.

Consequently, the source of sacredness and authenticity in the writing of Scriptures is purely bureaucratic and no longer linked to specific extraordinary individuals, let alone to an individual privileged revelation. The only crucial distinction in this social and institutional history of the Scriptures is not the one between the divinely inspired prophet and all the other authors, but the one between the member of the licensed guild and the unprofessional.

Moreover, the argument for the tradition is no longer a reassertion of the sacred ecclesiastical mission of authenticating and preserving the eternal truth in its trans-historical immutability, but the acknowledgement of a sustained collective practice of keeping alive and permanently adapting the revealed word of God. A continuum brings together the writing and the rewriting, and a continuum connects Moses' original books with the other prophetic books of Scripture

But, most importantly, as a third consequence, the human origin of Scriptures and the reinterpretation of prophecy as a professional activity opens the path to a

---

[20] In Simon's case, the materialist reading of the text AND of the social circumstances of its elaboration did not assume that errors in the apocrypha were due to bad faith – as it would later happen with those Enlightenment authors recasting the old theme of religious imposture. Errors emanated rather from common human mistakes and trivial misinterpretations, or even from cultural biases and chauvinism, not from conspiracies.

materialism even more radical than the Spinozist historical naturalism: instead of depicting the human dimension of prophecy as a sort of religious enthusiasm, exaltation, emotion, drunkenness stemming from the pathologies or emotional idiosyncrasies of the so called prophets, as Spinoza and other libertines had done and would do during the Enlightenment, Simon defines the humanness as institutional and social and, again, smooths the way to the understanding of the Bible as a cultural product.

No wonder then that his critical method was perceived to be offensive and dangerous by both Catholics and protestants.[21]

The particular cultural circumstances of France, though, made his story a very special one. Historical scholarship had suffered here a severe receding, especially after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a relative separation from other intellectual fields. Even later, notoriously, the *philosophes*' contemptuous rhetoric about the so-called pedantry and sterility of erudition would tend to obscure their substantial indebtedness to those great scholarly works. Spinoza's penetration in France[22] and unintended catastrophes like the reception of Simon's *Histoire critique* would contribute further to the marginalization of the erudition and the erudites, this time not only for reason of good taste and literary mondenity, but also thanks to the frightened public authorities, both civil and ecclesiastic.[23]

---

[21] Conservative defenders of Catholicism aside, this is not necessarily the common reading of Simon and of the possible outcome of his critical work. For René Pintard, Simon was one the libertine erudites. And, from the evaluation of Ernst Renan (*Revue des deux Mondes*, LX, 1865, 254) that Bossuet's victory over Simon, far from protecting the Church in the long run, would have opened the way to Voltaire's irresponsible and buffoonish antireligious satire, to more traditional commentators of Simon's work (Auvray deplores Bossuet's censorship and the suppression of the *HCVT* as having indirectly quicken the eighteenth-century anti-religious revolt – Auvray, 140-141), for a long time scholars tended to assume that the Simon episode would rather be harmful to the interests of the French Catholic Church. We can add to that the complain that the decay of historical erudition in France would have contributed to the obstruction of the development of French historical thinking in general and to the rupture between *histoire* and *philosophie* (Blandine Barret Kriegel, Chantal Grell).

I do not consider that Simon was a true unbeliever and a libertine, but that he mistook his own proto-sociological explanation of the origins of the Bible, his depersonalization and socialization of prophecy, for a restitutive historical argument, similar to a traditionally humanist or protestant philological endeavor meant to essentially bring the moderns back *ad fontes*.

[22] See Blandine Barret-Kriegel, op. cit.

[23] Should we compare the consequences of a hypothetical development of biblical criticism in France with its actual development in Germany and England, we could conclude with Jonathan Sheehan that the former need not lead in principle to an anti-religious sentiment or to a devaluation of the Scriptures. In Germany and England, critical attention to the Bible was indeed able to integrate philosophy, criticism and theology into a vast inquiry, without generating any irreparable divorce between them. But the situation of the institutional theology was different in France, where the authority of the Church depended directly on the sanctity of the tradition and on the dogma of

This might shed some light on one of the reasons why the unification of the French field of history into a discipline with common rules and with a homogeneous epistemology never happened until late in the eighteenth-century or even in the nineteenth-century. The sacred and the profane history did not converge under the same methodological roof. And, while in spite of the marginalization of professional scholars, the Mabillon-type of critical research went on – although in very specialized and rather insulated institutions like the A*cadémie des Inscriptions et des belles lettres* -, the singular work of Richard Simon had no immediate followers.

As I understand it, paradoxically, it was mainly because in the case of biblical hermeneutics, the connection with philosophy – with impious philosophy – had already been established and made obvious, through the libertine critique of Hobbes, La Peyrère and Spinoza. Ironically, historical phyrrhonism too brought to light and reinforced a connection between history and philosophy – for the bold and provoking rejection of history – associated with Cartesianism - as uncertain knowledge and, therefore, unscientific only stimulated countless reactions and reformulations, and drove philosophers, from Arnaud and Nicole to Fontenelle, to explore degrees of certainty, types of probability and verisimilitude, to revisit the Aristotelian classifications of knowledge and to invent new philosophical legitimations for history as well as ways of rendering the contingent knowable.

In Mabillon's case, this relationship was less obvious. In spite of its demystifying potential, Mabillon's work was serving, on the one hand, the direct interests of the Benedictine order and of the monarchy, and, on the other, as it was

---

individual prophetic revelation. Hence an advancement of biblical criticism might have been more pernicious in France than it actually was in the protestant countries. On the other hand, the *largesse* the protestant countries manifested towards biblical interpretation led to a significant hermeneutical pluralism and, eventually, to a profound transformation in the substance of biblical authority. As Sheehan again writes, 'If the old answer to the old question "What is the ultimate source of biblical authority?" was "theological truth," the new answers were distributed across a variety of humanistic and historical disciplines. This distribution of the Bible—the fact that the Enlightenment Bible was ineluctably *plural* in character—was a symptom of the media effects of Enlightenment. Just as political discussion in the period was distributed across a variety of new outlets—newspapers, coffee houses, or what have you—so too was the Bible distributed across a variety of genres, scholarly practices, and disciplines. It was not an accident that the Enlightenment Bible had no single center, that it was not an object as much as a project. If the Bible had always functioned in Christian Europe as an essentially unified text—indeed, its theological importance depended on this unity—the post-theological Enlightenment Bible would build its authority across a diverse set of domains and disciplines. Its authority had no essential center, but instead coalesced around four fundamental nuclei. Philology, pedagogy, poetry, and history: each offered its own answer to the question of biblical authority, answers that were given literary form in the guise of new translations.' (Sheehan, 91)

too sophisticated and specialized to be appropriated by amateur philosophers, it did not lend itself to vulgarizations.

At another level, if sacred and profane history never truly converged in France until the end of the Enlightenment, Mabillon's work also provided an obstacle to the integration of ancient history and modern history into a common epistemic field: although Mabillon's and Simon's methods were similar in their basic critical principles, they could not apply to the same objects, as Mabillon's research was founded mostly on medieval diplomas and charts, in other words on types of sources that could not have survived in great number from the Antiquity and were then relatively more modern. Unwillingly, Mabillon would contribute therefore to the survival in the eighteenth-century of some remnants of historical phyrrhonism: Voltaire's conviction that the ancient times are beyond our reach and hence don't deserve the historian's attention might be an interesting sign of this indirect penetration.

4. Spinoza and Spinozist critical history against history

A few more words about Spinoza's stakes when developing his critical hermeneutic in the *Theological-Political Treatise* before getting to the conclusions.

I mentioned Spinoza's argument on the homogeneity or consubstantiality of the *origins* of Scriptures and their *history* or transmission: both were material, human, knowable like any other object of nature. But two other things should be pointed out. Firstly, that, although the two are made of the same "natural" fabric, for Spinoza the remoteness in time between ancient text and modern inquiry generates an epistemic break between them: in principle, as mere documents, the Scriptures should be accessible to us, but in practice, the Hebrew language has changed, meanings of words were lost, and entire texts were probably lost too; thence, some of them cannot be understood unambiguously.

Secondly, from the beginning of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza highlighted an important distinction between the *reference* of the sacred text – its historical truth, which could be, at least partially, uncovered -, and its so-called *true meaning* – the doctrine. It follows that the historical knowledge and the religious or moral learning are two completely independent things, and that history cannot be a source for the legitimation of anything – neither authority nor dogma -, nor can religious ideas interfere with the uncovering of a *true fact*.

Spinoza deserted the traditional understanding of history as a source of legitimation and came closer to the pyrrhonist separation of history from anything else. After being cleverly used for a demystifying purpose, history is no longer relevant in

itself, nor for life, nor for politics, and therefore Spinoza's efforts in the *Treatise* – which would become, paradoxically, an enormously important source for historical thinking in the Enlightenment – are mainly driven towards the demonstration of history's irrelevance. In other words, the main function of his own historical inquiry is, as Spinoza understands it, deconstructing the theologico-political pretensions allegedly founded on the Scriptures, not reinforcing a positive and specific form of authority (royal dynasties, political entitlements of the parliaments or crown, supremacy of the church over secular powers etc.), nor, as it would happen later in modernity, being a fundamental resource for the explanation of the social facts, of the new, of the substantial differences between historical ages or between forms of social organization. And after such a deconstruction, history can only dissolve itself.

5. Epilogue

Historical criticism took different shapes in the late seventeenth-century. Works with similar methodological views and purposes could have various intellectual and political outcomes. Spinoza's biblical criticism was generally perceived as inacceptable, as a dissolution through history of any textual legitimation of the dogma – and also as a radical subversion of the historical legitimation device itself, suggesting, eventually, that history as such was irrelevant for religion as well as for morals, politics and philosophy. Mabillon's source criticism and principles of the diplomatics, in turn, were delivered and received by the most significant (or advanced) faction of the scientific community as a respectable positive and reconstructive method, while Richard Simon's critical history of the Old Testament and of its successive material and ideological transformations, although equally reconstructive in intent and reclaiming for itself a respectable historical tradition originating in Saint Jerome and Origen, was, contrariwise, understood to be destructive in its theological effects and was therefore censored by the religious authorities.

