



STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS
BABEŞ-BOLYAI



PHILOSOPHIA

2/2020

**STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
PHILOSOPHIA**

Vol. 64, No. 2, August 2020

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in *Emerging Sources Citation Index*.

YEAR
MONTH
ISSUE

Volume 65 (LXV) 2020
AUGUST
2

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2020-08-05
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2020-08-20
ISSUE DOI: 10.24193/subbphil.2020.2

S T U D I A
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
PHILOSOPHIA

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Issue Coordinator: Ion Copoeru

Publishing Date: August 2020

BEING AT HOME IN SOLITARY QUARANTINE. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYTICS AND EXISTENTIAL MEDITATIONS

NADER EL-BIZRI*

ABSTRACT. This ontological investigation is mediated via multifaceted phenomenological analytics and existential mediations over the architectural mode of *being at home in solitary quarantine* under communal global lockdowns. The present line of inquiry is undertaken by way of probing the attuned metamorphoses in solitude of the lived experiencing of the intertwined phenomena of space-time, embodiment-in-the-flesh versus being-with-others via cybernetic and telecommunication technologies, dwelling amidst things and paraphernalia, and the underlying affectivities of the mode of being-toward-death.

Keywords: *Architecture, Confinement, Embodiment, Solitude, Technology*

Exordium

The present article offers précised prolegomena to selected phenomenological analytics and existential meditations over the phenomenon of *being at home in solitary quarantine* within a confined architectural place during the communal lockdowns of the *Covid-19 coronavirus* planetary outbreak of 2020.¹ This line of inquiry probes the attuned metamorphoses in the lived experiencing (*Erlebnis; le vécu*) of intertwined phenomena such as: space-time, embodiment-in-the-flesh versus being-with-others via cybernetic and telecommunication technologies, dwelling amidst things and paraphernalia, and of the relatable underlying affectivities of being-toward-death.²

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¹ The text was composed as a daily dairy during the *Covid-19 coronavirus* pandemic of the Spring 2020, as this unfolded in my solitary quarantine in Lebanon, while being separated from my two sons in England.

² This study expands my reflections on architectural-phenomenology and its ontological underpinnings in: Nader El-Bizri, 'On Dwelling: Heideggerian Allusions to Architectural Phenomenology', *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2015): 5-30; Nader El-Bizri, 'Being at Home Among Things: Heidegger's Reflections on Dwelling', *Environment, Space, Place* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2011): 47-71.

Such investigations do not constitute psychological thought-experiments, psychiatric therapies, or psychoanalytic testimonies, even if such modalities merit philosophical ponderings on their own. The focus hereinafter is set on the unfolding of ontological thinking as mediated via phenomenological ponderings over the introspective existential affective dispositions and embodied lived experiences in the architectural mode of *being at home in solitary quarantine*. This present text stands as such as a philosophized diary during the pandemic of a quarantined *Dasein esseulé* (namely of a lonely being here/there [*Da*] in a space-time of confinement).

A Lived Experiencing of Space-Time

The spatial expansion (*espacement*) via socio-physical distancing in being-apart under global communal lockdowns results in the contraction of space-making (*Einräumen*) within the architectural dwelling-place of self-confinement in solitary quarantine. This felt experiential shrinking in the existential spatiality (*Die existenziale Räumlichkeit*) is more confining in its spatial significance (*Raumbedeutungen*)³ when the solitary quarantine is prolonged temporally.

Inhabiting a spatial (*räumlich*) leeway (*Spielraum*) and clearing (*Lichtung*) within a confined architectural locale passes via a shrunken realm of kinaesthetic de-distancing (*Ent-fernung*) of ambient things in the corporeal acts of room-making (*Einräumen*).⁴ This reflects the manner in which the solitary confinement remains situated within the middle (*die sich öffnende Mitte*) in-between (*Zwischen*) in the dialectics of the outside and inside (*la dialectique du dehors et du dedans*). Such state of affairs points to the experiencing of the confining place as a liminal cleavage (*Die Zerklüftung*) between interiority and exteriority. It is set as such at the threshold of a doorway that is left ajar (*entr'ouvert*)⁵ in awaiting from the inside the

³ I addressed some aspects of this question elsewhere through my phenomenological interpretations of Plato's *XΩPA* (*Khôra*) in: Nader El-Bizri, 'ON KAI XΩPA: Situating Heidegger between the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*', *Studia Phaenomenologica* 4 (2004): 95-97; Nader El-Bizri, 'Ontopoiēsis and the Interpretation of Plato's *Khôra*', *Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LXXXIII (2004): 25-45; Nader El-Bizri, 'Qui êtes-vous *Khôra*?': Receiving Plato's *Timaeus*', *Existential Meletai-Sophias*, Vol. XI, Issue 3-4 (2001): 473-490.

⁴ I herein refer to the analysis of Martin Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), *GA* 2, §4.

⁵ See for instance: Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), pp. 200-201; Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), p. 14; Nader El-Bizri, 'Parerga. *Carnet de Croquis: ni oeuvre, ni hors d'oeuvre*', in *Recto-Verso: Redefining the Sketchbook*, eds. Nader El-Bizri, with Angela Bartram and Douglas Gittens (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 27-38.

coming of a delivery of goods from the outside, or of simply looking through a window unto an external deserted public domain under the communal lockdown.

Being in solitary self-confinement at the time of socio-physical-distancing, the relation with others gets mediated via audio-visual tele-communicative technologies or cybernetics that ensure the seeming removal of the distance of separation from them. This semblance of technological de-distancing passes via an immersive simulation of quasi-[virtual]-nearness despite the actuality of the physically extensive remoteness. However, if meeting others is to be enacted in the physical locale, rather than in the simulated cyberspace, then de-distancing occurs at the threshold of the quarantined dwelling-place. A sense of a curbed hospitality with a metamorphosed etiquette settles therein as a new social norm, wherein we address each other from behind a veiling protective mask, or in being separated by the door itself, in order to avoid meeting face-to-face, and by also eschewing the proximity of being side-by-side. Handling the hand-to-hand exchange of goods (delivered-food, cash-money, credit card, etc.) is mediated as well via gloves, and is immediately followed by the sanitizing and disinfection protocols in a heightened sense of prudent hygiene.

The limitedness in the actual architectural place of quarantined solitary self-confinement lets the constrained realm of concretized sensory perceptions be supplemented by daydreaming images from memory and imagination. Perceiving in the immediacies and actualities of presence becomes ever more co-entangled in confluence with the sense of past and future temporalities in remembering and expecting. The mental distension of accounting for the duration of temporality in recollecting past memories, with contentment or regret, and anticipating a future by way of projected previsions, whether reassuring or threatening, becomes a flux of lived experiences via manifold kinaesthetic sensory perceptions. However, a sense of repetitiveness settles within the unfolding of the field of perception within the confining architectural place, and this is accompanied by a temporal prolongation of the sensed duration of the solitary quarantine. The tiresome overfamiliarity with the self-same architectonic physical attributes of the architectural room of spatial-temporal confinement becomes monotonous. This is the case despite the intermittent interferences from external demands or messages, as transmitted into the place of solitary incarceration via telecommunication means, or through the expected continuation of dealing with the work chores online. The home itself begins to feel uncomfortable due to its spatial-temporal confining character. The sameness in the features of the place turns into a tedium in the daily choices of limited spatial perceptions, which dilate the experiencing of the lived inner *timing* of temporality as a felt duration (*durée*).⁶

⁶ We hint herein at the parlance of Bergson without going deeper into espousing his philosophical doctrine over this take on temporality in the lived experience. His thesis is set in more than one of his oeuvres, such as: Henri Bergson, *Durée et Simultanéité* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1922).

The spatial self-sameness, with the limited adumbration of manifold sensory apperceptions, drags the duration of the experiential temporality almost with perceptual leaps that are akin to stroboscopic effects, and that mark the monotonies of solitude with disinterestedness and sluggishness that turn into loneliness. The ocular-motor kinaesthetic of embodiment in the flesh is locked as such within a temporally recurrent sequence of perceptual acts within a limited realm of spatiality. Monotonies mark the rituals of quotidian care, hygiene, sanitization, eating-habits, home-entertainment, and oscillating between the motivation for physical exercise and eutenics, or their lack thereof. Such seeming repetitiveness in the perceptual patterns becomes irksome in terms of the flux of the manifoldness of sensory experiences that are lived through monotonously, like what is sensed as being *déjà vécu*, albeit, without implied precognitions. A dislocating spatial sense of temporal slowness becomes burdened by *ennui*. This is the case in spite of the fact that in our epoch of modern telecommunication and cybernetics, the virtual interactions soften the sense of isolated loneliness, wherein the dullness of solitary confinement does not readily amount to feeling lonely *per se*.

Gazing into the limited perceptual field of vision, seeing it all in a spectacle of wholeness, conceals the contemplation of its architectonic details, and makes the bored senses experience the place of solitary confinement as a spatial depth of emptiness, despite the vivid colours or intricate shapes of what is experienced within the home, or of what appears through a window as a distant inaccessible locale or landscape. This distressing side of perception feels like the experienced uncanny event of staring despairingly into a gaping hole that swallows the meaningfulness of a lifeworld.

Mundane agitations arise from the vexing projection of the expectations of others upon us during the communal lockdown, or in anticipating what may still unfold in terms of ordinary affairs and everyday business when the quarantines are phased out and eased. The self-isolation may still offer as such an opportunity to catch up on what we might have not managed to accomplish under busier quotidian schedules, despite being derailed in our plans, whilst also presupposing that pressures would still come our way in terms of delivering the tasks at hand. An added sense of frustration is associated with the anticipation of harder circumstances to compensate what is perceived as a lost time in terms of productivity. We therefore expect being released from confinement into a projected future competitiveness in an environment of scarcity and diminished resources, rather than having a breathing period in which we recuperate from the heaviness of the quarantine and the afflictions of the pandemic. Instead of feeling hopeful from the releasement of confinement, the accumulated duties, and the burdensome setting in which to handle them, may not allow us necessarily to regather our motivations and energies following the long duration of

incarceration. The present hardship in the quarantine is projected with anguish as an impoverished lifestyle in the future that accompanies a post-traumatic sense of degradation in the mode of being.

Being distanced from others feels as a prolonged temporal duration in spatial confinement. Space and time are experienced as being more intimately co-entangled in their respective outer and inner senses. Closed space has a bound horizon in the limited distances that are crossed within the temporal flux of recycled patterns of displacement within it. The projection of crossing a remote distance to reach a destination within the open public space demarcates the flow towards the future as what is to be reached in the horizon of motion. However, the sense of such horizon is closed within the architectural limitedness of the locale of confinement. What is projected as a future to be reached in spatial de-distancing cannot be anticipated with clarity beyond the place of quarantine. Time is as such a temporality that passes, and is not orientated by a vector of teleological timing that carries an expected outcome as we move towards a given destination. This is the case given that spatial de-distancing is unachievable beyond the architectural limiting bounds of the place of incarceration. A sense of hope arises when what is projected as prospective outcome has some potential tangibility in being realizable in de-confinement. It is in this sense that the locked place opens up towards a teleological timing rather than being the space of the time that merely passes. A reconfiguration of the experiencing of space-time in a concretized solitary quarantine entails a *ralentissement* (slowing-down) of the duration of actions in my experiential lifeworld. Space contracts in isolation as a side effect of the spatial expansion of socio-physical-distancing in the communal lockdowns. As for the dilated experiencing of temporal duration in such condition of spatial confinement, it signals the emergent *event (Ereignis)*⁷ of a continuum in the lived equiprimordiality (*Gleichursprünglichkeit*) of space and time.⁸

The past as what is 'no-longer-present' and the future as 'the-not-yet-here' point to a watchful vigilance over remembering what-has-been and awaiting the yet-to-come, with an ecstatic equiprimordiality of past, present, and future.⁹ This is experienced as a sequence of retention, immediate perception, and protention in the

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie: Vom Ereignis* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2003), GA 65, §190-191; Reiner Schürmann, 'How to Read Heidegger', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2 - Vol. 20, No. 1 (1997): 3-6.

⁸ Refer to the Heideggerian consideration of the equiprimordiality of space and time in: Yoko Arisaka, 'Spatiality, Temporality, and the Problem of Foundation in *Being and Time*', *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1996): 36-46; Yoko Arisaka, 'On Heidegger's Theory of Space: A Critique of Dreyfus', *Inquiry*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (1995): 455-467. I also addressed this question in: El-Bizri, 'ON KAI XΩPA: Situating Heidegger between the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*', *art. cit.*

⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §65.

spatial continuum of a flowing temporal duration (*durée écoulée*). This state of affairs manifests the intentionality of *presencing* (*Gegenwärtigung*), wherein the lived experience presences (*Gegenwärtigen*), retains (*Behalten*), and anticipates (*Gewärtigen*) of manifold percepts that are intra-temporal (*innerzeitig*). This constitutes an *a priori* condition of the possibility of there being an ecstatic temporal unity.¹⁰

My solitude is *time itself* and not simply a passage of moments *in time*. After all, as a mortal, I am *temporal* in being destined towards my most certain and yet indeterminate existential end in death, whereby the fundamental characterization of time is experienced herein in being a projection of my *future*. Being *futural* (*zukünftig*) is thusly the possibility of being given time (*gibt Zeit*). The *present* is held as such in a particular temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) that flees its own *futurity* (*Zukünftigkeit*) by evading the angst from what is yet to come, and grasping the *past* (*Vergangenheit*) accordingly as *what has passed* (*das Vorbei*) and is irretrievable (*unwiederbringlich*).¹¹

The *futural* (*zukünftig*) aspect is disclosed in the existential analytic of how I am revealed to myself as '*the not-yet*', insofar that I am outstanding as long as I exist. I go to the extreme edge of my being in order to bounce back into the reality of my *meaningful presence* (*Anwesen*) in the lived experience (*expérience vécue*), and with anticipatory resoluteness (*Vorlaufende Entschlossenheit; résolution devançante*). However, by seeking clarity over what is *futural* (*zukünftig*) my lived experience is exposed to what anguishes the flux of my presence. I look at my solitary dwelling-place in confinement under the pandemic communal lockdown with wistfulness, as if already it is the locale that I will leave behind, and the time that unfolded within it is already what has passed; gazing as such into the immediate architectonic features of the bounded room with anxiousness concerning the degradation in being of what I anticipate to be my *futural* lifeworld.

The future is inexistent, yet, in actuality, it does not block the inductive and projective anticipation of the potentialities of what may yet happen through its coming. In average ordinary everydayness, we set plans and schedule activities that reflect the expectations of what is yet to happen as bounded by what is judged as being possibly realizable. However, in the context of the afflictions of the pandemic, in the actual health threats and economic strife, what is imagined as being *futural* is

¹⁰ For a discussion around this aspect in Husserl's thought and how it affected Heidegger's thinking, refer to: Rudolf Bernet, 'Origine du temps et temps originaire chez Husserl et Heidegger', *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 68 (1987): 499-521; esp. pp. 504, 513; Rudolf Bernet, 'Einleitung', in Edmund Husserl, *Texte zur Phénoménologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins, 1893-1917* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1985), pp. xi-lxvii. The ecstatic aspect of the temporal unity of past-future-present, which Heidegger evoked, is itself experientially articulated early-on in: Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. E. J. Sheed, Introduced by Peter Brown, ed. Michael P. Foley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), pp. 242-243.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit*, ed. and trans. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 10-15.

resistant to the capacity of projecting it with assured resolve. What is yet to come is most anguishing, and not merely in terms of the angst of being-toward-death, but out of a fear over the degraded quality of living in the space-time that remains before dying. The *futural* space-time frustrates the imagining of what is yet to come through an endeavour to assume an authentic resolute anticipation. Time is lost as such in the flux of presence within the locale of solitary quarantine, despite its reassuring concreteness, given that what is seen as a destining towards the future is unclear and threatening in its horizons of teleology. Temporality is co-limited in its horizons with the limitedness of the architectural spatiality of solitary quarantine. Uncertainty becomes anchored as such in the facticity of the lived immediate embodied sensory apperceptions within the tightly delimited architecture of confinement.

I am hermeneutic in making-sense of my confined solitude as a finite temporal mortal and by way of disclosing how others constitute my lifeworld and its meaningfulness. I am historical as such in the sense that I belong to a people, and to what is handed down over to me as traditions from ancestors, and towards whom I stand worthy of receiving their legacies, and becoming myself readied in the pathways of my lifeworld to grant an inheritance to posterity. My worldliness is biographically pre-thrown into what is allotted for me as I came to be a historical being in space-time. An anticipatory resoluteness pushes me to historicize my being *futural* to be freed as such towards grasping my own existential finitude as my own *fate* (*Schicksals*), and precisely in facing up to my destining towards my own death (*frei für seinen Tod*). Even if my *futural* pathways are not disclosable within the blocked horizons of my resolute anticipation, which seem to be locked in my solitary quarantine, what I nevertheless strive to assume as being potentially mine is the assertive grounded attitude that prospectively 'I still have time'. After all, inauthenticity arises herein in the sense that 'I have no time' (*ich habe keine Zeit*) despite experiencing the temporal prolongation and slowness of timing in the spatially confined solitude. I am as such in search for the slowly wasted time (*recherche du temps perdu*)¹² with a resolute endeavour to seek an authentic temporalizing in 'having time' (*immer Zeit hat*).¹³ The tragic sense of my historicity can become ultimately an *oeuvre* that outlasts me in the fatefulness of abiding with others in co-historicizing a communal destiny (*Geschick*), rather than all being scattered as a mere assemblage of individual withering fates, and letting my limited temporality be wasted as such ever more.

¹² In homage herein to the novel of Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, which was published in seven volumes from 1913 to 1927 (posthumously 1923-1927; mainly via Gallimard and Grasset in Paris), and composed as a narrative reflection on time and remembrance.

¹³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §74.

Embodiment in the Flesh and the Mediated Telecommunications

Living in the flesh (*la chair*; σάρξ [sárx])¹⁴ is a prototype of being (*l'expérience de ma chair comme prototype de l'être*).¹⁵ The proper body (*le corps propre*) is spatialized and spatializing (*spatialisé et spatialisant*),¹⁶ sensed and sensing, in the flow of lived experiences via manifold adumbrations of kinaesthetic sensory perceptions.

As Merleau-Ponty poignantly indicates:

'Les choses, ici, là, maintenant, alors, ne sont plus en soi, en leur lieu, en leur temps, elle n'existent qu'au bout de ces rayons de spatialité et de temporalité, émis dans le secret de ma chair, et leur solidité n'est pas celle d'un objet pur que survole l'esprit, elle éprouvée par moi du dedans en tant que je suis parmi elles et qu'elles communiquent à travers moi comme chose sentante' [*'Things, herein, therein, now, then, are no longer themselves, in their place, in their time, they only exist at the tip of these rays of spatiality and temporality, emitted from the secret of my flesh, and their solidity is not that of a pure object that the spirit flies over, it is experienced by me from within as I am amongst them and that they communicate through me as a sensing thing'*].¹⁷

The embodiment in the flesh underpins our experiencing of worldliness as a realm of nutrition and food (*le monde est un ensemble de nourritures*)¹⁸ that is marked as well by a carnal sexuality.¹⁹ This embodied existence has an authentic ontological priority over the ontic grasping of the world as a system of handy tools,

¹⁴ Religious symbolism is attributed to reflections on the flesh in European thought. The premodern characterizations of this theological penchant in thinking is connected to the belief in the earthy Incarnation of divinity in the dominant forms of Christianity. *Cur Deus Homo?* This is pictured in the Gnostic sense of the Trinitarian presence of Christ, as reaffirmed in the belief in the annunciation, nativity, crucifixion, and resurrection.

¹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 291; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'Invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), pp. 110, 119, 148, 298. Refer also to: Reiner Schürmann, 'Symbolic Praxis', trans. Charles T. Wolfe, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2 - Vol. 20, No. 1 (1997): 54-63.

¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282. I also discussed this in: Nader El-Bizri, 'A Philosophical Perspective on Alhazen's Optics', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, Vol. 15, Issue 2 (2005): 189-218 (Cambridge University Press); Nader El-Bizri, 'La perception de la profondeur: Alhazen, Berkeley et Merleau-Ponty', *Oriens-Occidens: sciences, mathématiques et philosophie de l'antiquité à l'âge classique*, Vol. 5 (2004): 171-184; Nader El-Bizri, 'A Phenomenological Account of the Ontological Problem of Space', *Existential Meletai-Sophias*, Vol. XII, Issue 3-4 (2002): 345-364.

¹⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'Invisible*, *op. cit.*, p. 151 (English translation mine).

¹⁸ Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), pp. 45-46.

¹⁹ This is associated with the temptations of passionate corporeal cravings. The conception of σάρξ (sárx; 'flesh') in the apostolic Pauline *Epistles* hints at depravity and sin, wherein 'the minding of the flesh' is symbolically pictured as 'death' and 'enmity to God' (Romans [*Epistola ad Romanos*] 8:6-7) or that 'carnal lusting' is 'against Spirit' (Galatians [*Epistola ad Galatas*] 5:16-17).

equipment, and accumulated paraphernalia. When addressing the phenomenon of the flesh in this context, the experiential phenomenology that we invoke herein does not advocate dualism or a strict monism, be it that of physicalism or idealism. What is rather at stake relates analytically to a strand in *neutral monism* that points to a unified psychosomatic mode of entwining the mind with the body. My body remembers its past corporeal acts while expecting them to reoccur within the active flux of its normalized kinaesthetic sensory lived experiences in space-time.

Being at a distance from an actual embodied experiencing of *being-with-others-in-the-world-in-the-flesh* risks opening the solitary lifeworld in confinement to mental stresses that dislocate the structure of the lived experiencing of space-time. The distress in solitary incarceration can be accompanied at times by headaches and migraines, or a choking feeling of tightness in the throat and abdomen. The experience of going out of breath, throttled, or suffocating becomes even more acute with the thought of the effects and symptoms of respiratory diseases. Such ineffable mental agitations induce physical reactions. In extreme and rare instances, they might be even experienced as an episode of a panic-attack, as it happens in anxious silence, without a direct underlying cause or a fear from an immediate source of threat. Holding therein firmly to physical things, as if seeking to be reassured, albeit unstably, by their tactile seeming solidity. The architectural walls and the ceiling of the homely sanctuary seem to become experientially closing-in claustrophobically as if they were the inner bowels of a terrifying sepulchre. This happens at a moment of vision (*Augenblick*), like a blink of an eye that is nonetheless overstretched in its felt torn duration, all before a providential releasement recoils in corporeal relief, even by way of a single sigh and a tear, still pulled in the draft of the trembling trace of a withdrawing nervousness. The suppuration happens therein in a non-directional silent supplication of atonement, feeling nevertheless forsaken by divinities in flight, without awaiting their arrival.²⁰ Rather than readily praying for salvific mercy, being inclined as well therein to irreverently bid the sacral *Otherness* farewell for its abandonment of a world tormented by illness.

We are deprived of the embodiments of our human bonding, the handshake, the tap on the back, the hug. The lovers undergo an experience that is akin to sexual abstention, even though it is forced by way of corporeal isolation rather than being spiritually motivated. Nonetheless, the solitary confinement offers the semblance of developing a penchant towards living romantically with the absence of the bodily closeness with the lover who is physically distant. The bodily proxemics in being-with-one-another feel threatening with their infectious probabilities and have

²⁰ The average sense of religiosity is confronted with experiencing in thought an *apophatic* form of negative theology that accounts for the absent Godhead in an uncanny manner as *Deus absconditus* or *Deus otiosus*, rather than *Deus revelatus*, wherein Divinity forsakes humankind and denies it revelation.

necessitated our socio-physical distancing *in concreto*. The technologies of audio-visual telecommunication and cybernetics give us solace and relief in managing to stay in touch with each other. However, these reinforce our dependence on technicity in eschewing the proxemics of being-with-others in concrete situations of embodiment in the flesh. The hold of technicity over the determination of our being-with-others becomes ever more immersive and pervasive in this elongated period of lockdowns and socio-physical distancing.

Even if being-with-others is mediated via the technologies of the seeming tele-co-presence, the suppressed impulses in ordinary everydayness become veiled. This is the case in terms of how angst from being-toward-death is quieted via the distracting immersion in the quotidian affairs of others, the *Das Man* (neuter 'They'), and sometimes with an outright mode of escapism. The solitary confinement within a bounded architectural place makes the realms of the perceived concrete reality limited and dependent more acutely on what is supplementary to the actual sensory experiences by way of the workings of the faculties of imagination and memory. This may potentially increase the haziness of discriminating the concreteness of the lived immediate situations that are saturated with imaginings and memories from what is inaccessible of the actualities of the wider reality outside the locale of confinement. The limitation of the potentialities of the experiential lifeworld become more intensely felt not simply in terms of solitary confinement, but in how this unfolds under the conditions of the societal lockdowns, despite the interactive telecommunication with others. This situation limits the personal perceptual acts of dealing with the challenges of the solitary quarantine beyond the mechanisms of coping in reflective introspections that seek healthiness via the euthenics of daily routines (working online, reading, writing, cooking, cleaning, exercising, audio-visual quasi-socializing, using distractive technologies of home-entertainment, etc.). Under an extreme duress in solitary isolation, the multifaceted psychosomatic dynamics, which ordinarily underpin the sense of a cohesive unified self, risk becoming exposed to strife, and to being pitted against each other in a disorder of moods and cognitive dissonance. If this situation is overstretched, the attributes of a dissociative disorder in the personal identity of the psyche may occasion an emergent segregation of the lived states in the private inner life. These can further degenerate into outward corporeal manifestations that can turn into bodily self-harm in solitude; or if the quarantine is not solitary, they may occasion instances of domestic violence.

The prolonged duress may also unlock unfamiliar psychosomatic experiences in the interplay within the same passing moments of living through actual perceptions that are accompanied with immediacy by streams of memories and anticipatory projective imaginings. The distinction between what is real and what is virtual becomes less clear, and fantasy as mediated via mental constructs may thusly impinge on the

concreteness of the sensory lived experience in non-ordinary situations that occasion unfamiliar bodily sensations. These may result in an altered sense of experiencing the percepts of the confined architectural surroundings in the locale of isolation in terms of its forms, colours, and bodily kinaesthetic situational positioning in space-time.

During a prolonged solitary quarantine, the introspective inwardness in the use of language, which is marked by silence in not outwardly uttering what is self-said in introspection inwardly, is not adequately substitutive of the dialogue in an actual conversing with others. The use of telecommunication audio-visuals entails that the auditory and visual sensory-experiences are intermittent, fractal, and framed. The tactile and olfactory senses are not the only ones that get bracketed, but myriad and manifold sensory experiences in vision and hearing are not encompassed by telecommunication. After all, the audio-visual telecommunications are episodic, bound in their spatial and temporal parameters. They give glimpses of a mediated actuality through the reconstituted technological transmission and reception of the visual and auditory data. These conditions are straining in the expected adaptations in our various modes of performance, with the accompanying online-fatigue in changing our virtual personas as we pass across the buffers we generate in-between our working lifeworld and the personal one. We face the screen in cybernetic transmissions, and liaise via telecommunication means that necessitate segregating our formal appearance in virtual publicness from the personalized private interactions.

The isolating situational condition is not relieved when the face-to-face encounter or the side-by-side proxemics are replaced by audio-visual telecommunications. This is the case given that intermittent, delimited, framed, and fractioned audio-visual telecommunications do not result in an immediate presence, but constitute a mediated filtering that is akin to the virtual attributes of cybernetic simulacra in an overloaded fabrication of transmitted information. When the technical transmission-receptivity of the telecommunication signals is weak, the time lapses in the transmission are sensed, and the visual as well as auditory data become disclosed in their deconstruction-reconstitution operational structures; since the optical and auditory units are deconstructed via the technical processing devices to be transmitted as data that get reconstituted with bijection correspondence (point-by-point) to appear and sound as they issued from the source. The moving image is therein an assemblage of dynamic pixilation, and the auditory sound is a radio-frequency wave.

The increasing reliance on cybernetic and telecommunication technologies sheds light over the extent of our social embeddedness in lived corporeal experiences in the flesh. This calls for thinking over alternative modes of simulated embodiment that are not in the concrete actuality of our own proper corporeity in the flesh. Such situation demarcates the realm of manoeuvring the choreography

of quasi-embodied virtual gestures within the cyberspace via avatars,²¹ which correlate with the commensurable kinaesthetic acts of our corporeity in the flesh, with the eye/hand coordination being also aided by auditory sensing. The gaze, *logos*, and gesture are co-entangled herein in the body language and facial expressiveness as well (*'du regard, de la parole, du geste'*).²²

Further advancements in cybernetics would augment the seeming *realism* of the sensory-enhanced virtual matrices, which are being designed with greater precisions in simulating the lived experience in the flesh. The virtual domain carries as such the mimetic attributes that characterize the architectonic elements of dwelling in physical concretized places. These are transposed into the virtual inhabiting of a simulated mathematized digital realm that generates sense-stimuli parameters via plenoptic projections and haptic sensors.²³ The overreliance on cybernetics, telecommunication, robotics, and multi-modal biometrics in our effective sociability at a distance offers greater occasions for advancing these techno-sciences. Such penchant in the altered lifestyles, which would be increasingly dependent globally on technologism, increases the potency of the *Gestell* (en-framing; *le dispositif*)²⁴ of the unfolding of the essence of modern technology (*das Wesen der modernen Technik*) in its hold over beings. Technicity and the scientific endeavour in healthcare, pharmacology, and epidemiology offer us promising hopes of healing and relief in the face of what threatens our wellbeing. Telecommunication technologies, cybernetics, and robotics add to the smartly advancing means of facilitating our virtual being-with-one-another. However, experiencing the *Weltlast* (world-burden) and *Weltschmerz* (world-weariness), which emerges in de-personalization, de-humanization, and objectification, deepens the framing of humans as a standing-reserve (*Bestand*) that is orderable in a functional way as equipment (*Werkzeug*).²⁵ We are evermore challenged forth and harassed with demands to supply what we are readied for as standing-reserve in answering such calling online. With a flow of telecommunication that can happen anytime, the world's night is rearranged into a technological day, whereby we are ever-readied to respond to what orders us to channel our energies. The mechanical hand and muscle labour is replaced by the data-packet energies that

²¹ For an informative study on avatars, refer to: Krisine L. Nowak and Jesse Fox, 'Avatars and Computer-Mediated Communication: A Review of the Definitions, Uses, and Effects of Digital Representations', *Review of Communication Research*, Vol. 6 (2018): 30-53.

²² Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris : Éditions de Minuit, 1967), pp. 126-127.

²³ Nader El-Bizri, 'Phenomenology of Place and Space in our Epoch: Thinking along Heideggerian Pathways', in *The Phenomenology of Real and Virtual Places*, ed. Erik Champion (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 123-143.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, 'Die Frage nach der Technik', in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske Verlag, 1954), pp. 13-44.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §15.

are deconstructed and reconstructed as cyber puzzles between a machine hardware and another via the internet matrices. We are situated by way of simulation in the cleavage (*Zerklüftung*) of the liminal virtual space, in-between opposing physical regions that are held together in virtuality via telecommunication. Nonetheless, dwelling in the intimacy of nearness, which is opened up as a leeway (*Spielraum*) and clearing (*Lichtung*) in the interplay of the energies of life in its plenitude through our embodiment in the flesh, transcends the mere localization within the manufactured enclosures of virtual domains. However, our embodiment in the flesh is exposed to the risks of the pandemic, and in lockdown socio-physical distancing the individual is forced to be-with-others via a technical inhabiting of the architectonic simulated isthmuses in the interfaces between machines. The cyber-sociability has a heterogeneous multiplicity in spontaneous improvisations in the dissemination of information via telecommunicated simulacra. Such fractal networking is complex and concealable like a rhizome in its transmission of information, which is hard to verify in terms of its veracity or the reliability of its untraceable origins.²⁶

When thinking about the separate physical locales that are held together via telecommunication means, the interaction with others is after all an interfacing with machines in technologically-mapped isomorphic semblances of being in direct contact with one another. I am talking to my machine as you talk to yours, facing luminous rectangular glazed screens as if they were windows, and experiencing this as if we are talking to each other *in concreto* with immediacy. However, the cybernetic and telecommunication transmission-receptivity in-between the two-networked machines is what reconstitutes the correspondence of the visual and auditory data packets, which gives the semblance of us being in direct communication with each other. This occurs as such without the interference of extraneous data from outside the domain of what we exchange in our actual situation of embodiment in the flesh in terms of how we appear or utter. My appearing bodily forms and colours, as captured by the photo-sensors of the machine, get transmitted into what is received as pixels, which are reconstituted in an orderly algorithm as being my kinematic visual representations. This becomes manifested visually as if I appear on your computer/mobile screen. The reprocessing of the radio-receptivity of the frequency of my voice is reconstituted as what sounds similar to when I talk to you in person. Nevertheless, you and I are all along facing the machines, talking to them, typing on their keyboards or screens, with the lived experience that gives both of us the accurate semblance that we are indeed seeing and talking to one another with immediacy.

²⁶ The notion of rhizome resonates with the concept that was proposed in the synergy of philosophy with psychoanalysis in critical post-structuralism in: Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. L'anti-Œdipe* (Paris : Éditions de Minuit, 1972); Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. Mille Plateaux* (Paris : Éditions de Minuit, 1980).

We are getting nowadays dependent ever more on interacting with machines with an increasing intensity and extent. This state of affairs transmutes the face-to-face encounter of our corporeal embodiments in the flesh into a digital face-[machine]-to-[machine]-face telecommunication. The cybernetic sense of selfhood can become hijacked and hacked by the manifoldness of the imaginary order of the splintered digital self-image. This becomes more evident via the technologies of augmented-reality digital immersions in the cyber space-time of virtual embodiment as quasi-avatars, with an algorithmic precise fidelity in humanoid likeness and haptic proxemics. Such avatars are sometimes left nowadays as posthumous cybernetic relics. The advancement in the digitized morphological representation can turn the quasi-avatar homophilous by looking and sounding like an actual person. This can even go beyond the real-time and photo-metric similarities in video-re-rendering edits of a voice that is mapped unto lip-movements and facial-expressions in the dubbed visage technologies of telecommunication (as per the uses of the existing new 'Face2Face' software). A future technology may even manifest a virtual appearance in a holographic guise that represents an embodiment in the flesh without there being an actual corporeity that underpins its source. Such quasi-avatar could be controlled by an autonomous bot, or by a human being, and would appear online with technical precision as a digital impostor that takes on my cyber identity or yours, and can be mistaken for being me or you, while in actuality being a rearrangement of pixels and auditory frequencies that constitute a visual and auditory similitude to you or me. The dangers on our being alive with one another in the flesh due to the infectious pandemic have forced upon us more than ever before to willingly accept and promote the over-dominance of the virtual domain within a technological mode of en-framing of our being-in-the-[cyber]-world.

Being-with-others at Remote Socio-Physical Distancing

The face-to-face relation in our embodiment in the flesh is a primordial dimension of ethics, and the side-by-side proximity of our co-presence around joint endeavours and projects is a sign of solidarity and collegiality. Both modes of embodiment in the flesh are transmuted through the technological semblance of being-among-one-another (*Untereinandersein*) via cybernetic and telecommunication means. A lostness (*Verlorenheit*) in the distractive digital immersions within the virtual space-time, or of being in a mode of cyber-escapism, may itself compensate with some indifference the reductive character of the technological mode of being-for-one-anther (*Füreinandersein*) at a distance.

The capacity for empathy and ethical reciprocity can be still sustained at a socio-physical distance, since it can be imagined and projected, as well as signalled via telecommunication means. However, this remains alien to the actual witnessing

of the suffering of others in the flesh, or their joy. We also suppress mistrusting others at a distance in a climate of fear and impoverishment due to the pandemic afflictions, and we henceforth aim at retaining an uncorrupted trust that they would still do what is right in the time of our collective agony, despite the austerity and scarcity in resources. One hopes it is not the ruthless situation of *Canis canem edit* that will face us. The afflictions of the pandemic bracketed our being-with-one-another in the flesh, and forced some of us into an isolating solitary quarantine. Albeit, socio-physical-distancing reveals the dependence of our wellness on others, in taking alterity as an ethical keystone of our being, especially in how we encounter each other face-to-face in the flesh.

The being-in-the-world of the mortal human being is that of being-toward-death; however, the structure of such inner-worldly finitude is determined by being-with-others. *Dasein* is herein the mode of my 'being' *Da*, namely my being 'there/here', in the world, and in a situational manner. *Dasein* is as such the mode of 'être-là' *qua* 'être-le-là'; namely being the thereness/*hereness* of my lived worldliness.²⁷

By meditating over the question of the being of the mortal human in its relationship with others in the world, Levinas levelled his critique of Heidegger's existential analytic of *Dasein* in *Sein und Zeit*, seeing it accordingly as a manner of affirming the impersonal lonely character of *Dasein* as 'esseulé'. In ordinary circumstances, the solitary character of being-in-the-world is manifested in being-with-others in a situational relation of side-to-side (*côte à côte*). This is in everyday affairs a situated gathering around a common project, a theme or goal, instead of being in a face-to-face relationship. According to Levinas, this constitutes the meaning of Heidegger's notion of *Miteinandersein* in the mode of being reciprocally with one another: *être réciproquement l'un avec l'autre*.²⁸ However, the solitary character of *Dasein* is manifested with authenticity and angst in the isolated quarantine that separates my being-in-the-world from the mode of being-with-others in the flesh; hence not even having the opportunity to being situated alongside them in a *side-to-side* relation of the teamwork solidarity, let alone of being *face-to-face* in affirming the primacy of otherness in ethics. Levinas pictured the solitude of *Dasein* as being itself *neuter* in its ethical imports, and that being *side-by-side* is similar to being positioned

²⁷ Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome II: Philosophie moderne* (Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1973), p. 51; Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome IV: Le chemin de Heidegger* (Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1985), pp. 113-115.

