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CONTENT

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ARGUMENT

Mihaela FRUNZĂ[1]

This section groups several papers that illustrate the contemporary discussions in two subdisciplines of philosophy: phenomenology and formal logic.

The first two papers, by Carmen Stadoleanu and Marius Florea, were presented at the Second International Conference of PhD Students in Philosophy, held in Cluj in May 22, 2022. Both papers were included in the Phenomenology & Hermeneutics section. Phenomenology and hermeneutics are two of the most complex and richest areas in contemporary philosophy. They both deal with the interpretation of human experience, and both have a long history in philosophy. Today, phenomenology and hermeneutics are still very important areas of philosophy, and they continue to be very intricate and rich. There are many different phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches, and each one has its own unique insights to offer.

One of the papers describes the experiences of Nicolae Steinhardt and Viktor Frankl, who both found happiness and meaning through suffering and pain. Despite being innocent, both were imprisoned and faced difficult conditions. However, they each had a life-changing experience that led to

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happiness. Nicolae Steinhardt was secretly baptized while in prison and this discovery of God led to the happiest days of his life. Viktor Frankl realized that suffering can actually hold meaning and through this suffering, he was able to find happiness.

In the second paper, the author argues that the eternal recurrence, or the idea that everything happening has happened an infinite number of times before and will happen again, is a direct solution that Nietzsche gives for overcoming nihilism. This thought is incredibly heavy, and may seem impossible to reconcile with the search for freedom, or lightness. However, Kundera argues that it is precisely this contradiction that we must confront in order to affirm our freedom. The eternal recurrence forces us to intervene in the chain of determinations and to make decisions that will influence the future.

The third text included in this section, written by David Mândruţ, explores several philosophical interpretations of Winnicott's concept of "the use of an object." The author looks at how this theory is present in the work of Heidegger and Buber, as well as in Phenomenology of Spirit. The main thesis is that after encountering the resistance of the external world, the subject is able to set that being at a distance and enter into relation with it. The paper also looks at how Winnicott's perspective compares to the views of other phenomenological authors.

Angelo-Vlad Moldovan discusses the foundations of mathematics and how they can be used to create a new approach in foundations through model-theoretic methods. They argue that this new approach can fulfil some of the foundational qualities that have been previously established. They also explore the potential consequences of this new paradigm on topics like philosophy of mathematical practice and the incompleteness theorems.

HAPPINESS AND MEANING IN IMPRISONMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF SUFFERING IN THE EXPERIENCES OF NICOLAE STEINHARDT AND VIKTOR FRANKL

Carmen STADOLEANU[1]

ABSTRACT. The paper describes the experiences of Nicolae Steinhardt and Viktor Frankl, both imprisoned despite their innocence, and their discovery of happiness and meaning through suffering and pain. Nicolae Steinhardt was a Romanian political prisoner of the communist regime and Viktor Frankl was a Jew imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp. While in prison, Nicolae Steinhardt is secretly baptized and his life takes a very interesting turn. The discovery of God gives him access to the phenomenon of happiness and as he confesses, in prison he will live the happiest days of his life. Despite the miserable conditions, the pain, and the physical and mental torment, Steinhardt characterizes his happiness as ecstatic, passionate and life-changing. Under similar conditions, Viktor Frankl discovers the importance of suffering in determining the meaning of life. For Frankl, life always holds a potential meaning and "if there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering". Therefore, through suffering and sorrow, and not in spite of them, Steinhardt and Frankl gain access to happiness and meaning.

Keywords: happiness; meaning of life; suffering; prison; imprisonment; purpose; pain; Nicolae Steinhardt; Viktor Frankl.

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Introduction

A life lived in detention is definitely a complex topic, it "both fascinates and repels"[2] and it is full of challenges and difficulties. In Gresham Sykes' terms, prison is "a society within a society"[3], an aggregate of people living together and having rules, traditions, values, dreams, aspirations, and dramas. However, the predominant elements in such a "society" are rather the negative ones, such as: "domination for the sake of domination alone"[4], the sacrifice of the personal autonomy of the individual in order to prevent escape attempts, the "environment made harsh by man-made decrees"[5], the rebellion, the apathy, the sabotage, the show-off[6] - all these, among many others, are part of this word in which it seems almost impossible to find happiness and meaning.

How could an inmate asset that he is having a meaningful life as long as he lives almost like an animal trapped in a cage, forced to leave his cell only rarely and under strict supervision, forced to live in miserable and bitter conditions and deprived of the activities of a free life? Likewise, how could the encounter with happiness happen in one of the most unhappy and hostile environments, in which pain and suffering lurk in every corner? Once in prison, the inmate loses both his autonomy and the comfort of living independently. He also loses the access to personal belongings and the boundless ties with his loved ones, entering a foreign universe, often brutal, cruel and almost Kafkaesque.

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[2] Deborah H. Drake, Sacha Drake and Rod Earle, "Prison Life, Sociology of: Recent Perspetives from the United Kingdom", in James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Second Edition, Volume 18, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2015, p. 924.

[3] Gresham M. Sykes, *The society of captives: a study of a maximum security prison*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1958, p. xii.

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 24.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 28.

[6] *Ibidem*.

Also, an important element of life in prison is the frequent injustice which "can lead to resentment"[7]. Moreover, as studies show, deep resentment "can turn to hatred, then can be a major motivation to hurt other people"[8]. In this paper we analyze only the lives of the innocent prisoners, unjustly accused and imprisoned, victims of arbitrary decisions, such as political detainees convicted under Romania's communist regime or victims of the Holocaust imprisoned in concentration camps, like Nicolae Steinhardt or Viktor Frankl. In other words, the lives of those who have not committed any kind of violence or harm. However, being imprisoned has negative consequences whether you are guilty or innocent – or maybe even more dramatic consequence when you are not guilty.

A study regarding the effects of imprisonment on wrongfully accused inmates has revealed that "the psychological impact of being wrongfully accused of a crime was described as extreme and long-lasting"[9]. Among those consequences, we mention: changes in self-identity, the struggle with stigma, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, isolation, strain on relationships, frustration, the feeling of being betrayed, anger and so on[10]. At the same time, victims of the Holocaust "still bear the pain of their past in the form of various psychiatric symptoms"[11]. In such conditions, can a man be happy and find meaning in prison? Especially when he feels betrayed by the others, by his fellows and his neighbors who should be responsible

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[7] Lifan Yu, Maria Gambaro, Mary Cate Komoski, Mengjiao Song, Jacqueline Song, Mark Teslik, Brooke Wollner and Robert Enright, "The Silent Injustices against Men in Maximum Security Prison and the Need for Forgiveness Therapy: Two Case Studies", *Journal of Forensic Psychology*, Volume 3, Issue 2, 2018, p. 1.

[8] *Ibidem*.

[9] Samantha K. Brooks and Neil Greenberg, "Psychological impact of being wrongfully accused of crime offences: A systematic literature review", *Medicine, Science and the Law*, Volume 61, Issue 1, 2021, p. 47.

[10] *Ibidem*, pp. 47-49.

[11] Efrat Barel, Marinus H. Van Ijzendoorn, Abraham Sagi-Schwartz and Marian J. Bakermans-Kranenburg, "Surviving the Holocaust: A Meta-Analysis of the Long-Term Sequelae of a Genocide", *Psychological Bulletin*, Volume 136, Issue 5, 2010, p. 694.

for him, in terms of Levinas[12]? Both Nicolae Steinhardt and Viktor Frankl prove to us that they are able to overcome injustice, fear, harsh living conditions, and the feeling of helplessness and they neither become resentful nor lose their hope. Hope is an important element for meaning and happiness and despite the fact that for Camus „happiness is born of the absence of hope"[13], we will argue that hope is essential for a life, especially for one lived in the cruel and difficult conditions of imprisonment - "hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism"[14].

Utilitarianism, as conceived by its theorists, promotes the guidance of human actions by the principle of utility, which aims to maximize happiness and minimize suffering. According to Bentham, "by the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action […] according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question"[15]. Moreover, a certain object has the property of utility if it "tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness, […], or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness"[16]. Furthermore, according to John Stuart Mill, "Utility or The Greatest Happiness Principle" assumes that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness"[17]. By happiness, Mill understands "pleasure, and the absence of pain"[18] and by unhappiness, "pain, and the privation of pleasure"[19].

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[12] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, translated from the French by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 107. "*All men are responsible for one another, and "I more than anyone else"*.

[13] Albert Camus, "Le Désert", *Noces suivi de L'été,* Gallimard, Paris, 1959, p. 71.

[14] Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator. Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, translated by Emma Craufurd, Camelot Press, London, 1951, pp. 10-11.

[15] Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, 2000, p. 14.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 15.

[17] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, 2001, p. 10.

[18] *Ibidem*.

[19] *Ibidem*.

Against the utilitarian conception that opposes pain and suffering to happiness, we will try to offer in this paper a perspective in which happiness and suffering do not repel each other, but come to intertwine so strongly that through pain and suffering – and not against them – the human being finds happiness and meaning.

Nicolae Steinhardt describes cell 34 of the Jilava penitentiary as "a cavern, a canal, a subterranean gut, cold and deeply hostile, an empty mine, the crater of an inactive volcano, an image of a faded hell"[20], in which the suffer of the detainees is so severe that it remains strongly impregnated in one's memory. Torment is everywhere you look in prison, it accompanies you every step of the way. In describing an episode that happened at the Jilava's infirmary, Steinhardt says that he does not remember who the man lying on the first bed was; however, it was "a man silenced by sufferance and filth"[21]. This description of the depersonalized man, dispossessed of his particular qualities, over whose memory time inevitably lies, but which is distinguished only by his suffering, seems to be a symbol of imprisonment. Viktor Frankl also describes the experience of arriving at Auschwitz, the concentration camp, as synonymous with depersonalization, uniformity, and loss of identity. The prisoners able to work, who were therefore not sentenced to death from the very beginning, went through the process of abandoning everything that set them apart from others – from their clothes, to their hair, and to handing over all their personal belongings: "No one could yet grasp the fact that everything would be taken away"[22], Frankl writes, and further explains that all that remained for the prisoners at this stage was only their "naked existence"[23].

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[20] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericirii*, Editura Mănăstirii Rohia, Rohia, 2005, p. 38.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 136.