Nevertheless, Mabillon's and Simon's respective objects of inquiry were significantly different: although the purpose of both was to loyally defend the textual foundations of their religious communities, Mabillon's diplomatics targeted mainly medieval charts and titles – which were, everything else left aside, created beyond doubt by human beings. As for Simon, his *Histoire critique* was an attempt to reassert the authority of the interpretative tradition of the Catholic Church while proving that the authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures cannot legitimately be based on ignorance and, even less, cannot be guided by theology itself, but only by the erudite critical knowledge of the Scriptures and of their convoluted history.

If this discrepancy in aims and objects was certainly a crucial factor that led to the radically different receptions of Mabillon's and Simon's critical history, it is equally important to acknowledge the shaping influence of the French historical context that led to a further marginalization of the critical study of the Bible in particular. In France, where biblical history was mediocrely developed at the end of the *Grand Siècle*, and where profane critical history never managed to infiltrate substantially into other intellectual domains, the absence of their intellectual mediation was one of the circumstances allowing later, especially in the second half of the eighteenth-century, a burst of anti-ecclesiastic raids in the writings of the *philosophes*. Moreover, it will be mainly during the Enlightenment that the meaning of *criticism* will shift towards a more negative, suspicious-like, deconstructive understanding,

In the protestant countries, conversely, the biblical criticism led to a dissolution of the canonic authority of the Bible, but also to the birth of another type of biblical authority: the cultural authority**.** In England and Germany, as well as in the Low Countries, responses to Toland and Spinoza stimulated a development of erudite scholarship and a return to the microscopical study of the biblical texts. Scholarship, then, was developed there as a theological defense weapon against the uncertainties of the Bible. As a result, in the protestant countries, the Enlightenment Bible became plural: as an object of study for different human sciences, it supported different versions and transformed itself, little by little, into a cultural universal patrimony of the humankind. As such, it integrated both religion and culture into the same spiritual heritage unaffected by the old divisions between faith and absence of faith. By making possible the separation of the Bible from theology, the historical scholarship essentially contributed to the birth of a new realm, that we name today culture.

SCHLICK AND SELLARS ON OBSERVATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

ANTON CRIȘAN[*]

ABSTRACT. The aim of the present paper is to provide a comparative account of the manner in which Moritz Schlick and Wilfrid Sellars treat certain aspects surrounding the topic of observational knowledge. By considering Sellars's allusions to Schlick's epistemological undertaking within the context of his rejection of givenness, I evaluate the extent to which Schlick can be characterized as a traditional foundationalist. By emphasizing that this is not the case and that Schlick adheres to a non-standard version of epistemological foundationalism, I shed some light on those theoretical elements that allow for a convergence of opinions between the two authors to transpire.

Keywords: Schlick, Sellars, confirmations, the Given, observation reports

Introduction

In the crucial section VIII of his acclaimed *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Wilfrid Sellars alludes to Moritz Schlick in such a manner that it invites the thought that he might have regarded him as modern empiricism's chief spokesman on the issue of observational knowledge. As it is well known, the main purpose of this seminal work is to discard the idea of the Given, an untenable notion that has nonetheless managed to become so entrenched within the epistemological endeavor that even the most gifted writers have succumbed to its charm. The implicit reference to Schlick is justified by the fact that Sellars implements his project by focusing primarily on what mainstream epistemology amounted to at the time that he was coagulating his own view. Not surprisingly then, this wildly accepted framework was largely influenced by core elements of logical empiricism: "In Anglo-American philosophy of the mid-twentieth century, a phenomenalist, internalist, foundationalist empiricism – often identified with logical positivism was dominant"[1].

---

[*] Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, crisananton@yahoo.com
[1] deVries, 2005, p. 97.

In the first part of this paper I offer an examination of Schlick's take on observational knowledge in order to isolate those aspects that would enable us to claim that he diverges from a classical version of foundationalist epistemology. Special attention will be devoted to Schlick's main theoretical innovation, namely his concept of 'confirmations' and the function assigned to these special synthetic statements.

In the second part, I lay out Sellars's account of what the Myth of the Given in empiricist and foundationalist clothes entails. I will not be interested in assessing the success of Sellars's critique against givenness. I will present his depiction of what a foundationalist and empiricist outlook of the Given is supposed to contain in order to pave the way for a discussion concerning the main contours of Sellars's alternative proposal with regard to the subject-matter of observational knowledge.

In the third part, I go on to chart the common ground between Schlick and Sellars on issues pertaining to observational knowledge. My strategy will not be that of defending Schlick in light of the accusations leveled by Sellars against foundationalism. I take those to be quite persuasive and as such I propose a different approach. I will isolate those aspects that allow for a non-standard account of Schlick's foundationalism and connect these aspects with certain features of Sellars's positive account of knowledge and justification.

I.

According to Moritz Schlick, epistemology is organized around the issue of the certainty of our knowledge. This is the case because those engaged in prosecuting epistemology are primarily motivated by the pursuit of absolute certainty. The unbearable thought that the assertions of our common knowledge or, even worse, those pertaining to our scientific knowledge could, in principle, only be conferred the epistemic status of probability has compelled philosophers to: "search for an unshakeable, indubitable, foundation, a firm basis on which the uncertain structure of our knowledge could rest"[2].

Schlick's pronouncements regarding the problem of the foundation of our factual knowledge represent the result of his contribution to the internecine debate surrounding the epistemic status of "protocol statements", a philosophical dispute that took place among prominent members of the Vienna Circle in the first half of the twentieth century.

---

[2] Schlick, 1959, p. 209.

In order to showcase his own point of view Schlick draws the reader's attention towards those propositions that are in charge of conveying "the immediately observed". In this context he coins his famous notion of 'confirmations' (*Konstatierungen*). According to Schlick confirmations should not be equated with protocol propositions. If one were to register by means of memory or by employing the written word all of her observations and subsequently commence the enterprise of building up science, then the person in question would be in possession of actual protocol propositions temporally situated at the dawn of science. All the other scientific propositions progressively emerge out of these initial statements via inductive reasoning "which consists in nothing else than that I am stimulated or induced by the protocol statements to establish tentative generalizations (hypotheses), from which those first statements but also an endless number of others, follow logically"[3].

According to Schlick the hypotheses in question can be deemed confirmed if the assertions derived from them convey "the same" as it is conveyed by future observation statements themselves procured under precise conditions that are unambiguously presentable in advance. They maintain their status provided that no observation statements that contradict the assertions drawn from them arise. So, if we accept this exposition as a valid portrayal of the real mechanism of science, then we become able to discern the function that is assigned to the so-called statements about the "immediately perceived". They are not to be equated with actual protocol propositions (registered statements), but rather be explained as "the occasions of their formation"[4]. As such, they serve as the initial impetus of our knowledge construction enterprise. They are, form a temporal perspective, the starting point of the entire affair. While the extent of their presence within our system of knowledge is not discernable at this point, we do find ourselves empowered to at least declare that they are responsible for furnishing "the ultimate origin of all knowledge"[5].

However, the question as to whether observation statements are to be regarded as the absolutely certain bedrock of our entire factual knowledge cannot be solved, since the connection between these assertions and the rest of our factual claims is not straightforward. Confirmations are seen as providing yet another service, more precisely "the corroboration of hypotheses, their verification"[6]. The main task of science is that of building predictions that have to be appraised by experience. If a prediction turns out to be successful, then "we obtain thereby a feeling of fulfilment,

---

[3] Schlick, 1959, p. 220.
[4] Schlick, 1959, p. 220.
[5] Schlick, 1959, p. 221.
[6] Schlick, 1959, p. 221.

a quite characteristic satisfaction"[7]. The essential duty of confirmations consists in facilitating the occurrence of this kind of sentiment. They are to be evaluated in virtue of this fact. The type of feeling introduced above is secured at the precise moment when the confirmation happens, that is to say when the relevant assertion is produced. This informs us about the manner in which these propositions are experienced by epistemic agents: "For thus the function of the statements about the immediately experienced itself lies in the immediate present"[8]. They are momentary, short lived cognitive episodes that are without any kind of persistence. After they dissipate, one is left only with different marks of their passing, various written or memorized signs. These items are merely hypothetical in nature and as such do not rise to the level of absolute certainty. Given the inherent elusiveness of confirmations it is impossible to assemble a logically sustainable edifice by taking them as a starting point: "If they stand at the beginning of the process of cognition, they are logically of no use"[9]. So, it would be more profitable to situate the propositions regarding the immediately experienced at the end of the cognitive endeavor. There they are able to carry the phenomena of verification to its conclusion, thus realizing their task as soon as they manifest themselves: "Logically nothing more depends on them, no conclusions are drawn from them. They constitute an absolute end"[10]. By validating certain hypotheses, i.e., by producing the feeling of satisfaction discussed above, confirmations open up the possibility for more general hypotheses to arise and the quest for universal laws is enabled.

Confirmations are described as the absolute end of the cognitive enterprise, they constitute its culmination, the measurement of its success, and this is the true sense in which they provide the foundation of our empirical knowledge: "Science does not rest upon them but leads to them, and they indicate that it has led correctly"[11]. The fact that the sentiment of satisfaction that they generate will fuel future cognitive pursuits has no bearing on their status: "They are really the absolute fixed points; it gives us joy to reach them, even if we cannot stand upon them"[12].