²⁸ Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre*, *op. cit.*, 18-19, 69, 88-89. I also treated this question elsewhere in: Nader El-Bizri, 'Uneasy Meditations following Levinas', *Studia Phaenomenologica*, Vol. 6 (2006): 293-315; Nader El-Bizri, 'Ontological Meditations on Tillich and Heidegger', *Iris: Annales de Philosophie* 36 (2015): 109-114; El-Bizri, 'Variations ontologiques autour du concept d'angoisse chez Kierkegaard', in *Kierkegaard, notre contemporain*, ed. Nicole Hatem (Beyrouth-Copenhague: Presses universitaires de l'USJ – Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, 2013), pp. 83-95.

alongside things, which contrasts with the ethical predisposition of the face-to-face relation. However, in the solitary quarantine, under a communal lockdown of socio-physical distancing, the side-by-side itself proxemics are compromised, and the face-to-face encounter is bracketed. This undermines even the neutrality of ethics and exposes us to greater risks without a situated condition for being treated ethically by others at a distance and under a veil of anonymity. This is the case given that the virtual-interaction-in-remoteness via telecommunications and cybernetics does not amount to a *face-to-face* relation *per se*, let alone of being a *side-by-side* form of concretized proxemics, since it is of the order of simulating a relation with otherness rather than living it through in an actual embodied being in the flesh. Being-with-others at a socio-physical distance is spatial in the sense of being a mode of separation from others that does not amount to being reciprocally with one another (*Miteinandersein*). The face-to-face encounter (which is advocated by Levinas) and the side-by-side positioning (as attributed by Levinas to Heidegger) both describe the spatiality of proxemics in embodied lived experience (*Erlebnis, le vécu*), while being-with-others in the virtual domain of cybernetics or telecommunication technologies is underpinned by physical and social remoteness, and exposed to the risk of becoming an ethical distancing as well. The prolonged duration and recurrence of such episodes of communal lockdown and socio-physical distancing may ultimately further undermine the valuing of being in the flesh, which even before the pandemic was exposed to deconstructions in theory and praxis by way of the advancements in genetics, robotics, cybernetics, and the logistical technicities of financial systems and warfare. Albeit, even the face-to-face encounter with others does not arrest the human inclinations towards violence, and the atrocities of armed conflicts, especially in intercommunal wars, have shown repeatedly how ruthlessness effaces the face of the other in the flesh. The one who is near and dear concerns me even without being present, and this may furthermore be the case with the other who asks from me to develop an ethical predisposition towards otherness without being ordered to do as such by anyone *per se* (commanding as such without appearing; '*il ordonne sans se montrer*'... '*sans apparaître*').²⁹ Even at the average scales of human affairs in the private lifeworld, being confined in a shared place with others can occasion interpersonal tensions, and these may be worsened by overcrowding. Such situations might degenerate into a claustrophobic mode of '*Huis clos*' ('no exiting'),³⁰

²⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Autrement: Lecture d'Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence d'Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), pp. 22-23.

³⁰ This is unlike the sense intended by being locked with others in a confining space as portrayed by Jean-Paul Sartre in his theatrical piece in which he famously noted that 'hell is others' (*l'enfer c'est les autres*), even though what he meant is that they can torture us because we care about how they perceive us, and in how we are framed by them, given that others are what we most care about in

or even in a predisposed aggressive contexts, and in domestic relationships that are compromised by mistrust, this can become terribly degraded with abusiveness into verbal bullying and bodily harm.

The sense of reducing other human beings in a levelled averageness to the *Das Man* accentuates more the neutrality and indefiniteness of the framing of others as 'They'. The *Das Man* as 'They' has the anonymity of the 'anyone'. This is akin to the impersonal 'on' in French, which is indefinite and more neutralizing than the use of 'nous' ('we' or 'us' in French), or 'eux/elles' ('they' in French). The neuter *Das Man* ('They') resonates with the usage of 'it', as in saying 'it is being said that...' rather than 'they have said that...', wherein the 'it' is much more indefinite than the 'they' (or French *eux/elles*), without having a directionality as such towards a given group of persons there or here, but aimed at anyone rather than someone *per se*. The solitary *Dasein* in quarantine during communal lockdowns, is situated at a remote distance from an indefinite, impersonal, and anonymous *otherness* as *Das Man*. This uncanny *otherness* presences in stealth within the virtual cyber space-time, and it is even felt in the empty urban piazzas and streets, wherein there is *nobody* in sight; literally *no-body-[in-the-flesh]* here or there. *Das Man* is dialectically experienced therein/herein as the *uncanny presence in absence*. The technology of the virtual, and the architecture of the real, both veil the hidden *otherness* in their lived modes of *Dasein* behind closed doors.

The auspiciousness of the unpredictable, overwhelming, and uncontainable universal pandemic resonates with the gnostic occult signifiers of the imminence of an apocalypse, albeit without prophecy, catharsis, redemption, or divinities. The nostalgic yearning (*Sehnsucht*) for being fetched back home (*wieder in der Heimat zu sein*) from whatever is unhomely and alien (*Fremde*) contrasts herein with the manner the *home* becomes a place of an isolating incarceration. *Being at home in a prolonged solitary quarantine during a universal communal lockdown* is an uncanny unified event through which the homely is haunted by the un-homely, and solitude is inhabited by introspective thoughts about others, while the sensory embodied experience in the flesh lived only amidst things. When overwhelmed by the non-ordinary, the lived experience surpasses the earthbound average everydayness, wherein the dwelling-place is experientially transformed into a trapping space-time with its limited percepts and kinaesthetic possibilities. This estrangement via self-alienation (*Selbst-entfremdung*) is no longer situated within the habituated familiarity of the home, it is rather de-familiarized experientially from within the place of average

defining our sense of who we are and the meaning we assign to our being. I see myself as *the one who I am* under the gaze (*le regard*) of the other. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Huis clos* (Paris : Gallimard, 1945).

habituation and quotidian habitation in an ostracizing inward withdrawal that is an exile without intentionality, a banishment without directionality. The responsiveness to others with charity, hospitality, and care, which align with nurturing the attributes of temperance and εὐδαιμονία (*Eudaimonia*), of character-edifications in ἀρετή (*aretê*) and φρόνησις (*phronêsis*) of practical wisdom (Socratic, Stoic, Epicurean, Cynic, Sceptic, Hermitic) all become experientially burdening by a sense of lonely isolation. However, technicity can facilitate charity by way of philanthropic online pledges of donations to the needy or to the public services, such as healthcare, which may prove to be an efficacious method of aiding others during the communal lockdown.

The busied *lostness* (*Verlorenheit*) in the quotidian workings of average everydayness characterizes our *being-among-one-another* (*Untereinandersein*). In ordinary circumstances, outside the framed mode of being in isolated quarantine, the engagement with others in publicness lets the individual fall prey to *Das Man* in an inauthentic mode of *being-for-one-anther* (*Füreinandersein*). A *call of conscience* (*Gewissensruf*) attends to the authentic *angst* from mortality that each one of us may have in times of solitude, while being directional in the resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) to seize upon what is left of existential possibilities, rather than surrendering to fate with reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*). Such anticipatory attitude towards the future is frustrated by the locked horizons of what can be expected during the pandemic, or in pre-projecting the worries over what unfolds of afflictions in its aftermath. I am called upon by my conscience to snatch myself back from falling prey to the seducing average idle talk (*Das Gerede*),³¹ which uproots, hinders, and conceals the authentic pondering over the meaning, place, and truth of my being. This is the calling voice of an unfamiliar existential caller. It does not report facts, rather it cometh without uttering by speaking in an uncanny mode of silence (*Der Ruf berichtet keine Begebenheiten, er ruft auch ohne jede Verlautbarung. Der Ruf redet im unheimlichen Modus des Schweigens*).³² My *angst* of being-toward-death as a mortal, which is more intensely felt at the time of an actual global threat, ought to be seized upon and endured as what is originary and primordial (*ursprünglicher*). The call of conscience is a mode of care that is attuned to the existential uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*) of not being in flight from what anguishes, nor of being distracted from it with an illusory familiarity or publicness. Homesickness (*Sehnsucht*) is oddly experienced within my own dwelling-place in an out of joint solitary confinement. I make-sense of not feeling homely within my architectural

³¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §35.

³² Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §56-57.

place of confinement; yearning for the familiarities of average everydayness away from what is alienating (*Fremde*). This inward introspective journey amidst thoughts passes as a longing νόστος (*nostos*) to being brought back home (*wieder in der Heimat zu sein*).

The *force majeure* that befell upon us affirms the essence of our loneliness as mortals; each destined *suum cuique* to one's ownmost dues in the individuated pathways of our veiled lamentations toward death. The existential preoccupation with the solitary experiential lifeworld need not necessarily degenerate into indifferences towards the communal affliction with a bourgeois reactionary loneliness. The introspective self-reflection in solitude can be a mode of pondering over the question of being-with-others, and can become an authentic embodiment in the flesh of the microcosm of a *conditio humana*. Albeit, this can degenerate into a dystopic *contra mundum* in critiquing others by being fixated on depletions in the healthcare resources, impoverishments in economics, deviances in politics, and restrictiveness in sociability. Such penchant can be isolationist rather than done with the genuine spirit of activism, and it can as such turn from melancholy to revengefulness. The lifeworld may become exposed to the pessimism of being experienced as *Weltlast* (world-burden) and *Weltschmerz* (world-weariness). Besides such demoralizing affectivities, the isolating confinement is marked by episodic boredom (*Langeweile; ennui*), which is experienced as the 'long-while' of the unoccupied passing time in monotonous limbo (*Hingehaltenheit*). My bored solitude (*Vereinzelung*) unveils my individuated limited temporality and spatial finitude. I am thusly self-awakened to my essence as a temporal worldly mortal who is held out into the nothing (*Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts*). A distinction is revealed as such between my ontic *cum* inauthentic *existenziell* of fearing death, and my ontological *cum* authentic *existenzial* of angst from the nihil.³³

Dwelling Amidst Things

The prospects of honest dialogical hermeneutics in the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*)³⁴ is compromised in the solitary preoccupation with the immediacy of limited kinaesthetic perceptual acts within the architectural place of quarantine with its locked spatial-temporal horizons. When we are in communication with others, face-to-face or side-by-side, we engage in a dialogue that presupposes the 'I-Thou' (*Ich-Du*) relationship. However, in solitude, I address myself in silent

³³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., §19.

³⁴ To evoke, herein, the phenomenological hermeneutics parlance in: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1960), pp. 284-290.

monologues, or I direct my *logos* towards things in an objectifying 'I-It' (*Ich-Es*) relationship. The de-personalization tendencies in solitary quarantine let the 'I-It' dominate over the 'I-Thou', even if these are mediated via audio-visual telecommunication (WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc.). The 'I-It' accentuates the a mode of being-amidst-things over being-with-others *per se*.³⁵

Being-in-the-world is dwelling amidst things as well as being-with-others. The metamorphosed relation of being-with-others under solitary quarantine during a communal lockdown posits *otherness* at a distance in space-time. However, the architectural locale of self-isolation in solitude places immediate things into proximity within the fields of sensory lived experiences. Things are co-present with the quarantined *Dasein* in solitude, and brought closer in handiness. This state of affairs does not relate only to paraphernalia in the eutenics of our modes of habitation (furniture, tools, utensils, clothing, equipment), but more fundamentally in handling food (*nourritures*) and the intimate modes in which we gather with others around them. The architectural sensibility is tied as such to our sensory kinaesthetic experiences of being in the flesh, with interactions with others and the handling of things, along with the underlying aspects of nourishment, sexuality, hygiene, bodily sheltering and comfort.

The 'thingly' beingness of a thing (*l'être-chose d'une chose... sa choseité*) is altered experientially in how our sensory experiencing is affected by attuned moods. The altered protocols in disinfecting things contrasts with the familiarity with which we handled them in average everydayness as ready to hand entities (*zuhanden; Zuhandenheit*), or in the detached gazing upon them as present at hand existents (*vorhanden; Vorhandenheit*). The quotidian dealings with things under the ordinary average everydayness discloses these entities under the modes of *Vorhandensein* ('thing on-hand'; 'being-present-at hand'; 'objective presence') and *Zuhandensein* ('thing at-hand'; 'being-ready-at-hand'; 'handy').³⁶

The modes of being with-others and amidst-things reflect the ontological significance not only of the *logos*, but of the hand as well in the manipulation and handling of everyday workings. This is not simply indicative of the handiwork (*Handwerk; travail de la main*) in artisanship or manual labour. Being at remoteness from others in the flesh, and barely touching what others might have touched feel like mutilations of handiness. A devaluing of dwelling with others and amidst things occurs with curbing the kinaesthetic handling of things via new habituations in avoiding to handshake or touching what others have touched. Our hands, like our

³⁵ Martin Buber, *Ich und Du. I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970).

³⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, *op. cit.*, §9.

faces, become sources of worry over what contaminates or not in the new protocols of hygiene and sanitation. Nonetheless, the ontological centrality of the phenomenon of the hand-touch for thought cannot be underestimated.³⁷

The way we experientially handle paraphernalia in average quotidian everydayness is altered under the situational circumspections of being confined within the locale of a solitary quarantine. Touching things within the locale of confinement is marked by an awareness of their level of disinfection as contrasted with the goods that are freshly delivered from the outside. The familiarity in the gestures of the hands in handling things becomes subjected to stricter levels of awareness, especially with what we admit into the quarantined locale from what is outside it. Things are sanitized at the threshold of their entry, or necessitate a repeated disinfection as accompanied by re-cleaning the hands when feeling unsure about the precautionary protocols of the hygienic prudence. Delivered goods accentuate the concerned awareness of how the hands touch their exposed outer surfaces. Cooked food is more reassuring than what is uncooked; even the outer surfaces of fruits and vegetables become inspected with greater care to avoid traces of contamination. Handiness is disclosed through how we monitor the hand-usage in handling the many things we touch on a daily basis. The presence at hand and readiness to hand of things shift out of the homely region of familiarity while being brought closer to the lived space-time of the moods through which we handle them, whether with concern or reassurance. What we handle under normalized circumstances with ease and immediacy becomes increasingly an object of our hygiene, sanitation, and disinfection in new fixation habits that border on neurosis.

Things at home are in a direct relationship with our embodiment in the flesh in the perceptual flow of lived sensory experiences, and in the comforts they offer to the daily routines of confinement, despite the monotonies in the adumbrations of limited sequences of apperceptions. In the place of solitary quarantine, things are no longer appraised by the externalized mercantile values that others have speculatively ascribed to them. Their experiential valuing depends instead on the comfort they offer to the embodied sensory engagement with them *hic et nunc*. Resting amidst things, the comforts they give within the locale of confinement allow for imagined supplements to scaffold the concreteness of the lived experience, along with its mood-swings and emotive dispositions. This reflects the sobering essence of euthenics in how the sense of wellbeing depends on improving the living conditions within the ambient habitual environment. After a

³⁷ This is for instance emphasized by Derrida in his interpretation of Heidegger's take on the hand and Nancy's consideration of the touch. Refer for instance to: Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger et la pensée. De l'esprit et autres essais* (Paris : Flammarion, 1990); Jacques Derrida, *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris : Galilée, 2000).

prolonged confinement, one becomes habituated to the private new modes of the intimate and basic homely comforts, and these may be experienced as attachments to the place of quarantine, albeit feeling that with a sense of unease whilst longing to be out in the publicness of being with others.

It is not simply the memorabilia that get disclosed in the lived sensory experience as affective prompters of wistful recollections and imaginings, this is also the case with paraphernalia, clothing items, and certain tastes of foods and drinks. The poetics that are usually associated with these homely things can still be undermined by an anguished ennui that makes the previously intimate abode feel unhomely during the period of confinement. A sense of humbling asceticism might settle in via the daily routine of solitary quarantine. The accessories of sociability, elegant attires, items luxury, or even perfumes, seem to recede more than ordinarily into the closed drawers and cupboards. The appetite for acquiring more of these possessions becomes gently tamed.

The lived experiences through which we handle things has a phenomenological *noētic-noēmatic* structure, which reveals how the same given object can itself gain differing significations in perception, recollection, and imagining. *Noēsis* (νόησις; intentional-act) is taken herein to be the mode of understanding and intellection, which designates a concept *cum* idea that is perceived in the mind (*nous*; νοῦς), while *noēma* (νόημα; object-as-intended) is what is thought about, be it a perceived phenomenal thing with its *hylē-morphē* sense-data, or the content of thought in judgement. The *noētic* is hence a mental judgement, while the *noēmatic* is what is intentionally judged by way of filling that judging-act with its intended sense. A single act of *noētic* apprehending has a specific *noēmatic* object that is apprehended, while a single *noēma* has the potential of correlating with more than one act of *noēsis*. This is the case given that a *noētic* act is correlatively directed towards a *noēmatic* intentionally-held object. The *noētic* content emerges as such in a directional act-process that is orientated towards the idealized sense (*Sinn*) of the object being perceived, judged, described, and constituted. Intentionality is grasped in this context as a directed experiencing of things in the world as mediated via consciousness, with attuned moods and affectivities.³⁸

In the normalized average everydayness of a mortal, things recede into being inert entities that are left behind as relics after one's own death, even if they are pictured as posthumous inheritances. Worldly possessions have the character of

³⁸ To appeal herein to the foundational Husserlian phenomenological investigations in: Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 238 cf.; Edmund Husserl, 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie - Buch 1, Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie', *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 1.1 (1913): 1-323.

being nothing for the dying person, unless viewed from the standpoint of becoming a material legacy that will be handed down over to posterity. In times of calamity and catastrophe, of natural disasters, or communal meltdowns, in lawlessness and collective violence, the valuing of things becomes shaken for those who are threatened in their life, unless such *things* shield their being from harm, or can be handed over to their heirs as reclaimable heritage. This passes via the sense in which the destiny of a people is co-historicized by mortals who constitute its generational communities. In the lived circumstances of a global pandemic, under the universal existential threat to humanity, and to the sense of history across the Earth, the mercantile valuing of things is out of joint due to the sorrowful anguish that brings the value of all possessions to the brink of being sucked into the gaping hole of a nihil that swallows the lifeworld of mortals. When such things are pictured as potentially inheritable relics, they experientially regain a commercial value. At a time of a universal existential crisis, living has primacy over accumulating wealth or possessions, and material riches are of value insofar that under a calamitous disaster they can still save lives or left behind as inheritances for a surviving posterity.

Affectivities of Being-Toward-Death

Angst in being-toward-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*) is associated not with anxiousness over mortality *per se*, rather it is projected towards the future that is left before dying. This is especially more acute when the futural conditions are expected to be impoverished in a lifeworld of scarcity and austerity, wherein the penchant towards resentment, antagonism, and strife becomes the trend. Relinquishing *the courage to be* in the face of what anguishes us in being-toward-death, is itself a mode of seeking tranquilizing distractions and coping techniques. The question of being (*Seinsfrage*) is experienced herein as an *appropriating event* (*Ereignis*) that is manifested by way of an un-concealing ἀλήθεια (*alétheia*)³⁹ that reveals *Dasein* as 'being' *Da* ('there/here'), namely 'être-là' qua 'être-le-là' (being-thereness/hereness)⁴⁰ that is destined toward what annihilates all existential possibilities.⁴¹ If you exist, then

³⁹ The reflection on ἀλήθεια (*alétheia*) relates to Martin Heidegger's reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics Θ*, which correlates with his own take on phenomenology and his reflection on the manifold and the oneness of being in critiquing metaphysics in his fundamental ontology. Martin Heidegger, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik Θ 1–3: Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), GA 33.

⁴⁰ Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome II: Philosophie moderne, op. cit.*, p. 51; Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger, Tome IV: Le chemin de Heidegger, op. cit.*, pp. 113-115.

⁴¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris : Gallimard, 1943), pp. 594-595.

death does not ... if death exists, then you do not (*si tu es, elle n'est pas ... si elle est, tu n'es pas*), since there is an abyss separating the *present* from death (*il y a un abîme entre le présent et la mort*).⁴² The mortal is prevented from dying by death itself (*empêché de mourir par la mort même*), whereby, in embodied living in the flesh, an external bodily death clashes with an inner anticipation of mortality (*comme si la mort hors de lui pouvait désormais que se heurter à la mort en lui*), wherein an affirmation of my situation of *being alive* is counterpoised by asserting my own mortality (*Je suis vivant ... Non, tu es mort!*).⁴³ Insofar that I am a mortal, living is also dying.

Dasein is *ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-the-world* (*Sich-vorweg-im-schon-sein-in-einer-Welt*),⁴⁴ wherein it makes itself known via inner-worldly beings (*Die am innerweltlich Seienden sich meldende Weltmäßigkeit der Umwelt*),⁴⁵ and is inauthentic in the preoccupied mode of being-with (*Mitsein*) of the neuter *Das Man* of publicness. The auto-disclosure of the authentic self (*eigentliches Selbst*) happens in its pondering with anticipatory resolve over its destining towards-the-end as a finite mortal, and by aiming to assume its potentiality of being as its own. *Dasein* makes-sense of its affective disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) by having a conscience (*Gewissen*) in its existential projection (*Entwerfen*) toward death (*Tod*). Such predicament is silenced (*Verschwiegenheit*) in the idle chatter with others that does not permit *Dasein* to have the courage to be toward its death. The notion of *care* (*Sorge*) is grasped in this situation as a *concern* or *worry* (*souci*) that turns into a *call of conscience* (*Gewissensruf*) in being inclined towards resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) to gather the experiencing of the past, present, and future with equiprimordiality as a lived temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*).⁴⁶

Shrinking back from what the existential fear discloses, lets us hide in the business of publicness, whereby our being-in-the-world is that in the face of which angst is anxious (*wovor die Angst sich ängstet, ist das In-der-Welt-sein selbst*).⁴⁷ Death is the horizon of resoluteness for disclosing one's own worldly dwelling in an authentic mode of being that does not shrink back in fear from the nothing. A *courage to be* in the tempest transcends soldiery fortitude in wondering about the meaning, truth, and place of being,⁴⁸ even in the loneliness of an anchorite within the solitary

⁴² Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), pp. 59, 73.

⁴³ Maurice Blanchot, *L'instant de ma mort* (Paris : Gallimard, 2002), pp. 9, 11, 15, 17.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., §41.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit.; §16.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., §50.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op. cit., §40.

⁴⁸ Paying homage herein to Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1954), pp. 30-31; as I did before in: El-Bizri, 'Ontological Meditations on Tillich and Heidegger', art cit.

quarantine in the time of a communal lockdown under a universal existential threat. Authenticity arises in not falling prey (*Verfallen*) to the neuter *Das Man* in preoccupied hurried busyness, even if it unfurls in confinement via telecommunication online.

The solitary quarantine signals a tacit releasement (*Gelassenheit*) from what holds sway over the disclosure of our essence, to be at peace with each other in compassion, mercy, dignity, empathy, solicitude, as these unfurl via acts of charity, hospitality, and care. However, the dread from the nothing in which we are held as mortals makes us restless about the time that passes away, despite the renewal and relief it promises in the mode of a projected potential future. The dreadfulness of experiencing the *nihil* in the withdrawal of meaning from my worldly being is itself experienced as a gaping hole that swallows the meaningfulness of my lifeworld. This may give rise to a sense of revengefulness, guilt, or repulsion from the passing away of time in confinement. I am undead but limited in the degraded possibilities of my being, not solely under the actuality of solitary confinement, but in terms of the impoverished lifestyles in the aftermath of the pandemic as distraught by the prospects of unemployment and personal derailment.

The angst about death that determines the disclosure of *Dasein* as being-toward-its-end, and hence of its own temporality as a passing finite mortal, is manifold in its manifestations. It is anguishing about the mortal's own ending, but more fundamentally in how such implied wholeness in death of one's own being will come to be. What is destined for my being before my ending? How capable am I in taking my own dying in my own hand when the time left in awaiting natural death is gradually becoming an utterly unbearable degraded mode of existence for myself, and in no longer being able to take care of my loved ones, or even turn into an existential burden on them? The authenticity of angst about death is alerted by the projected quality of what is left of living before dying. This figures more prominently when the potential imminence of mortality is witnessed as a threat during a war, or natural disasters. The concern over the time that passes during a period of communal existential threat fears the incapacity to be resolute in anticipating whatever is left for the life of a mortal as historical being. The anguish is deepened over the quality of the remaining time of a mortal in the aftermath of a pandemic within a world that may yet be destined to face tragic afflictions. The resoluteness in the courage to be within a degraded lifeworld in solitary quarantine and its aftermath seems to be frustrated by the diminished capacity to anticipate with assuredness the nature of what is futural. The horizon of the future is fuzzy at best if not daunting altogether with the threats it signals. Vexed from being able to assume a resolute anticipation towards a future, the attitude of fortitude without querulousness can itself be frustrated. An apathetic disinterestedness and lethargic disengagement with sentimental melancholy awakens deep-seated

impulses of avoidant solipsism and withdrawals into reclusiveness; as if I become trapped in my irreducible personal *qualia*. As if self-isolation becomes quasi-habitual, and is taken to be a newly disclosed eco-syntonic personality trait, rather than being as such an ego-dystonic alienation with anguished grouchiness. During the quarantine, thoughts go to those who are suffering in sickness, or to the heroism of the health-carers in healing the ill, as well as being empathetic towards those who live in isolation. The solitary quarantine gives us lived perspectives on loneliness, we think herein of the phenomenon of the Hikikomori, mainly in Japan, of adolescents and adults who willingly pull inward into reclusive confinement and extreme isolation. We also think of those whose bodily illness necessitates quarantines in the midst of regular everyday human affairs, or even what is experienced, and to a certain extent, in the highly-skilled and systematically-trained endurances of submariners or spaceship astronauts. We are also inclined to understand with greater empathy the fragile states of advanced senescence, wherein a shrunken lifeworld is filled with bodily frailties, and marked with reminiscence, silent patience, and anxious awaiting over the uncanny manner in which the inevitable destiny of all mortals comes to happen.

Faced with a destining to end, the resolute mortal can still stand worthy of ancestors by having held their past creditable legacies as heritage, and lived it in the flux of presence as an oeuvre of tradition, as well as readied it *a fortiori* for posterity to be a posthumous future inheritance. This does not depict a picture of reactionary conservatism, rather it points to a rootedness in the temporal personal sense of historicity via the manner in which it partakes in co-historicizing the epochal making of a People's History. The traces of solitary quarantine, the relics of a mortal, become as such the intimate testimonies of a universal History. It is in this sense that this humble text presences herein as a phenomenological memoire of *un Dasein esseulé*, registered as an existential testament of solitary quarantine during the planetary universal pandemic of the Spring of the year 2020.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This article was composed as a diary in a *contra spem spero* spirit, which is experientially irreducible to a *contradictio in terminis*; and it is via this penchant that I dedicate it to the *Dasein esseulé* in solitary quarantine.

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

I*

ROSA MARIA MARAFIOTI*

ABSTRACT. *A Logos for Being and God. Heidegger's Confrontation with Theology from the 1930s.* I. 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. Heidegger's "theological heritage" is crucial for his development of the "question of Being". Although Heidegger characterizes philosophy as "a-theistic" in principle already in 1922, he continues to consider of great importance a dialogue with a kind of theology that does not objectify God by means of a dogmatic doctrinal system. Distancing himself from neo-scholastic theology, which makes use of Aristotelian notions based on traditional metaphysics, and that, therefore, should be "destroyed", at the end of the 1920s Heidegger assigns to his existential ontology a "corrective" role towards theology as science of faith. However, from the 1930s onwards he deems it impossible to talk about God until the "forgetfulness" of the truth of Being is overcome. For this reason, Heidegger understands as task of his thinking the preparation of an authentic experience of divinity. Consequently, he defines his meditation as "corrective" for thinkers and theologians who pretend to exceed the limits of philosophy and theology and who, failing to differentiate the two, end up believing in Being and conceptualizing God.

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

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Die Suche nach einem lebendigen Verhältnis mit Gott und deshalb auch nach einem *Logos*, der imstande ist, das Göttliche zu denken und auszudrücken, ohne es zu vergegenständlichen, prägt den ganzen heideggerschen

* Der zweite Teil dieses Beitrags wird in der nächsten Nummer der Zeitschrift („Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai“, *Philosophia*, 3/2020) erscheinen.

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Denkweg. Heideggers „theologische Herkunft“ erweist sich als entscheidend für die Stellung und die Ausarbeitung der „Seinsfrage“. Auch wenn Heidegger bereits 1922 die Philosophie als prinzipiell „a-theistisch“ bezeichnet, hält er den Fortgang des Gesprächs mit einer Theologie, die Gott nicht innerhalb eines dogmatischen Lehrsystems vergegenständlicht, weiterhin für unverzichtbar. Abstand nehmend von der neoscholastischen Theologie, die sich der zu „destruierenden“ aristotelischen Begrifflichkeit am Leitfaden der traditionellen Metaphysik bedient, spricht Heidegger seiner Existenzialontologie Ende der 1920er Jahre eine „korrektivistische“ Funktion gegenüber der Theologie als Wissenschaft des Glaubens zu. Ab den 1930er Jahren erachtet er jedoch jegliche Rede über Gott als unmöglich, bis die „Vergessenheit“ der Wahrheit des Seins verwunden sein wird. Deshalb weist er seinem Denken die Aufgabe zu, einen Raum für eine eigentliche Erfahrung des Göttlichen zu schaffen, indem er es als ein „Korrektiv“ für diejenigen Denker und Theologen bestimmt, die sich anmaßen, die Grenzen der Philosophie und Theologie zu überschreiten und diese nicht voneinander zu unterscheiden, zumal sie an das Sein glauben und den Gott begreifen wollten.

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

*Man kann den höchsten Gott mit allen Namen nennen,
man kann ihm wiederum nicht einen zuerkennen.*

Angelus Silesius, Cherubinischer Wandersmann

Tragweite der Thematik und Notwendigkeit ihrer erneuten Behandlung

1953/1954, aus Anlass des Besuches von Prof. Tezuka aus Tokio, äußert sich Heidegger über die von ihm durchlaufene „Wegstrecke“ und behauptet, dass jedes »Vorwärts« im Denken im Grunde nur ein »Rückwärts« im Sinne einer vertiefenden Rückkehr in »das Anfangende«¹ sei. Zu Heideggers „Anfangendem“ gehört ein innerer Glaube, ein von einem echt religiösen Interesse orientiertes Fragen und eine ausdrückliche Stellungnahme zu den theologischen Thesen, die jenem Glauben und dem ihm entsprechenden ruhelosen Fragen entgegentzukommen scheinen. Im *Rückblick auf*

¹ M. Heidegger, *Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache*, in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, in *Gesamtausgabe*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main (= GA), Bd. 12, 2018², 79–146, hier 94. Zu dieser Vorgehensweise vgl. K. Harries, *Herkunft als Zukunft*, in H. Schäfer (Hrsg.), *Annäherungen an Martin Heidegger: Festschrift für Hugo Ott zum 65. Geburtstag*, Campus-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main/New York 1966, 41–64.

den Weg von 1937/1938 erläutert Heidegger seinen bis dahin zurückgelegten Denkweg als eine verschwiegene Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum, die er als eine »Wahrung der eigensten Herkunft – des Elternhauses, der Heimat und der Jugend – und [als die] schmerzliche Ablösung davon in *einem*«² bestimmt. Das somit beschriebene zwiespältige Verhältnis zum Christentum, das keine Beschäftigung mit Dogmen und Ritualen betrifft, hängt von der Beibehaltung der Fragen der ersten Schritte auf seinem Bildungsweg ab, die er sich aufgrund seiner Verwurzelung in einem katholisch geprägten familiären und gesellschaftlichen Milieu stellte, obwohl er sich von den Antworten, die er von jenem Milieu geerbt hatte, nach und nach nicht mehr zufriedenstellen ließ, da sie sich ihm vielmehr als Verdeckung der eigentlichen Problematiken und als Erscheinung desjenigen Nihilismus erwiesen, gegen den sie sich hätten richten sollen.

Sohn eines Mesners³, geboren im katholischen Meßkirch und 1909 Theologiestudent an der Universität Freiburg sowie Alumnus des theologischen Konvikts, gibt Heidegger den philosophischen Fragen, die ihn nach dem Lesen von Carl Braigs Abhandlung *Vom Sein. Abriß der Ontologie* (1896) und Franz Brentanos Dissertation *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* (1862) antreiben, am Beginn seines Denkweges eine theologische Formulierung. Dies hat zur Folge, dass einerseits Heideggers Verhältnis zur Theologie eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Suche dieses Denkers nach einem eigenen philosophischen Weg, und zwar bei der Stellung und der Ausarbeitung der Frage nach dem Sein („die Sache“ des heideggerschen Denkens)⁴, gespielt hat; andererseits, dass Heideggers Überlegungen über den Gott im Bereich seines Nachdenkens über das Sein zu kontextualisieren sind. Daraus wird die besondere Komplexität von Heideggers Behandlung der Gottesfrage ersichtlich, die sich auf religiöser, philosophischer und theologischer (obwohl in einem eigentümlichen Sinne) Ebene vollzieht.

² M. Heidegger, *Mein bisheriger Weg*, in *Besinnung*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 66, 1997, 411–417, hier 415. Heidegger gesteht, dass ihn die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum – von Anfang an mit dem Katholizismus und seit der Marburger Zeit auch mit dem Protestantismus – nie losgelassen habe, und schreibt: »Es handelt sich aber auch nicht um einen bloß „religiösen“ Hintergrund der Philosophie, sondern um die Eine Frage nach der Wahrheit des Seins« (415–416).

³ Für die tiefe Religiosität von Heideggers Eltern vgl. Fritz Heideggers Bericht im Geburtstagsbrief an seinen Bruder vom 26.11.1969, wiedergegeben in V. Klostermann (Hrsg.), *Martin Heidegger zum 80. Geburtstag von seiner Heimatstadt Meßkirch*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1969, 58–63. In M. Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 94, 2014, 320, Nr. 14, erinnert sich Heidegger an die Mutter als eine »fromme Frau, die ohne Bitterkeit den Weg des scheinbar gottabgekehrten Sohnes im ahnenden Vorblick ertrug.«

⁴ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik*, in *Identität und Differenz*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 11, 2006, 51–79, hier 56.

Heideggers Erarbeitung der Gottesfrage soll im Folgenden nur in dem Maße berücksichtigt werden, in dem sie in Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung und der Wandlung von Heideggers Begriff der Theologie steht, der sich seinerseits gleichzeitig mit dem heideggerschen Seinsdenken entwickelt. Zuerst gilt es, sich auf die Erörterung der bedeutendsten Etappen von Heideggers Auseinandersetzung mit der Theologie zu konzentrieren, weil sie als notwendig für das Erfassen des heideggerschen Denkens im Allgemeinen erachtet werden soll. Dies ist von der Forschung seit mehreren Jahren bereits anerkannt worden. Zum einen haben einige Studien Heideggers Einfluss auf die katholische und protestantische Theologie betrachtet und nach dessen Grund gefragt. Sie haben herausgestellt, dass die Theologie auf der vom heideggerschen Denken angebotenen Möglichkeit aufgebaut habe, Geschichtlichkeit und Transzendenz zu vereinigen; weiterhin haben die Theologen wertgeschätzt, dass Heidegger der hermeneutischen Tragweite der Sprache gerecht geworden sei, indem seine Phänomenologie es ermöglicht habe, theologische Begriffe in einer allgemein verständlichen Weise mitteilbar zu machen.⁵ Zum anderen wurden mehrere Arbeiten der umgekehrten Frage gewidmet, nämlich in welchem Maße sich theologische Motive und Denkansätze für Heideggers philosophische Anfänge und seinen späteren Denkweg als prägend erwiesen haben.

Eine erneute Behandlung dieser Thematik ist jedoch nötig aufgrund des Gehaltes der im letzten Jahrzehnt erschienenen Briefwechsel und der Aufzeichnungen, die ab der Mitte der 1930er Jahren verfasst worden sind. Sie sollen mitberücksichtigt werden, da sie aus vielen Gründen von entscheidendem Belang sind. Denn die posthum veröffentlichten Briefwechsel, Abhandlungen und Notizen der *Schwarzen Hefte* (*Überlegungen, Winke, Anmerkungen, Vier Hefte I und II und Vigiliae und Notturmo*, 1931–1957) werfen ein neues Licht auf die öffentlichen Reden Heideggers. Unter dem dadurch aufgeklärten Gesichtspunkt wird es möglich, nicht nur auf einige Schwerpunkte von Heideggers Biographie noch einmal zurückzukommen,⁶

⁵ Zu Heideggers implizitem und explizitem Einfluss auf die Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts vgl. vor allem P. Stagi, *Di Dio e dell'essere. Un secolo di Heidegger*, Mimesis, Milano/Udine 2013. Für die Möglichkeit, die Theologie mit neuen Begriffsmitteln ausgehend von Heideggers Denken auszustatten, welches die „Destruktion“ der traditionellen Kategorien von „Grund“ und „Subjekt“ unternommen habe, die auch von der zeitgenössischen Theologie in Frage gestellt werden, vgl. A. Anelli, *Heidegger und die Theologie. Prolegomena zur künftigen theologischen Nutzung des Denkens Martin Heideggers*, Ergon-Verlag, Würzburg 2008.

⁶ Viele Autoren haben die These vertreten, dass Heidegger Nazi und Antisemit wegen seines problematischen Verhältnisses mit der eigenen „theologischen Herkunft“ geworden sei. Unter diejenigen, die eine Bestätigung ihrer Meinung in den *Schwarzen Heften* finden wollen, fallen auch: Gianni Vattimo, nach dem Heidegger zum Nationalsozialismus von seiner Abkehr von Luther und Paulus zugunsten Hölderlin sowie vom Verzicht, eine normative Ethik wegen seiner Berufung an Kierkegaards Auslegung von Abraham zu entwickeln, getrieben worden sei (vgl. G. Vattimo, *Heidegger teologo cristiano?*, in D. Di Cesare (Hrsg.), *I Quaderni neri di Heidegger*, Mimesis, Milano/Udine 2016, 183–191); Hans Ruin, laut dem die Lektüre von

sondern auch das implizite „theologische“ Erbe des heideggerschen Denkens deutlicher zu erhellen.⁷ Damit wird ermöglicht, den vorwiegenden Einfluss von der Existentialanalytik wie auch von Heideggers späterer Seinsauffassung auf die Theologie besser zu begreifen und in einen Bereich einzutreten, aus welchem sich einige Begriffsmittel entwickeln lassen, die zu einem neuen und produktiven Verhältnis zwischen Philosophie und Theologie beitragen können. Da der vorwiegende Teil der neuesten Literatur zum hier auszuführenden Thema Heideggers Denken nach der sogenannten „Kehre“ der Mitte der 1930er Jahre⁸ angeht, wird sich die Arbeit nach einem schnellen, vorbereitenden Überblick über die ersten Strecken des heideggerschen Denkweges auf dessen nachfolgenden Gang beschränken.

Zwischen Theologie und Philosophie: Von der Neuscholastik bis zum philosophischen „A-theismus“

Heideggers Anfänge werden vom Studium der Scholastik und ihrer Auslegung durch Aristoteles geprägt. In der ersten Mitte der 1910er Jahre, in seinen frühen Schriften, schließt Heidegger an den neuthomistischen Realismus an, indem er eine anti-immanentistische und anti-subjektivistische Haltung einnimmt.⁹ Gleichzeitig

Paulus zur Entwicklung nationalistischer und antisemitischer Tendenzen bei Heidegger eine wichtige Rolle gespielt habe, wohingegen Hans Jonas Paulus als einen jüdischen und existenzialistischen Denker geschätzt habe; George Pattison, der Heideggers Kritik am Katholizismus als einen „Krieg“ gegen seinen eigenen Schatten ansieht; Ward Blanton, nach dem Heidegger von ihm selbst befreien wolle, wenn er gegen das Christentum vergeblich kämpfe (vgl. Ruins, Pattisons und Blantons Beiträge in M. Björk/J. Svenungsson (Hrsg.), *Heidegger's Black Notebooks and the Future of Theology*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2017, 49–129).

⁷ Von den zahlreichen Monographien, die sich mit Heideggers Beziehung zur Theologie befassen, seien zumindest die folgenden erwähnt: S. Capelli, *Philosophie et théologie dans la pensée de Martin Heidegger*, Cerf, Paris 1998; A. Gehrtmann-Siefert, *Das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie im Denken Martin Heideggers*, Alber, Freiburg/München 1998; J. Wolfe, *Heidegger and Theology*, T & T Clark, London 2014.