[22] Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning. An introduction to logotherapy,* Beacon Press, USA, 1992, p. 27.

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 28.

Nicolae Steinhardt and the odd encounter with happiness in prison

In this sordid, "almost surreally sinister"[24] place, Nicolae Steinhardt lives an unusual encounter with happiness - with the greatest and most complex happiness that, he says, he could ever experience: "I was going to know the happiest days of my entire life. How absolutely happy I had been in cell 34!"[25]. Despite the suffering, Nicolae Steinhardt's experience is proof that happiness does not suppress pain; on the contrary, the two can coexist, and pain can even turn into happiness and increase it. "In cell 34, the joy [...] and the pain [...] mix so inextricably that everything, including pain, converts in ecstatic and lofty happiness[26]" – this is how Steinhardt describes his experience of happiness which, in Tatarkiewicz's terms, is a form of psychological happiness[27]. From this point of view, the happiness experienced by Nicolae Steinhardt after his confession of faith, the Christian baptism, and the conversion to the Orthodox religion, in room 18 of the Jilava penitentiary, in complete secrecy, sheltered from the relentless eyes of the guards, but also the rebirth "from infested water and quick spirit"[28] is a very strong, intense and powerful feeling, capable of turning an entire human existence upside down. He describes his happiness as total and totalizing: "this happiness surrounds me, embraces me, dresses me, vanquish me"[29] or "I feel unutterable happy. [...].

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[24] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

[25] *Ibidem*.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 41.

[27] For Tatarkiewicz, there are (at least) four "notions of happiness": (1) happiness as chance or good fortune that suddenly gets in someone's way, significantly changing their life course; (2) happiness as a "particularly joyful or profound" experience, almost violently manifested, like a state of "bliss or drunkenness"; this notion of happiness is experienced by Nicolae Steinhardt as it will be described in this paper; (3) happiness as eudaimonia or as "the greatest measure of goods accessible to man" and (4) happiness as lasting satisfaction in relation to one's own life, taken as a whole. See Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Despre fericire*, traducere din limba polonă de Constantin Geambașu, Eikon, București, 2019, pp. 14-24.

[28] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 92.

The light surrounds me, it is a total happiness, and it suppresses everything"[30] or "More than anything else I am happy, happy, happy. […]. The happiness not only that lasts forever but it is ever growing"[31]. This high intensity pleasant state, lived with such exaltation by Nicolae Steinhardt, illustrates, therefore, the happiness in a psychological sense, described by Tatarkiewicz, who explains that such phenomena are common mostly in three situations: the contact with art, with love and in the religious life. The latter presupposes the encounter with divinity in such a way that everything around fades away - even self-perception:

> and the happiness, after softly embracing me, suddenly changes its tactics, becomes hard, jumps, falls on me like some avalanches that – antigravitationally – raise me; then, again, proceeds otherwise: sweetly, it rocks me – then finally, unsparingly, it replaces me. I am no more. I still am, but I don't recognize myself[32].

Nonetheless, it is not only the intensity that makes these feelings of exacerbated joy the object of happiness. For Tatarkiewicz, there is something more, and he explains his hypothesis relying upon the ancient ideas of the theologians who described the happiness in heaven as not more intense than the earthly, but more "extensive"[33], in a sense that it is totalizing, it affects the whole universe of the individual, it "embraces" him, it "raises" him to haven, it "replaces" him, in Steinhardt's words. According to Tatarkiewicz, the psychological notion of happiness has two hypostases - delight or relief[34]. Delight insofar as it is characterized by "mental intensity and excitement"[35], making the subject experience something as a "madness of joy"[36], and relief

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[30] *Ibidem*, p. 103.
[31] *Ibidem*.
[32] *Ibidem*.
[33] Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Op. cit.*, p. 66.
[34] *Ibidem*.
[35] *Ibidem*.
[36] *Ibidem*.

in the sense that it produces an "overwhelming bliss"[37] and it is characterized by a "complete state of relaxation"[38].

In the case of Nicolae Steinhardt's experience, both situations emerge. When he writes: "I soak my so-called pillow with the sweet warm tears of happiness"[39] or "The world is different for the devoted believer overwhelmed with happiness - rich, new, inviting, captivating, euphoric - just like for an artist in moments of inspiration"[40], he finds himself under the empire of deep, ardent, euphoric and exhilarating delight. On the other hand, when he states: "I went into prison blind [...] and I go out with my eyes open; I came in spoiled and pampered and I go out healed of vanity, airs, whims; I came in dissatisfied and I go out knowing true happiness"[41] he refers to a calm, deep, quiet, and comforting happiness that alleviates the old sufferings.

Last but not least, in Steinhardt's experience it becomes clear the relationship between happiness and pain or suffering. Despite the uplifting experience caused by the sacrament of baptism, happiness does not nullify suffering, just as the suffering of the daily life in prison does not nullify the experience of happiness. Thus, the author writes: "The moments of suffering we experience, just like those of pleasure - if they are given to us - we experience as absolute time, out of temporality"[42]. Suffering, just like happiness, is a complete and radical feeling, without physical or mental frontiers. Tatarkiewicz points out that usually, human beings capable of great happiness are also the ones capable of great suffering[43]; the ability to experience strong feelings is not limited to those of a positive nature. Moreover, not only do happiness and suffering not cancel each other out, but they can be mutually reinforcing. For Tatarkiewicz, "when suffering turns into joy, then it merges

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[37] *Ibidem*.
[38] *Ibidem*.
[39] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Op. cit.*, p. 42.
[40] *Ibidem*, p. 336.
[41] *Ibidem*, p, 316.
[42] *Ibidem*, p. 223.
[43] Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

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with it and becomes a positive component as a whole"[44], which is confirmed by Steinhardt, for whom the misery of cell 34 merges with the exaltation of baptism, and "everything, including pain, turns into happiness"[45].

It is clear that suffering is a part of human life, it is closely linked to one's fate. For Arthur Schopenhauer, the cause of suffering is nothing else but "an incongruity between our desires and the course of the world"[46] and, at the same time, suffering is closely linked to the very meaning of the human existence: "Thus the profound and serious significance of our existence hangs over the farce and the endless miseries of human life, and never leaves it for a moment"[47]. We can, therefore, connect the notions of suffering, happiness and meaning of life, insofar as suffering is, without a doubt, a component of life which has the power to enhance happiness and also reveal the meaning of an existence. For Nicolae Steinhardt, suffering is inextricably intertwined with happiness and has a purpose, he confesses, it contributes to give life a meaning: "I am overwhelmed by the belief that suffering has a meaning, that our lives cannot be meaningless"[48].

Viktor Frankl and the discovery of the meaning of life in a concentration camp

Viktor Frankl is "a survivor of one of the most appalling hells ever devised for human degradation and torment"[49] and he also argues that suffering is meaningful, insofar as the human being's response to the encounter

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[44] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

[45] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

[46] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation. Volume II*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1966, p. 158.

[47] Idem, *The World as Will and Representation. Volume III*, Project Gutenberg Ebook, London, 1909, p. 229.

[48] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

[49] James Woelfel, "Viktor Frankl on Freedom and Responsability in the Death Camps: A Critique", *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Volume 13, Issue 3, 1982, p. 16.

with suffering is decisive for the course of his life. If Nicolae Steinhardt experienced prison life as a political prisoner, Frankl knew the horrors of the Auschwitz concentration camp, from the perspective of the Jew deported with barbarism in one of the "death camps". He was convinced that life "is potentially meaningful under any conditions, even those which are most miserable"[50]. On the other hand, if Tatarkiewicz observes the totalizing character of happiness, Frankl notes this aspect in relation to suffering: "suffering completely fills the human soul and conscious mind, no matter whether the suffering is great or little. Therefore the size of human suffering is absolutely relative"[51], he explains. Happiness and suffering seem to have the same, or at least a very similar, nature. For Frankl, suffering is "an ineradicable part of life"[52] and "if there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering"[53].

At the same time, the human being is gifted with inner freedom, and while the outer freedom can be easily lost, the inner liberty can be preserved - and it is important to be preserved - even when the outer freedom is taken. Viktor Frankl uses this hypothesis for arguing his opinion regarding the meaning of life: "It is this spiritual freedom - which cannot be taken away - that makes life meaningful and purposeful"[54]. Imprisonment robs the individual of his external freedom, but the human being still has access to happiness and meaning, precisely because the inner freedom cannot be taken away from him. Regardless of the terrible suffering, the human being is confronted with a choice, Frankl believes: the choice of becoming worthy of his own suffering, in Dostoevsky's terms, carrying his cross with dignity and remain "brave, dignified and unselfish"[55] or, on the contrary, "forget his human

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[50] Viktor E. Frankl, *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

[51] *Ibidem*, p. 55.

[52] *Ibidem*, p. 76.

[53] *Ibidem*.

[54] *Ibidem*, pp. 75-76.

[55] *Ibidem*, p. 76.

dignity and become no more than an animal"[56] who fights for his survival. At the same time, every human life is unique and cannot be compared with any other, Frankl thinks, but all lives have in common the fact that they must find their "why", their meaning, their purpose, in order to endure the "how" of the world, the misery, the difficulties, and the torment. The lesson of Viktor Frankl, as that of Nicolae Steinhardt, is that a high purpose makes suffering not only acceptable, but also a mean for happiness and meaning in life: "hidden opportunities for achievement"[57] lie in suffering.

Furthermore, when life has a powerful "why", it cannot lose it, regardless of the external conditions, a fact confirmed by both Steinhardt and Frankl. Understanding the human condition, its limitations, and the importance of finding meaning in life are just some of the lessons we learn from reading Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*: "human life, under any circumstances, never ceases to have a meaning, and this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death"[58]. Therefore, human life has intrinsic value and meaning not in spite of suffering, pain or death, but because of them, because of the rise above the human misery and the understanding that "suffering has a meaning", as Steinhardt argued. In Husserl's terms, it doesn't even matter if life has a meaning in itself or not; what really matters is the way in which the human being reacts and behaves in the "world that is unpredictable"[59] and in which there is rational calculation, but also coincidence and chance (*Zufall*), as well as destiny and fate (*Schicksal*)[60].

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[56] *Ibidem*.

[57] *Ibidem*, p. 88.

[58] *Ibidem*, p. 90.