Schlick addresses the issue concerning the status of absolute certainty that is to be accorded to confirmations by putting forward a comparison between this sort of propositions and analytic assertions. An analytic proposition is commonly defined as the type of statement the truth of which is determined in virtue of the

---

[7]   Schlick, 1959, p. 222.
[8]   Schlick, 1959, p. 222.
[9]   Schlick, 1959, p. 222.
[10] Schlick, 1959, p. 222.
[11] Schlick, 1959, p. 223.
[12] Schlick, 1959, p. 223.

meanings of the linguistic items that are its constituents. The rightness belonging to analytic propositions is not to be established by confrontation with experience, since these assertions lack factual content. Therefore, their correctness is a matter of conformity with the rules of our language: "What makes them true is just their being correctly constructed, i.e. their standing in agreement with our arbitrarily established definitions"[13]. They are truths of reason alone, and their validity is determined *a priori*. Some doubts were expressed as to the manner in which we can be certain that in a specific situation some given assertion indeed conforms to the rules of language, i.e. that what we have in front of our eyes is an a priori validated analytic statement. These skeptical challenges target the fallible nature of our psychological abilities of exercising language and of guaranteeing the validity of our analytic propositions, as for example in a situation in which one would misremember or forget the beginning of an assertion by the time one has reached its end.

Schlick admits that such a misfunctioning of our psychological capabilities is something that can easily occur. However, the repercussions that ensue from such a scenario are not accurately depicted by these skeptical claims. Failing to comprehend an assertion or ineptly grasping it would not produce any negative effects, because: "so long as I have not understood a sentence it is not a statement at all for me, but a mere series of words, of sounds or written signs"[14]. Any enquiry as to whether a linguistic entity is to be deemed analytic or synthetic is to be directed towards statements that are worthy of the name and not towards un-cognized sequences of linguistic items. As soon as this condition is satisfied, the entire affair is elucidated, since to comprehend an analytic proposition is just that, apprehending its analyticity: "For if it is analytic I have understood it only when I have understood it as analytic"[15]. To comprehend an assertion is equivalent to knowing the usage rules for the linguistic items that serve as its components. Furthermore, the usage rules in question are also responsible for rendering a proposition analytic. So, to sum up, if someone is unable to ascertain whether a certain linguistic construction is an analytic assertion or otherwise, then we can safely state that presently the person in question is not in possession of the adequate usage rules, which amounts to saying that the same person has failed to comprehend the assertion. The skeptic is mistaken, since in fact it turns out that once one has managed to comprehend a certain sequence of linguistic items as an analytic proposition one has concomitantly assessed its rightness. The act of adequately cognizing the meaning of an analytic proposition coincides with the act of establishing its correctness: "For to understand

---

[13] Schlick, 1959, p. 223.
[14] Schlick, 1959, p. 224.
[15] Schlick, 1959, p. 224.

ANTON CRIȘAN

its meaning and to note its *a priori* validity are in an analytic statement one and the same process"[16]. This is not the case with synthetic propositions. One remains completely oblivious as to the validity of a synthetic proposition even if one is successful in the assessment of its meaning. A verdict regarding the truth or falsity of this kind of proposition is to be delivered by recourse to experience. For synthetic assertions, the act of comprehending their meaning and the act of appraising their correctness do not overlap: "The process of grasping the meaning is here quite distinct from the process of verification"[17].

Schlick contends that confirmations escape this predicament. He further describes these assertions about the immediately experienced as linguistic constructions: "of the form 'Here now so and so', for example 'Here two black points coincide' or 'Here yellow borders on blue' or also 'Here now pain', etc."[18]. The common and distinctive feature exhibited by these propositions consists in the presence of a particular type of linguistic items called "demonstrative terms". The specific rules that govern the use of these items ensure the fact that in uttering a proposition in which they participate, the epistemic agent involved has an experience. They guide our attention towards observation and refer to something that cannot be conveyed solely with the help of general definitions. Additionally, they must be accompanied by a specific kind of gesturing: "In order therefore to understand the meaning of such an observation statement one must simultaneously execute the gesture, one must somehow point to reality"[19]. Up to this point the strategy deployed in order to validate an observation statement is identical with what is required for the validation of the rest of our synthetic propositions since one can comprehend the meanings belonging to confirmations only by calling on experience. So, as far as synthetic assertions go establishing their meaning and establishing their truth are two detachable operations. This principle applies to all synthetic propositions with the exception of the statements concerning the immediately experienced. Confirmations resemble analytic propositions, when it comes to them, the two operations invoked above are one and the same: "However different therefore 'confirmations' are from analytic statements, they have in common that the occasion of understanding them is at the same time that of verifying them: I grasp their meaning at the same time as I grasp their truth"[20]. It is simply absurd to inquire about possible errors that could arise within the process of assessing observation statements. Their validity is as straightforward as that of tautologies. The only difference

---

[16] Schlick, 1959, p. 224.
[17] Schlick, 1959, p. 225.
[18] Schlick, 1959, p. 225.
[19] Schlick, 1959, p. 225.
[20] Schlick, 1959, p. 225.

consists in the fact that, while analytic propositions lack any factual content and as such disclose no information about the world around us, confirmations do provide usable knowledge about different aspects of reality.

II.

The main goal of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* is to communicate the crucial truth that such a notion as that of "The Given" is an ill-founded aspect of epistemology, that it is a myth and that its problematic effects need to be neutralized. If one pays close attention to the requirements that a purported epistemological category needs to fulfill in order for it to properly be identified as "The Given", then one will soon enough come to the conclusion that nothing is apt to play the part.

As far as the issue of characterizing the alleged content that the category of the Given is supposed to encompass, the prevalent opinion in the literature is that the notion touches on a kind of knowledge that can be gained in virtue of some form of unmediated access that we can maintain with respect to something. The idea of unmediated access refers to a type of epistemic scenario in which the process of securing a certain body of knowledge is implemented without the involvement of any other sort of additional knowledge. Simply put, no knowledge of other things is called for in order to facilitate the cognitive exercise in question[21].

Truth be told, most commentators agree that there is a minimalist interpretation of the Given that would be acceptable for Sellars. He would happily endorse the declaration stating that if the complex edifice of our empirical knowledge is to be erected as the solid affair that we envisage and desire it to be, then a minimum of the knowledge in question must be unmediated i.e. non-inferential in character[22]. However, this is not the position propounded by those writers who countenance epistemic givenness in some form or another. There is a much stronger sense in which one can regard the nature and the status of the Given and that is precisely what Sellars is attempting to dismantle[23].

---

[21] Willem deVries, for example, defines the Given as follows: "What is a given? The concept of the given is meant to capture the idea that there is some level at which knowledge is a matter of direct, immediate encounter with its object and depends on nothing other than that encounter"[21]. James O'Shea provides a similar account: "… the given is supposed to be something the nature and character of which are known or apprehended simply in being directly experienced or contemplated".

[22] See: deVries, 2005, p. 98, O'Shea, 2007, p. 281, Williams, 2009, p. 163.

[23] Michael Williams equates the enhanced version of the Given with "epistemological foundationalism in its general form", see: Williams, 2009, p. 154; deVries characterizes it as: "more than a belief in the immediacy of some knowledge", see deVries, 2005, p. 98.

Now, historically speaking, a great variety of items have been presumed as representing suitable contenders for the role of the Given: "Many things have been said to be 'given': sense contents, material objects, universals, propositions, real connections, first principles, even givenness itself"[24]. For the purpose of this article, I will explore Sellars's critical stance leveled against the version of the Given that was developed in a foundationalist and empiricist guise by those figureheads of modern empiricism during the first half of the twentieth century. According to the picture painted by Sellars one can detect a deep-seated connection between the anatomy of the epistemological notion of the Given and the suggestion that empirical knowledge is to be envisioned as an edifice characterizable in terms of a self-justified foundational level of beliefs capable of lending support to the remaining part of our knowledge: "… the point of the epistemological category of the given is, presumably, to explicate the idea that empirical knowledge rests on a foundation of non-inferential matter of fact…"[25].

In his depiction of the foundationalist variant of the Myth of the Given typified by modern empiricism Sellars brings into prominence a conceptual economy governed by two essential parameters. First, according to the standard image promoted by the foundationalists thinkers our system of empirical knowledge exhibits a stratum of non-inferential as well as presuppositionless knowledge: "each fact can not only be non-inferentially known to be the case but presupposes no other knowledge either of particular matter of fact, or of general truths"[26]. Second, the echelon in question must provide the basic, regress-stopping level of our justificatory infrastructure: "the non-inferential knowledge of facts belonging to this structure constitutes the ultimate court of appeals for all factual claims – particular or general – about the world"[27].

Now, the first principle is generally interpreted as being a pledge for the self-reliant nature of our basic knowledge, i.e. of the Given. The self-sufficiency in question is to be understood in the strongest possible sense, in other words the kind of knowledge that we are confronted with at the basic echelon must not in any way depend on some other brand of knowledge[28]. The second principle is

---

[24] Sellars, 2000, p. 205.

[25] Sellars, 2000, p. 206.

[26] Sellars, 2000, p. 243.

[27] Sellars, 2000, p. 243.

[28] deVries explains the epistemic independence of the Given not as something that is the consequence of mere non-inferentiality but as something that stems from eluding any kind of epistemic dependence whatsoever, see deVries, 2005, p. 99; a similar point is made by Chauncey Maher: "Thus, in general, it would seem that foundational knowledge needs to be independent knowledge, not simply non-inferential knowledge", see: Maher, 2012, p. 9; Williams introduces the

regarded as addressing the issue of the purported warranting capabilities that our basic knowledge must be equipped with. The foundationalist writer argues that the knowledge that one encounters at the basic stratum can ultimately bestow justification upon the superstructure of our empirical knowledge[29]. In order to deliver a coherent portrait of knowledge and justification empiricist epistemologists must convincingly identify the distinctive type of propositions that could play the required part. The most likely candidates are what we commonly designate as observation reports: "Now there does seem to be a class of statements which fill at least part of the bill, namely such statements as would be said to report observations, thus, 'This is read'"[30].

Foundationalist defenders of the idea of the Given argue that, as far as the issue of procuring epistemic warrant, observation reports acquire their justification in a manner that is comparable to the one that is at work in the case of analytic propositions: "Thus, it has been claimed, not without plausibility, that whereas ordinary empirical statements can be correctly made without being true, observation reports resemble analytic statements in that being correctly made is a sufficient as well as necessary condition of their truth"[31]. Consequently, the process of justifying observation reports boils down to the accurate usage of the linguistic expressions that are their components: "… correctly making the report 'This is green' is a matter of following the rules for the use of "this", "is" and "green"[32].