⁸ Heidegger betont mehrmals, dass durch die „Kehre“ die Kontinuität seines Denkens nicht abbreche, da sie nur die Veränderung des Ansatzes der Seinsfrage betreffe, die der „Kehre“ im Ereignis vom Sein und Menschenwesen entsprechen wolle. Vgl. dazu M. Heidegger, *Ein Vorwort. Brief an Pater William J. Richardson*, in GA 11, 145–152, hier 149–152; I.M. Fehér, „Das zureichende Sagen dieser Kehre.“ *Heideggers Rückblick auf Sein und Zeit in seinem „Humanismusbrief“*, in A. Denker/H. Zaborowski (Hrsg.), *Heidegger und der Humanismus*, „Heidegger Jahrbuch“, 10 (2017), 79–101, hier 82–84.

⁹ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 1, 2018², 1–188; A. Denker/H. Zaborowski (Hrsg.), *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, „Heidegger-Jahrbuch“, 1 (2004), 18–25; A. Denker/E. Büchin (Hrsg.), *Heidegger und seine Heimat*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 2005, 38–115. Das Buch von Denker und Büchin macht deutlich, wie stark Heidegger sich der heimatlichen Umgebung zugehörig fühlte.

geht Heidegger auf einem Weg fort, den er im letzten Jahr seiner Gymnasialzeit dank der Werke Braigs und Brentanos eingeschlagen hatte. Um sich einer Antwort auf die Frage nach der leitenden Grundbedeutung des Seins und somit nach der Wahrheit anzunähern, die alternativ zu derjenigen gelten kann, welche seine Professoren während ihrer neutestamentarischen Exegese an der katholischen Fakultät gegeben haben, liest Heidegger Husserls *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–1901), die von Brentano inspiriert worden waren.¹⁰ 1911 bricht Heidegger sein Theologiestudium ab und widmet sich ganz der philosophischen Forschung. Das Lesen von Nietzsches *Willen zur Macht*, der Werke Kierkegaards und Dostojewskis, und von Diltheys *Gesammelten Schriften*¹¹ sowie die Kenntnissnahme der katholischen Theologie, die die spekulative Tübinger Schule im Unterschied zur neuscholastischen Tradition betreibt,¹² halten Heidegger dazu an, zu dem dogmatischen Ansatz der Neuscholastik und der antimodernistischen Einstellung der katholischen Kirche immer mehr Abstand zu nehmen.

Eine Art Wasserscheide zwischen den frühen „apologetischen“ Schriften und den späteren Arbeiten, in denen die religiöse Thematik philosophisch behandelt wird,¹³ stellt Heideggers Habilitationsschrift *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus* (1915–1916) dar. In ihr verfolgt Heidegger keinen im strengen Sinne theologischen oder rein historischen Zweck, denn er legt die scotische Behandlung der gnoseologischen Probleme mit den Auslegungsmitteln der modernen Logik und in Hinblick auf die Themen der Philosophie zu Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts aus, um den Begriff der Wahrheit neu zu bestimmen.¹⁴ Am Ende des Schlusskapitels seiner Arbeit beruft Heidegger sich auf die »Philosophie des lebendigen Geistes, der tatvollen Liebe, der verehrenden Gottinnigkeit«¹⁵, d. h. auf Hegel – dessen *Theologische*

¹⁰ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Vita*, in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, hrsg. von H. Heidegger, GA 16, 41–45, hier 41; *Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie*, in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 14, 2007, 91–102, hier 93.

¹¹ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Vorwort zur ersten Ausgabe der „Frühen Schriften“*, in GA 1, 55–77, hier 56; *Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache*, a. a. O., 91–92.

¹² Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Vorwort*, a. a. O., 57; *Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie*, a. a. O., 94.

¹³ Zur „Grenzstellung“ von der Arbeit über Duns Scotus, in welcher der Beginn von Heideggers Abstandnahme von der kirchlichen Doktrin klar hervortritt, vgl. R.M. Marafioti, *Tra teologia e filosofia: Heidegger e Duns Scoto*, „Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai“, *Theologia graeco-catholica varadiensis*, 2 (2008), 155–190, hier 156–158.

¹⁴ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, in GA 1, 189–411, hier 410, Fn. 8; S. Poggi, *La logica, la mistica, il nulla*, Edizioni della Normale, Pisa 2006, 87, Fn. 63.

¹⁵ M. Heidegger, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, a. a. O., 410.

*Jugendschriften*¹⁶ von Hermann Nohl, einem Schüler von Dilthey, 1907 veröffentlicht wurden – und verweist außerdem noch auf die Mystik. Die Aufwertung dieser letzteren als »Gegenbewegung« zur mittelalterlichen Scholastik, die wegen ihres theoretischen Ansatzes »die Unmittelbarkeit religiösen Lebens stark gefährdete«¹⁷, verwirklicht sich gleichzeitig mit der Vertiefung des Denkens von Luther – der den das Gesetz und den Glauben voneinander trennenden Abgrund hervorgehoben hatte – und Kierkegaard – von dem die Macht der kirchlichen Institutionen zugunsten der persönlichen und echten religiösen Erfahrung kritisiert wurde.¹⁸ Dies treibt Heidegger immer mehr dazu, dem religiösen Erlebnis einen entscheidenden Vorzug vor seinem theologischen und sogar vor seiner philosophischen Konzeptualisierung sowie vor seinem Ausdruck durch die offizielle Sprache einer Kirche zuzumessen.

Deshalb schreibt Heidegger am 19. Januar 1919 an seinen geistigen Vater, den Theologen Engelbert Krebs: »Erkenntnistheoretische Einsichten, übergreifend auf die Theorie geschichtlichen Erkennens, haben mir das *System* des Katholizismus problematisch und unannehmbar gemacht – nicht aber das Christentum und die Metaphysik (diese allerdings in einem neuen Sinne).«¹⁹ Insofern Heidegger die Religiosität in der persönlichen Urerfahrung und nicht in einer theoretischen Weltansicht oder in einem Lehrsystem verortet, wird er wohl gedacht haben, dass die traditionelle Theologie sie verdeckt habe. Einen Zugang zum Wesen der Religion zu finden, ist tatsächlich eines seiner Ziele, als er als Privatdozent und Assistent Husserls, der 1916 die Nachfolge Rickerts an der Universität Freiburg antritt, 1919 beginnt, Vorlesungen zu halten. Denn Husserl möchte, dass Heidegger eine Phänomenologie

¹⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, hrsg. von H. Nohl, Mohr, Tübingen 1907. Für Heideggers erste Annäherung an Hegel vgl. C. Strube, *Zur Vorgeschichte der hermeneutischen Phänomenologie*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 1993, 90.

¹⁷ M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, hrsg. von M. Jung, T. Regehly, C. Strube, GA 60, 2011², 314. Heidegger plant für das Wintersemester 1919/1920 die Vorlesung *Philosophische Grundlagen der mittelalterlichen Mystik*, die er jedoch nie hält. Die Notizen zu ihrer Vorbereitung sind in GA 60, 301–337 veröffentlicht.

¹⁸ Heidegger verweist schon im WS 1919/1920 auf Luther und Kierkegaard (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, hrsg. von H.-H. Gander, GA 58, 2010², 205). Er zählt sie im Jahr 1923 zu den grundlegenden Quellen seines eigenen Denkens (vgl. *Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizität*, hrsg. von K. Bröcker-Oltmanns, GA 63, 2018³, 5) und bestätigt seinen Rückblick im Brief an Rudolf Bultmann vom 31.12.1927 (vgl. R. Bultmann/M. Heidegger, *Briefwechsel 1925–1975*, hrsg. von A. Großmann und C. Landmesser, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2009, 48).

¹⁹ Heideggers Brief an Krebs vom 19.01.1919, wiedergegeben in A. Denker/H. Zaborowski (Hrsg.), *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, a. a. O., 67–68. Trotzdem wird Heidegger nie aus der Kirche offiziell austreten (vgl. H. Heidegger/P. Stagi, *Martin Heidegger: ein Privatporträt zwischen Politik und Religion*, Gmeiner, Meßkirch 2012, 78, 122).

der Religion ausarbeitet.²⁰ Dies entspricht Heideggers Anliegen, insofern er sich im Brief vom 19. August 1921 an Karl Löwith als »christlicher Theologe«²¹ definiert: er ist auf der Suche nach einem λόγος, der imstande sei, das Göttliche nicht als Gegenstand einer zeitlosen theoretischen Erkenntnis zu denken und auszudrücken, sondern als das, was zum Glauben rufe und zu einer Um-wendung der ganzen Existenz führe. Bis etwa Mitte der 1930er Jahre sind in Heideggers Denken demnach zwei verschiedene Verständnisse vom Wort „Theologie“ gegenwärtig: ein negatives, das die „Wissenschaft von Gott“ als ein dogmatisches Lehrsystem darstellt, das sich an den Kategorienbereich der aristotelisch-scholastischen Tradition hält; und ein positives, gemäß dem die Theologie in den ersten Lehrveranstaltungen dazu tendiert, mit der Philosophie selbst zusammenzufallen, indem sie in der Form der Seinsfrage eine wesentliche Funktion bekleidet.²²

In den Vorlesungen über die Phänomenologie der Religion (1920–1921) unterscheidet Heidegger die Glaubenserfahrung des Urchristentums von seiner folgenden „Verunstaltung“ durch die Patristik und Scholastik, die sich einer theoretisierenden griechischen, aus Aristoteles’ Werken gewonnenen Begrifflichkeit bedient hätten, und behauptet, dass das Wissen, das in den Briefen des Paulus an die Galater, an die Thessaloniker und an die Korinther mitgeteilt worden sei und welches auch die *Bekenntnisse* (398) des Augustinus geprägt hätte, nicht theoretisch sei, sondern Ausdruck des Selbstverständnisses des Lebens. Heidegger legt die Paulusbriefe ausgehend von seiner Konzeption des „faktischen Lebens“ – des Lebens als immer schon in einem bestimmten Bedeutungszusammenhang versetztes, der „zunächst und zumeist“ sein (Selbst-)Verständnis bedinge – aus. Er identifiziert die religiöse Lebenserfahrung, in der Gott erscheine, mit der ursprünglichen Bewegtheit des Lebens. So kann er das Leben des Urchristentums zum Paradigma des Lebens im Allgemeinen erheben und eine eigene Phänomenologie erarbeiten, deren Absicht

²⁰ Vgl. dazu O. Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger und die Religionsphänomenologie*, in Ders., *Heidegger in seiner Zeit*, Fink, München 1999, 249–264.

²¹ M. Heidegger/K. Löwith, *Briefwechsel 1919–1973*, Alber, Freiburg/München 2017, 53. In seinem Brief vom 20.10.1920 hatte Heidegger bereits zugegeben: »Ich selbst werde schon gar nicht mehr als „Philosoph“ genommen, ich sei „eigentlich noch Theologe“.« (24). Vgl. den Brief vom 08.05.1923 auf S. 87, und dazu I.M. Fehér, *Religion, Theology, and Philosophy on the Way to Being and Time: Heidegger, the Hermeneutical, the Factual, and the Historical with Respect to Dilthey and Early Christianity*, „Research in Phenomenology“, 39 (2009), 99–131, hier 100–101.

²² Die Zweideutigkeit des Wortes „Theologie“ kommt noch Mitte der 1940er Jahre in den *Fragen zum Beaufret-Brief* vor, erschienen in M. Heidegger, *Zu eigenen Veröffentlichungen*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 82, 2018, 587. Für Heideggers »positives Verständnis« der Theologie vgl. I.M. Fehér, *Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, „Wiener Jahrbuch für Philosophie“, Bd. XXXIX (2007), 141–164, hier 147–148.

darin bestehe, zur „Sache selbst“ – zur Zeit als Sinn des Lebens – zu gelangen, insofern sie über das unzeitliche Bewusstsein Husserls hinausgehe, in dem die traditionelle Bestimmung des Menschen als „ἕξιον λόγον ἔχον“ gegipfelt habe.

In dem sogenannten *Natorp-Bericht* (1922) drückt Heidegger deshalb die Notwendigkeit aus, eine „Destruktion“ der durch die »griechisch-christliche Lebensauslegung«²³ geprägten überlieferten Idee des Menschen zu vollziehen, damit sowohl die Philosophie als auch die Theologie erneuert werden können. Er ist sich dessen bewusst, dass Philosophie und Theologie sich selbst nur unter der Voraussetzung treu sein können, dass sie voneinander unabhängig bleiben, obwohl beide ein fruchtbares Gespräch miteinander führen sollten. Seit der Vorlesung *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* (WS 1921/1922) behauptet er deshalb, dass die »Philosophie [...] prinzipiell *a-theistisch*«²⁴ sein müsse, soweit sie eine präzise methodologische Haltung einnehmen solle, die aus einem radikalen Selbstverständnis und aus der Treue zur eigenen Aufgabe – die Heidegger nunmehr mit der Frage nach dem Sein des Lebens identifiziert – entspringe. Ihrerseits müsse sich die Theologie von der Begrifflichkeit, die sie aus der philosophischen Tradition geerbt habe, befreien und zu einer ursprünglichen Deutung des Verhältnisses des Menschen zu Gott gelangen.

In *Sein und Zeit* (1927) arbeitet Heidegger endlich seine eigene Frage – die Frage nach dem Sein überhaupt – heraus und blickt positiv auf die „Grundlagenkrise“, in welche die verschiedenen Wissenschaften zwischen Ende des neunzehnten und

²³ M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)*, in *Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zur Ontologie und Logik*, hrsg. von G. Neumann, GA 62, 2005, 343–399, hier 369. Zu der „phänomenologischen Destruktion“ als „Dekonstruktion“ im Sinne einer Methode, welche die Beseitigung der „Schleier“ bezweckt, die sich im Laufe der Zeit über das eigentliche Wesen eines Phänomens gelegt haben, vgl. vor allem *Sein und Zeit*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 2, 2018², 27–36.

²⁴ M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, hrsg. von W. Bröcker und K. Bröcker-Oltmanns, GA 61, 1994², 197. Vgl. 198–199; *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, hrsg. von P. Jaeger, GA 20, 1994³, 109–110. Der „prinzipielle“ Atheismus als die dem Denker angemessene Haltung wird in einer *Anmerkung der Schwarzen Hefte* bestätigt, die auf die Mitte der 1940er Jahre zurückgeht, wo Heidegger es ablehnt, dem seinsgeschichtlichen Denken das Adjektiv „atheistisch“ zuzuweisen, weil es – als gegensätzlich – noch an den „Theismus“ gebunden bleibe (vgl. *Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 97, 2015, 147). Trotz der sogenannten „theologischen Epoché“ der Jahre 1921–1931 (während derer die Gottesfrage als solche ausgeklammert bleibe) (vgl. dazu F.-W. von Herrmann, *Die drei Wegabschnitte der Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, in N. Fischer/F.-W. von Herrmann (Hrsg.), *Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, Meiner, Hamburg 2011, 31–45, hier 37–39), impliziert Heideggers philosophischer „Atheismus“ schon in den 1920er Jahren eindeutig theologisch-religiöse Züge (vgl. dazu K. Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933*, Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart 1986, 45).

Anfang des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts geraten waren. Er bemerkt, dass auch in der Theologie eine Tendenz zum methodologischen Neuansatz in Erscheinung trete, dank der sie auf die ursprüngliche Position Luthers zurückverwiesen werde, von der sich das Lehrsystem der Reformation entfernt habe.²⁵

Auf das sachgemäße Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie geht Heidegger ausführlicher im Vortrag *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (1927) ein, wo er die Theologie als *positive* Wissenschaft definiert. Heidegger führt aus, dass sie als sein »Positivum« bzw. Vorliegendes die »Christlichkeit« habe, deren »Konstitutivum« der Glaube sei.²⁶ Dieser sei seinerseits diejenige »Existenzweise des menschlichen Daseins«, in der sich »Christus, der gekreuzigte Gott«²⁷ zeige. Die Theologie sei hinsichtlich der »Begründung und primären Enthüllung ihrer Positivität, der Christlichkeit«²⁸, zwar selbstständig, da ihr Sachbereich in der Offenbarung Gottes gründe. Die Theologie bedürfe jedoch der Philosophie in der Form der Existenzialontologie des Daseins – des menschlichen Seienden –, sofern die Christlichkeit bzw. der Glaube ein spezifischer Existenzmodus sei. Es komme darauf an, dass »alle theologischen Grundbegriffe« einen christlichen und einen »sie ontologisch bestimmenden vorchristlichen und daher rein rational faßbaren Gehalt«²⁹ haben, der von der Existenzialontologie formal aufgezeigt werde. Heidegger schließt daraus, dass die theologischen Kategorien ihre »primäre Direktion (Herleitung)«, was so viel heißt wie »den Ursprung [ihres] christlichen Gehaltes«, aus dem Glauben empfangen, aber sie einer »Korrektion (d. h. Mitleitung)«³⁰ durch existenziale Begriffe bedürfen. Theologie und Philosophie müssen deshalb in einem wesenhaften Verhältnis stehen, ohne jedoch die Grenzen ihrer eigenen Sachgebiete zu überschreiten.

²⁵ Vgl. GA 2, 13–14. Eine ähnliche Wendung findet sich in M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, a. a. O., 369.

²⁶ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie*, in *Wegmarken*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 9, 2004³, 45–78, hier 52, 63.

²⁷ Ebd., 52.

²⁸ Ebd., 61.

²⁹ Ebd., 63.

³⁰ Ebd., 64. Heidegger führt das Beispiel des Begriffes der Sünde an, den er auf das ontologische Konzept der Schuld zurückbezieht. Zur „korrektiven Funktion der Philosophie“ vgl. G. Pöltner, *Philosophie als Korrektion der Theologie. Heideggers Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Philosophie und Theologie*, in N. Fischer/F.-W. von Herrmann (Hrsg.), *Die Gottesfrage im Denken Martin Heideggers*, a. a. O., 69–88, hier 78–82. Der Theologe, der die Existenzialanalytik von *Sein und Zeit* fruchtbar für die Theologie im Sinne Heideggers Vortrag *Phänomenologie und Theologie* gemacht hat, ist Rudolf Bultmann, zu dessen Einfluss vgl. O. Pöggeler, *Philosophie und hermeneutische Theologie: Heidegger, Bultmann und die Folgen*, Fink, Paderborn/München 2009.

Christlichkeit *versus* Christentum: Ein „Korrektiv“ für den Glauben und das Denken

Die Frage, ob die Theologie, als Wissenschaft des Glaubens, Gott begrifflich angemessen und nicht bloß vergegenständlichend ausdrücken kann, wird von Heidegger nach der Kehre der Mitte der 1930er Jahre nicht mehr explizit gestellt. Während dieser Kehre überdenkt Heidegger das Verhältnis zwischen Sein und Gott und sieht sich zu einer Neuformulierung der Gesamtproblematik des Göttlichen veranlasst. Seiner Meinung nach falle jetzt der Bereich, in dem Gott erscheinen könnte, nicht mehr nur mit der Existenzweise des Glaubens zusammen, sondern mit derjenigen Lichtung, in der das Dasein, ex-sistierend, inständig sei.³¹ Erst in einer solchen Lichtung könne jedwede Art von Seiendem – von dem aber das Göttlichen zu unterscheiden sei – zum Vorschein kommen, soweit das Sein selbst (das Seyn) an sich halte und mithin sich der Entbergung entziehe. Die Lichtung, in der das Seiende durch verschiedene auf es gerichtete Verhaltensweisen des Daseins entborgen werde, verberge deswegen das Sein. Aus diesem Grund denkt Heidegger die Eröffnung der Lichtung als einen Urstreit zwischen Verborgenheit und Unverborgenheit und nennt sie „Wahrheit“ – deutsche Übersetzung des griechischen Wortes „ἀλήθεια“, „Un-verborgenheit“ – des Seyns. Insofern sich die Lichtung nicht ohne den Beitrag des Menschen eröffnen könne, bestimmt Heidegger das Geschehen der Seynswahrheit als „Ereignis“ und versteht darunter den ursprünglichen Bezug zwischen Seyn und Menschenwesen, dank dessen jedes von ihnen in sein Eigenes – das für den Menschen das „Da-sein“ sei – kommen könne.

Heidegger ist der Ansicht, dass das bestimmte Denken des Seins, das sich im Laufe der Philosophiegeschichte entwickelt habe, es nie an sich selbst erfasst habe: verblendet vom Licht des in der Lichtung anwesenden Seienden, habe sich die Philosophie als „Meta-physik“ gestaltet und die Verborgenheit des Seyns, die der Unverborgenheit zugrunde liege, allmählich vergessen. Dies habe zur Vergessenheit des ganzen Wahrheitsgeschehens geführt und das Erscheinen des Göttlichen als solches unmöglich gemacht. Deshalb schreibt Heidegger im Aufsatz *Wozu Dichter?* (1946), dass nicht nur das Heilige, was so viel heißt wie die Spur zur Gottheit, im Zeitalter der Vollendung der Metaphysik unsichtbar geworden sei, sondern sogar die

³¹ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Brief über den »Humanismus«*, in GA 9, 313–364, hier 326, 329–330. Zur „Inständigkeit“ in der Lichtung als eine tiefere Weise, in der Heidegger das Existenzial der „Geworfenheit“ des Daseins ausgehend vom „Zuwurf“ des Seyns denkt, indem er die Wahrheit des Seins selbst als „Ereignis“ erfährt, vgl. F.-W. von Herrmann, *Wege ins Ereignis: Zu Heideggers »Beiträgen zur Philosophie«*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1994, 70–73.

Spuren zum Heiligen »beinahe ausgelöscht«³² seien. Im *Brief über den »Humanismus«* (1946) führt Heidegger aus: »Erst aus der Wahrheit des Seins läßt sich das Wesen des Heiligen denken. Erst aus dem Wesen des Heiligen ist das Wesen von Gottheit zu denken. Erst im Lichte des Wesens von Gottheit kann gedacht und gesagt werden, was das Wort „Gott“ nennen soll.«³³ Daraus folgt, dass es solange nicht möglich sei, eine Art von λόγος an Gott zu richten, bis die Vergessenheit der Seynswahrheit (die der vollendeten Metaphysik vollständig entfallen sei) nicht erfahren werde.

Aus diesem Grund und gleichzeitig mit der Entstehung von Heideggers Begeisterung für Hölderlin und für die griechische Auffassung des Göttlichen, die sich jener Dichter produktiv angeeignet hatte, vermehren sich die Aussagen gegen die traditionelle Theologie und die kirchlichen Institutionen in den heideggerschen Schriften ab den 1930er Jahren. Die Verstärkung von Heideggers Polemik läuft parallel mit der Präzisierung der terminologischen Unterscheidung zwischen „Christlichkeit“ und „Christentum“: während die erste den Glauben des Einzelnen beschreibt, meint das zweite die »geschichtlich-kulturell-politische Erscheinungsweise der Christlichkeit«³⁴, und umfasst sowohl »die politische Macht der Kirche«³⁵ als auch die katholische und die protestantische Theologie. Dank des Unterschiedes Christlichkeit–Christentum kann Heidegger die religiöse Erfahrung aus der Kritik ausschließen, die er (ausgehend von seiner Metaphysikauffassung) gegen die Theologie vorbringt. Außerdem erlaubt ihm jener Unterschied, den aufrichtigen Glauben vor der heftigen Polemik zu „retten“,

³² M. Heidegger, *Wozu Dichter?*, in *Holzwege*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, GA 5, 2003², 269–320, hier 272. Vgl. 319.

³³ M. Heidegger, *Brief über den »Humanismus«*, a. a. O., 351. Vgl. 352, 338–339. Gadamer bemerkt, dass Heidegger dem Wort, das Gott nennen sollte, in der Vollendung der Metaphysik ein Unvermögen zuspreche, welches demjenigen Wort analog sei, das das Sein selbst beschreiben müsse. Deshalb stoßen Theologie und Ontologie auf dieselbe unüberwindbare Schwierigkeit (H.-G. Gadamer, *Die religiöse Dimension*, in *Neuere Philosophie I: Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, Mohr, Tübingen, Bd. 3, 1987, 319).

³⁴ M. Heidegger, *Verschiedene Positionen – „Christlichkeit“ und „Christentum“*, in GA 16, 416. Dieser Unterschied deckt sich nicht mit demjenigen von Christlichkeit (der Glaube als Existenzweise) und Theologie (die Wissenschaft vom Glauben), die bereits im Jahre 1927, während des Vortrages *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (a. a. O., 52–55), eingeführt wurde. Zur Differenz von „Christlichkeit“ und „Christentum“ vgl. GA 82, 582; GA 97, 58, 205, 245. Für Heideggers Anknüpfung an Kierkegaards Unterscheidung von „Christenhed“ und „Christendom“ vgl. G. Thonhauser, *Ein Rätselhaftes Zeichen: Zum Verhältnis von Martin Heidegger und Søren Kierkegaard*, Walter De Gruyter, Berlin/New York 2016, 460–464.

³⁵ M. Heidegger, *Seminare: Hegel – Schelling*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 86, 2011, 248. Vgl. *Nietzsches Wort »Gott ist tot«*, in GA 5, 209–267, hier 219. Heideggers Kritik an der Theologie wurde auch von der „Luther Renaissance“ im 20. Jahrhundert beeinflusst.

welche er (auf der Grundlage seiner Privatmeinungen)³⁶ gegen die Jesuiten und die katholische Kirche sowie gegen ihr stillschweigendes Einverständnis mit der Machtposition der jeweilig erfolgreichen Partei formuliert.

All dies lässt sich am besten anhand der Notizen der *Schwarzen Hefte* aufweisen, die gegen Mitte der 1940er Jahre verfasst werden. In Ihnen verurteilt Heidegger den Diskurs der Theologen schlicht als »Gerede über Glauben und Wissen«³⁷. Diejenigen, die sich mit der Theologie befassen, seien sogar »die eigentlich Ungläubigen«³⁸, weil sie den Abgrund zwischen Glauben und Denken überwinden wollen, ohne sich ihrer Unvergleichbarkeit und darüber hinaus der Differenz zwischen den beiden und der Wissenschaft bewusst zu sein.

Heideggers Kritik an der Theologie wird von einer philosophischen Analyse begleitet, die auf eine „Verortung“ des Christentums in der Geschichte der Metaphysik ausgerichtet ist. Heidegger eignet sich Franz Overbecks Idee der Unmöglichkeit einer „christlichen Theologie“ an, d. h. eines begrifflichen Wissens des „wahren Urchristentums“, verunstaltet im „historischen Christentum“ durch die Kirchenväter.³⁹ Er wird wohl wegen der eingehenden Auseinandersetzung mit Nietzsche in den 1940er Jahren über Overbecks These mehr als zuvor nachgedacht haben. Tatsächlich wird er im *Vorwort zu Phänomenologie und Theologie* aus dem Jahr 1970 sowohl auf das Werk *Über die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie* (1873) von Overbeck als auch auf das gleichzeitig erschienene »erste Stück« der *Unzeitgemäßen Betrachtungen* von Nietzsche verweisen, indem er »das vielfältig Frag-Würdige der Christlichkeit des Christentums und seiner Theologie [...] wiederholt zu bedenken«⁴⁰ geben möchte.

Die Ausgabe des das Verhältnis zwischen Phänomenologie und Theologie behandelnden Vortrages vom Jahr 1970 ist Rudolf Bultmann gewidmet, dessen Schrift *Neues Testament und Mythologie. Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung*⁴¹ (1941) Heidegger in einer *Anmerkung* schon

³⁶ Zu einigen biographischen Gründen (z. B. die Kontrolle der philosophischen Fakultät durch die katholische Kirche), aufgrund derer Heidegger die kirchliche Institution kritisiert, vgl. J. Wolfe, *Religion in the Black Notebooks: Overview and Analysis*, in M. Björk/J. Svenungsson (Hrsg.), *Heidegger's Black Notebooks and the Future of Theology*, a. a. O., 23–48, hier 25–27.

³⁷ GA 97, 204.

³⁸ *Ibidem*. Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen VI–IX (Schwarze Hefte 1948/49–1951)*, hrsg. von Peter Trawny, GA 98, 2018, 238.

³⁹ Vgl. F. Overbeck, *Über die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie: Streit- und Friedensschrift*, Fritsch, Leipzig 1873, 11, 16.

⁴⁰ M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie*, a. a. O., 45.

⁴¹ R. Bultmann, *Neues Testament und Mythologie. Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung*, in Ders., *Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*, Evangelischer Verlag Albert-Lempp, München 1941, 27–69.

Mitte der 1940er Jahre erwähnt. Bultmanns Projekt von einer »Entmythisierung des Christlichen«⁴² – einer Befreiung der eigentlichen Botschaft Christi, des Kerygmas, von seinem mythologischen Überbau, der zu seinem Verstehen in einem vorwissenschaftlichen Zeitalter diene – wird als eine Anwendung der Methode der phänomenologischen Destruktion auf das Neue Testament von Heidegger geschätzt. Heidegger würdigt zwar Bultmanns Versuch, den ursprünglichen Kern der Verkündigung zu enthüllen,⁴³ und wertet die unleugbaren Berührungspunkte seiner Auffassung des Menschen und der Geschichte mit der Marburger Theologie auf.⁴⁴ Es liegt ihm jedoch viel daran, die Einzigartigkeit seiner Besinnung gegenüber irgendeiner theologischen Lehre oder Religion zu betonen. Er präzisiert darum, dass sein Denken nicht zum »Anti-Christentum« gehöre; es sich aber auch nicht als »christlich« bestimmen lasse. Er gibt zu: »Ich bin nicht Christ, und einzig deshalb [...], weil ich, christlich gesprochen, die Gnade nicht habe. Ich werde sie nie haben, solange meinem Weg das Denken«, das selbst »die Kluft zum Glauben« ist, »zugemutet bleibt.«⁴⁵ Mit diesen Worten will Heidegger sein Existieren von demjenigen eines Gläubigen unterscheiden, da er den Glauben in *Phänomenologie und Theologie* als eine Vollzugsweise des Daseins definiert hatte, mit der sich der Empfänger der Gnade ins Offenbarungsgeschehen füge und dank dem auferstandenen Christus wiedergeboren werde.⁴⁶

⁴² GA 97, 198; vgl. 199.

⁴³ Die Rolle, die Heideggers Denken dabei spielt, wurde von Paul Ricœur hervorgehoben in *Vorwort zur französischen Ausgabe von Rudolf Bultmanns „Jesus“* (1926) und in *Jesus Christus und die Mythologie* (1951) (veröffentlicht in *Hermeneutik und Strukturalismus. Der Konflikt der Interpretationen I*, übers. von J. Rütsche, Kösel, München 1973, 175–198). Hier unterscheidet Ricœur drei aufeinanderfolgende Stufen der Entmythisierung: die wissenschaftliche, die existenzialanalytische und die kerygmatische. Vgl. dazu E. Albano, *La filosofia ermeneutica in Rudolf Bultmann. Il processo di demitizzazione*, „Nicolaus. Rivista di studi storico-teologici dei PP. Domenicani“, 2016, 155–177, hier 167–175. Zur Fruchtbarkeit von Heideggers Freundschaft mit Bultmann, die im Jahr 1924 begann, und zu Heideggers Dialog mit der Marburger Theologie, vgl. H.-G. Gadamer, *Die Marburger Theologie*, in *Neuere Philosophie I*, a. a. O., 197–208.

⁴⁴ In seinem Brief an Bultmann vom 22.12.1948 dankt Heidegger Bultmann für die Zusendung des kurz zuvor erschienenen Buches *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Mohr, Tübingen 1984⁹) mit den Wörtern: »Deine „Theologie“ habe ich nur angelesen und mich sogleich an der klaren und scharfen Luft gefreut, die darin weht.« (R. Bultmann/M. Heidegger, *Briefwechsel*, a. a. O., 205).

⁴⁵ GA 97, 199. In GA 98, 23, 230, klagt Heidegger darüber, dass die Theologen sein Denken missverstehen und es als „gott- und glaubenslos“ missachten würden. Er spielt auf diese Anklage auch in M. Heidegger, *Vigiliae und Notturmo (Schwarze Hefte 1952/1953–1957)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 100, 2020, 89 an.

⁴⁶ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie*, a. a. O., 53–54.

Dass das Denken sich außerhalb der Perspektive einer Heilsgeschichte bewegen müsse, wird von Heidegger besonders in den Notizen der *Schwarzen Hefte* aus den 1940er Jahren betont, die auf die Differenz zwischen der Existenzialanalytik und der Philosophie Kierkegaards eingehen, unter die auch diejenige fällt, die mit *Mein Verhältnis zu Kierkegaard* betitelt ist.⁴⁷ In ihr beleuchtet Heidegger auf der einen Seite, inwiefern sich Kierkegaard vom deutschen Idealismus trotz seiner unbezweifelbaren Abhängigkeit von der hegelschen Philosophie unterscheide: in Kierkegaards Ausarbeitung des Existenzbegriffs liege »ein Versuch vor [...], innerhalb der abendländischen Metaphysik und zwar der neuzeitlichen von der Subjektivität aus das *Selbstsein* des Menschen wesentlich zu begreifen.«⁴⁸ Auf der anderen Seite gibt Heidegger gleichzeitig zu verstehen, dass gerade das, was Kierkegaards Sonderstellung ausmache (welche ihn dazu bewogen hatte, in *Sein und Zeit* einige kierkegaardsche Termini zu gebrauchen), den Wesensunterschied zu seinem eigenen Denken hervorscheinen lasse. Dieses wird von Heidegger in der Feststellung geäußert, dass »für Kierkegaard [...] die Absicht auf das christliche Heil«⁴⁹ gehe.

Mit diesem Ausdruck nimmt Heidegger Kierkegaard aus dem Bereich der Philosophie und sogar der traditionellen Theologie heraus,⁵⁰ soweit er diese „metaphysisch“, d. h. als Wissenschaft des höchsten Seienden zwecks der Begründung des Seienden im Ganzen versteht. Denn Philosophie und Theologie zielen auf die Allgemeinheit, wohingegen das christliche Heil den Einzelnen als solchen angehe: das Heil werde dem Empfänger der Gnade als Einzelfall gewährt, da der Glaubende ausschließlich als Einzelner die Wahl im Augenblick treffen

⁴⁷ Vgl. M. Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939–1941)*, hrsg. von P. Trawny, GA 96, 2014, 215–216. Gegen die »Zuflucht in die christliche „Heilsgeschichte“« vgl. GA 100, 73. Nach Heidegger vermöge »die christliche Wahrheit« (ebd., 176) das Wesen der Geschichte sowie das der Metaphysik nicht zu erfassen.

⁴⁸ GA 96, 215. Heidegger hatte sich über seine Stellung zu Kierkegaards Existenzbegriff schon in *Sein und Zeit* eindeutig geäußert (vgl. GA 2, 313, Fn. 6). Er geht auf Kierkegaards „Hegelianismus“ mehrmals ein, unter anderem in GA 9, 432–433; M. Heidegger, *Der Deutsche Idealismus (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) und die philosophische Problemlage der Gegenwart*, hrsg. von C. Strube, GA 28, 2011², 205; *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus*, hrsg. von G. Seubold, GA 49, 1991, 22–25; GA 63, 41–42; GA 82, 232, 234; GA 86, 762.

⁴⁹ GA 96, 215.

⁵⁰ In den 1930er und 1940er Jahren behauptet Heidegger, dass Kierkegaard weder Theologe noch Philosoph noch Metaphysiker sei (vgl. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, hrsg. von V.B. Schillbach, GA 6.2, 1997, 430–431; GA 49, 19; GA 82, 233–234). Heidegger nimmt die Selbstdefinition Kierkegaards als „religiösen Schriftsteller“ auf (vgl. *Nietzsches Wort »Gott ist tot«*, a. a. O., 249), ohne ihn damit abwerten zu wollen (vgl. dazu G. Thonhauser, *Ein Rätselfhaftes Zeichen*, a. a. O., 457–458).

müsse, kraft der er seine eigene Gegenwart und die Heilstat Christi so total miteinander vermittele, dass er die Kreuzigung und die Auferstehung wie etwas Gegenwärtiges erfahre und an ihr teilnehmen könne.⁵¹

Kierkegaards Ausrichtung auf das christliche Heil zeige aber deutlich, dass das Hauptanliegen seiner Überlegungen ein ganz anderes als dasjenige Heideggers sei: für Heidegger komme es nicht darauf an, ob der Mensch geheilt oder verdammt werden müsse, sondern ob er zum Da-sein zwecks des Wahrheitsgeschehnisses werde oder ob er sich den Weg zu sich selbst und zur Seynswahrheit versperre. Schon in *Sein und Zeit* beabsichtigte die »Besinnung auf das Selbstsein des Menschen« – so bemerkt Heidegger – die Beantwortung einer Frage, »die weder christlich noch gegenchristlich ist – vielmehr außerhalb des Christentums, außerhalb der Metaphysik überhaupt liegt.«⁵² Deshalb wird »das Selbstsein Kierkegaards [...] in „Sein und Zeit“ sogleich ursprünglicher – d. h. existenzial [...] vom Blickwinkel der existenzialen Analytik aus« gelesen, d. h. im Hinblick auf die »Vorbereitung der Wahrheit des Seins aus dem Wissen vom Dasein.«⁵³ Heidegger lehnt die Auslegung von *Sein und Zeit* ab, die dieses Werk als eine Wiederholung der Gedanken Kierkegaards mit dem einzigen Unterschied der Weglassung des christlichen Glaubens betrachtet, und fügt hinzu: »Von Jaspers mag gelten, daß er Kierkegaard säkularisiert, sofern er in der Tat [...] die Grundhaltung von Kierkegaard übernimmt (vgl. die Dreigliederung von Weltorientierung, Existenzerhellung und Metaphysik), also die Transzendenz theologisch bejaht – aber nicht christlich gläubig vollzieht.«⁵⁴

Heideggers Ansicht nach seien tatsächlich nicht die Ausführungen Kierkegaards, sondern diejenigen Jaspers das einleuchtendste Beispiel einer »christlichen Philosophie«.⁵⁵ Indem Heidegger die Einzigartigkeit seines Denkens

⁵¹ Für Kierkegaards Begriff der Gleichzeitigkeit vgl. S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophische Brocken*, hrsg. von L. Richter, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 2002³, 52, 65. Zu Kierkegaards Auffassung der Wahl des Einzelnen im Vergleich zu Rahners Konzept vgl. K.T. Kehrbach, *Der Begriff „Wahl“ bei Sören Kierkegaard und Karl Rahner: zwei Typen der Kirchenkritik*, Lang, Frankfurt am Main/Bern/New York/Paris 1992.

⁵² GA 96, 215–216.

⁵³ Ebd., 216. Vgl. GA 82, 150, 233, wo Heidegger sich freilich äußert: »[D]ie Begegnung mit Kierkegaard hat nichts Wesentliches für das Denken [...]. Philosophisch blieb Kierkegaard von Anfang an ein *Hindernis* und abwegig.« In den 1930er Jahren bezieht sich Heidegger auf Kierkegaard am häufigsten im Rahmen seiner Selbstinterpretation und zur Abgrenzung seines Denkens gegenüber Missverständnissen.