[59] "Die Welt ist unberechenbar" (Edmund Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie: Analysen des Unbewusstseins und der Instinkte, Metaphysik, Späte Ethik*, Husserliana XLII, herausgegeben von Rochus Sowa und Thoms Vongehr, Springer, Dordrecht, 2013, p. 286).

[60] *Ibidem*.

Conclusions

Both Nicolae Steinhardt and Viktor Frankl question their very existence and as Alexandru Dragomir would say, they are serious about trying to figure out what their lives are about and how to live authentically and non-contradictory[61]. They remain stately in the face of the awful injustice and take their lives "seriously" and for these reasons, they don't lose neither the meaning nor the possibilities of happiness. This is what Frankl had in mind when he wrote that "man is even ready to suffer, on the condition, to be sure, that his suffering has a meaning"[62]. For Viktor Frankl, suffering leads, as he confesses, to evolution and growth, but this does not mean that the human being should seek suffering or pain on purpose. On the contrary, what Frankl argues is that "meaning is available in spite of suffering" or even "through suffering"[63]. At the same time, Frankl believes that when an individual finds a meaning in his life, not only he will he be happy, but he will also have the ability to cope with suffering. In Paul Ricoeur's terms, we could argue that Steinhardt and Frankl "mediate" the relationship between happiness and suffering through *phrónēsis* or practical wisdom. Ricoeur believes that there is not an "absolute contradiction" between happiness and suffering, and the practice of „lying" the dying patients at the end of their lives in order not to make them suffer is just a misconception regarding the relation between happiness and suffer[64]. Through sorrow, Nicolae Steinhardt is able to feel genuine and sincere happiness in the middle of the hell, because the encounter with God through baptism, illustrated in his *Diary of Happiness* so vivid, passionate, and almost theatrical, despite the tragedy of the scene, gives his life a higher meaning.

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[61] Alexandru Dragomir, *O teză de doctorat la Dumnezeu. Exerciții de gândire*, Humanitas, București, 2016, pp. 68-69.

[62] Viktor E. Frankl, *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

[63] *Ibidem*, p. 148.

[64] Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kethleen Blamey, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, p. 269.

Jan Patočka thought that life needs to be understood "not from the viewpoint of the *day*, of life merely accepted, but also from the view of strife, of the night, of *polemos*"[65] and likewise seem to believe Steinhardt and Frankl. In Tatarkiewicz's words, we can argue that both Steinhardt and Frankl "treat" suffering as a "sacrifice" and as a "blessing"[66] and through this, they both gain their "right" to happiness and meaning.

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BETWEEN THE LIGHTNESS OF BEING AND THE WEIGHT OF BECOMING

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ABSTRACT. One of the few direct solutions that Nietzsche gives for the overcoming of nihilism is the facing of the thought of eternal recurrence. Being the heaviest of all thoughts, it may seem that through Heidegger's filter it will become a sort of metaphysical concept, but his analysis may at least help us see it as an axis around which thought can pivot, at least for a moment. Kundera sees the contradiction between lightness and weight as the most problematic of all, as it is difficult to see the burden as something positive when emancipation seems to always be an attempt to achieve total freedom, a search for lightness. We argue that "the heavy thought" makes us confront fatalism and affirm freedom, while lightness makes freedom by becoming impossible. The eternal recurrence is the idea that offers motivation to intervene in the chain of determinations and to influence them decisively.

Keywords: eternal recurrence, lightness, weight, freedom, being, becoming.

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Introduction

The article's title makes reference to Milan Kundera's novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, a postmodern literary work that combines fiction with philosophical essay parts concerning two opposites, lightness and weight. Closely tied with the main character's own psychological drama, the question on which concept should represent the positive half of this pair seems to find an answer when looked at in relation with Nietzsche's eternal return. We will try to understand, starting from here, not only the particularities of this duality, but also what the tension between the two concepts can further reveal about being and becoming.

At first glance, it is easy to accept Parmenides' view that lightness is the positive concept, and this common belief survives until today. Lightness is closely tied with freedom while weight is often associated with carrying a burden, something that we must get rid of in order to be free. However, if we look at this common belief from an existentialist point of view, it is easy to see its limits in describing the experience of freedom. "I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free."[2] The burden of freedom can be an experience just as valid, especially when we talk about anxiety, that can be described as the sensation the human subject has when confronted with the radicality of his own freedom.

Even though Kundera only refers to Parmenides' study of opposites, we cannot omit the pre-Socratic philosopher's peculiar ontological views. Being is seen as unable to change, while becoming is impossible. Contrary to this, Heraclitus develops a philosophy of becoming, comparing existence to a river that flows, seeing substance not as static, but constantly changing.[3] If we

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[2] Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Washington Square Press, New York, 1978, p. 439

[3] Curd, Patricia, "Presocratic Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/presocratics/>

are to avoid Parmenides's strange conclusions about the nature of existence, we must break apart the opposites that he puts forward, including lightness and weight. Kundera brings Nietzsche into discussion as a philosopher that dismantles the general belief about weight, as he introduces the concept of the eternal return, discussed in *The Gay Science*, where the philosopher calls it "the greatest weight."[4]

> This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence--even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself.[5]

This may seem strange, as it is not clear why the infinite repetition of life exactly in the same manner would put a burden on one's shoulders. At first, this may seem as a nihilist thought, a cycle of repetition with no change whatsoever would constitute a proof for fatalism, with the human subject unable to modify any of the iterations of his own life, it having already happened in the same way before. Even if we look past this preliminary nihilistic interpretation, the thought is being planted into conscience by a demon, so by giving this example, Nietzsche acknowledges the fact that, at least at first glance, the eternal return is something meant to frighten us. Only by thinking about the eternal return along with the maxim "*Amor fati*", that is meant to turn the negative into positive, can we make a crucial step in our own attempt to invert the duality of lightness and weight, and along with this, to rethink dualism as a whole.

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[4]   Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, 1974, p. 273

[5]   Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, 1974, p. 273

Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all, and on the whole: someday I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.[6]

The passage from a naïve *yes*, the kind that is present in shallow expressions like: "*Live the moment*" or "*You only live once*", to the true affirmation of life that Nietzsche proposes can be made only after we interiorize the thought of eternal return. What do the aforementioned maxims really mean, with their heavy use in advertising or self-help literature, if not the fact that life should be taken lightly and every moment enjoyed as it could be the last one. What the eternal return proposes is exactly the opposite, every action we do should be regarded as the most important, as we are condemned to live with its consequences over and over. The weight applied to the Moment is something of relevance for Heidegger in his interpretation of Nietzschean thought, as it helps us notice the relation between the Moment as the fundamental unit of time and eternity. The Moment has a specific weight because it equals eternity, if we look at it from the perspective of the eternal return, and we should not understand this only in a metaphorical sense. What Nietzsche and Heidegger argue for is a thought that should help us interpret our place in existence in a better way.

Atlas and Sisyphus, myths of a burden

To further explore the concept of weight and its existential implications, we can bring forth two reinterpretations of mythical representations in modern literature and philosophy, the revolt of Atlas from Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* and the absurdist Sisyphus from Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Rand's novel, while being embraced by many right-wing libertarians as the purest

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6 Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, 1974, p. 223

expression of individualist capitalism, it is heavily criticized by others on the left as being a gross exaggeration of collectivist politics and an ideological work. This radical freedom translates from Rand's philosophy of objectivism to an adversity towards any sort of regulation from the state regarding the market. She is known to be, in addition to a declared egoist and individualist, an enemy of any form of socialism, understood only as a collectivist form of organization that is always deemed to become totalitarian.

> [S]ocialism is the doctrine that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that his life and his work do not belong to him, but belong to society, that the only justification of his existence is his service to society, and that society may dispose of him in any way it pleases for the sake of whatever it deems to be its own tribal, collective good.[7]

While her political thought leads to a form of anarcho-capitalism, in which entrepreneurship can finally flourish, *Atlas Shrugged* is set in a dystopia at the opposite side of the spectrum, a world in which individual initiative on the market is set back by an abusive bureaucratic state that is on the verge of economic collapse. Dagny Taggert is the main character, a feminine symbol of entrepreneurial struggle, while John Galt is the mysterious driving force of the story, the leader of the strike of the martyred elites. These great minds in conflict with the dysfunctional collectivist state are represented by the main metaphor of the novel, that of Atlas, whose suffering is a symbol for the condition of the entrepreneur under a collectivist regime. We see the visceral image of this Titan burdened by the weight that only he can carry, the element of novelty being the suggestion that in this case, he should shrug[8], in this way becoming the symbol of the strikers.

The burden is that of the state, that in an altruist society must be supplied economically by everyone in contributions in the form of taxes, while the wealth is then redistributed more evenly, and for a capitalist, this

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[7] Rand, Ayn, *For the New Intellectual*, Penguin Books, New York, 1961, p. 36
[8] Rand, Ayn, *Atlas Shrugged*, Signet, New York, 1957, p. 422

goes against his own interest. There are authors who try to minimize the political implications and propose a more in-depth analysis of Rand novel as a metaphor for the human condition under state regulations.

> All too often, Rand's criticism of altruism-collectivism in Atlas Shrugged is interpreted too one-sidedly in politico-economic terms, as if her main point is to show society's dependence on its best minds materially and financially. But Rand wanted to dig deeper than this.[9]

As profound as the novel intends to be, we can easily see through this attempt of critique by appeal to a dystopian imaginary and discover the underlying ideological content. The collectivist tendencies of modern society are limited, and if anything, they are the only ones that separate us from total domination by corporate interests. The maximum amount of freedom on the market leads to the dominating power of a few actors, who form an oligopoly that holds everyone else in a weaker position. This form of stateless capitalism is nothing but a replacement of state power with monopoly or oligopoly power, and we can even identify manifestations of this ideology in our current form of global capitalism.

We may be tempted to regard Rand's philosophy as identical to Nietzsche's, both opting for a surpassing of the Christian ideas of generosity and mercy, seeing them as negative concepts that hinder human development. We can clearly distinguish between the two because even though they both want to reject Christianity, Rand only seeks to replace it with another ideology, while Nietzsche is more concerned about rejecting any form of ideology altogether.