Sellars offers three clarificatory remarks. First, he notes that there is a distinction between a common and an epistemological meaning of the word "report". In our everyday use we understand the term as expressing an action involving the presence of two participants, the one making the report and the one who is the recipient of that report. The epistemological sense of "report" excludes the idea of an "overt verbal performance" as well as the idea of reporting as something that is done "by someone to someone", which is to say that reports are not understood as actions but as recordings of observations made by a single observing subject.

---

notion of an 'Encapsulation Thesis' with respect to basic knowledge in the sense that "basic beliefs, as intrinsically credible, must not be beholden to any collateral commitments", see: Williams, 2009, p. 156.

[29] deVries talks about the epistemic efficaciousness of the Given, something that he describes as a capacity to pass on warrant to other instances of knowing: "it can transmit positive epistemic status to other cognitive states of ours", see: deVries, p. 99; Williams speaks about a 'Priority Thesis', namely the idea that the given: "is the ultimate source of warrant for all other beliefs", see: Williams, 2009, p. 156.

[30] Sellars, 2000, p. 244.
[31] Sellars, 2000, p. 245.
[32] Sellars, 2000, p. 245.

Second, foundationalists regard the rightness that is characteristic of observation reports in the same manner as the one that is specific to actions, even though they employ the term "report" in an epistemological context. Third, in Sellars's opinion the phrase "following a rule" taken in the strongest possible sense (a scenario in which it is not equivalent to what is contained in the phrase "exhibiting a uniformity") implies the idea of an epistemic subject that manifestly knows "that the circumstances are of a certain kind" and not just "the mere fact that they are of this kind" as a decisive factor for designating something as an action.

In light of these considerations Sellars concludes that foundationalists take observation reports as actions, that they perceive their rightness as the rightness of actions, and that they asses their epistemic authority along the lines of what is contained in the phrase "following a rule", thus offering us a picture of "givenness in its most straightforward form"[33]. This is so because, by adhering to the three requirements mentioned above, one automatically subscribes to the idea that the epistemic warrant belonging to observation reports is ultimately based on a brand of inherently justified "nonverbal episodes of awareness". Subsequent correctly proffered verbal performances are in charge of conveying this initial inherent authority and ultimately of bestowing it upon the rest of our factual knowledge. This echelon of self-justifying nonverbal occurrences of awareness ensures the basic level of the entirety of our empirical knowledge: "These self-authenticating episodes would constitute the tortoise on which stands the elephant on which rests the edifice of empirical knowledge"[34].

As far as the constructive part of Sellars's endeavor is concerned, he proposes an improved version of what is known as "the thermometer view". In its unamended form the theory in question treats reports as bearers of knowledge in virtue of the fact that they constitute primitive reactions (covert or overt utterings of observation statements) that are likely to come about under certain favorable circumstances, namely in cases in which epistemic subjects find themselves in the presence of certain objects that exhibit certain properties and the conditions of perception are normal. Obviously, such reactions should not be designated as proper propositional attitudes.

In order to deliver a convincing account Sellars believes that he has to surpass two key obstacles. The first one is about establishing the kind of authority that, once ascribed to these quasi-propositional reactions, would allow us to deem them as constituting vehicles capable of conveying knowledge. Judging by what has been said thus far the only imaginable warranting source is provided by the fact

---

[33] Sellars, 2000, p. 245.
[34] Sellars, 2000, p. 246.

that a possibility of inferring the presence of a certain object with certain properties is inaugurated via an epistemic entity's reporting affair. Sellars reminds us that in assessing the rightness of a report we are not obliged to apply the same criteria that are at work when conducting an evaluation as to whether a certain action is to be gauged as correct or otherwise. As far as the rightness of reports is concerned, it is enough to evince whether or not a given report represents a sample of a general behavioral style, one that a specific community of language users would authorize and adjudge as worthy of endorsement. As far as the second obstacle goes Sellars contends that if a report is to be interpreted as a barer of knowledge, then it must not simply be the case that it possesses epistemic warrant. There is also the requirement that the entity responsible for making the report must hold the capacity to acknowledge the authority in question. Being capable of carrying out the task of cognizing the authority of observation reports by making the required inference involves higher cognitive powers, such as holding concepts that designate properties of objects (such as red or round) or understanding the manner in which certain conditions allow perception to fulfil its normal function: "In other words, for a *Konstatierung* 'This is green' to 'express observational knowledge', not only must it be a *symptom* or *sign* of the presence of a green object in standard conditions, but the perceiver must know that tokens of 'This is green' *are* symptoms of the presence of green objects in conditions which are standard for visual perception"[35].

Sellars's contention is that holding observational knowledge is simply impossible outside a context in which epistemic subjects already possess a significant amount of different kinds of knowledge: "The point I wish to make … is that … one could not have observational knowledge of any fact unless one knows many other things as well"[36]. Here, he stresses that it is not the case that observational knowledge requires what is often described as tacit knowledge or 'know how', but proper explicit knowledge of general principles such as the principle "X is a reliable symptom of Y"[37]. This is equivalent with denouncing the longstanding empiricist doctrine about the alleged epistemic autonomy of observational knowledge. It reverses the empiricist teaching stating that knowledge of a general fact is cemented only after securing knowledge of several instances of particular facts that ensure the plausibility of the general principle in question. On the contrary, observational knowledge is possible only if it is preceded by knowledge of general facts. The latter acts as a presupposition for the former.

---

[35] Sellars, 2000, p. 247.
[36] Sellars, 2000, p. 248.
[37] Sellars, 2000, p. 248.

ANTON CRIȘAN

According to Sellars, an epistemic subject does not have to know that observational knowledge presupposes knowledge about general facts at the very moment when he is engaged in mouthing that observational knowledge. He has to be able to retrospectively and inductively justify his knowledge. As such, epistemologists can also avoid the danger posed by the regress argument and preserve the epistemic integrity of observational knowledge as knowledge worthy of the name: "Thus while Jones's ability to give inductive reasons *today* is built on a long history of acquiring and manifesting verbal habits in perceptual situations … it does not require that any episode in this prior time be characterizable as expressing knowledge"[38].

Some epistemologists fall prey to the error of considering that the task of explaining what *S knows p* really amounts to is descriptive in nature when, in fact, we are dealing with a profoundly normative endeavor: "The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says"[39].The Myth of the Given is described as the insight that observation comprises self-warranting nonverbal occurrences that in turn pass their justification onto verbal acts if these acts are carried out by abiding semantic rules. In repudiating the idea of the Given, Sellars assures us that he is not abjuring the insight that our observings constitute internal or nonverbal occurrences. He wants to show how it is possible to understand them as such outside the framework provided by the idea of givenness. Sellars also makes it clear that in renouncing the epistemological geography of traditional empiricism he does not wish to contend that empirical knowledge is without foundation: "There is clearly some point to the picture of human knowledge as resting on a level of propositions – observation reports – which do not rest on other propositions in the same way as other propositions rest on them"[40]. He urges us to reflect on the deceitful nature of the celebrated metaphor that is usually associated with traditional empiricism, that of the foundation (like the foundation of a house, thus creating the impression of a hierarchical structure of justification). Sellars proposes a theoretical construction in which he enlists what he calls two logical dimensions.

The first one largely corresponds to the empiricist image of a great deal of empirical statements that rest on observation reports. The second one is innovative, since in it, observation reports figure as resting on numerous empirical statements. Ultimately, the greatest mistake that the image painted by traditional empiricism

---

38 Sellars, 2000, p. 249.
39 Sellars, 2000, p. 248.
40 Sellars, 2000, p. 250.

lies in "its static character"[41]. This static manner of understanding knowledge and justification is what creates the impression that we are somehow obliged to side with either foundationalism or coherentism: "One seems forced to choose between the picture of an elephant which rests on a tortoise (What supports the tortoise?) and the picture of a great Hegelian serpent of knowledge with its tail in its mouth (Where does it begin?). Neither will do"[42]. The rationality of empirical knowledge, and as such, that of science as well, does not come down to the fact that it rests on a foundation, but depends on the fact that it is a self-correcting endeavor that considers any statement as being reversible. There is however a provision, we can attack any statement whatsoever, but we cannot attack all of them at once.

III.

Sellars does not single out any foundationalist author to whom his characterization is supposed to apply. Indeed, as Willem deVries and Timm Triplett have noticed, by taking into account the fact that he mentions confirmations and the fact that he stresses that for the foundationalist writer the validity of this kind of statements is to be explicated in virtue of a similitude between them and analytic propositions, we can safely assume that Sellars's interlocutor is Schlick: "Sellars does not, unfortunately, cite any sources for this empiricist view, but it is reasonable to think that he has Moritz Schlick in mind. Schlick uses the term *Konstatierungen* adopted here by Sellars, and he also explicitly makes the comparison between analytic and observation statements noted by Sellars"[43].

As we have seen thus far, Sellars's intention is to exclude the idea of the Given from epistemology. As a consequence, a considerable amount of energy is invested in refuting a foundationalist and empiricist version of the Myth of the Given. However, Sellars isolates an essential trait of foundationalism that he considers worthy of being preserved for the sake of his own take on knowledge and justification. He agrees with the traditional foundationalist that there is or, more precisely, that there should be a special class of synthetic propositions, i.e., a certain amount of non-inferential knowledge. I am referring, of course, to Sellars's treatment of observation reports as epistemic items that obtain their authority in virtue of the fact that they constitute reliable indicators of the presence of perceptual objects.

---

[41] Sellars, 2000, p. 250.
[42] Sellars, 2000, p. 250.
[43] deVries and Triplett, 2000, p. 73.