⁵⁴ GA 96, 216. In GA 82, 234, führt Heidegger aus, warum Jaspers Kierkegaard missdeutet habe. Er nimmt von Kierkegaards und Jaspers Stellung zur Existenz gleichzeitig Abstand in GA 100, 58.

⁵⁵ Heidegger definiert eine solche Philosophie als »Koppelung zweier „Halbheiten“« (die Christlichkeit werde mit dem Christentum, die Philosophie mit der Weltanschauung verwechselt) und das »christliche Denken« als »Falschmünzerei« (GA 96, 214–215, 268). Er zählt Jaspers' Existenzialismus implizit zur »christlichen Philosophie« und der Ton seiner Aufzeichnungen wird ziemlich verbittert,

gegen diejenigen verteidigt, die es zu nah am Projekt Kierkegaards oder am Existenzialismus Jaspers' ansiedeln, kritisiert er Jaspers' Ansatz als „psychologisch“ und seine Haltung als „moralistisch“ und „christlich-sentimental“.⁵⁶ Die Veröffentlichung des Buches *Der philosophische Glaube* (1948) veranlasst Heidegger dazu, Jaspers' Philosophie als eine verwirrte Verkoppelung von Denken und Christentum herabzuwürdigen, die sich des Begriffes der Transzendenz bediene, ohne ihn klar zu bestimmen.⁵⁷ In den *Schwarzen Heften* verschärft Heidegger einige Einwände, die er in seiner Rezension zu Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*⁵⁸ 1919–1921 erhoben hatte. Er hatte bereits von einem »philosophische[n] Versagen im Hinblick auf ein eigentliches Zugreifen und Losgehen auf die intendierten Probleme«⁵⁹ gesprochen, dessen Grund er im Mangel an Methodenbewusstsein erkannt habe. Heideggers Meinung nach habe Jaspers seinen Lebensbegriff aus der Zusammensetzung verschiedenartiger Einflüsse entwickelt, unter denen auch derjenige von Kierkegaards Auffassung des Absoluten zu nennen sei, die Jaspers jedoch »von seinem spezifisch lutherisch-religiösen beziehungsweise theologisch[en]«⁶⁰ Charakter gereinigt habe. Heidegger hatte der Verfahrensweise Jaspers das Vorgehen Kierkegaards mit dem Satz gegenübergestellt: »Man gibt gerade das Entscheidende an Kierkegaard aus der Hand, wenn« sein »Methodenbewußtsein übersehen, beziehungsweise in sekundärer Bedeutung genommen wird.«⁶¹

Das, was Heidegger von Kierkegaard in allen Phasen seines Denkweges uneingeschränkt bejaht hat, wird wohl tatsächlich in der Methode bestehen, da er Mitte der 1940er Jahre noch anmerkt, dass der Däne die Aufgabe, »ein Korrektiv zu sein«, erfülle »und so zugleich, allerdings für Achtsame, auf das Korrektivische«⁶² hingewiesen habe. Einen ähnlichen Auftrag will Heidegger im Bereich des Denkens übernehmen: Wenn Kierkegaard die Christlichkeit vom Christentum scharf unterschieden habe, so beansprucht Heidegger, das Denken vom Glauben, der Philosophie und der Theologie bzw. der Metaphysik abzugrenzen.⁶³ Heidegger möchte »ein Korrektiv«

nachdem er vom Gutachten Jaspers' für den Bereinigungsausschuss (wiedergegeben in M. Heidegger/K. Jaspers, *Briefwechsel (1920–1963)*, hrsg. von W. Biemel, Piper, München/Zürich 1992, 270–273) erfährt. Er erwähnt Jaspers „Geheimbericht“ in GA 97, 61–62.

⁵⁶ Vgl. GA 97, 62, 199.

⁵⁷ Vgl. ebd., 62, 91, 138, 200, 258, 314, 335; GA 98, 188, 191.

⁵⁸ K. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Piper, München 1994².

⁵⁹ M. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers »Psychologie der Weltanschauungen«*, in GA 9, 1–44, hier 15.

⁶⁰ Ebd., 27.

⁶¹ Ebd., 41. Vgl. Karl Löwiths Bemerkung dazu in seinem Brief an Martin Heidegger vom 17.08.1921 (in M. Heidegger/K. Löwith, *Briefwechsel*, a. a. O., 47).

⁶² GA 97, 245.

⁶³ Vgl. *ibidem*. Für das Verhältnis und den Unterschied zwischen Wissenschaft, Philosophie, Theologie, Glauben und Denken, vgl. 199, 299, 314–315; GA 98, 7, 18, 148, 158–159, 297; GA 100, 107, 110,

für diejenigen sein, die dem absurden Anspruch verfallen, Gott zu denken und an das Sein zu glauben.⁶⁴ Somit will er dem Denken ein Interesse an der Gottesfrage dennoch nicht absprechen. Er verfolgt vielmehr das Ziel, das „Wissen“ von Gott „aufzuheben“, um dem „Glauben“ an ihn „den Platz einzuräumen“⁶⁵.

144; GA 82, 582, 587. Heidegger skizziert die Grenzen der „Philosophie“ der Religion seit seinen ersten Vorlesungen, in denen er eine andere „Phänomenologie“ der Religion entwickeln wollte (vgl. P. Stagi, *Der faktische Gott*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2007, 75–92).

⁶⁴ Vgl. GA 97, 193.

⁶⁵ Heideggers Verfahren steht hier demjenigen Kants nahe, der in der *Vorrede* zur zweiten Auflage der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* schrieb: »Ich mußte also das Wissen aufheben, um zum Glauben Platz zu bekommen« (I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, hrsg. von J. Timmermann, Meiner, Hamburg 1998, B XXX, 28; vgl. B XXIX, 27).

KNOWLEDGE-HOW, ABILITY, AND COUNTERFACTUAL SUCCESS. A STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION¹

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ABSTRACT. The paper is thematically divided into two parts. In the first part, we will address the arguments raised against the anti-intellectualist thesis that ability is a necessary condition for knowledge-how, present Katherine Hawley's proposed generic solution based on counterfactual success in order to overcome these arguments, followed by an analysis of Bengson & Moffett's counterargument to Hawley's counterfactual success thesis [CST]. We will conclude that Bengson & Moffett's counterargument misses its target, so that, as far as we are concerned, Katherine Hawley's proposal, namely CST, is safe. In the second part of the paper, we will provide a statistical interpretation of one of Hawley's more specific proposals, counterfactual success with occasional failure [CSTF], and assess a couple of philosophically challenging consequences that follow from such an interpretation.

Keywords: *know-how, ability, counterfactual success, intellectualism, anti-intellectualism, null hypothesis significance testing, effect size.*

Introduction

The epistemological discussions surrounding knowledge-how are canonically² divided as debates between two broad views about what knowledge-how consists

¹ I would like to thank Ciprian Bogdan, Ion Copoeru, Mihai Rusu, and Roberta Șerban for their careful reading, suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this paper. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers and participants in the Wednesday Research Seminar hosted by the Department of Theoretical Philosophy (University of Bucharest) & CELFIS, where an earlier version of the paper was presented; I greatly benefited from their helpful comments and suggestions.

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² See (Fantl, 2017)

in and what its nature³ is. The first view posits that to have knowledge-how is, in effect, to have propositional knowledge under certain modes of presentation or ways of thinking, while the second view is characterized by the idea that to have knowledge-how is to possess a certain ‘power’⁴, namely a certain ability or disposition, to act accordingly. Beginning with Gilbert Ryle⁵, the first view has come to be known as ‘intellectualism’, and the second view, as ‘anti-intellectualism’.

Anti-intellectualism came in two flavors, according to the hypothesized nature of the ‘power’ in question: an ability, or a disposition. In the remainder of the paper we will focus on the ability account of power. Ability, in anti-intellectualism, is related to knowledge-how either as a necessary condition or as a sufficient condition. As a consequence, many intellectualists have tried to undermine one or both of these logical relationships. In order to accurately describe the positions under scrutiny here, the proposed arguments and counter-arguments, we will adopt Bengson & Moffett’s⁶ terminology, definitions, and specifications. First, we will consider the arguments raised against the anti-intellectualist thesis that ability is a necessary condition for knowledge-how, present Katherine Hawley’s proposed solution to overcome these arguments, and the intellectualist response to Hawley’s proposal. Then, we will argue that the response misses its target, so that, as far as we are concerned, Katherine Hawley’s proposal is safe. In the second part of the paper we will provide a statistical interpretation of one of Hawley’s proposals and assess a couple of philosophically challenging consequences that follow from such an interpretation.

Counterfactual success and knowledge how

Following Bengson & Moffett⁷ we will specify the thesis that ability is a necessary condition for knowledge-how as:

[AIN] Having the ability to ϕ , or having had the ability to ϕ at some time in the past, is necessary for knowing how to ϕ .

The intellectualists arguments against AIN can be summarized in a paradigmatic example:

³ The distinction between the nature and grounding of knowledge how can be tracked in (Bengson & Moffett, 2012, pp. 162-163)

⁴ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012)

⁵ (Ryle, 1949)

⁶ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012)

⁷ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012)

Ski Instructor. Pat has been a ski instructor for twenty years, teaching people how to do complex ski stunts. He is in high demand as an instructor, since he is considered to be the best at what he does. Although an accomplished skier, he has never been able to do the stunts himself. Nonetheless, over the years he has taught many people how to do them well. In fact, a number of his students have won medals in international competitions and competed in the Olympic games⁸.

Now, what the intellectualists argue using the ski instructor example is that Pat knows how to do complex stunts, although he lacks the ability to do them, so, voilà, a case of knowledge-how without the corresponding ability. We think that the argument can be resisted, although we are not going to analyze the argument, explore and develop the strategies by which it can be countered. Instead, we will focus on the proposal advanced by Katherine Hawley⁹ to handle such arguments. The idea underlining Katherine Hawley's proposal is that the tension between what counts as evaluable worlds with respect to ability vs knowledge-how is superficial: we tend to evaluate ability in worlds very close to the actual world, and knowledge-how at worlds which are very close to worlds similar with the actual world, but an elementary examination of the tasks involved in such cases should dissolve the apparent tension. So, a careful reformulation of AIN in terms of counterfactual situations should fix the problems that the ski instructor example generates.

Counterfactual Success Thesis [CST]: x knows how to ϕ only if:
if x tried to ϕ under normal conditions, x would succeed at ϕ -ing.

To see how CST may be used to counter the argument based on the ski instructor example, one should note that once we remove the 'under normal circumstances' clause (for there is nothing abnormal in Pat's conditions), the evaluable worlds for Pat's know-how respect CST.

Bengson & Moffett concede that CST might accommodate the argument based on the ski instructor, but they think that the anti-intellectualist construal of AIN in terms of CST remains problematic. To this end, they have proposed an argument based on the following situation:

Pi. Louis, a competent mathematician, knows how to find the n^{th} numeral, for any numeral n , in the decimal expansion of π . He knows the algorithm and knows how to apply it in a given case. However, because of principled computational limitations,

⁸ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012, p. 168)

⁹ (Hawley, 2003)

Louis (like all ordinary human beings) is unable to find the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π ¹⁰.

The argument goes like this: ‘Notice that conditions would have to be extremely abnormal for Louis to succeed in finding the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π when he tries: he would have to be superhuman, as it were. Presumably, then, we need to consider very “distant” or “dissimilar” worlds to locate one in which Louis succeeds in his attempt. In this world, and presumably all others even remotely like it, Louis cannot reasonably hope to succeed in finding the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π when he tries. His inability is pervasive. Yet he still knows how to find it. So the counterfactual success thesis—with or without the ‘under normal conditions’ clause—is false. Call this the problem of pervasive inability for the anti-intellectualist thesis that an ability to act is necessary for knowing how to act.’¹¹

Under scrutiny¹², however, *Pi* turns out to be a poor argument against AIN or CST, for it misconstrues the way in which ability or counterfactual success are employed in these theses. Along the lines of Hawley’s¹³ analysis, one should distinguish the relevancy of the tasks in question with respect to the envisaged know-how. At close examination, we discern in *Pi* two distinct tasks, one which consists in finding the n^{th} numeral in the decimal expansion of π , the other consisting in finding the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π ; let us assume that the former task is understood in what we consider to be the usual sense¹⁴, that

¹⁰ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012, p. 170)

¹¹ (Bengson & Moffett, 2012, p. 171)

¹² The analysis of *Pi* that we are going to present differs from that of (Cath, 2015); although we are sympathetic to the idea underling Cath’s argument against *Pi*, that ‘rather than simply knowing how to Φ one always knows how to Φ -in-circumstances-C1 or Φ -in-circumstances-C2’ (Cath, 2015, p. fn 14), so that the corresponding tasks for Louis are: find-the- 10^{46} -numeral-in-the-decimal-expansion-of- π -in-circumstances-where-he-has-much-greater-computational-powers, and find-the- 10^{46} -numeral-in-the-decimal-expansion-of- π -in-circumstances-where-he-has-his-current-computational-powers, we do not agree with Cath’s verdict that Louis knows how and has the corresponding ability with respect to the first task, but neither with respect to the second: we fail to understand why Louis doesn’t know-how to find-the- 10^{46} -numeral-in-the-decimal-expansion-of- π -in-circumstances-where-he-has-his-current-computational-powers, given that he has mastered the algorithm.

¹³ See Hawley’s analysis of the difference between assessments of knowledge-how vs ability in (Hawley, 2003, p. 23).

¹⁴ In order to show that this is the usual sense, consider the case of multiplication for the same situation: Louis knows how to multiply two natural numbers, and we think there is consensus that he has the corresponding ability (being ‘a competent mathematician’), but, obviously, he is unable to find the result of the multiplication of two natural numbers, each composed of 10^{46} digits. Are such extreme cases powerful enough to make us reconsider the attribution of ability to Louis? Our answer is that we will still maintain that Louis has the generic ability of multiplying two natural

is, for reasonable values¹⁵ of n . The first task, then, has a generic character, and assuming the possession of the corresponding know-how, is achievable under normal human conditions and circumstances, while the second task, all things being equal, is not. From this point on, we will qualify as ‘relevant’ a task that, assuming the possession of the corresponding know-how, is achievable under normal human conditions and circumstances, and as ‘irrelevant’ one whose achievement, assuming the full possession of the corresponding know-how, depends on conditions and circumstances that go beyond what is humanly achievable. The two above-mentioned tasks determine two corresponding abilities or counterfactual successes: the generic ability or counterfactual success of/in finding the n^{th} numeral in the decimal expansion of π , and the specific ability or counterfactual success of/in finding the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π ; obviously, of these two pairs of abilities and counterfactual successes, only the first one qualifies as relevant. We should emphasize that only relevant tasks, abilities, and counterfactual successes are the subject matter of CST and AIN, under a proper construal of these theses.

In light of this distinction, one can observe that Louis’s inability to find the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π is based on ‘principled computational limitations’, and, so, is irrelevant to his know-how. The relevant ability in Louis’s case is the ability to find the n^{th} numeral in the decimal expansion of π , and we can safely assume from the characterization of Louis as ‘a competent mathematician’ that he possesses it: we assume that he can successfully determine the n^{th} numeral in the decimal expansion of π , given a reasonable value of n with respect to his computational capacities. Of course, his know-how is not limited by his computational capacities, after all he mastered the algorithm, but the fact that his corresponding relevant ability is, has, again, nothing to do with the ability of determining the decimal expansion of π : if Louis’s computational capacity and memory were to miraculously be extended, with no extra requirements besides those that he already possesses – know how + corresponding relevant ability – Louis would succeed in determining the 10^{46} numeral.

In order to emphasize our last point, let us return to the ski instructor example, and suppose that Pat knows not only how to do complex ski stunts, but also has the ability to do them. Now, although it is uncontroversial that Pat has the ability to do the complex ski stunts (we have assumed this), Pat is unable to perform the $10^{46\text{th}}$ stunt. However, as we can observe, his inability has nothing to do with

numbers, even when confronted with such extreme cases, because we implicitly understand that such an ability involves only reasonable values of natural numbers with respect to human computational capacities.

¹⁵ Reasonable with respect to human computational capacities, that is.

his know-how or the generic ability to do complex ski stunts; it is a pseudo-inability, so to say, based on inherent human limitations: nobody has the ability to do something which requires drastically transcending normal human conditions, although they have the ability to perform the same type of actions within the area circumscribed by their human limitations. In CST terms, counterfactual success should be evaluated only if it is humanly achievable, that is, under normal human conditions, there is at least one accessible nearby possible world or counterfactual situation where success is achievable.

There is another point worth mentioning which reinforces our verdict: ability, we reckon, as employed in AIN, has a generic character, which explains its versatile applicability in different contexts, so we regard as unwarranted any numerical requirement associated with an ability, such as, for example, the ability to shoot the 10^{46} th target, the ability to play the 10^{46} th chess game, or the ability to find the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π .

Consequently, *Pi* should be judged by the same standards as the *Ski instructor* example: Louis knows how to find the decimal expansion of π and has the corresponding generic ability within the limits defined by his cognitive conditions, just as we agreed that Pat knows how to do complex ski stunts, has the corresponding generic ability, but, obviously, and unrelated to his knowledge-how or generic ability, he is unable to perform the 10^{46} th stunt.

Technically, our analysis amounts to considering that counterfactual success or the possession of the relevant ability with respect to knowledge-how should be attainable under normal human conditions, that is, the accessibility relation that circumscribes the range of possible worlds with respect to the relevant ability or counterfactual success should be defined by human attainability. Success in counterfactual worlds, or ability, is relevant for know-how only if there is at least one proximal world at which success is attainable. As a consequence, 'pervasive inability', that is, inability or lack of success in all accessible counterfactual worlds is irrelevant and, thus, should be disregarded, having no bearing whatsoever on AIN or CST. Obviously, Louis's inability to find the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π occurs at all worlds accessible from its human vantage point, so its corresponding 'inability' bears nothing against CST. In conclusion, we think that the argument against CST based on *Pi* misses its target by misconstruing 'ability' and 'counterfactual success' in AIN and CST. In conclusion, CST should be amended by the stipulation that ϕ should be relevant or accessible.

So far, we have presented our defense of Hawley's account of knowledge-how against the so-called 'problem of pervasive inability', next we will focus on developing a positive reinforcement of her proposal by appeal to certain well-known and widely used statistical techniques.

Counterfactual success with occasional failure. A statistical interpretation

In her paper 'Success and Knowledge-How', Hawley presents two objections against her strategy of rendering AIN in terms of CST. The first one is a variant of the ski instructor, which we have already shown how to dismantle, and the second is based on the occurrence of failures even in the presence of certified or at least agreed knowledge-how. Hawley proposes and shortly discusses two options¹⁶ for handling such cases: the first is to define what a subject knows how to do in terms of just those circumstances in which the subjects succeeds, so that under those circumstances, success is guaranteed, and the second option is to allow some room for failure, arguing that what counts is that the subject would usually succeed in performing the task.

We are going to focus on the second option described by Hawley, but not before explaining our reasons for endorsing this option. And the reasons have to do with the shortcomings of the first option. The first reason concerns the circular characterization of knowledge-how under this option: if x knows how to ϕ under circumstances c , then, if x tried to ϕ , under circumstances c , x would successfully ϕ , where $c =$ circumstances in which x succeeds in ϕ -ing. Of course, as Hawley argues¹⁷, the circularity involved here is benign, for two reasons: first, knowledge-how and counterfactual success must be supplemented with justification¹⁸ in order to link them¹⁹, and, second, often, competence is defined, without a pernicious logical fallacy, with respect to competent performers: if x is a competent performer, then x succeeds under c , where $c =$ circumstances in which a competent performer succeeds. Still, that leaves us with an unrealistically fine-grained conception of

¹⁶ Hawley doesn't explicitly endorse one of the two proposed solutions, although when comparing them, she describes the epistemological virtue of the first option as more desirable: 'The first option has the advantages of theoretical simplicity, retaining a straight counterfactual success condition, whilst allowing some leeway in which task is discussed. The second option introduces some fuzziness into the standards for knowledge how, rather than into what is known' (Hawley, 2003, p. 24).

¹⁷ (Hawley, 2003, p. 24)

¹⁸ Hawley's analysis of knowledge-how mirrors the traditional epistemological analysis of knowledge-that; she puts true belief and knowledge in correspondence with counterfactual success and knowledge-how, so that the link between true belief and knowledge, namely justification, is mirrored by a link between counterfactual success and knowledge-how; she refers to this latter link as 'warrant'. However, she sometimes writes as if knowledge-how must be supplemented with warrant in order to explicate counterfactual success, for example, when she says that '[s]he may, if she also satisfies some "warrant" condition, know how to ...' (Hawley, 2003, p. 24) or 'knowledge-how requires warrant as well as success' (Hawley, 2003, p. 24).

¹⁹ So, to characterize one in terms that involves itself is not 'viciously circular' as she (Hawley, 2003, p. 24) puts it.

knowledge-how: 'She may, if she also satisfies some "warrant" condition, know how to make delicious bread when ingredients are available, she has normal use of her body, she is concentrating, the oven doesn't break down half way through baking, ... there is no need to fill in the dots.'²⁰

The second reason is that under this option failure is impossible, which, we consider, is unrealistic, and diminishes the heuristic character of mistakes and failures in the process of learning, even in the case of experts. We are not going to supplement our remarks with studies, empirical confirmations, and arguments, suffice to note that failure is virtually present in all expert performance and that learning and mastering know-hows is inevitably linked with mistakes and failures.

The second option involves, as we mentioned, rectifying CST so as to make room for occasional failure:

Counterfactual Success Thesis with occasional Failure [CSTF]:

x knows how to ϕ only if: if x tried to ϕ under normal conditions, x would usually succeed in the relevant ϕ -ing²¹.

We think that CSTF is a more accurate and defensible thesis: it is more accurate in the light of the last paragraph's remarks, as it leaves room for failure, and is more defensible for two reasons: first, it can be reinforced by well-established statistical methods, and second, as a consequence of using the statistical techniques, it leads to a couple of significant results with regard to knowledge-how and ability. Let us briefly mention two such results, one of which will be in our focus in due time. Firstly, the statistical construal of CSTF adequately addresses the problem of establishing thresholds²² which certify the possession of knowledge how. Secondly, a certain desirable graduality in possessing an ability, and maybe know-how, emerges, but more on this later.

Returning to the first result, we note that equipping CSFT with more or less arbitrarily imposed thresholds that would establish the possession of knowhow or ability has at least two shortcomings that the statistical interpretation circumvents. The decision procedure of simply attributing ability for values exceeding the threshold lacks any other desirable quantitative qualifications, such as the probability of errors

²⁰ (Hawley, 2003, p. 24)

²¹ (Hawley, 2003, p. 24)

²² Hawley is definitely aware of the difficulty of using thresholds as means of determining the possession of knowledge how: 'Presumably, there is no exact threshold which qualifies the subject as knowing how to X under C. Again, the threshold may be set by reference to competent performers' (Hawley, 2003, p. 24).

(false positives and false negatives, or in statistical jargon, type I and type II errors); moreover, the attribution of ability or know how based on this procedure is insensitive to the number of trials, although it is intuitively obvious²³ that the number of trials should play a significant role.

In what follows, we are not going to fully articulate how statistical methods can be used to give credentials to CSTF; we will only sketch the idea behind how this can be achieved. And the rough idea is that we can use probability distributions and tests of statistical significance based on such distributions to specify how 'usually' in CSFT could be statistically construed:

Counterfactual Success Thesis Statistically construed [CSTS]:

x knows how to ϕ only if: if x tried to ϕ under normal conditions,
x would succeed in a statistically significant manner in the relevant ϕ -ing.

The statistical package to be used has one essential function: to give a mathematical meaning to the expression 'statistically significant' as it occurs in CSTS. We are going to cover how this is accomplished by means of a well-known example, but to give the headline, to establish whether the successes in the relevant ϕ -ing obtained by x in some trials are statistically significant means that they are (extremely) unlikely²⁴ to be caused by some stochastic process. With the discriminating tool of statistical testing deployed, we can infer, with a certain sub-unitary degree of confidence, of course, whether x's successes are likely due to some stochastic process or something else is likely at play, namely the expression of an ability. In this sense, we can say that results that fail to achieve statistical significance are more likely caused by randomness, or luck, or mere guesses, so they amount to lack of an appropriate ability, while those who achieve statistical significance are likely to be the expression of some sort of an ability.

Resuming, in order to establish whether x knows how to ϕ , according to CSTS, we need a mathematical framework that would enable us to infer whether the number of successes registered by x in successive trials of ϕ -ing qualifies x as succeeding in a statistically significant manner or not, that is, whether x has the corresponding relevant ability or not. As mentioned above, the inference has a statistical character, so, we need to qualify both the inference as well as the attribution of the ability/know-how based on statistical significance as having a (sub-unitary) degree of confidence.

²³ After all, there is a significant difference between the same percentage of successes out of, say, 10 trials or 1000 trials.

²⁴ How unlikely depends on a couple of factors which can be adjusted to various demands of precision.

In standard statistical tests of significance, this mathematical framework takes the form of a probability distribution of a variable²⁵ that quantitatively encodes the outcomes of a random process. Accordingly, an appropriate framework should provide a probabilistic description of the expected distribution of successes in all the accessible counterfactual situations, assuming the absence of the ability to ϕ – which, as we stated, corresponds to a random distribution of successes. Standard tests of statistical significance are built upon such an assumption, called the *null hypothesis*, hence the description of such tests as *null hypothesis significance testing* (NHST). In inferential statistics, where NHST are widely used, the standard procedure is to identify, assuming the null hypothesis, a mathematical model in the form of a probability distribution²⁶ (taking also into consideration the parameter and the characteristics of the population of interest, of course), against which the difference²⁷ between the observed and the expected value(s) is determined, together with the associated probability of observing such a difference. The probability distribution that follows from the null hypothesis and the relevant characteristics of the parameter & population of interest is described by the probability mass function (pmf)/probability density function (pdf)²⁸ or the cumulative distribution function (cdf). A decision procedure is, then, applied to the value of the test statistic, and, accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected or not.

Next, we will show a demo of how the standard procedure in NHST can be successfully²⁹ applied to cases of know-how and corresponding relevant ability that form the subject matter of CSTS. To illustrate such an application, we are going to present a well-known experiment, *lady tasting tea*, first described and analyzed by Ronald A. Fisher³⁰. A lady colleague of Fisher, Muriel Bristol, claimed to have the ability to distinguish whether the tea or the milk was added first to a cup. So, ϕ = distinguish whether the tea or the milk was poured first in a cup, and, in order to determine whether the lady would significantly succeed in the relevant ϕ -ing according to the NHST protocol, one needs to set up an adequate mathematical model. To this end, Fisher devised an experiment involving 8 cups of tea and milk, 4 of which were prepared by one method, the rest by the other. The lady would have to choose four cups prepared by the same method or recipe – tea first, milk

²⁵ Such variables are known as ‘random variables’.

²⁶ The mathematical model can be a direct consequence of the null hypothesis, as will be the case with the example below, or a consequence of the sampling distribution of the parameter, thus, deriving from a more complex mathematical result, such as the Central Limit Theorem.

²⁷ The difference, measured in the standard deviations of the probability distribution, (and the associated probability – commonly known as p-value) represents the test statistic value(s).

²⁸ If the random variable is discrete, its distribution is described by pmf; pdf is used when the random variable is continuous.

²⁹ Pun intended.

³⁰ (Fisher, 1935)

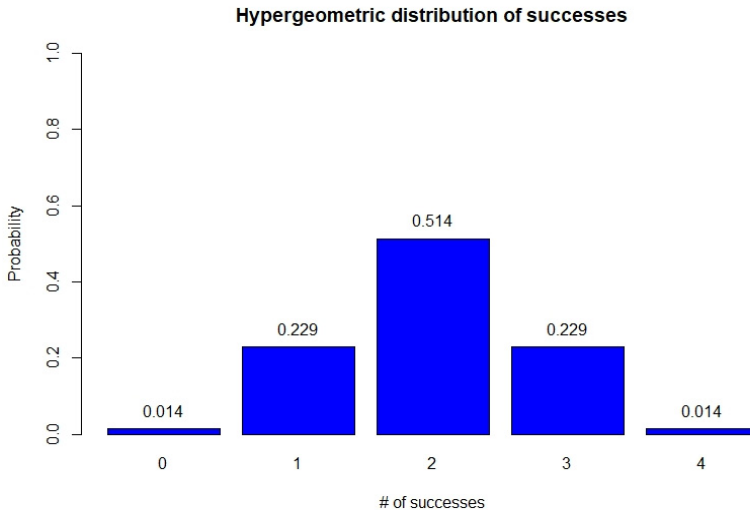
after, or milk first, tea after. Accordingly, the range of possible worlds determined by the design of the experiment is the sample space of all the possible outcomes, and the ‘if x tried to ϕ under normal conditions, x would succeed in a statistically significant manner in the relevant ϕ -ing’ part of CSTS is constituted by a statistically significant sequence of successes that resulted from the lady’s choices. A simple combinatorial argument tells us that the number of different possible outcomes of choosing 4 cups out of a total of 8 is: $\binom{8}{4} = 70$.

In this setting, the null hypothesis, that the lady doesn’t have the claimed ability – which amounts to considering that the number of successes is due to pure chance –, determines a well-known probability distribution of the number of successes: the hypergeometric distribution. Technically, the number of successes in this instance is a random variable $X \sim HG(n, K, N)$ whose pmf is:

$$P(X=x) = \frac{\binom{K}{x} \binom{N-K}{n-x}}{\binom{N}{n}}, \text{ for } \max(0, n-N+K) \leq x \leq \min(n, K)$$

where n = # of draws, N = population volume, x = # of successes in the sequence of n draws, K = # of existent successes in N . The expected value of $X \sim HG(n, K, N)$ is $E(X) = \frac{nK}{N}$.

For the *lady tasting tea* case, $n = 4, N = 8, K = 4; x = \overline{0, 4}$, so $E(X) = 2$, and the probability distribution³¹ of the number of successes is:



³¹ We have plotted the probability distribution of the number of successes using ‘R’ software.

We can interpret³² the probability histogram of the distribution of the number of successes in a modal setting, bearing in mind the connection between the vocabulary of modal logic and that of statistics: the range of possible worlds is the sample space determined by the design of the experiment, the (hypergeometric) distribution of successes determines a partition on the sample space (so on the range of possible worlds), and the probability associated with each possible number of successes is the weight of the corresponding equivalence class of possible worlds relative to the range of all such possible worlds. In this setting, we can interpret the probability histogram as a description of the accessibility relation equipped with a probability or weight that follows from centering on a world that is characterized by the null hypothesis.

Now, as can be seen from the probability distribution histogram, choosing all 4 cups prepared by the same method is so far from the expected value $E(X)$ of choosing only 2 such cups, that the probability of observing such a result assuming – and we cannot underemphasize the importance of this assumption – the null hypothesis, that the lady doesn't have the corresponding ability, is approximately 1.4%. It should be obvious that the all-draws-successful probability is $1/70$, that is, the number of favorable cases corresponding to all-draws-successful divided by the total number of possible cases, i.e. the cardinality of the sample space.

Fisher argued, based on a statistical norm active among his peers, that probabilities of observing the data under 5%, assuming the null hypothesis, should be interpreted as a good indication that the null hypothesis should be abandoned. To this day, this decision rule is active in interpreting statistical results in social sciences³³. In our case, the only acceptable case for rejecting the null hypothesis, according to this decision rule, would be for the lady to correctly identify all the 4 cups prepared by the same method. Anecdotal evidence³⁴ suggests that the lady managed to have done that, so the conclusion of Fisher's experiment was that the lady, most likely, possessed such a know-how or ability. In NHST, the decision rule is

³² The interpretation is not original, it just builds upon an analogy that Kripke draws between his conception of modal logic and the way probabilities are conceived in the mathematical framework of probability theory (Kripke, 1980, pp. 16-18).

³³ Of course, there are other, more severe, thresholds in social sciences; in physics, for example, as it employs statistical methods, the standard for rejecting the null is extremely higher than in social sciences, but that is partly due to the difference in variability of the phenomena studied by the two fields.

³⁴ David Salzburg, in his 2001 book, *The Lady Tasting Tea. How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century* writes that 'Fisher does not describe the outcome of the experiment that sunny summer afternoon in Cambridge. But Professor Smith (H. Fairfield Smith, a colleague of Fisher, – my note) told me that the lady identified every single one of the cups correctly' (Salzburg, 2001, p. 8).

usually more complex, requiring a precise specification of the critical values for the rejection area of the probability distribution in question, according to the type of test to be performed (one-tail, two-tails), but the underlying idea is that the critical values on the probability distribution should correspond to a p-value of at most 5%.

Now, what we have just described is an example of a real-life application of NHST protocols to determine whether a certain individual has a certain ability; obviously, the statistical inference that the lady, most likely, has the claimed ability is probabilistic (as we mentioned several times above); we didn't establish with certainty that the lady possessed such an ability, only that the lack of such an ability on her side is improbable.

Obviously, Fisher's exact test, as it is known, is not a singleton on the statistical market of tests, and the adequate way of testing statistical significance depends on the ϕ in question, on the characteristics of the population, etc., more generally, on the particular situation that is analyzed. Of course, there certainly are cases that elude such a straightforward modelling, for example, because there isn't a clear-cut way to define success. Various solutions can be found and implemented in such cases, all heavily dependent on the particularities of the situation under analysis, but a proper analysis of such solutions is too lengthy to be addressed in this paper. Here, we limit ourselves to enumerate a couple of easily accessible such solutions: maybe a threshold to define success could be consensually agreed upon, maybe other statistical methods could be used to transform performances measured on a non-dichotomic scale into a dichotomous one without losing any relevant information, maybe new tests can be developed in order to answer such demands, we certainly don't intend to assert that such solutions are always available, so that, in principle, could exhaust all the cases that constitute the subject matter of CSTF.

The statistical tests used to discern the likelihood of the possession of an ability ϕ , can be, and, in statistical practice, are doubled by considerations regarding the effect size. For our purposes, it suffices to say that the effect size measures³⁵ the magnitude of the difference between the observed and the expected values, so, it is a reliable evaluation of the strength or the intensity of the results usually obtained in a previous step of statistical significance testing. In a sense, we can say that the effect size informs us about the importance or impact of the observed difference. The distinction between tests of statistical significance and measures of effect size can be sharpened by looking at the interpretations attached to these procedures and their corresponding values: a statistical significance test tells us whether *there is* an effect, under the form of a statistically significant difference, whereas the value of the effect

³⁵ The measurement is usually in appropriate (i.e. contextually-determined) standard deviations, but see the subsequent discussion.

size *measures the magnitude of this effect*, whether it is small, medium, strong, for example. So, it should come as no surprise that one can encounter results that are statistically significant, yet their effect size is small, so, although there is a significant deviation from the expected value (under the null hypothesis), the deviation in question is small, and, often, unimportant in practice. To illustrate further, suppose that under the null hypothesis we expect a mean value of 15, we observe a mean value of 17, that differs statistically significant from the expected, but the effect size, measured by Cohen's d ³⁶, say, is 0.1. Then, under the widely used guide of interpreting indicators of effect size proposed by Cohen³⁷, the above-mentioned effect size is considered to be small³⁸, so, the difference, we can safely conclude, is not important. As the illustration suggests, the effect size is not measured by a one-size-fits-all measure, there are numerous custom-made indicators to adequately account for the different parameters and populations of interest; a discussion about the complexities involved in the design and use of adequate measures of effect sizes is a vast subject, way beyond the scope of this paper. Before turning to some philosophically relevant consequences of using the statistical package of NHST & effect size, it is worth mentioning that because CSTS is expressed in terms of success and failure, the distributions involved in the statistical procedures of testing the possession of an ability are, mathematically speaking, simple, mostly binomial and hypergeometric, but that doesn't mean there is an accompanying mathematically simple and easy to understand measure of the effect size. In fact, several indicators for measuring effect size have been proposed for the distributions relevant to CSTS, ranging from relative risk (RR), odds ratio (OR), risk difference (RD), to the binomial effect size display (BESD), number needed to treat (NNT) or Cohen's h ³⁹. In the *lady testing tea* case, several reliable measures not included in the list above could be used to determine the effect size, by displaying the data (and consequently construe Fisher's exact test) in a 2x2 contingency table and use statistical indices specific for such tables for measuring the strength of an association, such as Pearson's ϕ , Cramer's V, the contingency coefficient, etc.

The variability of the size effect implies that the ability tested according to CSTS varies also, so, in a sense, a consequence of interpreting CST statistically is that ability should be placed on a scale, not considered a have-it-or-not attribute.

³⁶ Cohen's d is a popular measure of the effect size, for its formula and use see (Cohen, 2008).

³⁷ (Cohen, 2008)

³⁸ Because Cohen's d is measured on the standard deviation metric of an approximately normal curve, the value 0.1 could be interpreted as indicating that the percentage of values that are below the observed mean of 17 is 53.98%, under the assumption of the null hypothesis.

³⁹ See https://www.psychometrica.de/effect_size.html for more information, examples and online calculators of these indices.

This graduality of ability is certainly something desirable. It accounts, first, for the difference we see in the possession of the same ability: we often describe someone as being beginner or intermediate or advanced with regard to some ability. Secondly, it accounts for the evolution of someone who is in the process of mastering a certain ability. The fact that a certain performance significantly deviates from what we expect under the assumption of no ability, but the effect size is small, can be interpreted as a description of someone who is in the process of mastering the ability in question. In the same vein, we can view and measure the difference between the performance of an expert and that of a beginner, by different values of the same measure of the effect size. This graduality of ability leaves us with an interesting ‘contraposition’ of the anti-intellectualist thesis that knowledge how implies ability or counterfactual success: that the graduality of ability implies the graduality of knowledge how. We are not stating here that anti-intellectualists have to embrace the graduality of knowledge-how as a consequence of our statistical interpretation, just that, under suitable conditions, an anti-intellectualist could advance the thesis that know-how, at least in some instances, is not a ready-made-clear-cut concept whose possession one either has it or doesn’t have, but something more fluid and with a fleeing texture, that individuals, through practice, gradually acquire. In a sense, we are saying that through practice, a tennis player gradually develops not only their skill and ability, but also gradually acquires know-how; after all, there isn’t a definitive moment at which we can categorically affirm the player is now in full possession of the appropriate knowledge how. Of course, this is a controversial claim, that needs further theoretical analysis and experimental testing.