To further differentiate between the two, we can propose a more nuanced interpretation and ask why Nietzsche chooses a "heavy thought" in the form of the eternal return, even though the absence of a unique moral

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[9] Minsaas, Kirsti, *Ayn Rand's Recasting of Ancient Myths in Atlas Shrugged*, in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged: A Philosophical and Literary Companion. Edited by Edward W. Younkins, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire, 2007, p. 132

system and of a God should lighten us. Rand sees the lifting of the burden off Atlas's shoulders as the ultimate step in the gaining of freedom, while Nietzsche seems to be adopting a new weight. We can argue, following Nietzsche's steps, that Christianity as a cultural form that leads civilization to passive nihilism can disburden people just as well, by shifting focus from this life to life after death, a place where all suffering will be redeemed. Meanwhile, we remain just as weak in our current lives, Christianity offering us other ways to cope with earthly struggle, such as lamentation and resentment, or we can accept God's death while not truly confronting this fact, fixated on the same despises for life, not choosing to revaluate all values.

Of course, it may seem that Rand's characters, being intentionally idealized, can represent some sort of model for the Nietzschean *Übermenschen*. The people of the mind seem to embody the aristocratic morality, opposing the resentful slave morality, but the concept of eternal recurrence can help us turn away from this parallel between Nietzsche and Rand, and introduce the second mythical figure, that we would argue is a bit more resemblant to authentic Nietzschean thought. The eternal return is compatible to a greater degree with the labor of Sisyphus in Camus's philosophy, the work done in *The Myth of Sisyphus* being continued in *The Rebel* and developing into a philosophy that from the idea of man's revolt, recovers humanism and leads us closer to the Other, unlike Rand's philosophy that seems to stray us away from any type of alterity.

> All Sisyphus' silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is his thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols.[10]

Camus's Sisyphus accepts the burden that he was given, and his revolt happens inside his working condition, when he embraces absurdity and learns to find happiness through it. The allusion to Nietzsche is also clear

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[10] Camus, Albert, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, translated by Justin O'Brien, Penguin Books, Hannondsworth, 1979, p. 110

here, Sisyphus accepts the burden of a godless world, he does not simply reject God, but continue his struggle, despite his non-existence. This is what is meant when Camus says that Sisyphus "silences all idols", the twilight of the Idols is already here and a new morality must be born. The figure of Sisyphus embodies man after this twilight, he takes it upon himself to forge a new meaning.

We must not interpret this metaphor of labor as an acceptance of servitude, but as a look into the deeper meaning of existence similar to Nietzsche's eternal return and his maxim, „*Amor fati*." From this point of view, Camus' absurdism is more nuanced, as he tries in *The Rebel* to place the individual within a collective, rejecting solipsism and violence towards oneself or others. He accepts the fact individuality and community will remain in tension, but rejects both far left and far right extremist ideologies, analyzing many views of philosophers both from the anarchist left, such as Mikhail Bakunin, and from the egoist right, such as Max Stirner. These tendencies, nowadays repeated in the clash between Antifa and the alt-right or neo-Nazi movements, have the same characteristics, especially because they are fueled by a form of destructive nihilism.

For Camus, resentment is a form of passive nihilism, manifested by calling for something you do not possess, while the authentic revolt is active, you turn to something that you are or you possess. Unlike Rand, for whom revolt is the fact of abandoning the burden of the whole society in order to free yourself, Camus thinks that revolt is based on the solidarity between people, view expressed in the slogan: "I rebel–therefore we exist."[11] For Stirner, as he further shows, to consider yourself in the service of humanity is the same as serving God[12], view that is shared by Rand and Nietzsche. What helps us salvage Nietzsche's philosophy in a greater measure than the egoist anarchism of Stirner and Rand is the fact that he did not place ultimate trust on the ideas of individual property or the free market.

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[11] Camus, Albert, *The Rebel. An Essay on Man in Revolt*, Vintage Books, New York, 1991, p. 22

[12] Camus, Albert, *The Rebel. An Essay on Man in Revolt*, Vintage Books, New York, 1991, p. 64

Dionysus-Christ, the God of Paradox

However, it is more interesting to see how Camus himself treats Nietzsche in his analysis of the history of revolt. For Nietzsche, what's interesting is that the figure of Christ is left standing, "only the God of morality is rejected"[13], and we can back this argument by what Nietzsche himself writes in *The Antichrist*: "at bottom there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross."[14] Camus believes that Nietzsche only tries to shift focus from *faith* to *deeds*, and in this regard the Nietzschean critique of Christianity recovers the Jesus more authentically than Christianity itself. While the gospels say that Jesus died on the cross, Nietzsche emphasizes the actual life of Christ, and there are few things more in tune with his own life affirming philosophy than this. He goes on to say that "the life lived by him who died on the cross, is Christian"[15]. The ideology of Christianity, however, is based on the Gospels and on the description of the death of Christ, thus life on earth becoming salvageable only by the belief in an afterlife.

Nietzsche also proclaims himself the last disciple of the God Dionysus[16], not in a religious sense, but more in a symbolic sense. It is possible that Nietzsche chooses the image of Dionysus only to avoid that of Christ, so as to escape any association with religion. However, there are similarities between Dionysus and Christ, both being examples of a *Dying-and-rising deity*. The eternal return offers us the thought that what we live now will repeat over and over, a continuous revival that gives life its weight. Of course, in Christianity, the emphasis was on the divine realm as a utopian space that contrasts the imperfection of life, but what Nietzsche wants to highlight is life as a means

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[13] Camus, Albert, *The Rebel. An Essay on Man in Revolt*, Vintage Books, New York, 1991, p. 68

[14] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is & The Antichrist. A Curse on Christianity*, Translated by Thomas Wayne, Algora Publishing, New York, 2004, p. 139

[15] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is & The Antichrist. A Curse on Christianity*, Translated by Thomas Wayne, Algora Publishing, New York, 2004, p. 139

[16] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil: prelude to a philosophy of the future*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. Vintage Books, New York, 1966, p. 235

in itself, not as a means to accede to the afterlife, and although it is difficult, we can draw the same conclusions from the life of Christ. A "Nietzschean Christianity", if we can put forward such a concept at least for the sake of the argument, would reconcile the Dionysian myth with the Christian one and would take into account the affirmation of life rather than the empty promise of the kingdom of the Lord after death. Duality and paradox, among others, are signified by Dionysus[17], and he is adopted by Nietzsche precisely for this reason, to reveal the tragedy of life and to make live the opposites, the concepts that contain in themselves their opposite.

The God whose Nietzsche announces the death of is only the moral God, the father with whom people strike a deal for the forgiveness of sins. This means that we cannot place Nietzsche in the camp of atheists who do not believe in God only out of scientism, but neither can we consider him a half-Christian, as Heidegger warns us.

> We dare not turn the word and concept atheism into a term of thrust and counterthrust in Christianity's duel, as though whatever did not conform to the Christian God were ipso facto "at bottom" atheism. The Christian God can all the less be for Nietzsche the standard of godlessness if God himself, in the designated sense, is "dead."[18]

Observing the way in which the concepts contain their opposite, starting from the Dionysian figure, which is itself a synthesis between the preliminary conceptions of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, we can see how the *lightness/weight* dualism can also be rethought. Heidegger stresses the importance of the eternal return being "the heaviest thought", and he tries to present this concept as being central to Nietzsche's view on existence. This interpretation can be criticized, as it shows Nietzschean thought bordering the metaphysical realm, with Heidegger trying to bring this concept together

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[17] Otto, Walter F., *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, Translated by Robert B. Palmer, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1965, p. 91

[18] Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Translated from the German by David Farrell Krell, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. 66

with *amor fati* and giving them an utmost importance in the understanding of something more profound about the nature of temporality, existence and the Dasein. However, his inquiry about the fact whether this particular thought can be seen as a central point in Nietzsche's philosophy should not be so hastily overlooked, even if it comes with the challenges of regarding Nietzschean thought as having a central point or as being a "philosophy", in the sense of a philosophical system, thing which he opposed and struggled to avoid in his writing. Heidegger suspects that Nietzsche uses the word *existence* not in a classic sense of describing something about the nature of reality, but more to describe a way of thinking about one's experience. He compares this view on existence to the Dasein, and we can see how this implies that the eternal return is not something that can be attributed to some external mechanisms, but to the human subject and its way of relating to the world.

The *Übermensch* is to be understood as something beyond man, not as something essentially different, it is simply the man that has overcome some of his limitations and can look retrospectively at his previous condition. The *Übermensch* is the condition of possibility for the current study of the human, and it is the only way the human condition can become visible, by allowing ourselves, even as a prospect, to gain distance from our current state. This, of course, means that the issue of temporality is closely tied with the way the human existence can be analyzed, and Heidegger does not hesitate to lead the discussion in this area. He focuses on the *Moment* as the point of maximum pressure, the thought of the eternal return applying its weight onto existence through this point.

> That is what is peculiar to, and hardest to bear in, the doctrine of eternal return-to wit, that eternity is in the Moment, that the Moment is not the fleeting "now," not an instant of time whizzing by a spectator, but the collision of future and past. Here the Moment comes to itself. It determines how everything recurs. [19]

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[19] Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Translated from the German by David Farrell Krell, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. 57

Becoming is not to be treated as a way to escape this life; it is not something exterior to it, but a way to calibrate with life in a deeper sense, to accede to eternity via the Moment. A temporary nihilistic attitude can be of help here, especially when we want to create new values and need to abandon the old ones. It is not that a certain set of values is more suitable than another, what's to grasp here is that values need to be in a constant process of reconsideration so as to avoid fixating on one single moral system. Becoming a nihilist is an important step, as it turns our attention away from traditional metaphysical explanations and gives us the freedom to participate in becoming, giving life's force the opportunity to manifest.

> "I no longer believe in anything" suggests the very opposite of doubt and paralysis in the face of decision and action. It means the following: "I will not have life come to a standstill at one possibility, one configuration; I will allow and grant life its inalienable right to become, and I shall do this by prefiguring and projecting new and higher possibilities for it, creatively conducting life out beyond itself."[20]

Even though Nietzsche values life, understood as the current existence, he does not concern himself with being as Heidegger does in his philosophy. He sees becoming as the most suitable way to think about ourselves, matching this with his view of a chaotic reality that cannot be explained by a single metaphysical system. This is why we cannot place the concept of eternal return at the center of Nietzschean thought, as it cannot be understood as a traditional philosophy that has basic principles and final conclusions. Instead, Nietzsche tried to capture the flux of existence, the dynamic nature of reality, and adopts becoming not only for descriptive purposes, but also as a possibility for us to better adjust in a changing environment. If we see our existence as becoming, we will be prepared to face uncertainty, but to do this, we must be willing to abandon a state of being and search for another, we must repeatedly destroy and create.