Certainly, within Sellars's take on knowledge and justification one is presented with a second, superior level, at which the epistemic subject must self-consciously account for the kind of epistemic warrant that is characteristic of the kind of beliefs that she holds. In order to do so knowers must prove themselves capable of employing sophisticated and complex cognitive procedures involving higher level conceptual tools. Epistemic subjects must comprehend and spell out the epistemic norms that allow for them to appear before us as knowers in the true sense of the word. Nonetheless, is seems obvious to me that Sellars's observation reports do represent a privileged type of synthetic assertions and that, at least in some sense, bare some resemblance to Schlick's confirmations. I claim that Sellars's characterization of confirmations does manage to capture Schlick's intentions. Their correctness is treated in the same spirit as the rightness of actions and their authority is indeed derived from self-justified nonverbal occurrences of awareness i.e. Schlick's famous gesturing that accompany the relevant utterances. But it is also true that they are the kind of statements that fall under de purview of the Cartesian, individual subject. They stem from the individual knower's experience. As such, they provide the cornerstone of an "individualist belief-based epistemology"[44]. This is also true about Sellars, with the proviso that, indeed, Sellars accentuates social mediation more clearly are programmatically then Schlick. The point that I am attempting to make here is that the two authors are both representatives of a rather traditional manner of understanding and practicing epistemology, one in which the starting point of the entire enterprise is constituted by the analysis of the type of knowledge claims made by the individual epistemic agent. The statements in question are subsequently seen as being responsible, it's true, to a lesser extent and in a different manner in Sellars's case, for safeguarding the epistemic dignity of the rest of our empirical knowledge. To better grasp this issue I propose we take another look at confirmations. From what we have seen in the first section of this article we can safely claim that Schlick's confirmations are not foundational in the traditional sense. This is so because they lack the necessary features that would allow them to occupy that position. The chief reason lies in the fact that they are elusive cognitive states and as such they are deprived of the stability that one would normally associate with the idea of a firm basis[45].

---

[44] Uebel, 2007, p. 453.

[45] Thomas Uebel invokes the issue regarding the lack of durability that is characteristic of confirmations within a cluster of arguments that are meant to demonstrate that Schlick's epistemology is couched in thoroughly anti-foundationalist terms. For my purpose here it will suffice to portray Schlick's undertaking as a non-standard form of foundationalism, see: Uebel, 1996, p. 422. Thomas Oberdan has shown that the elusiveness of confirmations renders other aspects, such as incorrigibility and indubitability, problematic. Their incorrigibility is affected since the only factor that impedes their revisability is the fact that it is simply impossible for future experience to generate any kind of impact on them. Their indubitability is put in

This is evident from the manner in which Schlick contrasts his statements about the immediately experienced, i.e. confirmations with the notorious protocol propositions. The distinctive characteristic belonging to confirmations resides in their immediacy which constitutes the source of their "absolute validity", but at the same time the reason of their "uselessness as an abiding foundation"[46]. An observation statement of the type 'Here now so and so' is a different thing from a protocol proposition of the kind "M.S. perceived blue on the nth of April 1934 at such and such a time and such and such a place"[47]. Protocol propositions are hypotheses and as a consequence they are incapable of removing the menace of uncertainty. Confirmations cannot be recorded by means of the written word since the demonstrative terms that are their essential components become deprived of any meaning once one tries to engrave them somewhere. Any attempt to utilize temporal or spatial markers instead of demonstrative terms would automatically transform any confirmation into a protocol proposition, namely into something that is of a completely different kind. Confirmations instigate protocol propositions and eventually promulgate the verification of scientific hypotheses thus allowing for science to complete its essential duty. Accordingly, given their professed elusiveness confirmations cannot act in a foundational capacity.

As a consequence, explaining the connection between confirmations and the superstructure of empirical knowledge in the sense that confirmations serve as premises in different inferences that would have the duty of justifying empirical hypotheses is indeed problematic on Schlick's account. However, is was Schlick's intention to afford to these incorrigible confirmations the task of reinforcing the hypothetical protocols. As Uebel puts it, confirmations are meant to "fortify" the epistemic agent, they provide her with the strength that is required in order to deal with the permanent uncertainty of the protocol assertions[48]. Again, the insistence here is on first person epistemic claims, on the private experience of the individual epistemic agent.

I contend that Sellars's observation reports have a similar function. First the nonverbal occurrences of awareness that are an essential part of confirmations are preserved by Sellars as well. As we have seen, observation reports are not actions and their correctness should not to be understood as the correctness that is specific to actions. It is also true that for Sellars observation reports constitute psychological and linguistic episodes pertaining to a socially endorsed epistemic behavior. The

---

jeopardy by the fact that it is not publicly or intersubjectively available, only the subject experiencing a confirmation can attest to its indubitable character. According to Oberdan confirmations are "incorrigible at the moment" and "indubitable for the speaker", see Oberdan 1993, p.54-55.

[46] Schlick, 1959, p. 225.
[47] Schlick, 1959, p. 226.
[48] See: Uebel, 2007, p. 453.

distinctive mark of the Sellarsian framework is the presence of this socio-cultural dimension, but I believe that we can show that the task assigned to his privileged type of synthetic assertions is similar to the one that is specific to Schlick's confirmations. By proving herself to be a reliable reporter the epistemic agent is fortified if not in its own eyes, then at least in the eyes of those who observe and evaluate whether or not she is a reliable and competent reporter. By being able to report reliably the agent is accepted within the community of language users that follow the same epistemic behavior and can begin to ascent to the next stage, that of being a self-conscious knower that can furnish real support for whatever knowledge claims the community is considering. As such, observation reports are in a sense responsible for lending support to the remaining part of our empirical knowledge. They attest whether or not somebody is a potential knower and they validate the presence of the person in question within the epistemic community that adheres to a specific set of epistemic norms.

As I said earlier, it is hard to envisage a straightforward foundationalist account on which confirmations act as justificatory enhancers for the rest of our empirical assertions by passing onto them evidential support. I propose to interpret this as meaning that their purpose lies elsewhere, namely in ensuring a liaison between knowledge (language) and reality.

According to Schlick, if one understands science as a system of assertions and investigates it from a strictly logical point of view by concentrating only on the logical relations between the assertions in question, then the issue of the foundation of empirical knowledge (science as well) is regarded in rather arbitrary terms: "In an abstract system of statements there is no priority and no posteriority"[49]. By following this line of thought it becomes plausible to accord the foundational role to the most general propositions that we encounter in the system of science, namely to axioms. The problem lies in the fact that just as easily we could afford the foundational role to the most particular assertions, namely to recordable protocol propositions. Any approach that allows for something like this to occur is fundamentally deficient. The situation is resolved once we adopt a different perspective. By focusing on the connection between science and reality we gain a better understanding of the true purpose of science, we discover that it is "a means of finding one's way among the facts; of arriving at the joy of confirmation, the feeling of finality"[50].

The entire issue of the foundation of empirical knowledge is reconfigured into an enquiry regarding the nature and status of those firm points where our knowledge and reality intersect. This is the main function of confirmations, facilitating

---

[49] Schlick, 1959, p. 226.
[50] Schlick, 1959, p. 226.

the convergence between knowledge and reality. As Uebel puts it, Schlick's merit is to have "… illuminated the very process at issue in the defense of empiricism: how language finds application in reality … with reference to the manifold practical connections of our language that he was beginning to explore, by demonstrating the use of indexical statements to be successfully embedded in our 'form of life', Schlick sought to provide what unwavering support could be given for the already more removed and no longer certain protocol statements by which scientists test their theories"[51]. Confirmations represent the only type of synthetic propositions that escapes the realm of hypotheses, thus meeting the demand of yielding absolute certainty. However, they are not foundational in a classical, intuitive sense, rather: "like a flame, cognition, as it were, licks out of them, reaching each but for a moment and then at once consuming it"[52].

I claim that Sellars's observation reports fulfil a similar task. Again, observation reports cannot be classified as actions and their rightness should not to be treated as the correctness that is characteristic to actions. However, they do possess epistemic warrant in virtue of the fact that the presence of certain objects with certain properties can be inferred (as noted above, presumably by full-blooded epistemic subjects) from the fact that they are uttered. Indeed, they do not constitute knowledge worthy of the name, since the epistemic subjects that are engaged in reporting do not manifestly cognize the fact that their reports are justified. I claim that this does not have any bearing on the fact that observation reports fulfil the task of ensuring a connection between our cognitive enterprise in general and reality. Observation reports are linguistic episodes that instantiate an epistemic behavior that is specific to a community of language users and this is enough to ensure the connection in question. By assessing the manner in which observation reports are carried out properly by an agent that is not yet capable of evaluating his own cognitive activity, more skilled members of the linguistic community can go on and establish how language, specifically their linguistic structures, meaningfully and productively apply to reality. Correctly executing an observation report is a clear indicator of the fact that an epistemic subject has been successfully trained and has acquired the linguistic skills of the community of knowers to which she belongs. In turn, the community itself can reconfirm the fact that its knowledge claims have bearing on the surrounding environment. As such, yet again, the rest of our empirical knowledge can benefit from this reassurance regarding our main cognitive procedures and tools and their successful applicability to reality.

---

[51] Uebel, 2007, p. 453.
[52] Schlick, 1959, p. 227.

Conclusion

One thing that most commentators of Sellars's work agree upon is the fact that when it comes to his critical stances his approach is rather intriguing. The Sellarsian critical engagement with a certain author or a certain intellectual tradition is not restricted to uncovering the faulty arguments of its opponent. Sellars is also interested in identifying those elements that are worthy of being preserved. Furthermore, he goes on and incorporates such elements into his own account, one that is (at least from Sellars's perspective) free of any problematic philosophical considerations. I maintain that this type of method is both philosophically profitable and a sign of intellectual strength.

By taking into consideration Sellars's critical remarks leveled against foundationalist epistemology in general and against Schlick's variant in particular I have attempted to find out whether or not we can establish some common ground between the two authors. The thesis that I have endeavored to defend in this paper was that the constructive part of Sellars's epistemology exhibits some features that one can also find within Schlick's intellectual enterprise. More specifically, I have attempted to demonstrate that Sellars's observation reports and Schlick's confirmations have similar functions. As a special kind of linguistic and cognitive episodes they enhance the standing of epistemic agents and provide a clear example of the manner in which knowledge (language) applies to reality.