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ON AGENCY AND JOINT ACTION

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ABSTRACT. In this article I focus on two conflicting directions of supra-individualism concerning joint agency. The two representative authors here are Schmitt (2003b) and Pettit (2003). The tension lies between assuming there is a joint agent, without ontologically committing to such an agent, any reference to it being just a *façon de parler*, or, on the contrary, assuming there is a joint agent and ontologically committing to it. The problem of joint agency is discussed in relation to the problem of joint action. My aim is to provide a critical discussion of the problem of joint agency. For this, I provide an overview of Schmitt's and Pettit's approaches to joint agency, and an example meant to raise some doubts regarding Schmitt's criterion for possessing agency. The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, I discuss the key concepts concerning this problem. In Section 2, I present Schmitt's noncommittal approach to joint agency. In Section 3, I present Pettit's committal approach. In Section 4 and 5, I discuss Schmitt's criterion for being an agent and why there cannot be a joint agent in the strict existential sense. His criterion relies on a system of beliefs that should be possessed by an agent. In this context, I formulate a critique of this requirement. In the last Section, I follow some of Pettit's (2003) and Gilbert's (2004) ideas to provide an example concerning the interaction between individual and group beliefs, which also supports the critique of Schmitt's criterion.

Keywords: *supra-individualism, joint agent, joint action, collective beliefs, ontological commitment.*

The challenge I discuss in this article is how to account for the relation between agency and collective action. What kind of agent is assumed in performing a collective action? Given the premise of a supra-individualist approach that collective action is not reducible to a set of individual actions (and relations between them), what kind of agent is needed for those actions and how do we understand agency? Is there a supra-agent *per se*, or is our reference to it just a *façon de parler*? Let's take the

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example of a collective action—suppose Mary and John are singing a duet. One approach is to consider that the joint agency needed to perform the act of singing a duet is reducible to the individual agents performing the action. In this case, Mary is an agent performing her part in the collective action of singing a duet, John is the other agent performing his part in the collective action of singing a duet. This way of explaining things is an individualist approach in which joint agency is reducible to the individual agents performing that collective action. However, instead of treating Mary and John as individual agents performing their parts in a collective action, one can treat them as a *pair* performing the action. In this case, the agent is the *pair* consisting of Mary and John. This way of explaining joint action is a supra-individualist account of agency. Such an account assumes a supra-agent that is “over and above” the sum of agents that perform a certain collective action. Two such approaches are Schmitt’s (2003b) and Pettit’s (2003) accounts of agency for group action. The supra-individualist account can be understood in (at least) two ways. The first is to argue for the conceptual irreducibility of joint agency without an ontological commitment to the supra-agent. For instance, in the example above, the *pair* of Mary and John is not an ontologically distinct entity. This is Schmitt’s (2003b) option, and it goes by the name of ontological eliminativism. The second proposal is that of ontological noneliminativism. Pettit (2003), for instance, argues that we should endorse such an ontological commitment to the existence of the supra-individual agent. Is the supra-individual agent a real ontological entity (noneliminativism), or is it simply an irreducible *façon de parler*?¹ These options are incompatible, and I will focus on the conceptual tension between the two accounts of supra-individualist agency.²

If supra-agency is more than a *façon de parler*, then the ontological commitment to supra-agency leads to some consequences that need to be explained by the noneliminativist. If groups have agency, it means they have intentionality and this implies possessing belief contents. The direction I take within this debate is to focus on the problem of belief possession when discussing the tension between ontological eliminativism and ontological noneliminativism. The two authors approach the relation between agency and belief possession in the following way: Pettit argues for an ontological noneliminativism because groups

¹ This position can be characterized given Tuomela’s (2017) distinction regarding the conceptual and ontological reducibility or irreducibility of intentionality. Schmitt’s thesis can be characterized as conceptually irreducible, but ontologically reducible with respect to joint agency. Pettit’s (2003) thesis is that intentionality on a collective level is both ontologically and conceptually irreducible.

² Schmitt (2003a) provides an overview of the approaches available concerning social entities. He talks about the individualist approach, as opposed to a supra-individualist one concerning social entities. Each approach has a conceptual and an ontological subspecies. In my paper I focus on the conceptualist and ontological supra-individualist approaches to agency.

have beliefs, albeit a restricted set of beliefs, while Schmitt argues for an ontological eliminativism since, in order to adequately talk about belief possession and agency, one must have a complex system of beliefs. The intuition I support is that this criterion of complex belief possession for agency is too strong. Even though we cannot speak of a complex system of beliefs at the level of collective agency, collectivities can possess a restricted set of beliefs that are related to the individual beliefs of the members of that collectivity. In order to show this, I provide in the last section an example of a collective action (that of protesting) that shows how collective beliefs can rest on individual beliefs. I contrast individual beliefs that support the collective ones with those individual beliefs that go against the collective ones. Both the supporting, and the contradictory individual beliefs belong to individuals who take part in the same collective action.³

The paper is structured in the following way: In Section 1, I provide a general presentation of collective action, agency, and the relationship between agency and intentional content such as belief contents. In Section 2, I discuss Schmitt's supra-individualist approach to agency in relation to collective action. Here I focus on his eliminativist approach to agency and the consequences of this move for group beliefs. Schmitt (2003b) discusses agency, intention, and action in relation with possessing a system of beliefs. Thus, in this section, I also describe his supra-individualist and eliminativist approach to group beliefs. In Section 3, I present Pettit's (2003) proposal to "collectivize reason." This proposal argues for treating collectivities as entities having intentionality. In this sense, Pettit takes collectivities to be genuine entities since they have beliefs, and they need to be consistent within their system of beliefs. In Section 4, I discuss the tension between Schmitt's and Pettit's proposals. Schmitt requires a complex system of beliefs for agency, intention and action, while Pettit claims that a restricted system of beliefs (of an entity) is enough for intentionality. I focus on Schmitt's example on this matter. I also suggest an answer regarding his condition of having a complex system of beliefs. This condition can be met if the collectivity's beliefs rest on individual beliefs. In the example of protesting I develop in Section 5, I aim to show that a joint agent does not need to comply with Schmitt's condition and that the condition is too strong. The joint agent can have a restricted set of beliefs, and those beliefs may rest on individual beliefs which need not be consistent. As a comparison, an individual agent can have a belief that rests on inconsistent beliefs (without acknowledging it).

³ Hindriks (2017) discusses Tuomela's nonreductive approach to intentionality in collective contexts, and he discusses why Tuomela does not have an ontological commitment concerning the existence of such a collective intentional subject. Here I discuss Schmitt's eliminativist approach regarding collective agency and I focus on the problem of belief possession concerning collectivities.

Collective action, agency, and group beliefs

I adopt an example from Ludwig (2016),⁴ who analyzes examples of sentences containing plural subjects that show the difference between cases in which multiple subjects perform the same action and those in which multiple subjects perform the same action in a coordinated way. In Ludwig's (2016) terms, sentences containing plural subjects may have a distributive, or a collective reading. Given the sentence "We sang the national anthem," there is an ambiguity between reading it distributively, as each subject singing the national anthem separately, and collectively, as singing the national anthem in a choir. For instance, let's suppose that last night there was a football game between our national team and one from another country. We can say that "We sang the national anthem" is true even though each of us sang it, separately and individually in front of our TVs before the beginning of the game. What makes the sentence true is the attribution of this property to all elements of the set for which "we" stands.

However, the sentence "We sang the national anthem" might also be used in the context of a choir competition. In this case, the attribution of the property *singing the national anthem* seems to function differently. The property of *singing the national anthem* is attributed to the group, to the choir in this case. The action performed is collective, and the understanding we have with respect to it is that the action is not just a sum of individual, separate actions which are not connected⁵. For instance, if I eat ice cream before the football game and my voice is dreadful, the reader is not affected, unless she hears me. But if I eat ice cream before the choir competition and my voice is dreadful, the whole choir is affected and we might lose the competition.

The discussion about collective action, thus, is associated with the agency and intentionality of the performers of the action. According to Davidson⁶, we can properly define an event as an action as long as the event results given someone's

⁴ Ludwig (2016) has a reductive approach to plural subjects to which a collective action is attributed. In Schmitt's (2003a) terms, Ludwig has an individualist approach.

⁵ There seem to be certain actions that are meaningful when taken collectively, as for instance when we protest against decisions made by public institutions that we consider abusive and unjust. We intend such an action to be a collective one. The action is meant to express our shared belief that the decisions the institution takes are wrong. One can reply that people protest individually, that we also have one-man protests. However, such protests are also oriented towards a collectivity. The meaningfulness of the protest is given by the acquiescence of a larger number of people to the message the individual protester wants to send.

⁶ See (Davidson 1963). Ludwig (2016), following Davidson, has a similar view on the relation between event, action and agency.

agency. Someone's action is her manifestation of agency. Thus, any action is only possible in relation to agency. Now, in the case of collective action, one needs to account for the aggregation of individual agencies. Chant (2018), for instance, talks about the principle of collectivization of an individual action. The principle is defined in the following way: whatever can be said about individual action can also be said about collective action. If an individual action is the result of the manifestation of one's agency, the collective action is the result of the manifestation of a group's agency. If we talk about agency in case of groups, then we must consider that groups are endowed with intentionality. Thus, groups should have beliefs, intentions and different cognitive and conative attitudes. As a result, a substantial part of the problem of joint agency regards whether we can talk about belief possession in the case of collectivities. Schmitt (2003b) claims that intention, agency and action depend on possessing a complex system of beliefs, and his (manuscript) discussion regarding belief possession is analogous with the one regarding agency. In case of group belief, one can have a summative approach and define group beliefs as the sum of the individual beliefs possessed by the members of the group, or one can have an approach that recognizes belief possession of a group and that is not reducible to the individual's belief possession (Gilbert 2004).

In the following section, I discuss Schmitt's (2003b) approach both to agency in the context of a collective action and to belief possession regarding groups, since Schmitt takes both agency and belief possession to depend on having a complex system of beliefs.

Schmitt's approach to joint action and group's belief possession

Can we talk about a collective agent or group agent if we accept collective action in a nonreductive manner? Schmitt (2003b) treats this problem as a tension between (strict) individualism⁷ and supraindividualism. His approach consists in the defense of the supraindividualist view. He provides an example of the following type: say Mary and Peter walk together, carry a piano or sing together a duet. The action is collective or joint (as Schmitt names it) and is performed by the pair Mary and Peter. This pair is the agent (Schmitt 2003b, 129). However, his thesis does not state a full commitment to supraagents. His thesis is not ontological: supraagents are not additional entities to the set of agents. Our reference to such entities is, according to him, just a *façon de parler*. However, Schmitt considers that the

⁷ I should note here that by (strict) individualism, Schmitt does not refer only to agency, but to joint actions as well.

sentences in which we refer to such entities are not reducible to those in which reference to such entities is analyzed away. Still, our reference to collective agents is not a genuine reference. Collective agency is, for Schmitt, neither explained away, nor ontologically real. It is something in between—it has an instrumental purpose in our ordinary language use.

The argumentative template that Schmitt (2003b)⁸ employs is the following. (Strict) individualism fails in explaining how a joint action is performed without a joint agent. (Strict) individualism is the view that no conceptual, or ontological commitment is necessary for joint action and joint agency. Both can be explained in terms of individual agents and individual actions. Schmitt rejects this approach and argues that individual agents and the relation between them are neither necessary, nor sufficient for an account of joint action. We must therefore suppose *some kind of* supraagent for the resulting joint action⁹; this is his supra-individualist account. However, supposing a supraagent implies that such agent is endowed with certain characteristics. Since a supraagent cannot possess such characteristics, it follows that there is no supraagent. If there is no supraagent, then there is no joint action either. This is his eliminativist account of joint agency and joint action that results from supra-individualism.

Schmitt (manuscript)¹⁰ has the same eliminativist approach generated by supra-individualism with respect to group beliefs. Here, Schmitt introduces a holistic view of belief possession that constrains a supra-individualist approach to an eliminativist view. The argument is the following: we attribute different beliefs to groups, and when doing so, we treat each group as a single subject (Schmitt manuscript, 149). However, holism implies interlocking beliefs and a whole system

⁸ The negative thesis that Schmitt (2003b) argues for is that (strict) individualism fails. He has a general thesis regarding the criterion of constitution. He rejects the (strict) individualist thesis that a joint action is the mereological sum of individual actions or that this mereological sum entails a joint action. Schmitt also rejects a more particular thesis defended by Miller (2001). The thesis states that a joint action consists of interdependent singular actions that are performed towards a common end. The second general thesis that Schmitt argues against is that the individual actions that constitute the joint action are constitutive under a certain characterization or description.

⁹ His account is thus still a supra-individualistic one since our reference to an such agent is not reducible to some other entities.

¹⁰ Schmitt's (manuscript) aim is twofold here. His main aim is to argue that it makes perfect sense to talk about a group's belief if we talk about a group's acceptance. His aim is to argue against the thesis that in the case of groups, one can speak only of a group's acceptance. His other aim is to propose a supra-individualist approach to a group's belief possession. The final version of Schmitt's (2014) paper, however, does not include the eliminativist view on group beliefs and it is only mentioned. See (Schmitt 2014, 62). Here, the author argues for the idea that one should accept group beliefs if one admits group acceptances.

of intentional attitudes. Beliefs are interlocked with concept possession and dependent upon “dispositions, habits, practices or a regularity of actions necessary for beliefs” (Schmitt manuscript, 150). Given that a group cannot possess such a system of interlocking beliefs and intentional attitudes, then an eliminativist approach to sentences in which we attribute belief possession to groups requires that such sentences are, strictly speaking, false. However, our common reference to groups and their belief functions under a pretense principle, and we speak as if such sentences are true. In Schmitt’s (manuscript, 150) view, when we talk about what a group believes, we approximate truth. Such sentences are not properly true; rather, they are used as if they were true. In the following section I will sketch Schmitt’s analysis of joint agency and joint action.

Joint agency and joint action

For the eliminativist, the supraagent is something that we are not committed to ontologically, as we are not literally committed to groups having beliefs. It is rather what we need in order to explain our reference to joint actions performed by a group. According to the supraindividualist reading, the conditions under which an action constitutes a joint action are:

“An action j is a joint action only if

- (1) There is an agent C who performs j from C ’s intention of performing j ;
and
- (2) C is not an individual” (Schmitt 2003b, 155)

Joint action depends upon the existence of a group that performs the action. The performance is realized via the group’s intention. Thus, if there is no group agent, there is no joint action. Schmitt’s analysis extends beyond joint action. Therefore, assuming group agent C , we need its unconditional intention to perform the joint action j . On the level of the members that compose the group, each member acts with the conditional intention that their action “contributes to a joint action if there is a joint action” (Schmitt 2003b, 154). However, this condition is only necessary, and Schmitt has to add the additional one that the action be performed by the group agent having an unconditional intention. What compels Schmitt to adopt this condition is the fact that the conditional intention of each member of the group to perform a certain we-action is not sufficient for the performance of the action (Schmitt 2003b, 155).

In a nutshell, Schmitt's (2003b) view is that if there is no supraagent in the strict existential manner, it follows that there is not any joint action, in the strict existential sense, either. Why is Schmitt not committing to the existence of a supraagent? Because an agent is defined as having the intention to perform a certain action. In order to have such an intention, the agent must have beliefs regarding certain ends that bring about the intention in the agent. In order to act, the agent must have beliefs regarding a certain end as well, and, in order to be endowed with agency, the agent "must have cognitive, motivational, and conative faculties" (Schmitt 2003b, 157). The supraagent has none of these essential properties of agency. In order to account for the phenomenon of joint action, Schmitt can still be said to follow a supraindividualist route. However, strictly speaking, there is no supraagent, *but we talk as if there is*, given that this language use is more economical.

Let us analyze Schmitt's example in order to illustrate his positive proposal. The joint action of moving the sofa performed by *A* and *B* results from the agreement between *A* and *B* to move the sofa together. Why does this agreement result in a joint agent performing a joint action? The answer is that the joint commitment and joint obligation set up the joint agent performing the joint action. Using the practical syllogism¹¹, the reasoning is the following:

- (i) We agreed that we should move the sofa.
- (ii) Every agreement implies a commitment and an obligation to perform given the content of the agreement.
- (iii) We are committed and have an obligation to move the sofa together.
- (iv) Then, we should move the sofa together.

Here, the conclusion can be understood as a resulting action, just as Aristotle points out in *De Motu Animalum* (701a28-33): "And the conclusion, 'I ought to make a cloak' is an action."

An important specification is that Schmitt (2003b) takes both the agreement and the resulting commitment/obligation to be apparent, not genuine. This is because he considers the agreement itself to be a joint action, and, as we have seen, there are strictly speaking no joint actions without a joint agent. The nongenuine character of the commitment and obligation result from the nongenuine character of the agreement.

¹¹Broadie (1968, 26) places the complete practical syllogism in *De Motu Animalum* (701a28-33). I follow the form indicated here by Aristotle in *De Motu Animalum* (701a28-33): "[I] need a covering, and a cloak is a covering, I need a cloak. What I need I ought to make; I need a cloak, I ought to make a cloak."

Given the apparent agreement from which the joint agent results, the joint agent is altogether apparent as well. Moreover, if we refer to the truth value of sentences referring to such supraagents, they are literally false, even if, in ordinary language use we only work with an “approximate literal truth.” (Schmitt 2003b, 160) The “approximate literal truth” has pragmatic virtues: it is more economical and provides the possibility of making predictions concerning the performance of collectivities (Schmitt 2003b, 161).

The central thesis Schmitt (2003b) defends is, thus, that joint action requires a joint agent. For this reason, his account has a supraindividualist component. However, there is no such joint agent *per se*, but we refer to it in ordinary talk, for the sake of economy.

Pettit’s irreducibility of joint agency

An approach that states the irreducibility of joint agency is Pettit’s (2003). This irreducibility is both conceptual and ontological. His general line of thought is of the following kind. We have the problem of the discursive dilemma with respect to decision procedures regarding collectivities. The dilemma consists in the inconsistent results between aggregating the conclusions of a set of individuals and the conclusion that should result if the premises were aggregated instead. Pettit (2003, 175) holds that the tension lies between seeking consistency at the individual level, with the possible cost of being inconsistent at a collective level, or seeking consistency at a collective level, with the cost of being inconsistent at an individual one. To be able to surpass such a dilemma, one should make the choice of “collectivizing reason” (Pettit 2003, 175). In this section I will present what Pettit understands by “collectivizing reason” and “intentional subject” concerning collectivities.

The problem posed by the discursive dilemma imposes the necessity of “collectivizing reason.” Pettit (2003) argues that the discursive dilemma arises when collectivities must take decisions. Decisions should be based on some procedures that either focus on an aggregation of decisions made on an individual level, or focus on seeking consistency within the collectivity’s stance on the issues that lead to the final decision. Pettit’s idea is that if collectivities choose the second alternative, such collectivities “deserve ontological recognition as intentional and personal subjects.”¹² (Pettit 2003, 175) Recognizing them as intentional and personal subjects implies collectivizing reason.

¹²Pettit (2003) argues against the idea of an eliminativist approach to collective intentionality. One reason is the need to treat a collectivity as a rational unit, as opposed to an approximate acquiescence of a majority to a certain aim, belief, etc.

My focus is on “intentional subject.”¹³ Collectivities that are united under a certain purpose are called “social integrates.” (Pettit 2003) Such social integrates are endowed with intentionality and represent intentional subjects. For Pettit (2003, 180), a collectivity represents an intentional subject if it meets the constraints of rationality. Such constraints govern mental content by aiming for consistency and adjusting this content in case contradictory beliefs, intentions, or purposes appear. What distinguishes such intentional subjects from individual intentional subjects is their lack of certain features such as having perception and memory (Pettit 2003, 182). Another aspect is that their cognitive¹⁴ and conative attitudes do not come in degrees.

Here one can see an important difference between Schmitt and Pettit. The difference lies in the clash between the set of properties ascribed to a collectivity/collective agent. For Schmitt, intention is possessed if there is belief possession regarding an end; action is performed if it is oriented towards a certain end; and agency requires possession of cognitive and conative attitudes.

The general argumentative schema is the following: Collectivizing reason requires that the group have consistent beliefs. Having consistent (even if restricted) beliefs imposes an “ontological recognition” of the collectivity as an intentional and personal subject. Thus, in analyzing the problem of collective intentionality, one should rely on the constraint of belief possession and the rationality of those beliefs. Also, given the conditions that Schmitt imposes on intention, action and agency, the problem of agency in the case of collective action should also be treated with regard to belief possession.

In what follows, I focus on the problem of belief possession and the conditions Schmitt imposes on intention, action and agency. The idea is to treat this problem as a tension between recognizing that a collectivity is endowed with intentionality, given the possession of a restricted set of beliefs, or going with Schmitt’s approach that intention, agency and action are dependent upon a very complex set of beliefs and attitudes. The question I would raise here is the following: Is it necessary for the group’s beliefs to be the result of a complex system of beliefs, or can they be the result of something else, such as each member’s individual set of beliefs?

¹³However, in order to have joint or collective agency treated in relation to joint action, one may not need such a strong thesis as “personal subject” for collectivities. Moreover, such a concept may exclude joint agency when performing simple joint actions such as moving the couch.

¹⁴Here Pettit (2003, 182) mentions beliefs as coming in degrees. However, I would slightly alter the cognitive attitude and talk about “assent” instead of “belief.”

A Possible Answer to Schmitt's conditions of possessing agency

I will start with the requirements Schmitt imposes on agency. Agency requires, in Schmitt's view, a large set of beliefs and desires: "To have cognitive faculty, it is presumably not enough merely to have a few beliefs on a restricted range of topics. You must have beliefs on diverse topics. Similar remarks apply to a motivational and a conative faculty" (Schmitt 2003b, 157). Pettit (2003) does not impose such a requirement concerning the range of beliefs and desires an agent must have in order to be considered an agent. Moreover, (Pettit 2003, 182) explicitly states that an agent constituted by a social integrate does not have such a wide range of beliefs and desires. The clash between the two requirements impinges on further development of the discussion: according to Pettit, a collective agent is required to have a certain range of beliefs, i.e. a restricted range of beliefs; for Schmitt (2003b) however, manifestation of agency requires a wide range of such beliefs and desires. The question is whether the collective agent can manifest agency with a restricted set of beliefs and desires, while the adjacent beliefs and desires that support the collective beliefs can be strictly possessed by the individuals composing the social integrate that manifests agency. I will discuss this using Schmitt's (2003b, 158)¹⁵ example.

The action of lifting a couch by A and B requires, in Schmitt's view, that certain beliefs and desires be possessed by the joint agent in order to have joint agency. A first example would be that the action performed by the agent rests on the belief that the object to be lifted is a couch and not something else, thus the agent possesses knowledge concerning the properties that differentiate that object from others. For instance, a property that differentiates the couch from a pillow is that the first one is much heavier. Both A and B have the belief p that the couch is heavier than other objects such as the pillow or the coffee table, or the coffee table book about coffee tables¹⁶. Central to his account is, in my view, the definition for belief possession: "[...] you believe p only if you are disposed to (theoretically) reason from the premise that p " (Schmitt 2003b, 158). Schmitt's view is that it can only be the case that A and B individually possess p such that both are disposed to reason from p and that it is not even necessary that they have this common belief p in order to act jointly. The cognitive content that constitutes the possibility for

¹⁵However, I will alter Schmitt's (2003b, 158) example in some ways. These changes do not alter, in my view, Schmitt's conclusions.

¹⁶One does not have to be very strict about the content of this belief. We can generally rely on the vague content that the couch is an object heavier than some other objects and that it cannot be lifted by just one person.

the manifestation of agency must be a system of such beliefs p , say p_1, \dots, p_n . Such a system is a complex one, containing beliefs that are not even explicit in one's mind when performing an action. As Pettit acknowledges, such a system of beliefs cannot be possessed by a social integrate. However, I think the social integrate can possess a restricted system of beliefs that are emergent on the individual systems the actors possess. Such a belief can be, for instance, the belief that there is an agreement between A and B. Going back to the practical syllogism formulated in terms of "we", the first premise is that "We agreed to move the sofa together." This belief is one that sets dispositions to reason from it. This belief is taken to imply obligation of action in case the agreement is made. The first premise of the practical syllogism, however, seems to rest on individual beliefs possessed by the individuals jointly performing the action: for instance the belief that the sofa is heavy enough to require at least two people to perform the action; that it is light enough to be lifted just by two people; that should be lifted from where it is placed, etc. Thus, the system of beliefs that agency requires in the collective case need not all be joint beliefs. Such beliefs support the belief content of the joint agent and make possible those belief contents that allow the joint agent to perform the joint action.

However, there remains a point that Schmitt uses in order to argue against joint agency and joint belief content. A and B can, in Schmitt's view, perform a joint action without having a joint belief content. Say A and B agree that the sofa is used for sitting, but A does not believe that it is upholstered, while B does. In this sense, the content of the belief "We are moving the sofa" is different for A and B. Thus, it is possible to have joint action without joint belief content. A possible answer that Schmitt considers is that the content of the belief can be replaced with something more general, such as "We are moving something." In this case, the content of the belief is the same. Schmitt, however, rejects this solution. In keeping with his view that believing something means having the disposition to reason from that belief, the limit case he imagines is the following: at least one of the two (A or B) lacks the disposition to reason from "We are moving the sofa." If one of them lacks this disposition, then the belief content is not the same. One possesses the belief content "We are moving the sofa," the other one does not.

The claim that at least one of the agents may lack the disposition to reason from "We are moving the sofa," i.e. to possess the belief that "We are moving the sofa" seems, however, to be misleading. Either A or B, may not have the disposition to reason from the content of the belief. The term Schmitt (2003b, 158) uses for this is "unwilling to reason." For Schmitt, this unwillingness must be understood as both unwillingness to theoretically reason, and to practically reason. However, it seems that this unwillingness must be restricted to theoretical reasoning, since

performing the action shows that the agents possess the belief content that “We are moving the sofa” and the action is the result of practical reasoning performing from that belief. The unwillingness to theoretically reason may take something of the form: “We are moving the sofa. The sofa is much heavier than we thought and we risk having a backache afterwards.” However, the unwillingness to practically reason is more difficult to support. If we accept that the conclusion of a practical reasoning is the action, then A and B do not perform an action. It seems that unwillingness to practically reason from a belief goes against our manifestation of agency.

A Critique of the Elimination of Joint Agency

In this section, I provide an example I consider relevant for the relationship between individual and collective beliefs. This example is meant to question Schmitt’s criterion for agency. Recall that his criterion is that to be an agent one must possess a large body of beliefs and desires, and that those beliefs be interconnected in a system of beliefs and desires. What I want to show is that we can speak about agency even though the agent possesses a restricted set of beliefs. Having a restricted set of beliefs does not mean that they are not supported by a complex system of beliefs. The complex system of beliefs may occur at an individual level, and they may give rise to consistent collective beliefs, even if the beliefs of the individuals in the collectivity are inconsistent. I contrast the situation in which inconsistent individual beliefs may support consistent collective beliefs with the situation in which individual beliefs go against the collective beliefs.

For the theoretical background, I start from some of Pettit’s (2003) considerations:

“How to secure the dual basis that is necessary for a collectivity to be an intentional subject? [...] Specifically, by ensuring, first, that the collectivity has a shared purpose and forms the judgments and intentions associated with pursuit of that purpose; and second, that it collectivizes reason in forming those judgments and intentions.” (Pettit 2003, 181)

I propose that, in the context of the discussion of belief possession, a shared purpose can be understood as joint commitment in Gilbert’s (2004) sense¹⁷. The condition of collectivizing reason is expressed as the need for a rational unification (Pettit 2003, 181). In what follows, I present the requirements one has when

¹⁷In belief context, a collectivity believes something if there is a “joint commitment to *believe* something as a body” (Gilbert 2004, 101).

treating a collectivity, and the beliefs and the purposes of the collectivity when engaged in the act of protesting. I also present the relation between individual beliefs and intentions, and the collective beliefs and intentions manifested by a collectivity engaged in the act of protesting.

In order to better illustrate the relation between individual beliefs and the shared beliefs at the level of a collectivity, I will provide an example. The joint action I have in mind is that of a protest performed by a group of citizens (the group varies from a thousand to several tens of thousands of people). The protests are motivated by several actions of the members of the government. Let's say that a certain event (e_1) in which a member of the government is involved stirs up several citizens, and they decide (individually) to protest against this member of the government. Call this group G_1 . After some time, a certain event (e_2) takes place. This time, what stirs up a larger number of people is the lack of involvement of the government in solving the problems that led to e_2 . These people also decide to protest and the protest is much larger than the first one. Call this group G_2 . As an effect, the government resigns. There is also the relation between G_1 and G_2 that is worth noting. Many of the members of G_1 are also members of G_2 ¹⁸. Many of the participants see the protest determined by e_2 to be a continuation of the protest determined by e_1 , since both events have the same cause. Here lies the relevance of the example. Suppose one member, x , who belongs both to G_1 and G_2 , takes part in the protest performed by G_2 . She says that she only protests against the involvement of the government official in e_1 and does not protest against the lack of implication of the government in solving the issues that lead to event e_2 . She states (in conversation with her friends) that she does not support the message that the government should resign. It is worth noting that her message is not made explicit on a placard and there are no members of G_2 that share her view. Also, she does not seek to convince others to share her view. The reason she takes part in the protest against the government is that if the government resigns, then the government official responsible for e_1 will also lose her position.

Now, if some TV reporter describes the event, she will presume the group is rational. By "rational" I mean acting in accordance with an intention and providing a justification for doing so.¹⁹ Taking the collectivity to be rational, as opposed to

¹⁸The condition stated in (Pettit 2003, 180) regarding the conservation of the intentional content of the collectivity over some variables like time and form is fulfilled here. For instance, during massive protests, the constant number of participants may be that of 100.000. This number is conserved over a period of a few hours because people come and leave constantly. However, the members that constitute the group that protests change constantly.

¹⁹Being rational in this case does not mean the subject is epistemologically infallible. The subject can still support wrong beliefs, but I think this does not exclude rationality.

irrational (unless the group's behavior suggests otherwise) is legitimized by a principle of charity and the need for fruitfulness in explanation. A principle of charity in this case simplifies our explanation. We do not need further instruments to explain the group's behavior and there is nothing to suggest that we would need those additional instruments. Contrast it with the phenomenon of mass hysteria in which additional sociological and psychological theories and instruments are needed to provide an explanation for the phenomenon. Considering the group to be rational is more fruitful for the explanation. If the government resigns as a result of mass pressure, we can also understand the behavior of the government officials and we can understand that there is a connection between the protest and the government resignation. Considering the group to be rational, the reporter will suppose that the protest is oriented against the whole government. One reason would be, for instance, that the protesters send this message explicitly by texts written on placards or by chanted slogans²⁰. The reporter would not suppose that this is a phenomenon of mass hysteria like the dance plague²¹. The reporter will also suppose that the group is protesting for the resignation of the government, since this is their intention. She will not suppose they have the intention to support the government, and nonetheless, that they act against their intention. She would also suppose that they mean the message they send, and that they sincerely assent to it²².

An important aspect that derives from this example is that, for the message to be sent, and to have an effect (the resignation of the government), it is necessary to suppose that the group of people is rational. The group has the belief that the government is corrupt or incompetent and is disposed to reason from this theoretical belief. For instance, the protesters believe that the protest should take place in front of the government building and that they should shout anti-government messages instead of pro-government messages. The belief that they should shout anti-government messages is supported by the fact that this action is in accordance with their intention. Shouting positive messages instead would mean they act against their intention, if the effect they expect is the government resignation. Such beliefs that are ascribable to the group are supported by and emergent over different individual beliefs. Those individual beliefs may even be contradictory or contrary, but the beliefs at the collective level may still be consistent, in spite of this. For instance, there is a majority of people from G_2 who believe that the government, by its activity, contributes

²⁰ See (Gilbert 2004, 100). Here she expresses the following suggestion for a group to have a collective belief: "Roughly, it is both necessary and sufficient for the members of a population, P, collectively to believe something that the members of P have openly expressed their readiness to let the belief in question be established as the belief of P."

²¹ See for instance the entry on *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Dancing Plague of 1518," author Patricia Bauer.

²² I take the meaning of "sincere assent" to be that of Kripke (2011, 138)

to corruption and a deficient functioning of other institutions. However, not all protesters believe that the government should resign for the same reason. Some believe that the government took effective economic decisions, but did not improve the efficiency of other institutions. Others may believe instead that the government did not take any effective decisions at all. There are also individual beliefs that are not giving rise to the collective one that the government should resign. The participant x to the protest performed by G_2 has such a belief. Her intention is to protest only against the government official involved in event e_1 and her belief is that this government official should resign. She acts on her intention to do something that will result in the government's official losing her position. However, the interpretation can be further developed and consider her acting to be irrational, since the collective action is directed towards sending the message that the whole government should resign given event e_2 . The irrationality here comes from explicitly withdrawing from holding the belief that the whole government should resign, and yet participating to a protest against the whole government. Her participation in such an action is ineffective, since the effect is the resignation of the whole government. Moreover, one may have to consider x to be irrational for the additional reason that her intention appears contrary to the message the protesters want to send. The comparison is made between her individual belief and disposition to act on that belief and the collective belief and the disposition the group has to act on that belief.

Another important aspect to note is the following: her action, that of protesting against the government official involved in e_1 , is absorbed here by the collective action of protesting. One seeing her there would infer that she is one of the protesters asking for the government resignation. The reasoning will be economical in this sense. If you reason that she is just *probably* protesting against the government, then one should make the same inference about all the people taking part in the protest, and not hear them say explicitly that they are protesting in order to infer that they, for sure, are protesting against the government. However, even though we may be cautious in attributing the belief at an individual level, at the collective level we can drop this precaution. The reason we have when dropping this precaution is the explicit message sent by the collectivity, the reaction of the authorities when receiving the message, etc. One way to see this is through the reaction participants have when in the media they are depicted as confused or as lacking a purpose. This aspect supports Gilbert's (2004) requirement that the general belief of the group, in this case that the government should resign, is attributed to the collectivity, given its joint commitment to believe this as a body. The qualification "as a body" is relevant here since this confers the unity of the agent having the belief that the government should resign.

Concluding remarks

The central aim of this paper was to discuss the tension between two kinds of supraindividualism concerning agency. One approach is eliminative with respect to the existence of such an agent, the other one is existentially committed to such an agent. The discussion concerning the ontological commitment with respect to agency relies on the problem of belief possession. One reason for this is that Pettit (2003) has such an ontological commitment given that collectivities are required to expose rational unity. The structure of the paper was organized to begin from Schmitt (2003b) and Pettit's (2003) approaches to collectivities engaged in the performance of an action. My intuition leaned towards Pettit's committal approach to collectivities as intentional subjects.

An important part of the paper focused on the discussion regarding the condition of complex systems of belief possession. If one commits existentially to a collective agent, then such agent must have such a complex belief system (Schmitt 2003b). I have provided an example of individual and collective belief interaction when people engage in the activity of protesting against an institution. The specifics of the example concerned the collision between individual beliefs and the beliefs of the collectivity. I have also focused on how contradictory individual beliefs support a belief expressed by the collectivity. Besides this interaction between beliefs, I have also focused on why we treat a group engaged in a protest as a rational agent and how, given this assumption of rationality, the activity of protesting can be a successful collective action.

Acknowledgement

This paper was supported by the research project PATCULT#RO ("Platforma pluridisciplinară complexă de cercetare integrativă și sistematică a identităților și patrimoniului cultural tangibil și nontangibil din România"), PN III-P1-1.2-PCCDA-2017-0686, 52PCCDI/2018, funded by UEFISCDI

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THE CONTENT OF COMPLEX VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS

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ABSTRACT. According to a widespread view about the content of conscious experience (Peacocke, 1992; Siegel, 2007), an experience has content when it is accurate relative to a possible scenario. Suppose you saw a ripe tomato. Your visual experience would have content if what you saw looked exactly like a ripe tomato, be it a genuine tomato or an expertly designed wax copy of a tomato.

I argue that this view cannot account for the content of a hallucination whose content is impossible. A 95-year old patient seems to “see small pumpkins and flowers coming out of her body” (Rocha et al., 2012). Intuitively, the patient's hallucination has content. But the accuracy-conditions view has to classify the experience as devoid of content, because what the patient hallucinated is impossible – accurate to no possible scenario. On the concept of “flower” we possess, it is incoherent for flowers to erupt from under one's skin. This visual hallucination is a counterexample to the view that an experience is endowed with content only relative to its accuracy conditions.

Keywords: *conscious visual experience; hallucination; content; accuracy conditions; Charles Bonnet Syndrome*

Introduction

I start with an overview of the argument. A widespread view about the content of conscious experience holds that an experience is contentful when it is accurate relative to a given phenomenal scenario, whether that scenario happens to be actual or not. For example, if your visual experience were accurate only if a ripe tomato were right in front of you, so that you could see it if you had no visual impairment, then the ripe tomato would count as the content of your visual experience, since this is what would make your experience accurate to the world.

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Accuracy (or veridicality) is for experiences what truth is for beliefs. Correspondingly, accuracy (or veridicality) comes in two flavors: weak and strong veridicality. If your visual experience is accurate with respect to an actual ripe tomato sitting in the actual world right in front of your eyes, then your visual experience is strongly veridical (relative to that content).

But your visual experience would be only weakly, and not strongly veridical, if what were in the actual world were not a ripe tomato, but some other thing looking exactly like it. For instance, suppose an expertly designed wax copy of a ripe tomato (Siegel, 2011) were in front of your eyes, in perfect view but too far to touch. Then you might easily be deceived into thinking you are seeing a ripe tomato. Since the actual visual scene (wax copy of ripe tomato) would be phenomenally indistinguishable from the content of your experience (ripe tomato), your experience would only be weakly veridical.

Call this view “the accuracy-conditions view.” If the content of a conscious experience is given by the conditions under which that experience is at least weakly veridical, it follows that no conscious experience can have a content that is logically impossible. In what follows, I will argue that this consequence of the accuracy-conditions view of conscious content is false, by appealing to clinical reports of complex visual hallucinations (Teunisse et al., 1995). Consider a complex visual hallucinatory experience in which a 95-year old patient seems to “see small pumpkins and flowers coming out of her body” (Rocha et al., 2012). What is beyond question, intuitively, is that the patient had a contentful hallucinatory experience – after all, she was hallucinating pumpkins and flowers, not the Empire State Building or a hippopotamus. Therefore, it is false that content is given by accuracy conditions.

Veridical conscious content, weak and strong

To raise an objection to the accuracy-conditions view of how the contents of conscious experiences are identified, we first need to be clear on exactly which conception of accuracy (correctness, truthfulness, or veridicality) is at play.

Suppose Judy, a florist, has just finished gathering a bouquet of red roses, and is looking at them. She is paying keen attention to how many there are, and in what condition, trying to guess how long it will be before they begin to wither. Judy is having a visual experience; she is a sentient adult, perceptually unimpaired, she is aware of seeing the roses, and there is something it is like for her to see the roses exactly when and how she does (Nagel, 2002).

Judy's visual experience has content – roses. When is experience contentful, and of what? The accuracy-conditions view goes as follows. For Peacocke (1992, pp. 105-110), and Siegel (2007, pp. 484-486) following him, the content of an experience is fixed by the accuracy (or correctness) conditions had by the experience. So when is an experience accurate?

One view might be to think that Judy sees roses only if there actually are roses, in the external world, that Judy is looking at. If there actually are no such roses, then Judy's visual experience lacks content. On this view, visual perception is only contentful when (strongly) veridical; seeing is an achievement putting the perceptual subject in direct contact with the external world.