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[20] Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Translated from the German by David Farrell Krell, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. 126

Lightness and weight, the inversion of values

Becoming individualizes the subject, but here it happens only under the burden of the hardest thought. Stirner's solipsism and selfishness, or Rand's anarcho-capitalism denies weight, gives individuality maximum importance but fails to place the human subject into a context, where intersubjectivity can become possible. Kundera describes in the novel the tension between hard and light with a reference to Beethoven and his expression used in the last movement of his last quartet. "Unlike Parmenides, Beethoven apparently viewed weight as something positive."[21] An almost Kantian imperative, the so called "*Es muss sein!*"[22] represents "the weighty resolution is at one with the voice of Fate (Es muss sein!); necessity, weight, and value are three concepts inextricably bound: only necessity is heavy, and only what is heavy has value."[23] What's important here is that Tomáš, one of the main characters, from being a libertine type of man, a good example of an individualist, becomes aware of the unbearable lightness when he falls in love, in relation to another person. This makes him choose the weight of settling with his loved one as he abandons his individual being that made him feel without purpose.

Although it is intuitive to associate freedom with lightness, this view would resemble more closely the rejection of responsibility and adoption of a libertine conduct. Camus says that "claim to total freedom and the cold-blooded dehumanization of the intellect appears in Sade."[24] The total freedom of the intellect that, as we have shown, leaves the subject lacking of any sign of humanity and leads to solipsism. The dehumanized subject of Sade, we can claim, has to detach from humanity as a whole to become truly free, in the same way that Stirner proposed. If we regard authentic freedom

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[21] Kundera Milan, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, translated by Michael Henry Heim, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. 13

[22] Ger. *It must be.*

[23] Kundera Milan, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, translated by Michael Henry Heim, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. p. 13

[24] Camus, *The Rebel. An Essay on Man in Revolt*, Vintage Books, New York, 1991, p. 46

as a prerequisite for the human experience, and not as a kind of solipsism, we can better understand what freedom actually means.

> Obviously, the thought of eternal recurrence of the same guides us back to the question of the relationship between freedom and necessity.[25]

Freedom can only be exercised through making choices, or else, it is nothing but an essentialist attribute of the intellect that has no real power to make changes in the phenomenal world. The hard choice that Kundera describes, evoking Beethoven, when made, destroys the other possibilities that potentially existed for the individual. Freedom is the way we choose one way or the other, the way we intervene in the string of causality that lies in front of us.

We can still accept the idea of determinism, but we also have to allow the subject to choose a path of necessity. This is only possible if we consider ourselves subjects of becoming, which cannot be submitted to a hard deterministic system that proposes the existence of static beings ready to be frozen in time and analyzed. We would be much more submissive to determinism if we were of what we could call "metaphysical libertines." If we gave in to the will of fate and assumed no responsibility, determinism would dominate us. We would be living beings in the present, but we could not truly become something, because any choice we would make could be easily replaced by another one, thus nullifying it. Most importantly, we could not be consistent in any action or pursuit, any project would be deemed to fail.

"*Be yourself*" is probably the most individualistic and narcissistic maxim of the contemporary era. Besides the problematic assumption of a (good) being that lies within each of us and could give us value, if only we were to actualize it, it eclipses the much more important teaching of Socrates, "*Know yourself*." We are asked to be ourselves, without being taught how to

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[25] Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, Translated from the German by David Farrell Krell, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, p. 135

know ourselves first, if such a thing is actually possible. As we know from psychoanalysis, the positing of the existence of an unconscious makes self-discovery all the more difficult. The maxim also goes against the existentialism of Sartre, who proves in *Existentialism is a humanism* that we do not have a being to relate to, and that there is not even a human nature to talk about.

> Thus, there is no human nature since there is no God to conceive of it. Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be, and since he conceives of himself only after life exists, just as he wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself. This is the first principle of existentialism.[26]

If we are to follow Nietzsche, "*Be yourself*" needs to be replaced with "*Become Who You Are.*" To choose the determinations means to become, to see the human being as a project. We turn from human *beings* to human *becomings*, among all the *becomings* in the world. Perhaps the most liberating maxim is "*amor fati*", the love of fate, not to be understood as a love of fatalism but as a revaluation of our own self-forged destiny. Nietzsche describes this attitude towards existence as a Dionysian one, and makes a connection between all the concepts reminded here in a fragment from *The Will to Power*:

> Such an experimental philosophy as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of the most fundamental nihilism; but this does not mean that it must halt at a negation, a No, a will to negation. It wants rather to cross over to the opposite of this-to a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection-it wants the eternal circulation: -the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence-my formula for this is amor fati.[27]

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[26] Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, translated by Carol Macomber, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2007, p. 22

[27] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, New York, 1968, p. 536

Negativity, understood here as the annulment of all possibilities in order to pick one choice at a time, is what frees us from the anguish of the ever-present choices and puts us on the path of becoming through the hard choice that Kundera describes in his novel. We must also acknowledge the fact that, in the view developed here, once a choice is made, it no longer belongs to us, as we are not a static being that is able to own something. Instead, the choice is now fixed in the string of the many causalities that we are able to visualize only retrospectively. In this sense, the human being is a thing of the past, that only the *Übermensch*, that is the human *becoming*, can perceive. The human *becoming* is that entity that has surpassed being and can gain distance from the thing that it wants to name and interact with.

Conclusion

Starting from the duality of lightness and weight that reveals the challenges of dealing with positive and negative concepts, and ending with the problem of *being* and *becoming*, we have managed to find connections with many more areas of discussion in Nietzsche's thought. Even though we must be constantly aware of the profound anti-systematical message that he intended to send, from the content to the form, we cannot help but notice the many ties between his proposed concepts and how they can all form a sort of map that we can use to navigate his work. This does not mean that the reader has to follow a specific route towards truth, but we can use the hermeneutical methods towards Nietzsche's works that Heidegger or Camus practiced in order to better understand their thinking respectively. The story about Sisyphus takes a whole other meaning and becomes even more complex if we take into account the eternal return, and Heidegger's conception of time takes an interesting turn when faced with the same concept.

It is also difficult to grasp just by focusing on Nietzsche just how revealing his ideas are, one of the reasons being that he does not concentrate his effort to explain concepts, precisely to avoid becoming too systematic. His style of writing is much more poetic, and the interpretations on his thoughts on the eternal return or *amor fati* are in themselves part of the concepts. The adoption of the figure of Dionysus is yet another emblematic feature of his philosophy that inspires Camus and Rand to employ similar mythical images in their work to explain certain attitudes that we should adopt, that cannot be expressed in traditional or academic ways of writing and argumentation. The similarity between Dionysus and Christ that we have noticed matched with Nietzsche's own concerns about how Christianity handles its own mythology is a very significant insight on how any message can become ideological.

The final reflections on *being* and *becoming* have proved useful in the attempt to overcome not only the traditional manner in which essence and existence have been perceived, but also to avoid a way of thinking that tends to regard beings as static, and refuses to adapt to the dynamic nature of the world as *becoming*. This is as much a philosophical tool as it is a way of altering our perception about ourselves, to regard the human as *becoming* instead of being. Such a change would free us from the confines of our own thinking by abandoning the unbearable lightness of being, overcoming our condition of metaphysical libertines and choosing weight instead. This should help us evolve organically, while also allowing ourselves to make real decisions by choosing the burden of the world, condemning ourselves to become free.

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SOME REMARKS CONCERNING
THE "USE OF AN OBJECT"

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to propose some philosophical interpretations of Winnicott's concept of "the use of an object". These interpretations will be coming from Heidegger's fundamental ontology and from Buber's late philosophical anthropology. We also noticed that Winnicott's theory of "the use of an object" was already in some way or another present in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in the fourth chapter, where consciousness is treated in terms of desire. Our main thesis is that after the subject encounters the resistance of the external world, its adversity and contrasting feature, the subject recognizes it as something independent and autonomous from the self, so the subject is able therefore to set that being at a distance, enter into relation with it, and finally establish the world qua world. We are going also to draw lines between Winnicott's perspective and the views of some phenomenological authors such as Eugen Fink, Merleau-Ponty or Marc Richir.

Keywords: Hegel, Buber, Winnicott, Heidegger, resistance, distance, relation, object, destructiveness, aggressivity.

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, we want to prove that the so-called resistance of the "external world", namely its adversity and its contrasting feature is the main means that enables the subject to set it a distance and enter into relation with it. Only after, the subject might speak of the world qua world. Secondly, we wish to argue that after this "primal setting at a distance", it is possible for the person, whether we call it Dasein (Heidegger) or subject (Winnicott), to perceive the object which has been "set at a distance" in an objective way, namely as something separated from the self, as an independent other and as an autonomous being. Child's psychology will be invoked here to assist us with its concepts of the permanence of the object, which we take from Piaget's genetic epistemology, or the object constancy of Margaret Mahler[2].

Our thesis follows the next way: Only after the object has been "set at a distance" and it has gained permanence (in the child's mind), does the object also gain a place in space and a duration in time. Respectively, what we want to argue is that the object set in space and time, in order to be perceived as such, needs to be "set at a distance". This means that the object needs to be recognized as an independent and autonomous other (a permanent/constant other). Only after the object has been set a distance and recognized as a permanence, does space and time "arise" in the mind of the child, because the child links space and time with the permanent object, namely he or she recognizes that the object exists in space and time.