By taking this kind of exegetical approach I hope that I have managed to shed some light on both philosophical undertakings and that I have made some steps toward opening new interpretative avenues with regard to Sellars's relation to the epistemology of logical empiricism.

REFERENCES

deVries, Willem & Timm Triplett. 2000. *Knowledge, Mind and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'*. Indianapolis and Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Co

deVries, Willem. 2005. *Wilfrid Sellars*. Chesham: Acumen Publishing Limited

Maher, Chauncey. 2012. *The Pittsburgh School: Sellars, McDowell, Brandom*, New York and London: Routledge

Oberdan, Thomas. 1993. *Protocols, Truth and Convention*, Amsterdam and Atlanta GA: Editions Rodopi

O'Shea, James. 2007. *Wilfrid Sellars: Naturalism with a Normative Turn*. Cambridge & Malden, MA: Polity Press

Schlick, Moritz, 1959. *The Foundation of Knowledge*. A.J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism*, New York: The Free Press, p. 209-227

Sellars, Wilfrid. 2000. *Empiricism and The Philosophy of Mind*. Willem deVries & Timm Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'*. Indianapolis and Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Co, p. 205-276

Uebel, Thomas. 1996. "Anti-foundationalism and the Vienna Circle's Revolution in Philosophy", *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 47, 415-440

Uebel, Thomas. 2007. *Empiricism at the Crossroads. The Vienna Circle's Protocol-Sentence Debate*, Chicago and LaSalle: Open Court Publishing Company

Williams, Michael. 2009. *The Tortoise and the Serpent: Sellars on the Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Willem de Vries (ed.), *Empiricism, Perceptual Knowledge, Normativity, and Realism*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 147-186

SOME ISSUES REGARDING ARTIFACTS[*]

PAULA TOMI[**]

ABSTRACT. When it comes to artifacts, the functional accounts define them as objects that have an intended function. This function is considered essential for them and is used to classify artifacts and differentiate them. However, functional accounts of artifacts face some serious criticism. It seems that a function is neither essential, nor sufficient for an artifact. Thomasson offers a new perspective on artifacts. The author defines artifacts based on their intended feature. A feature may, of course, be a function but does not have to be just that. Generally speaking, intended features are norms of how to treat that specific artifact. Such an account is able to escape the criticism raised against functional accounts. In this article is presented Baker's functional account of artifacts and some criticism that can be raised for such an account. The second part of the article critically introduces Thomasson's account for artifacts. The aim of this article is to support Thomasson's account against a functional perspective.

Keywords: artifacts, mind-dependent objects, intended function, natural kinds, intended feature, Amie Thomasson, L. R. Baker

Some common views define artifacts based on their function (Baker, 2008), their intended features (Thomasson, 2014) or based on actions (Houkes and Vermas, 2004). However, the first two accounts are the most well-known ones in later debates.

The aim of this article is to provide a comparison between the functional and the intended features accounts on artifacts and to offer some arguments in

[**] University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy, Splaiul Independenței 204, 060024 București, paulapompilia@yahoo.com

favor of the latter. To be more specific, I will argue that Thomasson's view is more complex[1] and suitable to analyze artifacts and that Baker's account has some flaws.[2]

In the first section I will present Baker's account. Some flaws of the functional account are presented in the second section. Finally, in the last section, Thomasson's alternative is presented. Thomasson's account is presented critically; thus, some possible issues of the account are pointed out and some answers are sketched.

I. Baker's account

The distinction between artifacts and natural kinds is not a new one.[3] Artifacts are artificial or non-natural kinds. If one wants to classify kinds based on their origin (i.e. how they appeared) a dichotomy occurs: natural kinds and artificial kinds. When it comes to natural objects (kinds) they come into being without any rational intervention, therefore, they are considered mind-independent.[4] On the other hand, artificial kinds are created by a rational mind (or by a causal chain that ends with a rational mind); because of this they are considered to be mind-dependent.[5] [6]

Since artifacts are considered mind-dependent, there are controversies regarding their existence; some authors[7] claim that they do not properly exist. There are authors that claim that only natural kinds exist and artificial kinds are composed of particles of natural kinds, therefore there is no need to inflate the ontology with artificial kinds.[8]

---

[1] By complex I do not want to suggest that it is more inflated terminologically, but rather that it has a degree of generality that the functional account lacks.

[2] It should be noted that by no means I want to suggest that Thomasson's view is the best account for defining artifacts. An article would not be enough for such a big aim. The purpose of this article strictly refers to these two views and their comparison.

[3] Aristotle – in *Physics* – tried to offer a criterion in order to distinguish between these two kinds.

[4] Their existence is considered mind-independent. However, this view might be criticized from an antirealist perspective. I am not going in depth with this discussion in this article. The main point I want to emphasize is that there is a distinction between the existence of natural kinds and the existence of artificial kinds.

[5] According to Baker (2008) artifacts are 'intention-dependent', therefore 'they could not exist in a world without beings with propositional attitude' (Baker, 2008, pp. 2-3)

[6] It should be noted that Baker's aim is to argue that the distinction between mind-dependent and mind-independent objects is not essential and does not provide a strong difference between artifacts and natural kinds; but this is not relevant for the aim of this paper. For more see Baker 2008.

[7] For example, Merricks (2001), Unger (1979)

[8] For more see: Merricks (2001)

Against this view, Baker (2008, p. 1) argues that the existence of artifacts is obvious. Artifacts exist not only because most of the ordinary objects are artifacts, but also because 'without artifacts, there would be no recognizable human life'.

Baker (2008, p. 1) defines artifacts in the following way:

'Artifacts are objects intentionally made to serve a given purpose'

According to Baker (2008) an artifact x has a function F, therefore x has its function essentially. This means that the nature of an artifact lies in its function. The persistence condition for an artifact is explained in virtue of being the kind of artifact that it is; this leads us back to its function. For example, let us suppose that we have an object O – a chair. O is a chair as long as it can fulfill its function. If O is unable to fulfill its function, it loses its status; although O may still look like a chair and have properties that chairs have.

Baker (2008, p.2) considers that artifacts are produced to perform the function they are designed for "whether they successfully perform their proper function or not". This mention might suggest that a degree of error is permitted. Another interpretation[9] might be:

$F_\Diamond$: an artifact x has a function F such that Fx is possible

This means the artifact can fulfill its function, but does not necessary have to do it. Thus, the artifact potentially has the function F, but it is not necessary to have it actually. This interpretation seems to raise many questions for Baker's account. The obvious question is how do we know that an artifact has a specific function only potentially and how it can be proved that it has it? This issue can be solved if an additional clause is introduced, obtaining:

$F_{\Diamond a}$: an artifact x has a function F such that Fx is possible, and F is fulfilled (actualized)[10] at least once by x[11]

---

9   The following interpretations (both $F_\Diamond$ and $F_{\Diamond a}$) have their roots in Baker's paper (2008).

10   Possible objects are not taken into consideration.

11   A possible counterargument to this might be the Chair – a chair used to put clothes on it. We can imagine a possible chair – let us call it c – such that we accept that c is a chair, but it was never used as one. Does $F_{\Diamond a}$ still stand? It seems that it does not. I have to thank my colleague Andrea Popescu for this example and for all the fruitful discussions and feedback on this article.

It should be noted that Thomasson's view does not have a similar problem. Thomasson may take into consideration the intended feature of the builder of the chair. In this situation, c would still be a chair, but it would not be used accordingly.

Baker's account has three main points. Firstly, artifacts are functional objects. Secondly, the function determines what kind of artifact an object is. Two objects, x and y, are of the same kind if and only if they perform the same function. Thirdly, because artifacts are intentional products, they are mind-dependent.[12]

Therefore, if Baker's account is accepted, then artifacts are defined and classified based on their function and they are mind-dependent objects. Such an account raises some questions.

II. Raising some questions for Baker

A functional account of artifacts – as Baker's – has some weak points. Thomasson (2014) questions Baker's proposal in the following way: having a specific function is a necessary or sufficient condition for having a proper classification of artifacts? Thomasson's answer is a strong no. Is the artifact's function essential to it? Once again, Thomasson's answer is no.

If we put it formally[13]:

$(\forall x)(Ax \rightarrow Fx)$ or, even stronger $(\forall x)(Ax \leftrightarrow Fx)$,
where A_ = is an artifact
and F_ = has a function.

This means that we are not supposed to find something that is an artifact (A_) and fails to have an intended function (F_). In this situation, the following formula should be false if Baker's account stands:

$\sim(\exists x)(Ax \& \sim Fx)$

Let us assume that there is an *a* such that (Aa &~Fa) is true. What can *a* be?

Thomasson suggests that *a* can be any piece of art. According to Thomasson artifacts that are pieces of art do not have a specific function. However, an advocate of Baker's account could suggest that the function for artistic objects could be a

---

[12] Following from these points, artifacts and natural objects are different from (at least) three aspects:
  (i) Artifacts depend ontologically on humans and human purposes, natural objects do not
  (ii) Artifacts could not exist in a world without minds. On the other hand, natural objects can exist in a world without any rational mind, despite the fact that they can also be used to serve human purposes.
  (iii) Artifacts essentially have intended functions, while natural objects do not have such functions essentially.

[13] This is my interpretation and formulation of Thomasson's example.

trivial one, as 'being a piece of art'. This can work pretty well in order to differentiate between common objects and pieces of art. Returning to the three parts of Baker's account:

(1) Artifacts are functional objects
(2) Function determines what kind of artifact an object is
(3) Artifacts are intentional products; therefore they are mind-dependent

(1) is fulfilled if the trivial function 'being a piece of art' is introduced. (3) is not the subject of this critique. However, (2) seems to fail. If artful artifacts have a trivial function, then, how can we distinguish between a sculpture and a picture only using their functions? If the function is supposed to be the criterion used to classify different kinds of artifacts, this means that the function cannot be a trivial one. The link between an artifact and its function is not a trivial one; it is rather a metaphysical one.[14] A function is something that is essentially connected to that specific artifact. Thus, it seems that Baker's account has some weak points.