An amendment, leading to a second view (the view I will be concerned with), is possible. Suppose Judy likes her bouquet of roses so much that she sends a picture of them to Mark. Mark will see the picture (a bit of cellulose), not actual roses. But in seeing the picture, he will see the photographed roses. For Mark's *visual* system, if he focuses only on what is in the picture, a photographed rose (a pictorial representation) and the rose photographed (a thorny physical object) will *look* the same, even if they are different.

Mark can have a rose-involving experience without there actually being any roses seen (say they withered meanwhile). For Mark, seeing a snapshot of roses is *perceptually* equivalent to seeing the real thing (*modulo* resolution, etc.), so an improved understanding of an experience's accuracy conditions will say that the visual experience's content is fixed by whatever is perceptually equivalent to the objects seen – accuracy differs from success. On this second view, visual perception is contentful only when *weakly* veridical (Siegel, 2011, pp. 42-58), i.e., when the visual *scenario* (Peacocke, 1992, p.107) is phenomenally indistinguishable from the actual world. If the photo could span all of Mark's visual field, and hue, brightness, resolution, etc. were controlled for, Mark could not distinguish a photo from the real thing no matter how hard he looked at it. The content of Mark's visual experience, on this view, will be the rose as represented by Mark's visual system in all possible situations compatible with what Mark visually experiences. On this view, seeing is weakly veridical, inasmuch as the actual perceptual situation is only one among many perceptually accessible situations, which would prevent *ensuring* that the content of visual experience is the actual object seen.

Is this view right? I will argue that it isn't. Weak veridicality of experiences is more flexible than strong veridicality as a condition to impose on conscious content when a subject is enjoying an experience. Notwithstanding, even weak veridicality is too restrictive. The weak veridicality of Mark's visual experience consists in the fact that the actual perceptual situation (Judy's roses, when she photographed them) is a

member of the set of situations that are perceptually accessible to Mark's eyes fixed on what is in the photo, and perceptually indistinguishable by him while looking. *But* there are cases where the relevant bit of the external world is not among the perceptually accessible situations, so weak veridicality fails to obtain. To those cases I now turn.

The problem-cases: complex visual hallucinations

To build my objection to the accuracy-conditions view of how to identify the contents of conscious experiences, I appeal to empirical cases: complex visual hallucinations. I'll first present these cases, and then argue for why they are credible counterexamples to the accuracy-conditions view.

Visual hallucinations are a paradigm example, especially those present in the Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS, hereafter), more frequent in old age, and associated with macular degeneration and peripheral eye loss (Teunisse et al., 1995). CBS patients experience vivid visual hallucinations, and would testify to what they *see* (in a non-factive, perspectival, sense of “see”), even though there is no external object seen by them (in the achievement sense of “see”).

Most CBS visual hallucinations (of bugs, or flowers, etc.) are weakly but not strongly veridical: there could actually be seen bugs or flowers, but there happen to be none. However, some CBS visual hallucinations are *strongly* non-veridical, i.e., physically impossible. Rocha et al. (2012, p.553) describe in detail the case of a patient who, in spite of being able to successfully attend to her daily affairs, experienced hallucinations that are not possible given our current understanding of the world. Here is Rocha et al.'s description in full:

A 95-year-old woman, with four years of schooling, had a seven-year history of DI [delusional infestation comorbidity]. In the beginning, there were itching and prickling sensations on arms and head. Subsequently, she felt small worms, with different shapes and colors, crawling through her skin or swirling around her body. After two years, she began to see small pumpkins and flowers coming out of her body and lettuce crawling on the table. She complained of water trickling out of walls and forming puddles on the ground. Occasionally, she saw small children walking on the walls and also worms on the floor and walls. Sometimes, the parasites set fire to small objects. She became upset with her family and physicians who did not believe her.

This is evidence that some Charles Bonnet complex hallucinations, namely, hallucinations of impossible states of affairs, are counterexamples to the view which assimilates the content of conscious experience to the fulfillment of accuracy

conditions. I take the evidence that complex visual hallucinations provide at face value. We should abandon the accuracy-conditions view of how the contents of conscious experiences are individuated.

The hallucinations which are the relevant counterexamples have impossible contents, like flowers growing under one's skin and then breaking out, tearing one's skin apart. Such hallucinations clearly have contents. But they are counterexamples to the accuracy-conditions view. This is because that view identifies the contents of conscious experiences in terms of accuracy conditions with respect to phenomenal (experienced) scenarios. Since accuracy is assessed relative to *possible* scenarios, no experience can have impossible contents – if the accuracy-conditions view is right. We have just seen some hallucinations do have impossible contents. So the view is mistaken.¹

The problem should have been expected. If we identify what someone experiences in terms of *truth* (veridicality, accuracy, correctness, etc.), then some hallucinations the contents of which *couldn't* obtain are obvious counterexamples.

Special sciences, everyday concepts, and conceivability

I have argued that the accuracy-conditions view of conscious content is mistaken because impossible contents are sometimes experienced, as in strongly non-veridical hallucinations. The nonagenarian's seeing small pumpkins growing and flowers blooming tearing her skin apart is an experienced content. But it is part of no possible scenario – because the content itself isn't possible.

In this section I address a reply to my objection. The accuracy-conditions view may keep the party-line by insisting that the experienced content, even in the most outlandish experience, is still *logically* possible. We imagined it, or hallucinated it, or dreamed it – therefore there is a *possible* way of mixing things that way, and that will be the scenario with respect to which our experience gets to count as accurate.²

¹ It is important not to hasten to conclusions. For instance, from the claim that accuracy conditions identify the contents of conscious visual experiences, it doesn't follow that *intentionalism* about such conscious experiences is true. Intentionalism is the view that what an experience is like for its subject is fixed by the content of that experience. But the view remains silent about how the content of the experience is fixed. Many works couple intentionalism with an accuracy-based view of identifying contents (e.g., Pautz, 2010). But the two are logically independent of each other. For instance, one might identify the contents of conscious visual experience from introspective reports – what the experience is described by the agent *to be*. Nothing in that view contradicts intentionalism.

² It is important to distinguish my view, and this objection to it, from debates surrounding how rich perceptual content is. One might, following Siegel (2011), argue that the content of perceptual

The immediate reply to be made here is that not everything we can imagine is possible. Renaissance geometers tried to square the circle, and this was an active research program for quite a while. Nowadays we admit that this isn't *merely* a failed program. Rather, it's *impossible* to square the circle – regardless of what our forefathers thought.

A variant of the accuracy-conditions view could still claim that the example I have given (following Rocha et al., 2012) doesn't fall in that category. It is *biologically* impossible for flowers to grow under one's skin, but not logically or conceptually impossible. After all, there has to be some hierarchy to the sciences, so that laws of biology are chemically contingent, laws of chemistry are physically contingent, and laws of physics are mathematically contingent. So logical impossibility doesn't follow from biological impossibility.

For the purpose of discussion, let me temporarily agree with this hierarchical picture of the sciences, though I very much doubt that special sciences can be adequately represented in this nifty logical outlook. Even so, when the patient hallucinates flowers growing under her skin, that isn't merely biologically impossible – it's *conceptually* impossible. We use words like “pumpkin” or “flower” with largely fixed and well-established meanings.³ This prevents creatures of imagination like flowers erupting from one's skin to be conceivable without contradiction. This is not a piece of botanical wisdom. It's larger than that: it's part of our everyday concept of flower.

Appearances

Let me now consider what looks like a way out from this quandary for the accuracy-conditions view. It might be thought that hallucinations like the one just mentioned may still be weakly veridical notwithstanding, because something that *looks* like flowers might have grown under the patient's skin – or might have *looked* like they were growing under the patient's skin.

experience is rich because kind-properties, like that of being a flower or lettuce, are being represented. But the accuracy-conditions view typically construes accuracy as follows. When I see a flower, my experience is weakly accurate if there are possible scenarios in which I perceive what looks like a *flower* – *not* ones in which I perceive what looks like a property, since *nothing* looks like a property.

³ To say this is not to be committed to any *unchangeability* of meaning. It is only to assert that competent speakers of the same language use words in *largely* overlapping ways, and that it would be incorrect to describe them as deferring to some body of theory (e.g., Linné's classification) which very few of them understand.

In reply, notice, first, that this reply is bound to differ from case to case, and there is no guarantee that all cases can so be explained. If one were to hallucinate a pink elephant while shopping in NYC, what could explain *that* appearance? (Suppose there are no elephants around.)⁴

Moreover, consider the patient's description above. Perhaps the patient's swollen veins might have looked as though some flowers were under her skin. If so, switch the example. How could one account for "lettuce crawling on the table?" Perhaps, you might think, the patient was dizzy and that's what accounts for her impression that the lettuce was moving. But surely that would make everything spin around, not just the lettuce! One would have *to posit*, in addition, some attentional deficit that made the patient attend to the lettuce alone. But surely she attended to her skin as well, since she seemed to see flowers growing from under it. So it is far from clear how the story would go. And, if the story *could* eventually be filled in, it is hard not to have the sense that it is entirely *ad hoc*.

Finally, to settle for weak veridicality of contents alone seems slightly unsatisfying. At the very least, it fails to do justice to widespread intuitions. We do wish to report that we see the very things around us. I see the computer screen, the coffee mug, the foliage of the forest outside. I don't see *the appearance* of the coffee mug, even though, in seeing, the coffee mug *appears* to me to be some way. The appearance is a way of seeing the mug, not an *extra* mug-styled object. We might say the mug appears to be similar to a small vase; we might conclude this from comparing their appearances. But, surely, it would be ludicrous to say the mug appears to be similar to its own appearance. Theories of appearing (e.g., Chisholm, 1957) for the contents of conscious visual experiences might have to bite the bullet and deny this commonplace.

⁴ The case of hallucinated impossible contents is, to an extent, similar to Crane's (1988) waterfall illusion, where, after intently looking at a moving object for a while and then shifting gaze to a stationary object, it might seem to you *both* that the object is moving when it in fact isn't *and* that the object is immobile relative to its background. I agree there is a similarity with the illusion Crane describes. But hallucinations, unlike illusions, cannot be explained away as malfunctions or side-effects of sensory processing. Further, Crane's own lesson of the illusion is that part of the content of the illusory experience is not conceptual. And that lesson – correct or not – doesn't follow from the facts of the illusion itself. Witness, e.g., Siegel's conception of accuracy conditions, which applies to contents, conceptual or non-conceptual alike. The problem is with identifying conscious contents by accuracy conditions – and it is a problem because sometimes these conditions exclude each other. Whatever (conceptual or non-conceptual) source accuracy may have is not of the essence here. To say, as Crane does, that "one cannot have an experience with contradictory representational content" is simply to beg the question against admitting the existence of hallucinations with impossible contents like the one quoted in the previous section.

Disjunctivism?

In brief, the problem with accuracy conditions is that there are *entirely inaccurate experiences that nonetheless have content*. The problem case described above is that of (some of the) complex visual hallucinations that occur as symptoms of the Charles Bonnet syndrome.

One immediate reaction is disjunctivist. In giving my alleged counterexample, I presupposed that we can talk, in a general fashion, about experienced contents. In contrast, Tye (2009, pp. 547, 561) argues for disjunctivism. On his view, visual experience and hallucinatory experience are two different *kinds* of experience, and conclusions about hallucinations do not carry over to veridical perception.

If one insisted that hallucination and veridical experiences are different in kind – as the disjunctivist claims – then one could preserve an accuracy-based method to identify the contents of veridical experiences. But the problem of identifying the contents of hallucinations would not be touched on. Tye is remarkably clear on this point, and he provides a solution. While he weighs the benefits of competing accuracy-conditions views for the content of sensory experiences, the most promising option (!) he sees for hallucinatory contents is to identify all of them with gappy contents (Tye, 2009, pp. 546-549). This entails that all such hallucinatory experiences have the same content – a gap; or what the null set denotes.

Let's illustrate this. Hallucinating pumpkins growing underneath one's skin and hallucinating an elephant playing the piano have the same content – namely, a gap. Hallucinating pumpkins growing underneath one's skin, flowers blossoming underneath one's skin, and hallucinating both of those happening together also has the same content – namely, a gap. Whatever the patient thought, imagined or daydreamed she was experiencing must have been wrong, on this view. I think it is safe to say that gappy contents are far removed from what patients experience when they undergo hallucinations. It is striking to see thoroughgoing disjunctivists like Tye cornered into such an implausible position.⁵

⁵ A similar diagnosis I believe applies to the attempt to rescue accuracy conditions (as part of an account of conscious content) by considering impossible perceptual scenarios in addition to possible ones (Hintikka, 1975). One such impossible scenario would be one on which it is possible that small pumpkins and flowers come out from the patient's body, and her experience of seeing them is accurate. Once we need to appeal to impossible worlds such as the scenario just envisaged, the entire plausibility of using possible-worlds semantics in the first place will have been undermined.

Whether there is a salient enough notion of conscious experience that applies to both, say, visual hallucinations and veridical visual perception, is a large question I can't settle here. So I grant the point: disjunctivism is one way to get around the problem I point to. (Unappealing ways out are ways out nonetheless.) The problem, however, survives unscathed for those who think it *does* make sense to talk about conscious experience in general, and to seek general methods for identifying the contents experienced.

Conclusion

Against the accuracy-conditions view of how to individuate the contents of conscious experiences, I have pointed to counterexamples coming from some complex visual hallucinations experienced by patients suffering from the Charles Bonnet syndrome. The accuracy-conditions view has it that the contents of conscious experiences should be identified by reference to which phenomenal scenarios one's experience is accurate, true, or correct with respect to. The counterexamples I have provided are hallucinations with impossible contents, which cannot be accurate with respect to *any* possible phenomenal scenario. One way out of this problem is disjunctivism; but that faces parallel difficulties in accounting for what, if any, is experienced in hallucinations with impossible contents. Another solution, which this paper points toward, is to stop identifying the contents of conscious experiences by their accuracy conditions.

Acknowledgments

This text grew out of a section in my 2013 MA thesis in Neurophilosophy at Georgia State University. I am grateful to my advisor, professor George Graham, for conversations that got me thinking about the content of conscious hallucinatory experiences, for his constant encouragement and pointed questions. I would like to also thank an anonymous reviewer, and the members of the Metaphysics group at the University of Virginia, where a previous version of this text was presented. Financial support for the first draft of the text was provided by the Jefferson Scholars Foundation through a John S. Lillard fellowship. Writing this version of the text was supported through an ICUB Fellowship for Young Researchers I received for 2020 from the University of Bucharest.

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ROBERVAL'S SCEPTICISM IN THE *ARISTARCHI SAMII DE MUNDI SYSTEMATE*

OVIDIU BABEȘ*

ABSTRACT. This paper argues for a different interpretation of Roberval's scepticism in his *Aristarchi Samii de mundi systemate*. Roberval's mild sceptical attitude, along with his fake attribution of his cosmological treatise to the ancient Aristarchus of Samos, are explained by prudential reasons related to censure. I will instead provide a more internalist reading. There are deeper metaphysical and epistemological reasons for Roberval's pessimism about the prospect of a perfect science of celestial motions, as well as for his (non-realistic) acceptance of heliocentrism as just a more plausible system than Ptolemy's or Tycho's. I start by spelling out two distinct sceptical worries conflated in the *Aristarchi*. The first is a general agnosticism regarding certainty about the causes of the motions of the heavens—it is more of a worry that the true system of the world can never be known. The second is a particular pessimism regarding the prospects of improving astronomy. The same effect (the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies) can be produced by diverse causes. Judging by what seemed to be the most probable physical causes of the heavenly motions, Roberval saw no reason for the existence of a precisely predictable regularity in heavenly motions. Both sceptical attitudes have to do, aside from the cosmology of the *Aristarchi*, with the theory of science he expounds in his private *Principes du devoir et des connaissances humaines*, and in a fragment he wrote for Mersenne's *Curieuse perspective de Niceron*.

Keywords: Roberval, Aristarchus, Early Modern Scepticism, Early Modern Cosmology.

Introduction. The context of the *Aristarchi Samii de Mundi Systemate*

In 1644, Gilles Personne de Roberval published a small cosmological treatise entitled *Aristarchi Samii de Mundi Systemate, partibus, & motibus eiusdem, libellus*. The book is attributed to the ancient Aristarchus of Samos, and Roberval claims it

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to be an annotated translation of a recently recovered Arabic manuscript. In the dedicatory epistle addressed to Pierre Brûlart de Saint Martin, Roberval writes:

Behold, sir, the little book of Aristarchus of Samos on the System of the World revealed to you, which, if I am not mistaken, you and R. P. Mersenne expected from us. It was recovered from an Arab manuscript by a certain stranger proficient in the Arab language, and written in Latin on your expense [...] and given to us in order to read and amend.¹

Roberval tells the reader that the Arabic manuscript was translated under his and Mersenne's supervision, on the expense of the royal counsellor. He does not explicitly defend the authenticity of the manuscript, or even its origin as a true ancient source.² Roberval does, however, imply the manuscript's authenticity, at least by the style and disposition of the treatise. The epistle informs us that, in addition to the translated text, Roberval will also help the reader by inserting certain notes. These are given within the text; are labelled as 'NOTA' and end with the abbreviation 'P.N.E.M.'.³ Usually, the notes present new discoveries which were unknown by the author; with the aim to corroborate or refute Aristarchus's opinions. Roberval does, therefore, refer to Aristarchus at least as the alleged author of the treatise.

Not many took the book to be an authentic ancient treatise.⁴ Most philosophers, mathematicians or scientists realized that the book is not authentic, and that the name of Aristarchus was used just as a cover for a seventeenth century author. They were, of course, right. However, as Heath observed more than a hundred years ago, "there was every excuse for Roberval. The times were dangerous."⁵ Only ten years before he wrote the *Aristarchi*, Galileo's *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems*

¹ G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi Samii de Mundi Systemate, enpartibus, & motibuseiusdem, libellus*, Paris, Antonium Bertier, 1644, Dedicatory Epistle [1643]. The treatise was republished in M. Mersenne, *Novarum observationum physico-mathematicarum*, Paris, Antonium Bertier, 1647. The only modern translation is in French, G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarque de Samos. Projet de Balance*, ed. tr. Jean Peyroux, Paris, Libraire de A. Blanchard, 2002.

² On this point see C. de Waard's note about the *Aristarchi Samii de Mundi Systemate*, in M. Mersenne, *Correspondance du P. Mersenne, Religieux Minime*, eds. Paul Tannery, Cornelis de Waard and Armand Beaulieu, Vol. 14, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980, p. 59.

³ These letters stand for 'pondere, numero et mensura' and were the motto of the mathematicians of the *Collège royal*. On this issue see A. Gabbey, "«Pondere, Numero et Mensura» Roberval et la Géométrie Divine", *Revue de Synthèse* 122(2), pp. 521-522.

⁴ For an overview of the reception of the *Aristarchi* see *Correspondance du P. Mersenne, Religieux Minime*, Vol. 14, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980, pp. 56-64.

⁵ Thomas Heath, *Aristarchus of Samos, the Ancient Copernicus*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913, p. 8.

of the World was condemned. The French context was uncertain, as geocentric systems were actively defended in the 1630s. In 1632, Libert Froidmond, arguing against Philip and Jacob Lansbergen's heliocentric system, published the *Anti-Aristarchus, sive Orbis-terrae immobilis*. Two years later, Froidmond followed up with another treatise, the *Vesta, sive Ant-Aristarchi Vindex*. Furthermore, Roberval's Parisian colleague Jean Baptiste Morin had published the *Famosi et antique problematis de telluris motu*, strongly arguing against Galileo and Copernicanism.⁶

Prudence, it seems, is enough to explain why Roberval chose to cover his identity in publishing his cosmology. After all, his purpose was at least partly that of popularizing some variant of heliocentric cosmology.⁷ Roberval's defence of Copernicanism is not, however, neither definitive nor too strong. Both in the dedicatory epistle and in the epilogue, he manifests a very precautionary attitude toward the certainty of the heliocentric system and a deep pessimism about the prospect of a science capable of resolving the astronomical issue once and for all. Roberval claims that heliocentrism is just the most plausible explanation, but the true system might be well beyond our knowledge. In the dedicatory epistle, Roberval writes:

Finally, you will ask what is my own opinion. Am I committed entirely to the prescriptions of Aristarchus against Ptolemy and Tycho? Certainly not! And it is indeed not appropriate to directly follow the opinions of the mathematicians who either adhere or reject them, until a demonstration or a refutation of them appears. One should not assert that any of these three famous systems is the true and natural one. It may be that all of them are false and the true one is not yet known. However, of these three systems, it is that of Aristarchus which seems to us to be the simplest and the one which fits best with the laws of nature so that, even though we do not claim that it is certainly true, we prefer it to the other two.⁸

There are, thus, two virtues which, at least declaratively, Roberval finds in Aristarchus's system: simplicity and a higher degree of concordance with natural laws. However, these virtues are only sufficient for Aristarchus's system to be preferable relative to Tycho's or Ptolemy's. Only a 'mathematical demonstration' could suffice for proving one system as the true and natural one. Why is it that Roberval did not

⁶ See a brief survey of the anti-Copernican books and Galileo's condemnation in A. Martinez, *Burned Alive: Giordano Bruno, Galileo and the Inquisition*, London, Reaktion Books, 2018, esp. ch. 3.

⁷ De Waard claims that the lack of popularity of the *Aristarchus* eventually led Roberval to abandon cosmology altogether, see *Correspondance du P. Mersenne, Religieux Minime*, Vol. 14, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980, p. 63.

⁸ Roberval, *Aristarchi*, dedicatory epistle.

endorse heliocentrism more strongly? What would a ‘mathematical argument’ be, and how should his general pessimism be interpreted? Roberval elaborates on his sceptical attitude in the epilogue of the *Aristarchi*, this time by using the voice of Aristarchus. He also claims that the prospects of a certain physical science capable of resolving the cosmological and astronomical issues are almost null. He writes:

It is not yet established if the system of the Earth is simple or composed, animated or unanimated. But if you want to extract an opinion out of this, we estimate that the Earth is composed, and animated by a sensible soul. [...] And this soul might be the same in all systems, or there might be different souls in each system.⁹

Roberval is as precautious in physical matters as he is in endorsing a general astronomical system. The causes of planetary movements are, according to Aristarchus, a certain soul inherent in every part of matter, which makes the parts unite into a larger whole. However, immediately after this hypothesis, Roberval (by his Aristarchus avatar) adds that even if this this soul would be absent, the movements of the heavenly bodies could be explained by positing certain qualities. In the last clarificatory note to the purported ancient text, Roberval shows a similar sceptical attitude towards the prospects of a more correct and precise astronomy:

Therefore, no one in the future could boast about discovering a certain perpetual theory of the planets, or about a perfect science of astronomical movements; most probably, they are exposed to many frequent irregularities, and their causes being so hidden and abstruse, it greatly exceeds the capacity of humans to discover them or to understand them.¹⁰

Here, in the explanatory note to Aristarchus’s alleged epilogue, Roberval elaborates his sceptical and pessimistic attitude about the certainty of the Copernican hypothesis and the prospects of a physical science capable of explaining it. His conclusions are very pessimistic. Not only do we have no satisfactory account about the heavenly motions—but there is no way in which we could ever attain a precise and certain explanation, as the irregularities in the movements of the planets are not periodical, and their causes are obscure and hidden from human knowledge.

⁹ Roberval, *Aristarchi*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁰ Roberval, *Aristarchi*, p. 147.

Roberval's scepticism about the true astronomical system and its physical properties is, same as his attribution of the treatise to Aristarchus, usually explained by prudence. Leon Auger argues that, as the Copernican hypothesis was still not too popular in France, Roberval was prudent in his endorsement: without mentioning Copernicus's name, he presented heliocentrism just as one (albeit more plausible) hypothesis among others.¹¹ De Waard also claims that prudence was responsible for the general tone of Roberval's treatise, and that his scepticism just amounts to a very precautionary attitude.¹² Roberval was, however, not alone in endorsing a heliocentric cosmology in the 1640s. Descartes published, in 1644, his *Principia Philosophiae*, and other heliocentric treatises were written. It seems that the general attitude was more nuanced, and Copernican and mixed systems had their own place at that time. Overall, it is arguable whether censure did affect theoretical cosmology and astronomy that much in Catholic France.¹³ If this is the case, there actually existed more freedom of opinion regarding the features and plausibility of the true system of the world. Prudence, then, would be enough to explain Roberval's choice of concealing his identity, but would not be a sufficient explanation of his sceptical attitude towards the endorsement of heliocentrism. We can, however, account for Roberval's scepticism in a more 'internalist' fashion, if we examine his other texts about the epistemological status of science(s). In the following sections, I will argue that Roberval is much more internally consistent than hitherto acknowledged. He wrote the *Aristarchi* in accordance with his general ideas about the status of physical and mixed-mathematical disciplines, and was closely following his methodological precepts. Upon closer examination, I will show that Roberval's 'scepticism' actually conflates two distinct sceptical worries. The first is akin to a general agnosticism regarding the certainty about the causes of the motions of the heavens—it is a worry that certainty about the true system of the world can never be attained. The second is a particular pessimism regarding the prospects of improving astronomy. The same effect (the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies) can be produced by diverse causes. Judging by what seemed to be the most probable physical causes of the heavenly motions, Roberval had no hope for a precisely predictable regularity in heavenly motions. I will elaborate on these in the next section.

¹¹ L. Auger, *Un savant méconnu: Giles Personne de Roberval*, Paris, 1962, pp. 104-116. and L. Auger, "Les idées de Roberval sur le système du monde" in *Revue d'histoire des sciences et de leurs applications*, tome 10, 3, 1957. pp. 226-234;

¹² M. Mersenne, *Correspondance du P. Mersenne, Religieux Minime*, Vol. 14, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980, p. 63.

¹³ See J. L. Russell, "Catholic astronomers and the Copernican system after the condemnation of Galileo" *Annals of Science*, 46:4, 365-386, 1989.

The scope and certainty of science. Roberval's scepticism

The dedicatory epistle of the *Aristarchi*, signed by Roberval, is dated July 1643. By this time, Roberval had been occupying the Ramus chair for mathematics at the Collège Royal for ten years. He was a central figure of the Parisian circle of savants and philosophers, and one of Mersenne's closest collaborators. In the early 1640s, Roberval was in very good terms with Pierre Gassendi, often meeting and discussing issues not limited to mathematics.¹⁴ He was also in a very close collaboration with Thomas Hobbes, at a time when the latter was very interested in geometry and the properties of some special types of curves.¹⁵ 'Nostre geometre', as Mersenne used to call Roberval, always benefited from his friendship with the Minim. For instance, Mersenne included Roberval's *Mechanics* in his 1636 *Harmonie universelle*, and he once more published some parts of it in his 1644 *Cogitata physico-mathematica*. The *Aristarchi* was reprinted, with some modifications, in Mersenne's 1647 *Novarum observationum physico-mathematicarum*. However, in cca. 1650, Roberval was to return the favour. Roberval was entrusted by Mersenne to edit and complete the *Perspective curieuse du R. P. Nicéron, divisée en quatre livres, avec l'Optique et la Catoptrique du R. P. Mersenne*.¹⁶ In this volume, Roberval wrote a short text expounding his epistemology. The text reveals a sceptical attitude towards the physical explanations of the reflection of light, which is remarkably similar with the one in the *Aristarchi*:

So it is that, in the matter we are discussing, concerning the equality of the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection, some would have us believe that light is reflected by rebound; others, that it is reflected by a continuation of the actual motion of the corpuscles which are the cause of light; others, by the continuation of that same motion of those alleged corpuscles, not actually but only potentially (like the action of several balls, arranged in a straight line, touching one another, with the first of them touching a wall, and the last pushed by some force designed to make them all move simultaneously along that straight line, towards that wall). Others again make a comparison with a stick thrown forcibly downwards, or obliquely, against a

¹⁴ See a summary of the interactions between Gassendi and Roberval in V. Jullien, "Gassendi, Roberval à l'académie Mersenne. Lieux et occasions de contact entre ces deux auteurs", in *Dix-septième siècle*, 2006/4, 233, pp. 601-613.

¹⁵ A substantial account of the interactions between Roberval and Hobbes is provided by Noel Malcolm in N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, esp. pp. 156-200.

¹⁶ The 2nd edition of the *Perspective curieuse du R. P. Nicéron* was designed to be published independently of Mersenne's own *Optics and Catoptrics*, but, after Mersenne's death in 1648, the 2 volumes were published together.

surface; others have other even more implausible visions. But all explain this notable action of nature by some resemblance they think it has with something else, which they believe they know well.¹⁷

This fragment is in Roberval's handwriting, even if the authenticity of the rest of the text can be doubted.¹⁸ The style of the text deserves some attention. Interestingly, Roberval appeals, in this fragment, to the authority of another author, "equally skilled in philosophy and mathematics"¹⁹. It is this philosopher who claims that only vanity and arrogance makes people believe they can know the nature of physical phenomena with certainty. Nevertheless, Roberval is in full agreement. After listing the most popular physical explanations of the phenomenon of reflection of light, Roberval presents them as having no other virtue than being familiar comparisons with already known causal relations. He does not bother to compare the plausibility of the hypotheses. The purpose is rather to argue for a general agnosticism regarding physical explanations. This agnosticism is, claims Roberval, justified, as humans simply cannot have sensory access to the nature of the physical world. Roberval goes on to compare the general search for true natural causes with that of a blind man, searching in vain for the nature of the Sun's light. Hypotheses about light are just as imperfect as the ideas which a blind man might have of the Sun. The agnosticism set forth in this fragment is further used to ground a very strong distinction between science and mere opinion. Certainty belongs to science, while probability belongs to opinion. Roberval writes:

[W]here the human sciences are concerned, we should use pure reasoning as far as possible, so long as it is founded on principles that are clearly and distinctly true, and draw from those principles conclusions that cannot be doubted. That is what we do in geometry and arithmetic [...]. In the absence of such principles, we must make use of regular experience, made under the requisite conditions, and draw plausible conclusions from it. And he called the knowledge which comes from the first type of conclusions, 'science'; as for the conclusions drawn from experience, he called the knowledge derived from them 'opinion'.²⁰

¹⁷ *Perspective curieuse du R. P. Nicéron, divisée en quatre livres, avec l'Optique et la Catoptrique du R. P. Mersenne*, pp. 88-89. An English translation of the fragment is available in N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, pp. 168-172.

¹⁸ See the discussion in N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, p. 172 and notes.

¹⁹ Noel Malcolm argues that this philosopher is, most likely, Thomas Hobbes.

²⁰ *Perspective curieuse du R. P. Nicéron, divisée en quatre livres, avec l'Optique et la Catoptrique du R. P. Mersenne*, p. 91.

Is it the case that in optics and astronomy we can have plausible conclusions at best? Indeed, the nature of the propagation of light and the true motions of the astronomical system of the world, along with their cosmological explanation, remain uncertain, and can gain plausibility just if the system provides enough “regular experience made under the requisite conditions”. However, Roberval nuances this agnosticism. There are, of course, disciplines such as mechanics, astronomy and optics, which borrow both from mathematics and from sensible experience. It is, claims Roberval, just a matter of names if we chose to call these ‘sciences’, be they mixed, or ‘very certain opinions’. Anyway, these mixed sciences inherit their fallibility from experience—for Roberval, the cleavage between science and opinions is very strong.

If the fragment from Mersenne’s *Catoptrique* appeals to the testimony of some other philosopher, Roberval himself shows the same agnosticism in a fragment from a conference against Cartesian theories written in 1647. Here he repeats the same agnosticism:

Regarding the parts of philosophy, metaphysics is very chimerical, physics is very true, but it is very hidden: it only reveals itself through its effects. It does not flatter and it cannot be flattered: all chimeras are destroyed with the same ease with which light removes darkness at night time. [Physics] is never contrary to itself, even if it produces contrary effects, or which merely seem this way to us.²¹

We can see, once again, Roberval’s general attitude about the scope of physical theorizing and its certainty. Metaphysics, which includes, for instance, speculations about the nature of light in the phenomenon of reflection, is just a chimera. It is no more than a vain fiction—for we, same as the blind man who lacks the appropriate sense to perceive light, are missing the appropriate sense to access the nature of physical phenomena. This sensory lack is the reason why physics is concealed, and can only be known via its effects. Notice that Roberval is not a complete sceptic here: even if we do not have sensory access to its nature, physics is nevertheless true, and it is never contrary to itself. The only way to arrive at an adequate knowledge of physical effects is to establish a mathematics of constant experience. Roberval continues:

²¹ G. P. de Roberval, *L’Évidence, — le fait avéré — la chymere*, my translation. The Lecture is reproduced in B. Pascal, *Oeuvres de Blaise Pascal*, eds. L. Brunschvicg, P. Boutroux, vol. 2, Paris, Hachette, 1908, pp. 49-51; and in L. Auger, *Un savant méconnu, Giles Personne de Roberval*, pp. 136-137.

Mathematics [...] is true immutable and invincible, while not hidden: it is clear and evident in its proper object [grandeur or number, provided that this object is considered geometrically and arithmetically, and *not in the composition of material things*. In this composition, mathematics, *being founded on the same principles as physics*, takes as its foundations facts which are certified by a constant experience, and on these bases it establishes mechanics, optics, astronomy and music, and other particular sciences.²²

Roberval uses a common-place distinction between pure and mixed mathematics. Pure mathematics considers discrete and continuous quantity in themselves: these are arithmetic and geometry. The particular, mixed sciences of mechanics, optics, astronomy and so on are established as soon as mathematics is considered “in the composition of material things”, via the warrant of a constant experience. Whatever this vague latter statement is intended to mean, one thing is clear from this philosophical text: Roberval reiterates the cleavage between mathematical and physical knowledge. The former is evident and certain, while the latter is concealed, and can only be attained by a systematic inquiry into the constant effects of nature.

The most illuminating account of Roberval’s scientific methodology and epistemology comes, however, from another source. In 1845, Victor Cousin published his *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*. In it, he publishes and attributes, for the first time, one of Roberval’s more private writings on the theory of science. The dating is imprecise, but the fragment is considered authentic.²³ In Cousin, the title appears as *Principes du devoir et des connaissances humaines*.²⁴ The text begins by drawing a distinction between propositions so evident that they cannot be doubted just by understanding the meaning of the words (like “the whole is greater than the part”), and those which are plainly false (like “the part is greater than the whole”). The former are first truths and the latter first falsities. Any other proposition can be doubted:

There are some propositions that do seem at first either false nor true, as there are four elements, a triangle has its three angles equal to two right angles rights; but, if we show that they are based on first truths, they are held to be true. If we show

²² G. P. de Roberval, *L'Évidence, — le fait avéré — la chymere*, my translation and emphasis.

²³ There are, however, some clues that the fragment was written before 1647. In the 24th principle, Roberval talks about nature’s horror of the void—and in 1647, Roberval learned about Pascal’s experiments affirming the existence of void in nature. See also G. P. Roberval, *Eléments de géométrie*, ed. tr. Vincent Jullien, Paris, Vrin, 1996, p. 23.

²⁴ The text is available in V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, Paris: Charpentier, 1845, pp. 242-261. All hence forth translations are mine.

them to be based on first falsities, they will be considered false. If there is no such connection available, they must remain doubtful. [...] there is difference between being true or false and being known to be true or for false.²⁵

Even geometrical theorems, by this account, are bound to remain doubtful until a demonstration is provided. Geometrical theorems, nonetheless, do not *become* true once they are proven. They have always been true, and our demonstrations bring them from the realm of unknown truths to that of known truths. Furthermore, this distinction grounds Roberval's definition of science. The seventh principle begins: "I call *belief* a proposition that can be true or not. I call *science* the belief which is grounded in first truths and which is proved by them. But when a belief is a proposition which is not a first truth nor proven by one, I call this belief *opinion*".²⁶ As was the case with the fragment from Mersenne's *Catoptrique* and with *L'Évidence*, — *le fait avéré* — *la chymere*, Roberval follows a very strong definition of science. Again, we see an account in which mixed mathematics do not count as real sciences, as they are not (or cannot be) deduced from first truths. Only logic and—maybe—pure mathematics satisfy these demands.

If we take this definition to be Roberval's definitive view on the nature of scientific knowledge, then the scepticism about heliocentrism in the preface of *Aristarchi* becomes trivial. "One should not assert that any of these three famous systems is the true and natural one. [without a mathematical demonstration]"²⁷ simply means that there is no science available in astronomical claims, and, indeed there cannot be any certainty in these claims. But there is more. As we have seen, Roberval acknowledges that mathematics can be considered "in the composition of material things" and this type of knowledge has the warrant of constant experience available. Only certainty is at issue here: generally, any explanation of a natural phenomenon is bound to remain uncertain, and this is what Roberval's general agnosticism amounts to. In choosing from alternative and incompatible explanations of natural effects, one must always keep in mind that alternatives, which are equally intelligible propositions, may be impossible in nature. In Roberval's words, "Everything which is intelligibly possible is not possible in nature; but everything which is possible in nature is intelligibly possible".²⁸ On these terms, one cannot help but remain agnostic about the general

²⁵ *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 3. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 244

²⁶ *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 7, my emphasis. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 245

²⁷ G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, dedicatory epistle.

²⁸ *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 16. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 248.

truths of physics. Recall that, in Roberval's view, physics is very hidden; Nature only reveals itself through its effects, and any effect can have a multitude of possible causes. The only ground of our physical knowledge is that "nature is not contrary to itself".²⁹ Roberval repeats this axiom here, but he does not elaborate on its justification. Instead, he builds on it. He assumes that "the same, a similar, or a similarly disposed cause produces, in the same, a similar, or a similarly disposed subject a similar effect."³⁰ There is, therefore, the epistemological possibility of anticipating a cause by knowing if the subject (a substance) is similar or similarly disposed. We do not need to enter into Roberval's scholastic terminology here; suffice it to say that he accepts substantial forms, material substrata, and the Aristotelian causes. The Aristotelian terminology is described as follows:

There are certain things I call substances, like an apple, a tree, a mountain, the sea, the water, the earth, the sky [...] I call qualities of the substances, the colour, gravity, beauty, heat [...], which cannot survive naturally without some substance. [...] There is something in natural substances which is like the foundation of their qualities and which is not lost, even though the qualities are lost [...] I call it the matter of substances.³¹

The interesting element in his Aristotelian vocabulary is the relation between qualities and matter. Roberval claims that the natural qualities are nothing other than the disposition of matter to produce or receive certain effects. Therefore, there is no quality which is immaterial, and no natural effect which lies outside the material world. An investigation of nature is, thus, an investigation of the actual material effects within nature. Given that similar causes should produce, in a subject, similar effects, one can progress by comparing the possible causes by which a natural effect might be produced. This can be done by arriving at a consistent conventional classification of qualities, which can afterwards be evaluated. If qualities are nothing other than material dispositions towards causes and effects, the scientist can learn, in a piecemeal fashion, the probable causes in nature, by inquiring into the *signs* of the object in question. Both the causes and the effects of something are signs of that thing. For instance, rain is a sign for the presence of clouds, in the same way as heat is a sign for the expansion of air. In principle 35, Roberval claims that the signs of a

²⁹ *Principes du devoir et des connoissances humaine*, principe 15. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 247.