Our supposition follows two different lines of thought. First, we will remember Winnicott's statement that the survival of the object grants the subject a path towards shared reality. The second line of thought, coming from Piaget, refers to idea that the permanence of the object allows for the child to perceive the object as set in a specific time and a specific place, even if the object is absent from the child's immediate perception. Combining

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[2] Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation*, Karnac Books, 2002, p. 40.

these two perspectives, we arrive at the conclusion that "the primal setting at a distance" implies that the subject can tell that the world exists apart from himself or herself. Moreover, the world now exists in space and time. Martin Buber called this the "act of distance", without being aware of the certain implications that this concept might have in child psychology or psychoanalysis. The real question which we want to ask is when and how does the child arrive at the state of the "objective subject" (Winnicott). We will consider the theory which implies that the first relation of the infant and his or her mother is a symbiotic one (Mahler), or an "anonymous collectivity[3]" (Merleau-Ponty). Winnicott calls this by the name of the merged state of infant and mother, or the fusion. We must also remember that the term fusion was already present in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, in his theory on intersubjectivity[4]. The concept of fusion in Husserl's fifth meditation plays a different role, respectively, it is linked to the constitution of the other. With these statements we also want to recall Daniel Stern's theory of the interpersonal world of the infant, emphasizing the difference which it bears in relation to Winnicott's and Mahler's theories. Daniel Stern, using empirical data, assumes that, at first, the child "has distance" from the mother, meaning that, at first, the child sees the mother as a separate person, and only by virtue of this distance between infant and mother might fusion behaviors take place[5]. This is a kind of paradigm shift coming from Stern's part, because he is explicitly contrasting the theories of Merleau-Ponty, Winnicott and Mahler.

Returning to our main subject, we want to follow Winnicott's argument that the survival of the object gives the object permanence for the child, and it enables the child to establish what belongs to the "external world", namely what he or she can use and relate to, apart from his or her own mind contents

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[3] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*, Northwestern University Press, 2010, p. 248.

[4] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1977, p. 118.

[5] Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Karnac Books, 1998, p. 206.

(the projective mechanisms). After the object has been set a distance, it is recognized/perceived objectively, as given in a specific place (absent from the child's immediate perception), and existing within its own duration. In his book on the child's conception of time, Piaget offers a critique of Bergson's theory of duration, and our point of departure would be that we consider that the child is not first of all aware of his own duration and place in time, but he or she is aware of the object's spatial and temporal features. Our argument bears certain resemblances with Heidegger's ek-sistence theory. In his conception, Dasein is always already outside in the world, being preoccupied with something. So, for us, the child perceives at first the permanent object to be set in a specific spatial and temporal register (to be a part of the external or shared world), and only by the process of introjection can the child assimilate these notions of space and time, as abstract ones.

We want to borrow from Kant's first *Critique* this idea of permanence as a mode of temporalization, this being the first "analogy of experience"[6]. We can affirm that the child who is encountering the adversity of the "external world" manages to set it a distance, by virtue of its contrasting feature (its resistance), perceive it objectively and recognize it as something independent and autonomous from the self, then perceive its permanence in space and time. All of this is building up the child's perception of space and time. We want to argue that before having the notions of time and space as abstract ones, the child has the notions of time and space of a particular object, in this case the object which has survived the destruction and has gained permanence in space and time. All of this is possible only by virtue of the "primal setting at a distance" (of the object), respectively the capacity for recognizing something as independent and autonomous from our own selves. This specific dialectic unfolds as it follows: The child "stubs his soul" (in Buber words) against something, and this would be the resistance and adversity of the object, the child wants to destroy it, but the object survives, so it is perceived as something different from the self (what we have called the "primal setting at a distance"), and finally the object gains permanence in

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6 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 299.

space and time, because for Winnicott, the object now gains a life of its own. Only after this stage of object permanence will the child establish his or her abstract notions of space and time, namely only after the infant has perceived the place and the duration of the object set a distance as something other-than-me. This specific process of perceiving space and time as abstract concepts is achieved only by virtue of the introjection of the permanent object (the introjection of its spatial and temporal features).

The philosophical context of our thesis

In his paper on aggression, Winnicott stresses on the importance of the actual encounter with the external world, this would mean the encounter with the environment which gradually becomes something distinguished as Not-Me[7]. This encounter, which opposes the being of the infant, builds up to the experience of primal aggressiveness, through the feeling of frustration. This early insight from Winnicott's paper will be of great use for us to understand the so-called "use of an object".

In his section on Dasein's temporality from *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes a remark concerning the resistance of the external world. This idea will be also a starting point for our remarks concerning Winnicott. Heidegger is telling us that only after Dasein has encountered the resistance of the "external world", does he understand that he is not the master of the world. These considerations follow naturally from Heidegger's analysis of reality from the first section of *Being and Time*[8]. Resistance is encountered as a not-coming-through, and as a hindrance of willing to come through. With such willing something must already have been disclosed which one's drive/striving and one's will are out for. The experience of resistance is possible, ontologically speaking, only by reason of the world-disclosure. We have to note here that

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[7] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, Tavistock Publications, 2003, p. 215.

[8] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell, 2001, p. 407.

resistance also characterizes the "external world" in the person of entities within-the-world, but never in the person of the world itself[9].

Our interpretation may be the following: Dasein's journey throughout the world is always characterized by some sort of resistance from this external world. This means that Dasein is always faced towards the world in some sense (Dasein ek-sists), and this external world should be characterized by some sort of adversity, by a kind of contrast, which here is called resistance. The resistance of the external world is the reason why Dasein is not the master of the world, because he cannot go beyond this resistance, in the sense that something always remains, or survives Dasein's will or drive/striving. Our argument, following the directions proposed by Buber and Winnicott, is that this resistance will be the means by which the subject can set a being at a distance and enter into relation with it, thus establishing what we usually call a world (in this case an objective one). We are going to discover that for Buber the being which has been set at a distance was primarily characterized by adversity and it was contrasting man's being. Also, with Winnicott, the object has to survive the child's destructiveness in order for the child to establish the so-called "external world". Here we could also recall Gadamer's saying that who "has" language also has world. Our interpretation might be that the following: Language enables the subject to set the world at a distance, thus transforming the *Umwelt* into a *Welt*, as in Buber's words.

Concerning the philosophical context of Winnicott's work, we could recall Jessica Benjamin's numerous attempts at making a conjunction, or even a synthesis between the philosophical view of Hegel and the psychoanalytical one of Winnicott[10]. Benjamin clearly noticed some similarities between the works of the two authors[11]. First, we must notice that desire's satisfaction in Hegel bears similarities with Winnicott's survival of the object (of which we

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[9] Ibidem, pp. 253-254.

[10] Jessica Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*, Routledge, 2018, p. 14.

[11] Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination*, Pantheon Books, 1988, p. 39.

are going to talk about later). Both authors consider that we become aware of the object and even of ourselves only by aggressivity, aggressivity coming from the part of the subject. This means that after the object is destroyed, as in Hegel, or survives, as in Winnicott, we come to acknowledge that the object is part of the shared reality, the shared world. The problem of the possibility of knowledge of the external reality was already present in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and here we might recall the distinction between phenomena and noumena. Winnicott tried to solve this problem by stating that "reality" doesn't belong neither solely to the outside, nor to the inside, but to the in-between. The in-between is called by Winnicott the intermediate area of experience, which might transform itself into a playground even. Playing becomes, therefore, for Winnicott, the via regia for the access to reality, because only by playing does one feel real, and only by playing does one arrive at the object, which has to survive in order so that shared reality might be achieved. The problem of reality was also discussed by Husserl in his *Cartesian Meditations*[12] and by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Both authors consider that reality is a pseudo-problem. Heidegger insists that the problem of external reality has its basis in an ontological constitution, this being of course our being-in-the-world.

Winnicott's work might be compared, as we stated above, to the work of some phenomenological authors, such as Husserl and Heidegger, but not only. Our task in this article is not to make a conjunction between Winnicott's view and that of the phenomenological authors, but to sketch the possible meeting points between these views, by virtue of the theory of the survival of the object. Eugen Fink is one of Husserl's students who stressed a lot on the meaning of the ontology of play for the human being, and his conception bears many similarities with Winnicott's work[13]. For example, both situate the area of play in the in-between (potential space for Winnicott and playworld for Fink). Merleau-Ponty's view of the body might also be of great use for us,

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[12] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1977, p. 58.

[13] Eugen Fink, *Play as Symbol of the World*, Indiana University Press, 2016, p. 70.

because Winnicott also states that playing is an activity which involves the body, even the lived one (Leib). Therefore, the distinction between Körper and Leib, or flesh[14], in Merleau-Ponty might be very useful for later talk. Although we invoked these authors, the phenomenological author which came closest to Winnicott's view is Marc Richir. In numerous of his works[15], he stressed about the phenomenological and even psychopathological meaning of Winnicott's concepts, such as the transitional object or the transitional area. He also insisted on the child's early experience of the moment of the sublime, which plays its part in the exchange of gazes between mother and infant[16]. This exchange was called in Winnicott the mirror-role of the mother's face, of which we won't talk right now. Now that we drew these lines between Winnicott's perspective and that of certain phenomenological authors, we might start with our discussion of the use of an object, but before all of that, we must turn towards some insights coming from Martin Buber.

Buber's concept of resistance

Before starting with our analysis of Winnicott's "use of an object", and before making a conjunction with Buber's late philosophical anthropology, we want to present the little-known text from Buber's personal correspondence, which may in fact throw light on the subject discussed here. The letter is from Buber's correspondence with Hans Trüb, dating from 27 august 1946, a time at which we can consider that Buber was already planning to write his paper called *Distance and Relation*. In this letter it is stated that world is first what which the "soul stubs itself against[17]". For the infant (and here child psychoanalysis is addressed), the world is not the mother's breast that

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[14] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 130.

[15] Marc Richir, *Phantasia, Imagination, Affectivité*, Jerome Millon, 2004, p. 508.

[16] Marc Richir, *Variations sur le Sublime et le Soi*, Jerome Millon, 2010, p. 36.

[17] Judith Buber Agassi, *Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy*, Syracuse University Press, 1999, p. 174.

belongs to him (the merged state), but the edge of the table that causes him pain. World is first (this means from man's starting point), that which is different from me, that which I cannot include into my soul. Perception of world as world occurs again and again through adversity and resistance, through contradiction, and even through absurdity. Before the world becomes actual to me as not-mine, it cannot become mine. Therefore, the world becomes mine, in a sense, through genuine encounters[18]. These remarks resonate with Buber's statement that almost from the beginning of his life, the child "has distance", meaning that, he or she can distinguish himself or herself from other selves. These remarks also imply that by "stubbing the soul against something", the child has a pre-theoretical "concept" of difference, and this "concept" is granted by the pain caused to him or her by that "stubbing". Anticipating, resistance now becomes the means by which the subject is ready to set a being at a distance. The child thus acknowledges that he or she cannot include that object which causes him or her pain into his or her soul, so now the child perceives the object as something different from the self.