Another question is the following: what happens with a specific object that loses its function because it receives a new one? For example, O may become a piece of art. Would O still be considered a chair? We would still consider it a chair, despite the fact that, given Baker's analysis, we should consider O otherwise. However, Baker can provide an answer to this counterargument. Since the definition provided by Baker states that the object has to be unable to fulfill its function in order to lose its status, Baker could say that the chair did not lose its ability to fulfill its function. Thus, O still has – potentially – the ability to fulfill its function, but does not do so actively. In this situation, the interpretation presented at $F_{\phi a}$ can be used. This answer solves the problem only apparently. In fact, such a possible answer just raises another question. Since objects have their function essentially, if O is still a chair, it means it cannot be a piece of art, because artistic objects have different functions than chairs. Baker's account states that an artifact has to be classified based on its function. Thus, pieces of art and chairs obviously have different functions; therefore one object cannot be both essentially. Therefore, Baker's account must choose to either consider O a chair, or a piece of art, and not both.[15]

---

[14] Taking into consideration that the function is essential in order to classify a specific object, it cannot be trivial. If it would be trivial – like identity – then every object would have it; thus, it cannot be used as a criterion of classification.

[15] Of course an artifact can have multiple functions, in this passage I focus on that specific function – according to Baker – that is essential for an artifact and provide a classification criterion. For example, an object that is a sculpture can have the form of a chair. However, that specific object would not fulfill the specific function of a chair, but rather the one for being an artful artifact; thus, such an object has essentially the function of being a piece of art, not that of being a chair.

To conclude, Baker's account fails to provide answers to some critical questions. First of all, artifacts' functions are not sufficient to classify them. Secondly, having a function is not essential for an object to be an artifact. Thirdly, even though it would be accepted that having a function is sufficient to classify artifacts, this does not solve the problem of classification, since there would be artifacts of different types and the same function.

III. Thomasson's account

Accounts that define artifacts to have intended features have their weak points. Thus, Thomasson provides a new definition for artifacts:

'Artifacts must have certain intended features' (Thomasson, 2014, p. 58)

An intended feature is more general than a function. An intended feature may be a function, a structural feature, a perceptible feature or something else. Quoting Thomasson:

> '(…) must have intended *features*, but these may include not only functional, but also structural, perceptible, or even receptive and normative features: features regarding how the object is to be regarded, used or treated.'
> (Thomasson, 2014, p. 57)

The resulting question is when we can consider the intended feature to be successfully accomplished? Thomasson provides an answer:

> '(…) something is a member of an essentially artifactual kind K only if it is the product of a largely successfully executed intention to make K, where the maker must have a substantive concept of the nature of Ks that largely matches that of some prior K-makers (if any) and intend to realize that concept by making an object with K-relevant features.'
> (Thomasson, 2003, pp. 599-600)

This definition allows the feature to vary from kind to kind (Thomasson, 2014, p. 60). The formulation – 'largely successfully executed intention' – is meant to underline the possibility of error. Therefore, some degrees of error are accepted. This is indeed needed in order to accept that something is an artifact, even though it is not perfectly executed, but it is recognized as an object of a specific kind. However, I believe that accepting some degrees of error leads us to some forms of

vagueness. A form of sorites paradox can be formulated. Let us assume there is an object c of a specific kind K. If a small error is made c_1 is obtained. This new object is still K, since Thomasson's formulation accepts some small errors. Successive errors are made until we reach c_n. If c_{n-1} was still K, then c_n should also be accepted as K. Thus, at which point do we reach the limit of errors such that from that point forward the object does not belong to K anymore? It seems that we are not able to provide an answer to this question and we are stuck with a form of paradox.

In a day to day situation an answer to the vagueness problem can be provided for specific cases. Thus, there is no general (or a priori) answer to the already mentioned question, but only individual answers for each situation. Those answers are a posteriori and can be provided only for a specific case. However, I am not sure that this solution may work properly. The changes mentioned in the form of the sorites presented are minimal; in a day to day situation such changes might not be easily observable.

However, it should be pointed out that from a pragmatic point of view, Thomasson's account provides a criterion of separation between failed artifacts and useful ones. In a day to day situation, sorites would not occur. Those kinds of questions and issues are purely theoretical. A pragmatic view may be the way out for Thomasson.

According to Thomasson (2014, p. 62), artifacts are 'intended to be *recognizable* by a certain *intended audience*'. This intended recognition serves the further purpose of treating the artifact in appropriate ways, 'as subject to the relevant norms' (Thomasson, 2014, p. 63). Thus, artifacts are linked to (public) norms.

Artifacts may be used in three ways: standard, alternative and improper (Houkes and Vermaas, 2004, 53). This usage can be accounted for by Thomasson, but Baker's account fails to do so. It is obvious that an account that defines artifacts based on their function cannot distinguish between these three uses. Thus, Baker's account cannot provide a criterion to differentiate between a standard and an alternative or improper use. The account provides a criterion to classify artifacts based on their function, but cannot offer degrees for those functions or classify between ways of using a specific artifact. Thomasson's account, on the other hand, may be developed with such an analysis. If an artifact is defined and characterized given its intended feature, the distinction between standard and improper use is already incorporated. Thomasson considers that the intended features are meant to point out how the object should be treated. Those normative features might be used to distinguish between these three uses of an artifact. Despite the fact that this account can provide a differentiation criterion, the improper use might raise some issues. An improper use presupposes a violation of the norms suggested by

the intended features of the artifact. Therefore, those accounts that define artifacts based on their features should be developed with a proper analysis for improper uses.

A theory of artifacts based on intended features may accept the improper use as a transformation of the artifact into one of a different kind. For example, let us assume that we have an artifact C that is a chair. An artist may use C in an improper way, and put it in an art gallery as an exhibit. In this situation C would no longer be a chair, but a piece of art. Baker's account fails to support such an answer, but Thomasson's one has no problems in this situation. Even more, it seems that an account based on intended features might accept the fact that C is both a piece of art and a chair. C would firstly be a piece of art, because its creator sees it in that way. However, because he has more than one intended feature, C is also a chair used in an improper way.

To conclude, an account based on intended features is able to solve some of the issues raised against an account based on intended functions. However, Thomasson's account faces the problem of vagueness, if it is not understood from a pragmatic point of view.

IV Conclusions

This article aimed to present two theories on artifacts and some problematic issues concerning each of them. Baker's functional account considers that artifacts are mind-dependent objects which should be defined and classified given their functions. Thus, an artifact that fails to fulfill its function does not belong to its kind anymore.

This view faces some serious criticism. First of all, there are artifacts which do not have an intended function. Such artifacts are pieces of art. A trivial function – such as 'being a piece of art' – is not enough to provide a classification criterion since we would not be able to draw a distinction between different types of artful pieces. This means that the function of an artifact is neither sufficient for its classification, nor essential for the object. Secondly, Baker's theory fails to accommodate that an artifact can change its function and it does not tell us what happens to the object if its function is changed. To sum up, it seems that Baker's account fails in some important aspects.

Thomasson's perspective defines artifacts based on their intended features. Features may incorporate functions, but they are not limited to those. The criticism raised for the previous account does not apply to the one based on intended features. Thomasson's view can offer answers when it comes to different uses of artifacts

and degrees of error. However, a paradox similar to sorites may be formulated for this account when it comes to errors. A pragmatic solution can be offered, but the theoretical problem still haunts the account. Despite this flaw, Thomasson's view is more suitable in analyzing artifacts.

To conclude, this article aimed to offer some arguments in favor of Thomasson's view when compared to Baker's. When it comes to artifacts, they can be better understood if they are defined based on their intended features, rather than functions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baker, Lynne, Rudder, 'The Shrinking Difference Between Artifacts and Natural Objects', in *Newsletter on Philosophy and Computers*, Piotr Boltuc (ed.), *American Philosophical Association Newsletters* 07(2), Spring 2008, pp. 1-8

Houkes, Wybo and Vermaas, Pieter, 'Actions Versus Functions: A Plea for an Alternative Metaphysics of Artifacts', in *The Monist*, vol. 87, no. 1, On Function, January 2004, pp. 52-71

Losonsky, Michael, 'The Nature of Artifacts', in *Philosophy*, vol. 65, no. 251, January 1990, pp. 81-8

Merricks, Trenton, *Objects and Persons*, Oxford: Clarendon (Oxford University Press), 2001

Thomasson, Amie, 'Realism and Human Kinds', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 67, No. 3, November 2003, pp. 580-609

_____ 'The Controversy over the Existence of Ordinary Objects', in *Philosophy Compass*, June, 5(7), 2010, pp. 591 – 601

_____ 'Public Artifacts, Intentions and Norms', in Pieter Vermaas et. al., eds. *Artefact Kinds: Ontology and the Human-Made World*, Springer: Synthese Library, Switzerland, 2014: 45-62.

Unger, Peter, 'There are no Ordinary Things', in *Synthese*, 41, 1979, pp. 117-54

BOOK REVIEWS

Introduction to an *Introduction to Philosophy*
(Edith Stein, *Introducere în filosofie*, trad. de Paul Gabriel Sandu,
Opere complete 8, Editura Carmelitană, 2020)

The title of the book illustrates the protreptic genre, of the invitation to philosophy and seems to have the simplicity of essence. There will be at least two categories of readers interested in it: those who seek to understand the meaning of their existence and the world, from the perspective of the perplexities of their lives, but also those versed in philosophical readings and who have not lost the desire to resume initiation. It is known that introductions to philosophy are not always only introductory, but sometimes involve skillful approaches to prior understanding.