³⁰ *Principes du devoir et des connoissances humaine*, principe 15. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 247.

³¹ *Principes du devoir et des connoissances humaine*, principe 26. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 250.

thing are its causes and effects, its qualities, or what usually precedes or accompanies it. A thing is not absolutely certain and infallible if, differently put, we could have similar signs and appearances of another thing.³²

By Roberval's account, many things can be signs of a particular object which is inquired: causes, effects, qualities, or just other phenomena which usually correlate with the inquiry. The 'similarity' between causes, effects, and signs plays a big role in Roberval's account. He does not, however, elaborate on what a 'similar cause', 'similar effect' or 'similar appearance' mean. He only illustrates this similarity by some examples:

It is very likely that correlated causes will produce effects which are or seem to be correlated. [...] as, if the Sun's rays bend entering into the water, those of a candle will also very likely bend; and if they bend entering glass, it is very likely that they will bend entering crystal or the like, if experience does not show the contrary.³³

The decision whether this or that cause and effect are or are not similar need not concern us at this point. It is only relevant that the decision is made by the individual scientist, based on what histories, communities or conventions might indicate. All these decisions are, of course, fallible: the signs of a thing might be misleading in different contexts, so the inquiry into the natural causes of a phenomenon is bound to be a step by step process; It should consider each causal relation at a time, and gradually move up on the chain of causes in the order of nature, until one reaches a tentative first cause. Roberval argues that any natural phenomenon has a multitude of natural causes, although this number must be finite:

There is one or more first causes for each effect, but, at the same time, there cannot be an infinity of causes of the same effect [...] The land dries because the water rises, it rises because it becomes lighter, it becomes lighter because it expands, it expands because it is heated; but it cannot be that there do not exist one or more first causes of all these effects.³⁴

This type of causal chain should be investigated by the scientist, step by step, all the way up towards the first principles. There is no guarantee of achieving certain knowledge about the first causes; some degree of arbitrariness in

³² *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 31. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 252.

³³ *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 35. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 258.

³⁴ *Principes du devoir et des cognoissances humaine*, principe 19. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 248.

unavoidable in establishing the first causes of physical effects. However, one must aim for corroborating purported causes of physical phenomena by as many experiences as possible. When there is no available access to the proper cause of a particular phenomenon in a causal chain, the inquirer must tentatively hold an already available cause as the natural cause.

Related to Roberval's earlier example of a natural causal chain, he writes: "When we cannot establish a cause of a natural fact [...] we will regard as a first natural cause the one on which this [unknown cause] depends, as, if we cannot establish the cause which makes hot air expand, we will regard as *the first natural cause that air is expanded by heat*."³⁵ This example is interesting for more than its illustrative purposes. As we will see, one of the physical principles of heavenly motion set forth by Roberval in his *Aristarchi* is precisely this: The Sun's heat rarefies matter and pushes it towards the extremity of the system of the world.

In the general context here, notice however that there are two reasons why ascribing natural causes to physical phenomena in this way is provisional. The first reason regards the actual mechanism by which the purported cause produces the effect. Heat might be the cause of the expansion of air, but this does not explain *how it is* that heat causes the expansion. The scientist would have to fill this explanatory gap. The second sense of the provisional state of first causes regards the possibility of error. In Roberval's example, heat might not be connected to the expansion of air at all—they could both be the effect of another cause. The scientist must always be prepared for this type of error, and be ready to give up the previously held explanations. In case the alternative conflicting causal explanations of physical phenomena, corroboration with other established causal chains plays a major role for Roberval: "When we have diverse appearances that cannot be together true, we have to believe the stronger and clearer appearances, which are in more conformity between themselves and with the previous ones held for certain."³⁶ *Fr.* "apparences" does not mean here sensory input—which might be deceitful. It refers to the provisional causal explanations of some physical effect. That is, explanations should be as consistent (within themselves and with each other) and as evident as possible. The same goes for systems of explanations, which are presupposed in accounting for signs and appearances, e.g. the observed celestial motions. When deciding between incompatible systems, such as the Ptolemaic, Tychoinic

³⁵ *Principes du devoir et des connoissances humaine*, principe 35, my emphasis. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 257.

³⁶ *Principes du devoir et des connoissances humaine*, principe 35. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 257. my emphasis.

or Copernican systems, the inquirer must evaluate system based on some criteria: “One system is more credible than another when it explains [*fr. rend raison*] all or most appearances more exactly, simpler, more clearly, and more related to other natural things.”³⁷

The similarity of this passage with the preface of the *Aristarchi* is striking. Recall that in the preface, Roberval claims that “it is [the system of Aristarchus] which seems to us to be the simplest and the one which fits best with the laws of nature so that, even though we do not claim that it is certainly true, we prefer it to the other two.”³⁸ There are, therefore, consistent reasons, on Roberval’s part, both for his preference for the Copernican system, and of his (only) moderate acceptance of it just as a more probable explanation than the alternatives. I will elaborate on these particular astronomical and cosmological reasons in the next section. For now, let us recapitulate Roberval’s precautious methodological tenets. These constitute the first part of Roberval’s fairly sceptical epistemology, what I have called his general agnosticism about the real physical causes of natural phenomena.

In all of Roberval’s philosophical writings, there is a fundamental difference between science and opinion. Only the claims of the former can be absolutely certain. The domain of science *per se* is (in a very traditional Aristotelian way) greatly restricted: only logic and pure mathematics may count as sciences. Roberval constantly wavers between describing claims of optics, mechanics, astronomy etc. as highly probable opinions, or sciences founded on the constant experience of physical phenomena whose causes are not directly accessible. Regardless, establishing the natural cause of a physical phenomenon is never certain. The main epistemological reason of this uncertainty is this: there can be multiple possible and incompatible causes of a particular effect. All alternatives may be equally intelligible. However, not all intelligible causes are, in fact, possible in nature. The scientist must establish a hierarchy of possible causal relations, by corroborating as many signs as possible. This hierarchy should build up (probable) causal chains, representing the causal order of nature, all the way up to the first principles. As the chain of causes can only be probable, the established first principles are bound to be provisional and revisable. If two or more of these accounts of causal chains prove to be incompatible, the inquirer has to choose the most probable one by criteria such as precision, consistency, corroboration, simplicity. We are never, however, entitled to believe that the resulting systems or first principles are anything more than probable opinions—opinions which, at some

³⁷ *Principes du devoir et des connaissances humaine*, principe 35. See V. Cousin, *Fragments de Philosophie Cartésienne*, p. 260.

³⁸ G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, dedicatory epistle.

point, might be abandoned. Seen in this light, Roberval's tempered endorsement of the Copernican system is no little thing—it is actually the most we could hope for in astronomy.

But Roberval's pessimistic attitude towards the prospect of a perfect astronomy expounded in the epilogue is of a different nature: it bears on the particular type of available knowledge about heavenly motions and their causes. I will now turn to a contextualisation of Roberval's methodological precepts to his own physical system described in the *Aristarchi*.

The Physical System of the *Aristarchi*

In the *Aristarchi*, Roberval articulates the physical causes of the movements of the heavenly bodies. In this sense, his work is closer to a cosmology than to an astronomy. As we have seen, knowledge about physical causes is bound to be uncertain. Still, the purported physical causes have to be taken as valid until one finds a better, more corroborated replacement.

What are Roberval's reasons for his pessimism about the prospect of astronomy? The first already assumes a heliocentric system of the world: it is the irregularity of the variation of the Earth's diurnal and periodical movement. The most nefarious effect of this irregular variation is the unreliability of observation. Without inaccurate way of establishing sidereal time, no observation about the position of heavenly bodies can be completely reliable:

Notice that [...] both periodical and diurnal movement of the Earth and of the planets, is irregularly irregular in many of its points. From which it follows that the natural or astronomic days are irregularly unequal. And yet we do not have another movement, aside from the diurnal natural motion of the Earth, which is irregular, *from which we can measure and discern time in astronomical observations*. And the method or the ways in which these measurements are done are not enough to correct and equalize time-keeping itself, because of the irregularity of all the movements. Because time is unequal and irregular, astronomical observations are doubtful and uncertain, and insufficient to create perfect we cannot make perfect tables of the celestial movements. Furthermore, the limit from which we can establish the celestial longitude, the vernal equinox, is absolutely uncertain, as it was explained in the chapter on the precession of the equinoxes.³⁹

³⁹ G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, pp. 146-147.

On the practical side, there is no hope for ever devising a method for determining, *e.g.* celestial longitude if neither the observations nor the astronomical tables are reliable. The same goes for the hope of further developing the science of astronomy itself—if the variations in movement are irregular, there is no hope of discovering any general law of these deviations.

Aside from the fallibility of observation, there is yet another reason which undermines the hope for a better astronomy. This has to do with the purported physical cause of all the movements of celestial bodies, including the system of the Earth. Let us follow Roberval's methodological precept and examine this effect (the appearance of the irregular variation of the motion of the Earth) by the cause which produces it, through the natural causal chain, all the way up to the first cause(s). Roberval claims that the movements vary irregularly (as does the precession of the equinoxes) because the system of the Earth, including here the smaller system of the Moon, possesses an oscillatory motion, a certain irregular trepidation, in its periodical movement around the Sun and in its diurnal motion.

I will trace the source of the irregular periodical and diurnal movement of the Earth, all the way back to the very first cause of the motioning the system of the world. They are as follows, from the most general to the most particular: 1. The heat generated by the Sun expands and rarefies the adjacent matter and pushes all matter towards the outskirts of the system. This determines the outward push by which the Sun acts on all the celestial bodies in the world; 2. The way in which the systems of the Earth and planets, by virtue of their material properties, react to this pushing. This step is twofold: on the one hand, it has to do with the universal property of the fluid, diaphanous matter which fills the heavens. On the other hand, it has to do with the irregular way in which the terrestrial elemental matter is disposed within the system of the Earth. 3. The motion of the Moon, which, by its oval orbit, irregularly influences the ebb of the sea and the diurnal motion of the Earth. I will treat them individually.

1. *The Sun as a cause of motion.* From the very first chapter of the *Aristarchi*, Roberval explains all motion of the system of the world by two principles. One of them is a principle of attraction, stating that the fluid heavenly matter has, in every one of its parts, a certain property by which it tends to unite with all the other parts of matter.⁴⁰ If the Sun would be absent from the world, all heavenly matter would reunite in a perfect sphere. The second principle concerns the action of the Sun. By its heat, the Sun continuously rarefies the surrounding matter. The rarefaction results in the elongation of matter, which is pushed towards the extremity of the

⁴⁰ G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, pp. 2-5.

system. The sun also has an axial motion of its own, by which the eviction of the rarefied matter takes place.⁴¹ This motion impresses upon the celestial bodies their periodical movement around the Sun. However, throughout the Sun's axial rotations, the ejections of rarefied matter do not have a constant flux, and thus the motions of heavenly bodies around the sun are not uniform.

2. *The movements of the Earth's system.* As one of the planetary systems, the Earth is moved around the Sun by the continuous pushing of the elongated matter, coupled with the attractive property of the celestial matter. The system of the Earth retains its quasi-spherical shape due to an analogous attractive property of the elemental matter, which accounts for the weight of terrestrial bodies.⁴² The terrestrial matter is, however, different from the heavenly matter. It is very mixed, and it is unevenly disposed on the surface of the Earth.⁴³ Therefore, the Sun unevenly elongates the airy and fiery atmosphere surrounding the Earth and, as a result, the diurnal motion of the Earth is irregular. To this is added a third reason of the irregularity, the influence of the Moon.

3. *The periodical movement of the Moon.* According to Roberval, The Moon is a part of the system of the Earth. Its density is similar to that of the superior atmosphere, such that it revolves, together with the air and fire, around the Earth. Roberval claims that the moon floats in the superior atmosphere in the same way as a submerged piece of wax floats in water.⁴⁴ Its orbit, however, is not circular but oval-shaped. This shape is responsible for the ebb of the seas: at its perigee, the Moon it compresses the air below it which, in turn, exerts a pressure on the ocean. Likewise, the Moon disturbs the flow of rarefied matter coming from the Sun, which also affects the diurnal motion of the earth.

All these physical causes render the diurnal and periodical motion of the Earth "irregularly irregular". These causes are more and more particular, starting from the first principle of motion (the Sun's heat) and ending with the interaction between the Moon and the superior atmosphere. Still, all of them are prior to the

⁴¹ This motion is described in G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, pp. 23-36.

⁴² This property of terrestrial matter is, however, different from the attraction inherent in heavenly matter. This point is sometimes neglected. Leon Auger, for instance, in his *Un savant méconnu: Giles Personne de Roberval*, pp. 106-108, claims that Roberval's principle is one of universal attraction. This is not true, as the attractive properties of the small systems are different in nature from the attraction of the celestial matter. See also P. Duhem, *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954, pp. 243-244; and E. J. Aiton, *The Vortex Theory of Planetary Motions*, New York, American Elsevier, 1972, pp. 57-58 and notes.

⁴³ See the description of the movement of the system of the Earth in G. P. de Roberval, *Aristarchi*, pp. 44-59.

⁴⁴ See the explanation of the motion of the Moon in *Aristarchi*, pp. 59-67.

earthly effect—the observed irregularity of the Earth’s motion. All in all, according to Roberval, the probable evidence, *i.e.* the probable individual causes acting upon the Earth, indicate that the movement of the Earth is irregular without following any general rule. If this is the case, then the expectations of achieving a “perpetual theory of the planets” are indeed totally unwarranted.

Roberval’s whole pessimism about the prospects of a better astronomy is not, as his more general agnosticism, epistemological. The latter is a general worry about the impossibility of attaining certainty in physical and (to a lesser degree) mixed-mathematical sciences. The main reason for this is that one can explain the same phenomenon in multiple, equally intelligible ways. The pessimism about astronomy, on the other hand, is not epistemological at all: it does not have to do with the nature or status of astronomical or cosmological knowledge. It only has to do with the particular causes which are envisaged by Roberval to be producing the motions in the heavens. If these causes (heat, attraction of matter, the irregular composition of the Earth and the influence of the Moon) would not have been real, or if later astronomers will discover a more fundamental cause of all these, the prospects of a perfect astronomy would be revived.

Conclusion

As is Roberval’s fake attribution of his treatise to Aristarchus of Samos, his attitude towards the certainty of astronomical and cosmological knowledge is usually explained in terms of prudence related to censure. The purpose of this article has been to provide a more internalist reading of Roberval’s mildly sceptical view about astronomy and cosmology. I have showed that Roberval’s *Aristarchi* is consistent with the epistemological and methodological precepts set forth in his philosophical writings. I have also argued that this attitude conflates two quite different strains of scepticism.

The first, which I have called his general agnosticism about physical causes is essentially an epistemological matter. It concerns the status of physical (and mixed) sciences within Roberval’s general theory of science. Physics is bound to be a science in which no absolute certainty can be attained. Humans simply lack the appropriate sense in order to know the true causes in nature. Every natural effect may have a variety of equally intelligible, but not equally possible, natural causes. As a result, inquirers must learn to discern the most probable explanation between incompatible alternatives. All probable explanations are, however, provisional and revisable. This is the case of the Copernican system. By all the amount of available evidence, it is the most plausible planetary system—and this is the most an astronomical system could hope for.

The second, which I have called Roberval's pessimism about the prospects of a perfect astronomy, is not an epistemological worry. It is the consequence of the particular physical cosmology which Roberval proposes. The probable physical causes of motion in the system of the world are such that the precise movement of celestial bodies can never be accurately predicted. The first principle of motion, *i.e.* the heat generated by the Sun, along with the motion of the Moon and the irregular disposition of terrestrial elemental matter affect the diurnal and periodical movement of the Earth. The effect is that the Earth possesses an irregular movement which is not uniform, and does not vary according to any law. Because there is no natural law of these irregularities, astronomers cannot even hope to construct precise astronomical tables based on accurate observations. This conclusion of Roberval is, however, only as sound and probable as his explanations of the physical causes of heavenly motions.

Both of these strains of scepticism shape Roberval's philosophical and physical endeavours. He is, nevertheless, consistent: in the *Aristarchus*, the choice of the astronomical system, as well as all physical explanations, are presented as mere probable, and his methodology leaves open the possibility of improvement. One thing to be further investigated is the philosophical influence which Roberval's closest collaborators, Mersenne, Hobbes and Gassendi, had on his twofold scepticism.

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PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY. HUSSELR'S CRITIQUE OF PSYCHOLOGISM AS COMMON GROUND¹

CRISTIAN BODEA*

ABSTRACT. This paper is addressing Husserl's critique of psychologism in order to gain a better understanding of an up to date phenomenological research. Starting with Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology became more and more interested in how psychoanalytic theory can contribute to its findings. The latest phenomenological research reflects this growing interest in psychoanalysis. I will demonstrate in this paper that Husserl's critique of psychologism enables this interest and that the psychoanalytic theory offers the same critique in response. Thus, the *ego* problem leading to the deadlock of intersubjectivity, represent one of the common grounds phenomenology and psychoanalysis can meet. In this respect I will use the works of Marc Richir and Jacques Lacan. Emphasizing Marc Richir's conception of language as phenomenon and the twist he gives to the concept of "perceptive" *phantasia* introduced by Husserl in 1918, I will consider the concept of unconscious as a way to solve the intersubjectivity dilemma.

Keywords: *ego, intersubjectivity, "perceptive" phantasia, psychologism, transcendental interfactivity, unconscious*

Instituted in response to the growing psychologism of its time, phenomenology was meant to give an account of the subjective dimension of human experience. Far from being strictly quantifiable, human experience is pervaded by the intimate and unique dimension of subjectivity. Thus, one cannot simply assume either that the same psychological laws apply in the same way to

¹ This paper is supported by the Recurring Donor Fund (Fondul Recurent al Donatorilor), available to the Romanian Academy and managed by the "Patrimoniul" Foundation GAR-UM-2019-393C/15.10.2019

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each and every one of us, or that one's experience may be ameliorated or "improved" in virtue of such laws. To assume that would involve a certain form of naivety, in Husserlian terms.

As a matter of fact, Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction targets precisely such a naive attitude. To be more precise, he aims at suspending it in order to access a phenomenological (or transcendental) attitude, from which subjectivity is to be adequately scrutinized. As the intended method for that adequate scrutiny, the newly instituted phenomenology evolves into a "pure phenomenology", which seeks to uncover the "pure" *ego*.

At this transcendental level, Husserl faces a crucial problem: intersubjectivity. He certainly recognises it as such, and so do many of his disciples. Although he is certain of having solved the problem, not all phenomenologists agree with him.

One of his prominent critics in this respect is Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who is sceptical about the very idea of a "pure" *ego* and about the ideal of purity it involves. In order to capture the rationale of this scepticism, I turn to another figure who, around the time when Husserl "invented" phenomenology, claimed to "invent" a novel method of inquiry into subjectivity and unveil a new field of knowledge: Freud and his psychoanalysis.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory emphasises a certain psychological determinism of the subject. At first sight, this is just another version of psychologism. However, for him the psychic apparatus has a special status: it is the unconscious itself. And given that the workings of the unconscious are not supposed to be the same for each and every one of us, it would be impossible to advance universally applicable psychological laws.

Merleau-Ponty reevaluates the Freudian theory of the unconscious, maintaining that the subject is not entirely transparent to itself. The *ego* is inevitably confronted with a sort of debris he cannot fully comprehend. Merleau-Ponty calls that debris *Wesen sauvage*.

Later on, Marc Richir develops the notion of *Wesen sauvages* into a key element of his theory of meaning. Since it is entangled with the unconscious, meaning is for Richir always in the making, thus never fixed or stable, as we would like to think. Because of that, language itself becomes phenomenal and has a transcendental value.

The critique of psychologism

It is a well-established phenomenological method the one of taking the obvious as a legit starting point for any research. As Husserl himself points out, when something is considered to be self-explanatory, we can be sure that there are

a multitude of misunderstandings and, nevertheless, a multitude of truths waiting to be unveiled. The illusion of knowing acts like a blanket covering all the riches of the unknown.

Such is the case with the critique of psychologism. It became so common among the phenomenologists that it may be easily considered as being self-explanatory. But, let us dig one more time into this problem and see what we can find.

I will start, again, with the obvious fact that psychologism is an *-ism*. Thus, it is an ideology. Its set of ideas is consistent with the one of the positivism of the 19th century when an afflux of the positive sciences takes place. With it, philosophy is called into question. Starting with the 19th century, "something happened" as Marc Richir observes². What exactly happened cannot be pinpointed, but there are some previous elements that can give us a hint.

Long before this moment in history... Descartes happened. What he achieved in such a revolutionary way was a return to the *ego*. In other words, "man ceased to be considered merely a creature, but, on the contrary, he is valorised as being the base for any cognition and action"³. With this move, a crack in the great metaphysical systems became visible. There were attempts to cover up this crack made by Locke or Hume, for example. Hegel was another one to try, and he also was the last great fail when trying to give an account for an absolute metaphysic. As a consequence of this failure, the only option left for philosophy was to choose between trying to find the *a priori* frames of knowledge a conscious subject is using (Kant), or to recognise the fact that any speculation regarding subjectivity is useless and solely psychology can give a rigorous discourse about this topic⁴. In either case, philosophy loses. If the first option is chosen, it means to perpetuate the desire to patch up the crack initiated by the Copernican revolution and thus return to metaphysics. If the second option is chosen, then subjectivity is left aside, meaning that Copernican revolution is ignored altogether - this amounts to returning to a pre-Cartesian metaphysics.

This is the historical moment Husserl intervenes. He acknowledges the precarious state in which philosophy is and tries to save this delicate situation. Thus, he doesn't want to give up the subjectivity issue but also rejects the attempts to reinstate the metaphysical way of thinking. In his attempt, he needs new instruments, i.e. a new working method. Of course, the new method invented by him is the phenomenological method.

² Marc Richir, *Le problème du psychologisme - Quelques réflexions préliminaires*, p. 110

³ *Idem*

⁴ Cf. Marc Richir, *op. cit.*

Husserl address his critique against psychologism for the first time in 1900 when he published the first volume of *Logical Investigations*, namely *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*. In it he tries to make clear the status of ideality and, in general, to clarify the problem of sense. Psychologism, he says, does nothing else than to obscure the ideality and its sense when pretending to explain it by empirical norms⁵. In other words, “as long as it is an empirical science, psychology is concerned with *facts* without questioning their conditions of intelligibility or the correlations of essence that envelops the facts when giving them sense.”⁶

Husserl’s conclusion is that a psychological explanation cannot have epistemological value. This blunt conclusion is not to be used as a way to disregard psychology. In my opinion, its meaning is that psychology and philosophy are two completely separated disciplines and do not compete at the same level. It is Husserl’s way of saving philosophy. By showing that psychology is not philosophy, or vice versa, he clears the path to new investigations regarding the human being that are neither explanatory nor metaphysical. Phenomenology gives an insight into the condition for possibility of sense-making, I claim following the thinking of Marc Richir.

In his theory, Jacques Lacan says about the same thing. Psychoanalysis, he says, is not so much about finding the cause of the symptom, but more about finding its *essence*, its unique feature, or its *trait unaire* as he puts it. This is the condition of possibility that plays the decisive role in someone’s life. It is also the element of uniqueness that manifests itself in sense-making. When things don’t make much sense, or don’t make any sense at all, that is usually a case for a therapy.

This therapy invented by Freud was at first as descriptive as it may be. In the beginning Freud gave long and elaborate explanations to his patients in hope that they will understand what is wrong with them and thus they will cure themselves. But that didn’t work. As said before, psychological explanations don’t have any epistemological value. In other words, it can’t give you knowledge in the sense of essential knowledge, or the knowledge of the essence. If there is such a knowledge, and how can it be acquired, remains to be seen.

Anyway, after one of his patients complained about his method and requested to be listened instead, Freud realised that listening is a key element in therapy. He then begins to develop his idea of *free-floating attention*, or *attention flottante* in French. It basically is a kind of *epoche* and requires the analyst not to pay too much attention to the words the patient is saying but to the way the words are said. In Richirian terms, this means to “listen” not the sense but the sense-making or the sense in the making (*sens se faisant*).

⁵ Marc Richir, *op. cit.*, p. 111

⁶ *Idem*

This idea of free-floating attention is very important for Jacques Lacan. When he declares himself to be a Freudian, and militates for a return to Freud, he thinks about it also. In his opinion most of the orthodox Freudians have forgotten the requirement of the free-floating attention and reiterate the same mistake Freud made at the beginning of his practice. This means that they are still trapped in psychologism.

For Lacan, psychoanalysis has nothing to do with psychology. As Husserl did long before him, he also addresses a critique of psychology. In *The Position of the Unconscious*, published in *Écrits*, he accuses psychology of being confused by the same illusion Hegel once named "the law of the heart" that results in a delusion of presuppositions⁷. "The law of the heart" or of "the good heart", as sometimes Hegel also names it, belongs to the imaginary, i.e. the register Lacan considers to be the one of duality and conflict. It is an enabler for ideality, thus it is an instrument of society, as the ideal is submitted to it. As a consequence, psychology is guided not solely by objective laws, as one may think, but by the ideal of the society, also. This, Lacan concludes, has serious consequences when it comes to knowledge. So, in a sense, what psychology knows is limited by the ideal of the society in which it develops. This is another explanation for why psychology became *psychologism*, thus ideology.

Psychoanalysis also tends to submit itself to the ideology of its time⁸, warns Lacan. The best example in that direction is the way in which the *ego* is treated by the American psychoanalysts. The idea that the *ego* must be strong, undivided and totally autonomous is consistent with the individualistic ideology which dominates in the USA. But that was not at all the idea Freud had. That's another reason why a return to Freud is needed.

The question of the *ego*

Reaching a conclusion in what regards psychologism, Husserl can go further on in the development of his idea of a new philosophy based on the phenomenological method he invented. The first step this method presupposes is, of course, the reduction of the natural attitude in order to get the transcendental attitude. It is a move that also presupposes the splitting of the *ego*; *Ichspaltung*, says Husserl.

This idea of a divided *ego* is not at all strange to psychoanalysis. Right from the beginning Freud talked about *Idealich*, i.e. ideal *ego*, and *Ich-Ideal*, i.e. ego-ideal, as two different instances of the same *ego*. He also used sometimes *Ueberich*

⁷ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 832

⁸ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *What it means to be contemporary?* in "What Is an Apparatus?" and Other Essays

to indicate more precisely what he meant by *Ich-Ideal*. So, the *ego*-ideal is the superego the American psychoanalysis is trying so avidly to make even stronger. Even though Freud never denied the importance of the superego, he was nevertheless precautious when dealing with it. Too much emphasis on the superego and the spectre of totalitarianism is in sight. The superego becomes tyrannical (it is its “natural” tendency to do so) and unbearable to the point of breaking the *ego* down. So, the last thing the superego needs is more encouragement...

Lacan introduces a precise distinction between these three terms: “the “ideal *ego*” stands for the idealized self-image of the subject (the way I would like to be, I would like others to see me); the *ego*-ideal is the agency whose gaze I try to impress with my *ego* image, the big Other who watches over me and propels me to give my best, the ideal I try to follow and actualize; and the superego is this *same* agency in its revengeful, sadistic, punishing, aspect”⁹.

In order to better understand what Freud had in mind, and thus facilitate the revaluation of his theory, Lacan considers that it is important to comprehend the dialectic these three terms presuppose. In this respect, he introduced another factor in the becoming of the subject, namely alienation. For Lacan, the process involved in the ontogenesis of the subject is not just one of splitting the *ego*, but also one of alienating it.

The natural attitude Husserl is speaking of is a kind of alienation. He also calls the natural attitude “naive attitude”, thus one of mirroring and plain description. Thereby, for a clear view one must leave aside the “reflected light”, i.e. the images of the things, and go to their essence, namely to their identity (note that in Lacanian theory there is a clear distinction between identity and identification). That is why, in the lecture of 1925, Husserl can say about the phenomenology of the *Logical Investigations* that it is an *eidetic psychology*. The *ego* of this particular type of psychology must also be one of an eidetic nature. It must be a “pure” *ego*, namely one that is identical to itself itself and above the one who gets a series of determinations in everyday life.

Marc Richir tracks down a problem with this *Aufhebung* Husserl is proposing¹⁰. “The obvious difficulty is to know which element from the naive life will be considered as being significant by the superior *ego*”¹¹. This difficulty proves to be a tautology and opens up the path for metaphysics. Going on this road, Husserl unknowingly restores metaphysics. In the light of psychoanalytic theory, one also must ask: Isn’t this superior *ego*, this “pure” *ego*, a superego, in fact? I will leave this question open...

⁹ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (cap. 5)

¹⁰ Cf. Marc Richir, *Le problème du psychologisme - Quelques réflexions préliminaires*, p. 123

¹¹ Marc Richir, *op. cit.*, p. 118

What Husserl is asking is for *the sight to stop seeing*, Richir concludes¹². It seems to be an impossible task as it is entangled in the vicious circle of *seen* and *be seen*. But, as Merleau-Ponty already made clear, the one who sees is also seen. There is no point in choosing between the two.

The phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty acknowledges the “reflected light”, or the rays of the world (*des rayons de monde*), coming from “the imaginary unity of being”¹³. He doesn't disregard this unity, but considers it as reflecting the “zero of being which isn't nothingness”¹⁴. This zero point of being is considered by Merleau-Ponty to be the starting point in phenomenological investigation. He thus follows Heidegger in his distance from Husserl. Heidegger recognises the irreducibility of the worldly horizon and its facticity and does not consider Being as transcendental subjectivity anymore¹⁵.

Transcendental interfacticity and *Wesen sauvages*

By focusing on Being in its worldly horizon, Heidegger develops an ontology of *Dasein* Husserl never understood. Even though Husserl was the one to realise “an ontological rehabilitation of the sensible”¹⁶, the worldly horizon remains secondary in his phenomenology.

Merleau-Ponty continues, in his way, the Heideggerian approach to phenomenology. In his considerations, the problematic of solipsism and intersubjectivity leads to the conclusion that the *solus ipse* is only a fabrication as “true and transcendental solitude... takes place only if the other person is not even conceivable”¹⁷ and if there is no longer “a self to claim solitude”¹⁸. As a consequence, what the solipsist hypothesis implies is the fact that it has no *ego* and no *ipse*, thus it contradicts itself. Given these conditions, the only valid hypothesis remains the one suggesting “a primordial generality we are intermingled in” from which “myself and the others are born together through the original *extasis*”¹⁹. In short, we must assume a primordial *We*.

¹² Cf. Marc Richir, *op. cit.*, p. 120

¹³ Guy-Félix Duportail, *Une chair à réparer : le nœud manqué de Merleau-Ponty*, p. 13

¹⁴ Marc Richir *apud* Guy-Félix Duportail, *Une chair à réparer : le nœud manqué de Merleau-Ponty*, p. 13

¹⁵ Cf. Marc Richir, *Le problème du psychologisme - Quelques réflexions préliminaires*, p. 133

¹⁶ Marc Richir, *The Meaning of Phenomenology in the Visible and the Invisible*, p. 60

¹⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty *apud* Marc Richir, *op.cit.*, p. 72

¹⁸ *Idem*

¹⁹ *Idem*

I claim that Lacanian psychoanalytic theory conceives this *We*, this togetherness, as the world of language we are born in. By language he means the *experienced* language, the *lived* language that is not, strictly speaking, the vehicle of cognitive communication. The sense it involves is more like an unconscious sense, not intuited but read between the lines. To use a Richirian expression, it is the *pre-sentiment* of a sense. That is another way of saying that the desire comes from the Other, as this *We* contains its mysterious desire. Consequently, language and desire are complementary in Lacanian theory; to be born into a world of language equals to be born into a world of desire. That is how, from language, Being comes to life²⁰. Being is a speaking being, or *parlêtre*, in Lacan's own words.

Lacan coined this expression in order to show that, in psychoanalytic theory, the subject is a mixture of body and language, namely a body that unconsciously desires. Because of that it is caught up in a chain of signifiers that prevent him from acting purely instinctively; the *parlêtre* has *drives* not *instincts*. The distinction between drives and instincts is very important. It shows that the body is not taken in its purely biological sense. Thereby, it represents nothing else than the *Leib*.

For Richir, the *Leib* is a language phenomenon as much as it is a world phenomenon. I will not develop here the distinction between *Leib* and *Körper* already made by Husserl. I think it is well known among phenomenologists. Its the same distinction also used by Merleau-Ponty when he speaks about the flesh (*chair*) that gives the fleshly essence, i.e. the *Wesen* sauvage, i.e. the rays of the world²¹.

“This is to say that the flesh is that by which the phenomenological field discovers its own consistency and autonomy: it is its tissue or element, that is, what we have called the phenomenality of the phenomenon. For the flesh is every time that which, while folding back on itself, so to speak, makes the phenomenon open onto other phenomena than itself [...]”²²

Richir considers this process to be much too ontologized by Merleau-Ponty. For him, the phenomenon of language is equally important in opening the world. In other words, the flesh is also a flesh of language. To put it another way, language constitutes the flesh of the world too. In his conception, Richir is much closer to the psychoanalytical theory than Merleau-Ponty. To be noted that, in both Richirian and Lacanian theory, language must be taken as transcendental, namely as condition of possibility for something to be instituted. Thus, transcendental interfacticity becomes a vehicle for *Wesen sauvages*, or significant that unknowingly affects the subject.

²⁰ Thus, it is a *living* Being, namely not without body, i.e. *Leib*

²¹ Cf. Renaud Barbaras, *Merleau-Ponty: Le réel et l'imaginaire*, p. 135

²² Marc Richir, *The Meaning of Phenomenology in the Visible and the Invisible*, p. 75

Back to Husserl. "Perceptive" *phantasia* and (non)-intentionality

Already in 1910, in the lecture named *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*²³, Husserl foreseen as a consequence of eidetic reduction the fact that the lived (*vécu*) [experience] will be "open to infinity because of the multitude of *non-actualized* intentional implications"²⁴. But, according to Richir there is an even deeper infinity (i.e. the wild infinity), one in which the intentional implications are not of symbolical nature.

"This wild infinity is that of language and the phenomenological unconscious, and any instituted (empirical) language is in a sense only the drawdown or projection on its plane, which is only apparent, and which exists only when a language takes itself for its 'object' by elaborating itself in its symbolic institution"²⁵.

In my opinion, Richir brings two important critiques in this quote:

1. the critique against the well-known Lacanian saying: "the unconscious is structured like a language";

2. the critique against what he considers a certain naiveté on Husserl's part regarding intentionality. If the world and its states are poles of intentional unity, then the attempt to suspend the natural attitude towards the world meets the difficulty of not knowing exactly how much of the representation is immanent (psychological) and how much of it is external, i.e. truly unknowable²⁶. As a consequence, Richir says, the intentionality is in risk of collapse to some kind of "absolute idealism of representation in which the psychological data would not recognise anything but themselves"²⁷.

To avoid this risk leading to tautology, Richir considers necessary for phenomenology to go beyond the standard of intentionality, as he puts it. And he finds means to do that right in Husserlian phenomenology. The concept of *phantasia*, which differs from the concept of imagination and is certainly not to be confused with *fantasy*, opens up to this possibility of breaking the intentionality barrier. Unfortunately, Husserl does not insist too much on that. If he had done so, he would have found that there are ruptures in the continuous flux of conscience,

²³ This title is later used by Heidegger for one of his books

²⁴ Marc Richir, *La psychologie comme phénoménologie transcendante : Husserl et au-delà de Husserl*, p. 378

²⁵ *Idem*

²⁶ Cf. Marc Richir, *Intentionnalité et intersubjectivité - Commentaire de Husserliana XV*, pp. 157-158

²⁷ Marc Richir, *op. cit.*, p. 158

something he was not prepared to accept, I speculate. Certainly, there are passive syntheses made without active participation on the subject's part. But this is done only to maintain a certain coherence in space and time.

Where Richir thinks the concept of *phantasia* should lead to is not simply the infinity, but the *wild* infinity where there is no space and no time. It represents the anarchic register of *Wesen sauvages*. Here, *sense is in the making* (*sens se faisant*); not through synthesis but by a synesthetic process. Thus, *phantasia* should be a more basic register than imagination. In this register "images" are sketchy and represent only shadows or, as Richir puts it, the shadows of shadows. It is his way of saying that the objects are "perceived" in a non-intentional way.

When Richir is speaking about "perceptive" *phantasia* he is always using quotes. It is because perception is not really a perception, since its objects are non-intentional. In fact, the term was introduced by Husserl in 1918. It can be found in the text number 18 in Hua XXIII and designates

"[...] this particular type of phantasiai in which there is 'perception' (*Perzeption*) of something that is beyond (or below) the real (perceived in *Wahrnehmung*) and the fictive (intentional object of the imagination through the eventual mediation, in the case where there is figuration of the imagined object, of a "perceptive" appearance, of a *Bildobjekt* which is, in fact, a simulacrum)"²⁸.

Long before Richir, Husserl used the word *Perzeption* instead of *Wahrnehmung* to mark the difference between a perception in its own right and one that is not quite so. Because of the difficulty translation imposes, Richir uses inverted commas for the word perceptive. So, this particular type of perception called *Perzeption* by Husserl is involved in *phantasia*. It is outside the real or the fictive. The question is: where is it?

Given the fact that he doesn't take the theory of *phantasia* to its full development, Husserl would be pretty unclear in his answer. A clear answer can be found in Richir, instead: "perceptive" *phantasia* is present in the *Wesen sauvages* which are both language phenomena and world phenomena. They are part of sense-making, i.e. the sense-in-the-making (*sens se faisant*).

Let us return now to the first critique to be found in the quote above mentioned. It refers to Lacan's idea that the unconscious is structured like a language. This is a well-known assumption in Lacanian theory.

²⁸ Marc Richir, *Phénoménologie de l'élément poétique*, p. 1

I think the critique implied by Richir is in connection with the distinction he makes between the phenomenological unconscious and the symbolical unconscious. The distinction is already present in Merleau-Ponty, although he largely theorized only on phenomenological unconscious. Richir paid more attention to it and made it more evident. His conclusion is that the unconscious the psychoanalytical theory is talking about is linked exclusively to the symbolical, thus it is a symbolical unconscious, while the phenomenological unconscious belongs to a phenomenology of the *Wesen sauvages*.

Conclusion

What Richir criticizes about the idea of the unconscious being structured like a language is not so much the suggestion of the unconscious having a structure, but the fact that this structure is somehow rigid. It forms a *Gestell* that tautologically circles around a defined number of signifiers. Thus, it is not open to the infinite. In a sense, the same critique goes to Husserl also. Of course, the infinite Richir has in mind is the wild infinite, the one of the anarchic wild essences. It has more the meaning of *indefinite*.