Now that we have established the philosophical ground of our discussion concerning Winnicott's paper, we can start to analyze it, and just then see how it can be compared or even synthetized with Buber's conception of the "primal setting at a distance".

Winnicott's "use of an object"

Before starting with the presentation of Winnicott's main thesis, we want to make some steps backwards towards Freud's essay on negation. From this very brief essay we want to take an idea which is to be found in the last paragraphs of the essay. There Freud speaks of negation as related to the death drive, and we also know that the death drive can manifest itself

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[18] Ibidem, p. 175.

in the form of destructivity, of aggressiveness[19]. The main idea we want to emphasize is that negation is related to the so-called testing of reality. Therefore, the death drive is the "beyond of the pleasure principle", because only with this negation implied in the structure of the death drive can the child arrive to his or her truth and at the truth of the object, at its certainty. This specific dialectics unfolds at it follows: The child is feeling angry towards something, because he or she met the opposition of the external world, namely its resistance, so he or she chooses an object in order to destroy it (to manifest his or her anger upon it), and only after the object has been destroyed (or maybe it has survived, as in Winnicott), does the child test the (external) reality and arrive at his or her truth, and at the truth of the object, of course. What we want exactly to prove in the following argument is that aggressiveness, the primal aggressiveness of the child is a sort of world-disclosure. The world is disclosed to the child as he or she tries to destroy the object and the object survives. Then the object can be used, Winnicott tells us. But there exists also the alternative, coming from Buber's philosophy, respectively, the situation in which the object doesn't survive the child's aggressiveness. The object will then be teared into pieces, but those pieces can also be contemplated in some way or another, and this specific form of contemplation can give rise to the originator drive, the drive to form something from those remaining pieces, something personal, and this may the very origin of the work of art in child's psychoanalysis, a form of proto creativity, we could emphasize.

The thesis that Winnicott is going to defend is that there was a lot of talk in the psychoanalytic field about object-relation, but not so much about the object-usage. His thesis in this chapter from *Playing and Reality* is guided by his work with patients, namely in the situation of the so-called psychoanalytic transference. One of Winnicott's first ideas is that the psychoanalyst, in some cases has to abstain himself from certain interpretations, which could, finally disturb the psychoanalytical setting. Discussing the implications of the

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[19] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XIX*, The Hogarth Press, 1986, p. 239.

interpretative act in psychoanalytic cure, Winnicott is suggesting that the analyst should be placed (by the analysand), in the area outside of the subjective phenomena, namely outside the area of omnipotent magical control. We want to retain this idea for our later talk. Winnicott's crucial idea, which will be a motif in this chapter is the analysand's ability to use the analyst[20]. We will also notice that by virtue of the survival of the object, the subject may now perceive the world objectively, and not conceive or create it subjectively.

Concerning the object-relation, we are notified that the subject permits a certain change at the level of the Self, and this is the point where the idea of investment is introduced. The object now has a certain and determinate meaning, because of the projective mechanisms and the certain identifications which occurred. The subject is kind of tired, Winnicott tells us, because he invested some of his feelings upon the object. The object-relation of the subject can be discussed in terms of the isolation of the subject. The object has to be first of all real, namely it has to be a part of the common external world, not some kind of projection. This aspect is defined by Winnicott as the crucial difference between relating and using. The object-relation has of course to be described as the subject alone, while the object-usage has to be described as accepting the independence and autonomy of the object[21], namely what Martin Buber would have called the "primal setting at a distance".

In clinical terms, after Winnicott, we can say that a baby is feeding from the Self, and another baby is feeding from the breast, of course, in the conditions that the breast is considered a separate object, a not-me source. Mothers, like some analysts can be good-enough, which means that they can facilitate the transition from the object-relation to the object-usage. To use the object, the subject has first the need to develop a capacity for using the object, and this is part of the modification of the reality principle. We can now recall Freud's insight from one of his papers on the psychology of the unconscious, a paper in which Freud tells us that the transition from the

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[20] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, 2009, pp. 116-117.
[21] Ibidem, pp. 118-119.

pleasure principle to the reality principle takes place through the delay of the satisfaction of the needs, namely through frustration[22]. Returning to Winnicott, the use of an object is another reason to consider the important role played by the facilitating environment[23].

In terms of succession, first it comes the relating and secondly the usage, and at this point we have to be reminded that in Buber's terms, the first was the distance, and only after we could have a talk about certain relations. This transition is so painful because the subject renounces at a certain part of his area of omnipotence, in favor of perceiving the object as an external phenomenon, not as something projected. The object is then recognized, in a sense closer to Hegel's, as something in-itself. This transition from relating to using is made by virtue of the subject destroying the object. This dialectic unfolds as it follows: The subject relates to the object, the subject destroys the object, the object survives the destruction, then the object can be used by the subject. The survival of the object may or may not exist. A new type of object-relation appears, the one in which the subject tells the object: "I have destroyed you", and the object is there to receive this type of communication. Now the subject can say the following: "Hello object, I've destroyed you, I love you, you mean a lot to me because you survived my destructiveness". "While I love you, I am continually destroying you in my unconscious phantasy". Here does the phantasy begin, and from now on, the subject can use the object[24]. In a text dating from 1968 (a time at which we can consider that Winnicott was already planning to write *Playing and Reality*) which is found in his posthumous book entitled *Babies and their Mothers*, Winnicott had already introduced the idea of the survival of the breast as a means of achieving shared reality[25]. Marc Richir would insist on this point, arguing that there is a certain rhythmical relation between the

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[22] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XII*, The Hogarth Press, 1981, p. 222.

[23] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, 2009, pp. 119-120.

[24] Ibidem, p. 120.

[25] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Babies and their Mothers*, Da Capo Press, 1987, p. 32.

destruction of the object and the survival of the object. Richir also emphasized the role played by the mother in this process, which he links to affectivity. The mother must be very careful while she holds the baby, because the menace of the fear of breakdown is present at every moment[26].

A very important feature of this transitional phase is that the subject is set outside of his area of omnipotent control, and this is exactly what Heidegger was arguing in *Being and Time* about the resistance of the world. Because of the resistance of the being of the world, Dasein "arrives" at the conclusion that he is not master of the world. Back to Winnicott, now the object has autonomy and a certain type of life for the subject. If it has survived the destructiveness, it can also contribute to the development of the child, in some way or another. Now we come to a very important detail in our research, namely the fact that after this survival of the object, the subject may start a life in the world of the objects[27], namely Buber's statement that after the "primal setting at a distance", followed by the act of relating there exists a world for man, by virtue of that synthetizing apperception. This concept of the synthetizing apperception was already present in Kant's first *Critique*[28], but there it was named the synthetic unity of consciousness. Buber stresses not so much on the meaning of external sensory data, but on the possibility of perceiving the wholeness of the human being.

Winnicott repeats his statement in these following words: The emotional development of the subject is made possible only by virtue of the real survival of the object invested with feelings, because the object is destroyed while being real, and is real by virtue of being destroyed. The central postulate of Winnicott's hypothesis is that the subjective object is not destroyed (the projective material), but the destructiveness begins to take place only while the object is objectively perceived, it has autonomy, and it belongs to the shared world. The reality principle implies the fact that the individual subject is angry and destructive, but this destructiveness is a kind of world-disclosure

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[26] Marc Richir, *Phantasia, Imagination, Affectivité*, Jerome Millon, 2004, p. 514.
[27] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, 2009, p. 121.
[28] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 238.

in Heidegger's words, namely, it allows for the subject to experience reality, placing the object outside the Self[29].

In this moment of the subject's development, the subject creates the object, meaning that the subject discovers the external world, and this consists only and only in the object's capacity to survive the primal aggression. Destructiveness means for Winnicott not only the baby's primal aggressiveness, but also the failure of the object to survive this primal aggressiveness. This destruction of the object, Winnicott tells us, doesn't suppose any kind of anger, but there might be happiness at the survival of the object, intended to be destroyed[30]. Here we can recall Buber's letter to Hans Trüb, where he says that the world is not the mother's breast, but the table that the child "stubs his soul upon", namely the child discovers the world by adversity, and this is a stimulus to go on and experience the outside world. We can very well believe that the child is angry because his "soul was stubbed" by the table, but this is also an impulse to get angry at the table, maybe wish to destroy it, and finally find out that is has survived the primal aggressiveness, all of this establishing the table as table (in this example).

From this point onwards, the object is continually destroyed through the unconscious phantasy. This fact of being continually destroyed (in the unconscious phantasy) contributes to the fact of perceiving the reality of the object as something-in-itself, it also enhances the feelings, and it establishes the constancy of the object, and now the object can be used. This very last point is crucial for our understanding of the object's survival and for the concept of the "primal setting at a distance", because after the object has been set at a distance through its survival, it is recognized, in Hegel's words, as something independent and autonomous.

The permanence or the consistency of the object is then established, namely the fact that the child perceives the object as something-in-itself, which has its own spatiality, even if it is absent from the child's immediate perception, and it is perceived as something which has its own duration in

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[29] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, 2009, p. 122.
[30] Ibidem, p. 125.

time. In this sense, we conceived this permanence/consistency of the object as the first spatial and temporal rapport which the child establishes with the outside world, namely the shared world. This, namely our understanding, has to be situated in the epistemological field, not in the ontological one, because after Heidegger, the child, namely the Dasein, which is this in-between (birth and death)[31] is always already in the world, our being-in-the-world being here a fundamental constitution of Dasein. Furthermore, this idea, namely Winnicott's one can be very easily combined with the idea of the "world in small doses", with the fact that the mother has to disclose the world to the child in small bits. Resuming Winnicott's words, we say that using the object is more sophisticated than relating to it, but also, in Buber's words, it is the very opposite thing. The object-relating can be done with the subjective object but using implies that the object is to be found in the external reality[32].