This volume is part of an ambitious project, to translate into Romanian the Complete Works of Edith Stein (1891-1942), an enterprise conceived in twenty volumes, ten of which are already completed. In this case, we are dealing with a posthumously edited manuscript, on which the author worked between 1917 and 1932, a succession of unfinished reflections. Edith Stein traveled a philosophical path marked by the encounter with the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and his first generation of disciples, but also with the life of Saint Teresa of Avila and the thought of Thomas Aquinas. The introduction to philosophy attests especially the author's interest in phenomenology and less the scholastic turn of her intellectual biography.
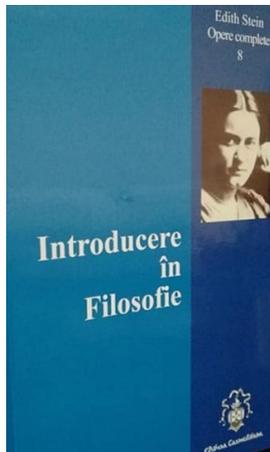
The reader interested in phenomenology will find here an actual development of phenomenological thinking, in the wake of Husserl and Scheler, sometimes in parallel with their reflections on topics of knowledge theory and philosophical anthropology. I further propose some ideas of the book, in a subjective selection, in the proximity of Steinian writing.

First about the structure of the volume: The introduction, which deals with the task of philosophy (A) and method (B), is followed by two main parts, The Problems of Natural Philosophy (I) and The Problem of Subjectivity (II). The first part, epistemological, develops around the concept of nature: the description of the phenomenon of nature (a), the science of nature as a philosophical problem (b), the knowledge of nature as a philosophical problem (c), and the second

BOOK REVIEWS

part around concepts such as subjectivity, consciousness, I, person: consciousness and knowledge of consciousness (a), ontic structure of psycho-physical subjects (b), knowledge of persons (c), sciences of subjectivity (d). One can see from the beginning the rigorous way in which the author approaches the themes of philosophy, in a manner characterized by conceptual precision.

About the hermeneutic circle applied to the introduction to philosophy: "According to a famous word, philosophy cannot be learned, only philosophizing. You can't reach your destination without crossing the road." (p. 2)

About the relationship with Descartes and the absolute foundation of phenomenology: "The field of research of philosophy must be a field of absolute certainty, of irrevocable knowledge. The clearest and most certain perception, in which a thing is given before our eyes, can prove to be a dream or a hallucination. But if philosophy is a field of knowledge beyond any doubt, we will have to "put in parentheses" not only the results of the particular sciences, but everything we know by experience." (pp. 14-15)

About otherness, in a vision that will later oppose it to Husserl: "If we now turn our attention to the stranger and try to describe him, we are forced to say that he is perceived as "directly" as a thing or as and your own person. Just as a thing is present for every act of perception as a whole, in which case we cannot deduce, starting from its facets accessible only implicitly, in the same way we "see" a person with everything that belongs to him, with body and soul, with its current states and its permanent features "(p. 180)

About tradition, a philosophical look: "Through tradition we consider the way of life of the present, insofar as it has its roots in the past; those models of life with which we are born, which we have neither created of our own free will nor have we assimilated rationally. To live in a tradition means to live in community with previous generations. What is important here is how this continuity of the spiritual life comes to be expressed. Since the content of tradition has its origins in past epochs, we live according to these traditional forms without being aware of them (without thematizing them), and without being aware of the fact that they have their origin in the past "(p. 274)

These few excerpts from a text that is not easily tamed and quoted do not aim at the core of Steinian thought, but are simple samples from the laboratory of a phenomenological reflection that deserves to be discovered.

In conclusion, we should mention, as praises, the mediators of this volume, Dr. Claudia Mariéle Wulf from the University of Tilburg, who took care of the German edition, Dr. Oana Șerban from the University of Bucharest, the author of the introduction to the Romanian edition, Fr. Luca Bulgarini OCD and Dr. Lorin Ghiman, who checked the scientific accuracy of the translation and the translator of the volume, Dr. Paul Gabriel Sandu, whose second vocation is to translate such difficult texts from German and who had to pass the Romanian language test philosophical, with all its inherent ambiguities.

Alin TAT

Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology,
*Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

BOOK REVIEWS

Die lebendige Qualität des Subjekts.
Eine lebensphänomenologische Kritik der Postmoderne
(Rolf Kühn, *Postmoderne und Lebensphänomenologie, Zum Verhältnis von Differenz und Immanenz des Erscheinens*, Karl Alber, 2019)

Zu den zentralen Auseinandersetzungen innerhalb der posthusserlschen Phänomenologie gehört die Frage nach den Weisen des Erscheinens bzw. den Möglichkeiten, jenseits von metaphysischen Sinneserwartungen die Frage der Phänomenalisierung (zu welcher in der philosophischen Tradition die Untersuchung der Wesens-Verhältnisse von Sein, Zeitlichkeit und Sprache/»Logos« gehören) erneut und anders greifbar zu machen. Die dazu von Rolf Kühn unternommene lebensphänomenologische Befragung der an Husserl und Heidegger anknüpfenden wichtigsten postmodernen Entwürfe geschieht vor dem Hintergrund eines Rückgangs auf eine vor dem klassischen Ansatz bei der Transzendenz von ,Welt' aufweisbare transzendental-leibliche Erfahrung von einer ,Immanenz' des Lebens qua ,Selbstaffektion' (*Henry*), die als vorstellungsfreies Erleben einer ,Ipseität' (paradoxerweise) zugleich gerade die prinzipielle Möglichkeit einer frei von Analogien zu erfahrenden Alterität zu eröffnen vermag (vgl. Kühn, S. 93, S. 393). Die uralte Problematik des Verhältnisses von *ego* und *alter* (bzw. der Fragekomplex um den Solipsismus der reinen Erkenntnis und die Debatten um die Realität der Außenwelt, die letztlich in der Trennung von Sinnlichkeit und Verstand verwurzelt sind und in der Irreduktibilität der Differenz von Anschauung und Denken liegen) ist eine, an der – im Anschluss an die *V. Cartesianische Meditation* Husserls – auch postmoderne bzw. poststrukturalistische Autoren scheinbar scheiterten: Während das Subjekt in der »Aushöhlung« eines Leibes zur Welt (*Merleau-Ponty*) oder als Nichts hinter dem Signifikanten verschwindet und das Wesen der Erscheinung qua ,Ding' strukturell entzogen bleibt (*Lacan*), wird einerseits die Möglichkeit der reinen Präsentation bestritten (wieder *Merleau-Ponty*) oder die Notwendigkeit gezeigt, das Imaginäre als Phantasma zu durchqueren, und dies in einem
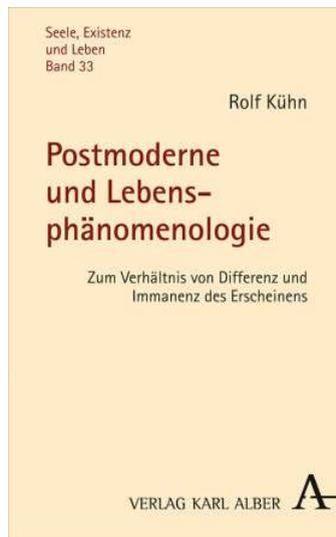
unendlichen Spiel von Begehren und Mangel an Genuß (wiederum *Lacan*). Trotzdem läuft ‚der Andere' immer wieder Gefahr, ‚meiner' Vorstellung gewaltsam unterworfen zu werden, um in ‚*An-archie*' gerettet zu werden (*Lévinas*). Gegen die Gefahren ideologischer Verirrungen des Denkens hilft nur die Vielfalt und der permanente Aufschub von ‚Sinn': gedacht werden könne dieser höchstens als ‚Spur' eines verlorenen Ursprungs, d.h. im Kontext einer unaufhebbaren Differe(ä)nz (*Derrida*) und somit immer nachträglich, in einer sich immer weiter multiplizierende Brechung, horizontal verschoben. Das verschwindende Subjekt und die Unmöglichkeit einer gewaltfreien Gemeinschaft angesichts der unentwegten Produktion von Vorstellungen im Machtkampf der Diskurse lässt nur der Gedanken einer sich immer wieder auflösendenden Pluralität qua Vielheit von Singularitäten zu (vgl. das „plural Singuläre" *Nancys*) in einer Gesellschaft des ‚Kon-takts' (vgl. Kühn, S. 406).

Das Versäumnis der Postmoderne sieht Rolf Kühn zunächst im Verfehlen der Subjektivität bzw. der Anerkennung einer „wirklich lebendigen Qualität" (Kühn, S. 90), die in Michel Henrys radikaler Phänomenologie als unaufhebbar aufgewiesen wird und die sich in „immanente(n) Bewußtseinserlebnisse(n) (*cogitationens*) als je bestimmter und konkreter Selbstaffektion unserer Eindrücke" (ebd.) erfährt und bezeugt. Weiter und konsequenterweise wird auch die Intersubjektivität eine wiederkehrende Herausforderung darstellen, für welche die Lebensphänomenologie eine Lösung bieten könnte, denn die ‚Selbstaffektion' führe qua erfahrene nicht zur Differe(ä)nz, sondern offenbare eine ‚ältere Ipseität' (S. 81), die zum ‚wahren Ego'(ebd.) ermächtigen und somit zur *Kraft* (*Henry*) werden könnte. Das vor aller Wahrnehmung oder Sprachbezug erfahrene ‚Ich kann' stellt als transzendentale ‚Geburt im Leben' *ego* und *alter* nicht gegenüber, sondern führt sie zusammen: „Sie sind unmittelbar transzendental *Lebendige* füreinander und treten als solche in einen Beziehungsaustausch: als Liebende, Hassende, Indifferente zum Beispiel und zwar vor jeder bestimmten Vorstellung vom wahrgenommenen Anderen." (S. 93-94) Intersubjektivität trage aufgrund dieser transzendentalen affektiven Verbundenheit somit immer den Charakter eines ‚*Mitpathos'*. (ebd., S. 94).

Rolf Kühn präsentiert mit seiner Auseinandersetzung einen hochkonzentrierten Einblick in die Werke von Michel Henry, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Emmanuel Lévinas, Jacques Derrida und Jean-Luc Nancy und zeigt, dass die intraphänomenologische Debatte um den transzendentalen Status der Leiblichkeit, der ‚Seele' und dessen Verhältnis zur Sprache und Welt, die längst über den Diskurs der Phänomenologie hinausgetragen wurde, noch lange nicht erschöpft ist.

Alina NOVEANU

Faculty of History and *Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*