Lacan is not totally foreign to the idea of *sense-making* as having in it the gap of the indefinite. In his theory, the element of the Real represents such a gap. As it is well known, according to Lacan there are three elements forming our psychic reality (the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary) tied together in a borromean knot. The real is defined as being that which cannot be comprehended, or better yet, the unthinkable. In the development of his theory we can find that the Real is considered to be not only inside the borromean knot but outside of it, also. Thus, Lacan will finally speak of the Real unconscious overcoming the limitation of a language that is taking itself as object. With the Real unconscious he attains the language as transcendental, thus, the Lacanian subject being no longer tied up to a particular language (maybe, the reason why his latest researches focus more on topology).

I will conclude by saying that the Real unconscious and the phenomenological unconscious are the two possible bridging points between phenomenology and psychoanalysis. If explored together, they can provide more insight into what it means for people to be social and speaking beings.

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GESETZ UND PERVERSION ALS GRENZVERHÄLTNIS DES GENIESSENS. ZUR FRAGE DER *JOUISSANCE* IN PSYCHOANALYSE UND PHÄNOMENOLOGIE

ROLF KÜHN*

ABSTRACT. *Law and Perversion as the Limit of Enjoyment. On the Question of Jouissance in Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology.* As a psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan differentiated between the impossibility of symbolic representation covering the real (le réel) and the enjoyment (jouissance), which only partially subject itself to such signifiers and therefore leaves a real rest - the "object a". This "object a", which is different from the imaginary object, represents a non-assimilable excess that occurs on the one hand as the cause of desire (désir) and on the other hand refers back to the intrinsically concealed presence of "object a" as the origin of fear. The cure consists in crossing this phantasm to give up the original identification; that is, to see the tension between the desire for recognition and the demand in need (besoin) and thereby to dissolve it. Insofar as the subject is split between the singular truth of desire and a general knowledge about it, interdiction, law and perversion are forming a special relation as frontier of enjoyment.

Keywords: *jouissance, indentification, Freud, law, desire, truth*

Kommen in der Kur Patient und Analytiker zum selben Ziel oder bleibt eine offene Frage, wenn das Subjekt hierbei im Lacanschen Sinne zur Anerkennung seines "Fehlens-an-Sein" gelangt ist? Denn die Patienten können nicht alle selber zu Analytikern werden, um in der Anerkennung des eigenen Fehlens in ständiger „Durcharbeitung“ positiv zu leben.¹ Das heißt, in Freiheit jene „Gabe“ zu leben,

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¹ Vgl. M. Fäh, „Das Menschenbild der Psychoanalyse Sigmund Freuds“, in: H.G. Petzold (Hg.), *Die Menschenbilder in der Psychotherapie. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven und die Modelle der Therapieschulen*, Wien, Krammer 2012, 345-368; hier 256ff.: M. Thiberge, *Essai sur la psychanalyse et la postmodernité*, Paris, L'Harmattan 2018, 411ff.

welche das Leben in einem naiven wie radikal phänomenologischen Sinne ist, nämlich reine "Selbstaffektion" oder "Passibilität", ohne dabei erneut eine imaginäre Funktion zu übernehmen. Führt die Tiefenpsychologie von Freud bis Lacan und darüber hinaus an diese von allen Täuschungen befreite „Leere“ des Lebens, so bleibt diese dann gerade als die „Fülle“ des Begehrens (*désir*) selbst weiterzuleben, die wir dessen reine Immanenz im Sinne subjektiver Leiblichkeit nennen.² Denn sonst würde die analytisch-therapeutische Technik nur das aufgefundene „Fehlen“ des Subjekts in eine unendliche Selbstregression weiteren „Durcharbeitens“ hinein verlegen, ohne den "Sprung" in die genannte positive Freiheit zu tun. Mit anderen Worten die "Transgression" schlechthin zu vollziehen, nämlich den subjektiven Lebensvollzug von *keiner* Bedingung irgendeiner Vorstellung mehr abhängig zu machen – und sei es der psychoanalytische "Verdacht" sich selbst gegenüber, die letzte Täuschung noch nicht ausgeräumt zu haben.³

1) Leben als originäre "Transgression" im Begehren

In dieser Hinsicht können wir schon vorwegnehmen, dass nicht nur die Transgression von Normen und Geboten eine subjektive oder „innere Notwendigkeit“ darstellen kann, wie Kandinsky dies für seine abstrakte Malerei in Anspruch nahm. Vielmehr betrifft die äußerste Transgression das Hinter-Sich-Lassen von *jeglichem* Bild, welches vorgibt, das Leben zu sein oder vermitteln zu können. Denn der signitive Tod im Sinne Lacans⁴ dürfte nicht nur eine Unterwerfung unter den „Nicht-Sinn“ darstellen, sondern das Abrücken von *jeder* Bedeutungsverleihung, sei es Sinn oder Nicht-Sinn. Ohne Zweifel vermag die Therapie/Analyse bis an diesen Punkt zu gehen, dass über die Biographie als enttäuschten „Sinnzusammenhang“ kein vergangenes, gegenwärtiges oder kommendes Wissen bzw. keinerlei Identität für das Subjekt im zeitlichen Sinne erreichbar ist. Aber gerade ein solcher „Nicht-Sinn“ würde dann noch eine weitere „Unterwerfung“ als bei Lacan verlangen, nämlich praktisch zu erproben, dass prinzipiell keinerlei geartete „Unterwerfung“ als "Entfremdung" in der Sinndimension

² Vgl. auch M. Henry, *Können des Lebens. Schlüssel zur radikalen Phänomenologie*, Freiburg/München, Alber 2017, 25ff., sowie M. Bondeli, *Kant über Selbstaffektion*, Basel, Colmena 2018.

³ In Bezug auf Nietzsche, Marx und Freud hat P. Ricœur den Begriff der "Philosophie des Verdachts" geprägt; vgl. *De l'interprétation. Essai sur Freud*, Paris, Seuil 1965, 69ff. (dt. *Die Interpretation. Ein Versuch über Freud*, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp 1969).

⁴ Vgl. *Das Seminar XI: Die vier Grundbegriffe der Psychoanalyse*, Freiburg/Olten, Walther 1978, 263f; R. Schindler, "Das Fenster zum Hof: Sinn, Unsinn, Ab-Sinn. Streiflichter auf die ternäre Verknüpfungslogik Lacans in ihrer Verbindung zur Deutung", in: *Riss. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse Freud - Lacan* 85 (2017) 9-21.

ansteht. Wir sind bereits in der Tat immer schon ohne jeden postmodernen Entzug und Aufschub – ohne „Fehlen“ bzw. „Nachträglichkeit“⁵ – vom Leben selbst affiziert, das heißt „bejaht“, ohne eine vorstellungsmäßige Sicherheit davon zu besitzen, es sei denn im konkreten Gefühl als Sichempfinden des rein subjektiven Lebens.⁶

Darin kann sich effektiv das Begehren verwirklichen, das heißt ohne Signifikanten von einem Objekt als einem möglichen Guten, folglich dieses Begehren als Vollzug des genannten Lebens in seinem eigenen Selbstbegehren als solchem. Dann vollzieht sich ein dergestalt radikal subjektives Leben als die *Transgression* aller sich welthaft anbietenden *Finalitäten*, einschließlich jener, welche Therapie/Analyse vordergründig oder mit letztem Anspruch verheißen können. Hierbei ist im weitesten Sinne eine illusionsfreie Selbstaufklärung intendiert, welche nach Lacan als die „Unmöglichkeit des Realen“ (*le réel*) im Rahmen des Sprechens (*Dire, parole*) als dem Unbewussten erkennbar sein soll. Sofern diese Einsicht an die Kategorie der *Andersheit* oder *Differenz* geknüpft bleibt, handelt es sich dabei jedoch nur um eine logische Möglichkeit als Sprach- und Erscheinenstruktur aller Dinge im Horizont der Welt. Dies darf insofern nicht hypostasiert werden, weil sich trotz dieser „Unmöglichkeit“ das *sich-gebende* Leben ohne Unterlass weiter in uns fortzeugt. Es bildet mithin das uns *originär gründende* Leben, was selbst hinsichtlich reflexiv oder analytisch diagnostizierter „Unmöglichkeit“ eine ontologische Wirklichkeit darstellt, die älter als alles verfehlte „Reale“ ist. Diese phänomenologisch-ontologische Notwendigkeit als „Gabe“ zu sehen, dürfte der entscheidende Schritt über die Psychoanalyse hinaus sein, ohne die Schwierigkeiten dieses Begriffs der *Gabe* bzw. *Gebung* seit Husserl und Heidegger zu verkennen.⁷

Aber es kann nicht von der Hand gewiesen werden, dass in der Praxis der AnalyseTherapie Patienten diesen Schritt oder Sprung am Ende für ihren eigenen Lebensvollzug in der Alltäglichkeit zu tun vermögen.⁸ Das eigene „leere Sprechen“ als Gesagtes (*Dit*) von vermeintem Wissen allein kann jedoch kaum in seine singuläre Wahrheit gelangen, denn eine solche Sprachverwiesenheit behält die Struktur des Aufschubs als unendlichen Horizontverweis in sich.⁹ Erfahrbar bleibt

⁵ Vgl. Chr. Kirchhof, *Das psychoanalytische Konzept der "Nachträglichkeit". Zeit, Bedeutung und die Anfänge des Psychischen*, Bielefeld, Psychosozial-Verlag 2009.

⁶ R. Kühn, *Postmoderne und Lebensphänomenologie. Zum Verhältnis von Differenz und Immanenz des Erscheinens*, Freiburg/München, Alber 2019, hier bes. 66ff. zum "originären Wie".

⁷ Vgl. zum Beispiel J. Derrida, *Falschgeld. Zeit geben I*, München, Fink 1993; M. Enders (Hg.), *Selbstgebung und Selbstgegebenheit. Zur Bedeutung eines universalen Phänomens*, Freiburg/ München, Alber 2018.

⁸ Vgl. N. Langlitz, *Die Zeit der Psychoanalyse. Lacan und das Problem der Sitzungsdauer*, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp 2005, 252ff.

⁹ Vgl. H. Müller, *Die Lehre vom Unbewussten und der Glaube an Gott. Ein Gespräch zwischen Psychoanalyse und Glauben - Jacques Lacan und Simone Weil*, Düsseldorf, Patmos 1983, 88ff.

indessen, dass das Leben selbst bereits schon je in uns ankünftig geworden“ ist – ebenso *einmalig* wie für *immer* als unsere unzurücknehmbare Individuierung. Es geht also schließlich nicht darum, einen letzten logischen oder existentiellen Widerspruch von Sinn/Nichtsinn zu ergreifen und mutig in der „Offenheit“ dieses Widerspruchs zu leben. Vielmehr bleibt über die Unerhörbarkeit jeder Bitte in der begehrenden Anfrage (*demande*) hinaus das Leben als jenes Schweigen zu vernehmen, welches sich selbst seine eigene Fülle ist. In solchem Schweigen kommen Ohnmachtserfahrung des Sprechens und jeglichen Wissens – gerade auch in der Beziehung zum- Anderen (A) – zusammen. Ebenso jene Erfahrung des Seins als eines unmöglichen Habens wie des reflexiven Ichs als eines disseminierenden Sinnzentrums für alles Erscheinen. Die in diesem Schweigen implizierte radikale Passibilität ist dann weder ein Eines noch Eigenes im isolierten Sinne eines substanzhaften Wesens des Subjekts, sondern eben eine reine *Proto-Relation* im Leben ohne vorstellbare Relata. *Sie* ist es, welche der „Transgression“ in Bezug auf scheinbar fest gefügte Dinge, Situationen, Beziehungen und Bedeutungen von vornherein ihre je erneuerte dynamische Relationalität verleiht, das heißt ohne Fixierung auf ein Objekt, Gesprochenes oder isoliert Begehrtes.¹⁰

In diesem Sinne können wir sagen, dass die unendliche wie konkrete Transgression immer schon stattgefunden hat, nämlich als das Ankünftigwerden des absolut phänomenologischen Lebens in seiner leiblichen Inkarnation. Diese sind wir als Fleisch (*chair*) bzw. Begehren, so dass Fleisch/Begehren als Intensität jene Transgression bildet, welche es als analytisch-therapeutische Problematik in Bezug auf individuelle, gesellschaftliche und moralische wie religiöse Normativität als Verbote und Weisungen zu verstehen gilt. Um das Lacansche Verständnis in dieser Hinsicht zu verdeutlichen, ist daran zu erinnern, dass das Subjekt in seiner Bewegung auf den reinen Genuss (*jouissance*) hin gespalten ist. Denn im Anschluss an Hegels Rechtslehre ist solcher Genuss einer Teilung mit Anderen sowie der Vernunft unzugänglich, während das Begehren die gegenseitige Anerkennung zweier Bewusstseine darüber hinaus impliziere, das heißt auf eine allgemeine Gesetzgebung hin ausgerichtet ist. In diesem Sinne ist das Begehren als prinzipieller Einschluss der Erwartung des Anderen (A) bei Lacan aufzufassen,¹¹ auch wenn diese Gegenseitigkeit eine unaufhebbare Differenz beibehält, indem mein Begehren nie mit dem Begehren des Anderen im imaginären wie symbolischen Realitätsbereich zusammenfallen kann.¹² Hieran wird

¹⁰ Für einen entsprechenden Erfahrungsbericht aus der Sicht der Traumatisierung vgl. R. Mayr, *Wahrheit LEBEN. Eine lebensphänomenologische Orientierung an Michel Henry*, Salzburg, Bibliothek der Provinz 2014.

¹¹ Vgl. auch H.-D. Gondek u. P. Widmer (Hgg.), *Ethik und Psychoanalyse. Vom kategorischen Imperativ zum Gesetz des Begehrens. Kant und Lacan*, Frankfurt/M., Fischer 1994.

¹² Vgl. M. Thiberge, *Essai sur la psychanalyse et la postmodernité*, 259ff.

ersichtlich, dass das Begehren einen grundsätzlichen Bezug zum *Gesetz* hat. Dadurch wird das *Grenzenlose* und Unvermittelte in bestimmter Hinsicht domestiziert, was auch der Freudschen Auffassung weitgehend entspricht. Rechtlich ist es in der Tat so, dass ich nur dann etwas gänzlich für meinen Genuss in Anspruch nehmen kann, wenn ich zugleich die juristischen Bedingungen für den Besitz des entsprechenden Objekts in Händen halte. Dies schließt ein, dass die Anderen auf ein gleiches Genussrecht in einem vertraglich festgelegten Zeitraum verzichtet haben.¹³

Damit taucht für unseren analytisch-therapeutischen Zusammenhang die Frage auf, wie weit überhaupt *mein* Genuss reicht. Denn wenn der Andere unablässig zu meinem Begehren gehört, dann enthält dies auch immer eine Begrenzung meines Genießens durch das Genießen des Anderen (A) – und umgekehrt. Nehmen wir hinzu, dass dabei die Sprache sowohl als Unterwerfung wie Freigabe des Begehrens des Anderen auftritt, so findet zugleich Subjektivierung wie Objektivierung meines Begehrens statt. Mit anderen Worten gibt es eine Spannung zwischen dem Phantasma einer Verschmelzung mit dem Anderen und der Beschränkung meines Begehrens, sofern es ein unendliches Genießen sein möchte. Dies macht verständlich, warum Lacan prinzipiell formuliert, dass „die Transgression notwendig ist, um zum Genießen überhaupt Zugang zu haben“.¹⁴ Dies stellt daher (wie im Traum) den „Nabel des Begehrens“ dar, nämlich zugleich *Trennung* wie *Verbindung* in Bezug auf den Anderen zu sein. Wenn wir nun zuvor die „Transgression des Lebens“ als eine rein immanente Bewegung desselben ohne Entzug und Begrenzung angeführt haben, so kreist die weitere Klärung der Transgression um jenen Punkt, ob eben nicht jedes Genießen gleichfalls ein „Sich-Genießen“ (*auto-jouissance*) des radikal phänomenologischen Lebens impliziert.¹⁵ Auch analytisch-therapeutisch gesehen enthielte dann das Genießenwollen keinen Exzess als Hybris wie schon bei den Griechen, noch einen totalen Verlust seiner selbst durch eine Fülle des Genießens im Sinne des „Verschwindens“ des Subjekts bei Lacan. Vielmehr wäre eine Proto-Relationalität des *einen* ungeteilten Lebens in Übereinstimmung mit seiner unmittelbaren Selbstgebung in jedem Augenblick gegeben, ohne ein „Nichts“ des Objekts in Bezug auf die Befriedigung des Genießens leugnen zu müssen.

Insoweit sich das Begehren laut Lacan als Kette von Metonymien innerhalb von zu genießenden Objekten (*a*) bewegt, behindert es das Lustprinzip nicht

¹³ Für die Diskussion mit Hegel vgl. D. Finkelde, *Exzessive Subjektivität. Eine Theorie tathafter Neubegründung des Ethischen nach Kant, Hegel und Lacan*, Freiburg/München, Alber 2015.

¹⁴ *Das Seminar. Buch 7: Die Ethik der Psychoanalyse*, Berlin, Quadriga 1995, 208; vgl. ebenfalls *Le Séminaire VI: Le désir et son interprétation*, Paris, Éditions de la Martinière 2013.

¹⁵ Vgl. M. Henry, *Affekt und Subjektivität. Lebensphänomenologische Beiträge zur Psychologie und zum Wesen des Menschen*, Freiburg/München, Alber 2005, 27f., 49f. u. 151f.

prinzipiell, sondern passt sich dem Gesetz (Phallus) im weitesten Sinne an, während das Genießen (*jouissance*) als solches eine Befreiung von dieser horizontalen Bedeutungsebene verlangt.¹⁶ Dies impliziert jedoch einen Bruch, einen Sprung ins *Unmögliche*, was die Transgression kennzeichnet. Aber wir erproben auch, dass es zugleich eine originäre Leere für jede Befriedigung des Begehrens gibt,¹⁷ weil die genannte Metonymie durch den Phallus das stete Fehlen des Subjekts im wie am Sein symbolisiert. So taucht hier schon die Frage auf, ob eine absolute Transgression überhaupt möglich ist. Dieser Phallus ist der symbolische Verlust des verlorenen Seins des Subjekts durch die Unterwerfung unter das Gesetz (Differenz) des Signifikanten.¹⁸ Insoweit bedeutet das Genießen letztlich immer eine *Abwesenheit*, da durch die Unterwerfung unter die Sprache strukturell sowohl Genießen wie Nicht-Befriedigung als Kastration sich ständig fortschreiben. Besonders der Zusammenhang von Genießen/Mangel mit dem Anderen (A) tritt daher als *Grundtraumatisierung* auf, weshalb das Genießen im Grunde eher einen „Todestrieb“ als ein „Lustprinzip“ bildet.¹⁹ Dies heißt dann in letzter Konsequenz gerade auch für die Transgression, dass sie insbesondere (etwa beim Inzestwunsch) den Tod oder den Verrat des Anderen in sich trägt.

Auf die *Erotik* bezogen, wo das Verlangen nach Transgression sicher am meisten gegeben ist (sieht man von der kriminellen und kriegesischen Gewalt ab), stellt sich der Sachverhalt so dar, sich entweder ganz von einer Liebe einnehmen zu lassen (Transgression) oder aber einer solchen Fusion einen Widerstand entgegen zu setzen. Mithin ein gewisses *Nein* gegenüber dem Anderen zu leben, was ein begrenztes Nein als „Verrat“ dem Partner gegenüber einschließt. Diesseits der Transgression wäre damit stets nur ein „unreines Begehren“ zu verwirklichen, da die Transgression des äußersten Begehrens die Auslieferung des Subjekts an ein „reines Begehren“ bildete, welches durch kein endlos sich wiederholendes Phantasma bei der Objektwahl mehr begrenzt wäre.²⁰ Vielmehr verwirklicht sich ein solches Begehren als ein Akt, der über jedes Gesetz hinausginge, wie es etwa die Liebe Antigones zu ihrem getöteten Bruder bis in den eigenen Tod hinein zeigt.²¹ Aber ein Begehren,

¹⁶ Vgl. C.-D. Rath, "Einige Beziehungen zwischen Lacan'scher *jouissance* und Freud'scher Lust", in: *Riss. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse Freud - Lacan* 85 (2017) 22-39.

¹⁷ Hierin trifft sich Lacan unter anderem mit S. Weil; vgl. außer H. Müller (Anm. 9) auch S. Mazet, "Une lecture de *L'Avare*. Simone Weil et Jacques Lacan", in: *Cahiers Simoe Weil* 42/4 (2019) 351-360.

¹⁸ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Des Noms-du-Père*, Paris, Seuil 2005.

¹⁹ Vgl. S. Freud, *Das Ich und das Es. Metapsychologische Schriften*, Frankfurt/M., Fischer 2014, 191-250: "Jenseits des Lustprinzips" (1920).

²⁰ Vgl. A. Badiou u. B. Cassin, *Es gibt keinen Geschlechtsverkehr. Zwei Lacanlektüren*, Zürich, Diaphanes 2012.

²¹ Vgl. P. Guyomard, *La jouissance du tragique. Antigone, Lacan et le désir de l'analyste*, Paris, Champ-Flammarion 1992.

welches zu einem solchen Tod führt (wie auch im Selbstmord), ist eine Leidenschaft, der die Heterogenität in Bezug auf den Anderen fehlt. Und daher stellt sich die grundsätzliche Frage nach der ethischen Relevanz des Begehrens gegenüber dem Anderen – oder von diesem her, wenn es in einer gegenseitigen transgressiven Bemächtigung auftritt. In diesem Sinne ist die psychoanalytische Auffassung der Transgression bei Lacan²² kein wirkliches Überschreiten des Verbotes, sondern der Aufweis von der Rückkehr des letzteren unter der Form einer „kurzen und erdrückten Befriedigung“, welche ohne die Differenz zum Gesetz (Phallus) nicht auskomme.

2) Perversion und Genießen als Unbegrenztes

Analytisch-therapeutisch dürfte damit signalisiert sein, dass zwar mit den Patienten geklärt werden muss, welche Normen, Regeln und Verbote ihr Genießen verhindern, um Begehren und Sinn in einer subjektiven Existenz wieder zusammenfinden zu lassen.²³ Aber zugleich sind absolute Transgressionsansprüche ein Problem, welches die grundsätzliche Traumatisierung mit einem imaginären Phantasma ganz verdecken könnte, um die primordiale Relationalität des Subjekts zu einem gewährenden Grund des Genießens als Leben zu verdunkeln. Letzteres vermag nicht selbst Gegenstand von Transgression zu sein, sondern es ist zunächst vor allem *Empfang* als Passibilität, was transgressive Gewalt gegenüber jedem anderen Lebendigen ausschließt. Licht auf diese radikal phänomenologische wie tiefenpsychologische Konstellation wirft hier insbesondere die Frage der *Perversion*. Denn der Perverse versucht zwischen Gesetz und Genießen eine Entsprechung herzustellen, indem sein Begehren sich nicht mehr um das Verbotene kümmert, sondern dessen Schranke aufhebt, um ein freies Genießen allein für sich zu ermöglichen. Aber zugleich bindet er sich ebenfalls an das Gesetz des Anderen schlechthin (A), indem er glaubt, sein Objekt niederträchtig reduzieren zu können (Sadismus) oder durch einen Vertrag an sich zu binden (Masochismus). Lässt sich dies am meta-ethischen Zusammenhang von Sade und Kant diskutieren,²⁴ so können wir hier auch nach perversen Elementen in der *Religion* fragen, indem vom Gläubigen manchmal versucht wird, „Gott“ durch Gebete und Opfer zu erreichen. So wie hier der absolut (göttlich) Andere letztlich Genuss verheißt, oder zumindest

²² *Ethik der Psychoanalyse*, 208f.; dazu auch S. Lippi, *Transgressions. Bataille, Lacan*, Paris, Erès 2008, 17-26: „De la transgression à la trahison“.

²³ Im Bereich der Kunst gibt es den Ausdruck des Phantasmas über das geschaffene Werk; vgl. J.-F. Lyotard, *Dérive à partir de Marx et Freud*, Paris, Galilée 1994, 117-138: "Principales tendances actuelles de l'étude psychanalytique des expressions artistiques et littéraires", hier 125f.

²⁴ Vgl. J. Lacan, „Kant avec Sade“, in: *Ecrits II*, Paris, Seuil 1971, 119-150.

an Himmel und Hölle als Genuss und Strafe glauben lässt, so plant auch der Perverse die Inszenierung von Situationen (etwa Orgien), um darin als Subjekt in der Verschmelzung mit Anderen unterzugehen. Ähnlich werden auch im religiösen Ritual gelegentlich Martern organisiert, um die Einheit mit dem Göttlichen zu zelebrieren. So kann beispielsweise das Fasten wie ein auferlegtes Gebot praktiziert werden, da dies zugleich ein Genießen nicht ausschließt, denn selbst wenn der Essensentzug wie eine Bestrafung wirkt, ist der „Vater“ (Gott) da und liebt den Fastenden.²⁵

Natürlich ist der Perverse selbst manchmal von seinem Tun angeekelt, wie die Brüder nach der Tötung des Vaters in Freuds Werk „Totem und Tabu“. Aber in diesem *Ekel* drückt sich zugleich die Anerkennung einer Grenze aus, denn der Ekel ist wie ein Symbol der Kastration, indem eben das Genießen nicht absolut zu sein vermag. Insofern der symbolische Vater hierdurch dem Perversen zu Hilfe eilt, zeigt der Bezug zwischen Transgression/Ekel auch wieder einen implizit gegebenen Verrat am Begehren des Anderen (A) in dieser perversen Überschreitung des Gesetzes an. Hierbei ist allerdings deutlich von der Perversion als psychischer Struktur (wie etwa in der Neurose) und die kriminelle Perversion zu unterscheiden, da letztere die Form der Zerstörung anderer durch deren Auslöschung im Tod annimmt.²⁶ Exhibitionisten, Alkoholiker und Drogensüchtige zeigen hingegen zusätzlich, dass sie den Anderen brauchen, um im Blick dieses Anderen (A) ebenfalls als „Ekel“ noch existieren zu können. Denn diese Passivität bleibt noch ein Akt, um zu zeigen, dass ein reines Objektwerden nicht möglich ist und damit auch das Genießen des Perversen unvollständig wie enttäuschend bleibt. Und der Schmerz wird offensichtlich in der Perversion dazu genutzt, um das Begehren genießen zu können. Das Begehren verlässt in der Tat das Subjekt meist sehr rasch nach der Befriedigung, während der Zeitzyklus des Schmerzes länger andauert. Daher versucht der Perverse, einen Mechanismus des Begehrens zu installieren, der dieses Begehren immer wieder nährt. Im Sadismus ist dies sehr eindeutig, aber jeder Andere kann in einer tiefenpsychologisch gesehenen perversen Struktur zum Gegenstand von gewollten Schmerzen und Aufteilungen werden. Sie lassen das gegenseitige „Genießen“ – eben den Schmerz – weniger schnell aufhören, weshalb solche Bindungen als Ehe oder Beziehungen lange dauern können.

²⁵ Vgl. R. Kühn, *Psychoanalyse, Philosophie und Religion - wer leitet die Kultur?*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2020, Kap. II, 4 zur Freudschen Religionskritik als neurotischem Zeremoniell und Vatersehnsucht.

²⁶ Vgl. *Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse* 70 (2015): *Gewalt – Zerstörung – Transformation*.

Beim Perversen ist das Begehren als Transgression dabei an keinen Mangel gebunden, denn das Verbot zu genießen, wie es mit dem Anderen (A) an sich auftritt, wird verneint, um das Genießen als universal zu behaupten. Wenn es sein muss, macht sich der Perverse daher zum Instrument des Genießens durch den Anderen, um sich imaginär außerhalb seiner eigenen subjektiven Trennung zu versetzen, so als wäre er dieser Andere, um nicht auf ihn - als Nicht-Kastration - verzichten zu müssen. Man kann sich fragen, ob hier mögliche Parallelen zur Mystik bestehen. Auch der Mystiker glaubt oft, sich durch Leiden mit Gott vereinigen zu können, so dass hier in gewisser Weise die Trennung zu Gott aufgehoben ist, Aber während der Perverse letztlich zu einem Objekt, zu einem Fetisch seiner eigenen Leidenschaft wird, sieht sich der Mystiker als Ich, Person oder Subjekt "in Gott" aufgehoben.²⁷

In der Perversion wird mithin die eigene Subjektivierung, welche nach Lacan an sich einer Differenz oder Teilung unterliegt, zu einem Subjekt ohne Schranke, um sein eigener Fetisch anstelle des Gesetzes (Phallus) für den Anderen (A) zu sein. Der perverse Blick auf das Reale wird das Genießen des Anderen, das heißt zum eigennützigem Vertrag, um Opfer auspeitschen zu können (Sade), was bedeutet, dass die Identifikationen mit dem Anderen hier nicht in der Leere als Nicht-Erfüllung des Begehrens zu existieren vermögen. Deshalb *braucht* der Perverse den Anderen im doppelten Sinne des Wortes - als „Partner“ und als Unterwerfung unter den Blick und die Stimme, welche befiehlt oder manipuliert,²⁸ wie etwa beim missbrauchten Kind. Das Paradox der Perversion ist daher nur scheinbar, denn das Genießen wird - und zwar oft auf sehr gefährliche Weise - nur über den Schmerz des Anderen erreicht. Mit ihm kann der Perverse dann doch nicht im verschmelzenden Sinne *eins* werden, da die Identifikation mit dem Opfer als Objekt die Begegnung mit dem Anderen als Subjekt ausschließt. Nach Freud ist die Perversion eine Fixierung auf ein primäres Lustempfinden, was im Sinne Lacans impliziert, dass die Signifikantenkette immobilisiert wurde. Über ein faszinierendes Bild wurde jener Fetisch installiert, der als Erinnerung zugleich immer wieder wie ein Schirm als projektive Bildfläche dient, auf welcher die Objektivierung des Opfers stattfindet.²⁹ Mit Lacan kann man daher sagen, dass der Perverse sein Genießen

²⁷ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Das Seminar XX: Encore*, Berlin-Weinheim, Quadriga 1986, 98ff., zum Verhältnis von „zerrissenem Leib“ und mystischer Sprache; dazu auch R. Kühn, *Diskurs und Religion. Der psychoanalytische Wahrheitszugang nach Jacques Lacan als religionsphilosophisches Problem*, Dresden, Text & Dialog 2016, 119ff.; H. Ricard, *De Spinoza à Lacan. Autre Chose et la mystique*, Paris, EME & InterCommunication 2015.

²⁸ Vgl. S. Till, *Die Stimme zwischen Immanenz und Transzendenz. Zu einer Denkfigur bei Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida und Gilles Deleuze*, Bielefeld, Transcript 2013.

²⁹ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Écrits*, 518f.

nicht – wie sonst beim Begehren – an die prinzipiell bewegliche Form der Anfrage (*demande*) bindet. Denn der Perverse weiß bereits, dass er auf die Befriedigung verzichten müssen, aber dennoch daran *glaubt* – und deshalb zur Erreichung seines Zieles alles in Bewegung setzt. Aber als in seinem Begehren geteilt, das heißt als Instrument oder Gehilfe der Objektivierung des Anderen, wird der Perverse selbst zum eigenen “Verfall” (*déchet*) als Opfer des Ekels.

Wir können somit schließlich verstehen, dass jede Überschreitung einer Grenze, um ein äußerstes Genießen als *jouissance* zu erreichen, insoweit unmöglich ist, als das Subjekt dabei auf den Verzicht durch eine unübersteigbare Grenze stößt, welche in der tiefenpsychologischen Sprechweise von der *Kastration* gebildet wird. Über den alltäglichen Begriff hinaus impliziert die Transgression daher eine Erfahrung menschlichen Erlebens des *Unbegrenzten*, welches zugleich die unübersteigbare *Grenze* bleibt. Dergestalt bildet sich eine Dialektik heraus, welche eine menschliche Struktur schlechthin bezeichnet, die einem Maß des *Möglichen* für den Menschen entspricht und gleichzeitig auf der Höhe des *Unmöglichen* ist. Diese Dialektik von Grenze/Grenzenlosigkeit beinhaltet daher eine Korrelation von Kontinuität/Kontiguität der menschlichen Erfahrung schlechthin als einer Linie, welche die Transgression weniger zu einem spektakulären Bruch mit einer Norm macht als zu einer kontinuierlich ek-statischen Handlung, welche sich zwischen dem Begrenzten und Unendlichen hin und her bewegt. Deshalb hatten wir zu Beginn den Begriff der Transgression für den ursprünglichen Zusammenhang von Subjektivität/Leben letztlich verwandt. Denn die Proto-Relation zum rein phänomenologischen Leben ist für unser Empfinden zugleich äußerste *Ohnmacht* wie die *Fülle* transzendentaler Lebendigkeit überhaupt in der Passibilität unserer pathischen Selbstaffektion. Dadurch kommt die Transgression bzw. das ihr entsprechende Begehren in jeder Therapie/Analyse notwendigerweise zur Sprache, denn beide suchen nach einer Antwort seitens des phänomenologischen Wesens des Menschen. Am Beispiel des klinischen Falls vom „kleinen Hans“ bei Freud entfaltet Lacan daher den Zusammenhang mit der Identifikation anhand der Vatermetapher, um die Transgression (Verlassen des Hauses ohne Angst vor den Pferden) vornehmen zu können.³⁰ Denn der symbolische Vater ist insofern der Angelpunkt der Transgression, als das Subjekt im Übersteigen der Grenze seinen Platz einnimmt und zugleich die Gefahr reduziert, um das Mögliche des Unmöglichen der Entgrenztheit zu erkunden.

Dennoch bleibt die existentielle Transgression eine Einbildung, da Grenze wie Unbegrenztes nur jeweils in einer Bewegung gegeben sind, welche beides sucht und jeweils neu verneint, *um im Möglichen des Unmöglichen weiterzuschreiten*.

³⁰ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Die Objektbeziehung*, Olten/Freiburg, Walther 1982, 325f.; R. Kühn, *Der therapeutische Akt. Seine Singularität in Bezug auf Wissen und Wahrheit in lebensphänomenologischer und Lacanscher Perspektive*, Freiburg/München, Alber 2018, 145ff.

Betrachtet man diese singuläre Bewegung radikal phänomenologisch und nicht nur tiefenpsychologisch als Vater/Mutter-Metapher von Verbot (Inzest) und Gesetz (Identifikation), dann wird gut sichtbar, dass eben das rein selbstaffektive Leben die effektive Transgression bereits enthält. Denn dieses Leben kennt in sich innerhalb seiner Selbstbewegung keine mundane oder horizonthafte Grenze mehr, sondern erlaubt jede immanente Konstellation von Möglich/Unmöglich in Bezug auf seine unendlich modalisierte *Intensität* als affektive Historialität.³¹ Daher sind auch Zweifel gegeben, ob nach Lacan in der Transgression nur ein Genießen der Grenze stattfindet, während das Begehren selbst weiterhin dem Phantasma solch beschränkten Genießens unterliegt. Denn erfährt man im Genuss des Verbotes nur seine eigene Ohnmacht, um durch deren engen "Spalt" die Möglichkeit der Unbegrenztheit zu erahnen, die nicht "jenseits des Lustprinzips" weitergeführt werden kann – nämlich als das prinzipiell objektlose Begehren? Dies hieße, die Transgression noch an die paroxystische *Intention* des Über-Schreitens selbst zu binden, während gerade bereits in der Passibilität der Ohnmacht des Lebensempfangs das reine Sich-Genießen des Lebens als absolute Selbst-Affektion seiner selbst gegeben ist. Nur aufgrund der differentiellen Sichtweise des Subjekts bei Lacan lässt sich formulieren, dass „es ein nur jeweils kurzes Hervorbrechen des Genießens (*jouissance*) im Leben eines Subjekts manchmal gibt“, etwa in einem Traum, Lapsus oder in leidenschaftlicher Erotik,³² weil die Bewegung von Möglich/Unmöglich stets unvollständig bliebe.

Wenn in der Tat die Vater/Mutter-Konstellation tiefenpsychologisch die ursprünglichste sein soll, dann ist naturgemäß bereits die Selbstoffenbarung des Lebens als dessen reines „Sich-Genießen“ (*auto-jouissance*) in einem empirischen oder strukturellen Unbewussten begrenzt. Das heißt, nie wird jene ursprüngliche Transgression des Lebens erprobt, bereits absolut phänomenologisch von seiner Ur-Mächtigkeit affiziert zu sein.³³ Wenn der Neurotiker demzufolge sich nicht dem integralen Genießen aussetzt und über die Möglichkeiten des erotischen Lebens etwa nur träumt,³⁴ dann letztlich nicht, weil er den Tod als Kastration in der wirklichen Transgression fürchtet. Vielmehr fürchtet er tiefer noch die effektive Berührung mit einem absoluten Leben, welches die Normalität und Sicherheit des Alltags übersteigt, um eine andere Erprobung des eigenen subjektiven Lebens zuzulassen. Die Transgression muss daher in der Analyse/Therapie als das konkrete Durchbrechen solcher Angst mittels der Übertragung eingeübt werden,³⁵ so dass Sinn/Begehren innerhalb bestimmter

³¹ Der Begriff der *Intensität* wird allgemein von der französischen Postmoderne verwandt; vgl. zum Beispiel J.-F. Lyotard, *Economie libidinale*, Paris, Minuit 1974, als überkreuzte Marx/Freud-Lektüre.

³² S. Lippi, *Transgressions*, 42f.

³³ Vgl. M. Henry, *Können des Lebens*, 46-62: "Die Frage der Verdrängung nach Schopenhauer und Freud".

³⁴ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Le mythe individuel du névrosé ou poésie et vérité dans la névrose*, Paris, Seuil 2007.

³⁵ Vgl. Riss. *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 89 (2018): *Übertragung*.

Fixierungen nicht mehr auseinander brechen, um auf diese Weise dem Phantasma des bloß gewünschten „Unmöglichen“ Platz zu lassen. Da das Ursprüngliche nur in der eigenen Existenz als originär lebendiges *Gefühl* erprobt werden kann, vermag dieses Unmögliche auch nur in der Bewegung des entsprechenden subjektiven Empfindens als Selbstaffektion verwirklicht zu werden. Die Transgression als „Verwindung“ (*torsion*) von Grenze/Phantasma, um das Begehren „jenseits der überschrittenen Grenze“ erst beginnen zu lassen, reproduziert daher nur die Spannung zwischen Haben und Sein als eines Verhältnisses von Phallus/Kastration. Bildlich gesprochen, ist die Transgression gemäß Lacan damit eine bloß „spaltweit geöffnete Tür“, die nicht durchschritten wird,³⁶ weil die Vollendung nur im signitiven Tod liegen könne. Wir fürchten denselben, insoweit die Transgression das Verlassen eingefahrener Wege und „Verrat“ am Anderen (A) bedeutet. Sind wir wirklich im transzendentalen Leben geboren, so gibt es auch letztlich nicht diese Furcht, womit die Frage der Transgression bereits vom Ursprung des originär Lebendigen her gänzlich beantwortet ist – keine Furcht vor irgendeinem „Tod“ mehr haben zu müssen.

³⁶ Vgl. J. Lacan, *Séminaire IX: L'identification (1961-1962)*, Paris, Éd. Transcription 1960, 289, sowie *Le Séminaire XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse*, Paris, Seuil 1991, 19.