The subject relates to the object, the object is to be found in the external world, then the subject destroys the object, but the object survives and now it can be used as such. The object is continually being destroyed and this becomes the means for the love for the real object, this being an object outside the subject's area of omnipotent control. Winnicott's idea contribute to a certain positive study of the primal destructiveness of the child. This destructiveness and the survival of the object places it (the object), outside the area of the objects invested with the mental mechanism of projection from the subject. In this way, there is created a world of shared reality, which the subject can use, this world being something, of course, other-than-me-substance. We can now anticipate Buber's idea of the two movements of human life, namely the primal setting at a distance and the entering into relation, movements from which by virtue of the synthetizing apperception, man "has" a world. We have here to notice that in Buber's theory, unfortunately, there is no place for aggressiveness or destructiveness, which could have placed him closer to Winnicott's understanding of the issue

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[31] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell, 2001, p. 425.
[32] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, 2009, p. 126.

of object-usage. We must also notice that Buber talks about the adversity of nature, namely its resistance, which can be compared in some way or another with Winnicott's idea of the survival of the object.

In his chapter on desire from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel makes a very interesting claim, which anticipates Winnicott's theory of the survival of the object. Hegel tells us that desire wants to destroy the independent object and thereby give itself certainty for itself, namely in an objective manner[33]. Both Hegel and Winnicott assume the perspective in which there needs to be a primary aggressiveness towards an object, so that we could have an experience of the world. By destroying the object (Hegel) or by the survival of the object (Winnicott), the self-consciousness or the subject might have access to the external reality, but also to the reality of the object.

Winnicott could have combined as well the chapter concerning the origins of creativity with the chapter concerning "the use of an object", namely the chapter which we wanted to analyze in this particular paper. Using Buber's notion of the originator instinct/drive, borrowed from his book entitled *Between Man and Man[34]*, we can affirm that the origins of creativity lie in the early destruction of the object, namely in what is usually called primary aggressiveness. Our argument follows the next path: Buber tells us that even if a child wants to destroy an object, that is because the child wants to see it in its components, so he or she can contemplate the unity that has become fragmented, and of course put these fragments in another specific way/order.

This is the work of the originator instinct/drive, with which we want to imprint our own trace upon a relation (even upon reality), whether it is a relation with a human being, or the relation with the work of art. Following Buber's very interesting idea we want to affirm that the early destruction of the object is a form of creativity, a primitive one, which is accompanied by some sort of curiosity, we might add, this being the specific role played by

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[33] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 109.
[34] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, Routledge, 2004, p. 101.

the originator instinct/drive. All of these can be subsumed to Winnicott's idea of the creative apperception, namely the fact that we can look at the world in a different way, namely as an "as if". We can look at a tree in its totality or follow the bending of the branches[35]. We can look at the clock to know the time, or we can just contemplate the play of the clock itself as a mechanism. Here we could as well discuss the role playing in the creative act by the phantasy, after Husserl, but we will take time to prepare this discussion for another time.

The primal setting at a distance

We are now going to consider Martin Buber's view on the concept of distance in order to suggest that what happens between the child and the object that survived the destruction is an "act of distance", respectively what we want to call "the primal setting at a distance", this being the first act of recognition which came from the child, the recognition of something independent and autonomous from his or her own self. With this double movement, consisting in the distance and the relation, man as man, Buber tells us, comes to perceive its own perceiving as well[36].

The one, and only way perhaps, to expose the principle of being is to contrast its reality with that of other existing beings. Nature alone presents itself to us this act of contrasting, namely what has been called by Heidegger resistance, which should not be understood in this context as something similar to the psychoanalytical resistance of transference, but as the resistance of the world. Following his argumentation, Buber stresses again on the role played by this act of contrasting, and of course, here we talk about man's contrasting the external reality, which here is called by the generic term of nature.

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[35] Jan Abram, *The Language of Winnicott*, Karnac Books, 2017, p. 122.
[36] Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, Harper&Row Publishers, 1965, p. 59.

Now we come closer to the double movement which enables man to have an experience of the world. The first movement is called the primal setting at a distance and the second movement is called entering into relation. The second movement presupposes the first one because we can enter into relation only with a being which has been set at a distance from us, namely with a being which has become and independent opposite, just like in Winnicott's "use of an object". Distancing should be considered as an event in this case[37]. Buber is here proposing that in order to overcome the resistance of the world, we have to set it at a distance, whereas Schutz's perspective is more psychoanalytical in some sense. Schutz implies the fact that phantasy can be our weapon with which we fight the resistance of the external world. For Schutz, in the world of phantasy, there is no resistance[38], because the subject who phantasies is in some manner omnipotent of his or her own thoughts, similar to Winnicott's concept of the area of omnipotent control.

Buber is now going to talk about the impossibility of the animal to enter into relation, in the way human beings are able to. Now Buber invokes the concept of *Umwelt*, which is defined as the total world of objects which is accessible to the animal's senses. The animal perceives only that which concerns him in the situation available to it, and this available and concerning things construct his *Umwelt*. The animal doesn't have a world, but rather a realm, or as Merleau-Ponty would insist, a ray of world[39]. By world we understand something independent from the category of man, as we have saw that the animal realm is only that which serves to its immediate survival. Now Buber's goes on to insist on the animal's bodily being which accumulates data through its bodily memory. Only man can replace this conglomeration of information with a unity, which can be imagined as existing for itself, similar to Winnicott's "surviving object". This concept of unity can be also

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[37] Ibidem, p. 60.

[38] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, p. 234.

[39] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 241.

translated as totality. Here Buber makes a very interesting comparison between the life of the animal and that of the human, namely the animal lives like a fruit in its skin, while man is like a dweller in a huge building which is always being added to, and whose limits can never be penetrated (the universe, the cosmos), but nevertheless man knows this building as something he lives in, in which he dwells, so man has the capacity of grasping the wholeness of the building as such, its totality.

The world thus becomes detached from him, and becomes something independent, through the act of recognition, a concept which Buber most probably takes from Hegel. Only when a structure of being is independently over against a living being, an independent opposite, does a world exist, and here we get the short version of what Donald Winnicott tried to explain in his paper on "the use of an object", without, of course, the problem of aggression/destructiveness[40].

We may characterize this act of entering into relation with the world as such, as a whole and totality, and not as a sum of parts, as a synthetizing apperception. This synthetizing apperception is the function of unity, similar to the transcendental unity of consciousness from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Also, this concept should be understood as the apperception of a being in its totality and unity, namely its wholeness.

Buber goes on to talk about the so-called acts of distance and acts of relation, the first being universal, and the second being personal. Distance provides the human situation and relation provides man's becoming in that situation. Man has a great desire to enter into relation with beings and to imprint on them his relation to them. This is what Buber called in *Between Man and Man* the originator instinct[41], which in this paper, namely in *Distance and Relation*, is addressed in some manner as the will to relation.

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[40] Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, Harper&Row Publishers, 1965, p. 61.
[41] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, Routledge, 2004, p. 100.

Conclusions and perspectives

After the moment of the so-called "act of distance", the object becomes something permanent for the child, so we can talk about the concept proposed by Jean Piaget, namely the object permanence as having its basis in the phenomenon of the "act of distance". Moreover, after receiving permanence, the object can be related to as an object objectively perceived, not as what Winnicott would call a subjective object.

We find out that for Piaget not only objects may receive permanence, but people too[42]. This goes along with Winnicott's idea that the object which survives may also be the analyst in some way or another, this of course, taking place in the analytical setting. For Martin Buber, the act of relating which comes after the act of distancing can also enable the person to perceive others in their wholeness, in their totality and uniqueness.

Out thesis that we want to propose is that even space and time have their origin in the phenomenon of the "primal setting at a distance", namely following the permanence of the object, the child is able to tell that an object exists whether it (the object) is in front of him or not. With this, we want to argue that the "primal setting at a distance", which is followed by the permanence of the object, is not spatiality itself, but the presupposition to it, namely, to space. This means that after the object is set at a distance and it is perceived objectively, namely as something unique in the sense of something autonomous and independent apart from the child's mind, the space is also presupposed there. With this primal setting at a distance, the child, namely the infant perceives spatial correlations between its own body (the objective subject) and the object which may or may not be present. Moreover, we want to suggest that even time is part of this becoming of the object as something independent and autonomous from the child's mind. Here we want to insist using Kant's argument, cited above, present in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely that permanence (the permanence of the object) is a mode of the

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[42] Ulrich Müller, Jeremy I. M. Carpendale, Leslie Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Piaget*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 385

temporalization of time. We want to insist on this last point, by arguing that after the object has been set at a distance and regarded as something different from the self, as something not-me, whether it is a possession or not, and by virtue of the object permanence, the child is able to distinguish that the object has its own duration in time, and a place in space, of course.

Furthermore, we want to insist on this feature of the object set at a distance, namely the fact that the child is able to tell that this particular object is situated in space and time, and only after this, can the child have abstract concepts of space and time, by virtue of what Melanie Klein would have called introjection. Alongside Martin Buber, we can affirm that in the beginning there is the relation[43] (with the surviving object), which is the ground for every possible relation to space and time that comes afterwards (in the child's mind). Only after the survival of the object, which has now gained permanence in space and time can the infant perceive spatial and temporal relations. In other words, the surviving object which has now become something permanent is introjected by the child, and by virtue of this process of introjection the spatial and temporal features of the permanent object are assimilated by the infant.

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BETWEEN PATHOLOGY AND WELL-BEHAVIOUR – A POSSIBLE FOUNDATION FOR TAME MATHEMATICS

Angelo-Vlad MOLDOVAN[*]

ABSTRACT. An in-depth examination of the foundations of mathematics reveals how its treatment is centered around the topic of "unique foundation vs. no need for a foundation" in a traditional setting. In this paper, I show that by applying Shelah's stability procedures to mathematics, we confine ourselves to a certain section that manages to escape the Gödel phenomenon and can be classified. We concentrate our attention on this mainly because of its tame nature. This result makes way for a new approach in foundations through model-theoretic methods. We then cover Penelope Maddy's "foundational virtues" and what it means for a theory to be foundational. Having explored what a tame foundation can amount to, we argue that it can fulfil some of Maddy's foundational qualities. In the last part, we will examine the consequences of this new paradigm – some philosophical in nature – on topics like philosophy of mathematical practice, the incompleteness theorems and others.

Keywords: foundations of mathematics, tame mathematics, clarity-based knowledge, philosophy of mathematical practice, incompleteness theorems

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, mathematicians and philosophers have tried to assemble a foundation for all mathematics by reducing it to a finite number of axioms. This attempt, however, proved unsuccessful and forced researchers to either argue that mathematics does not need a foundation or to suggest other possible foundational theories. In this paper I will propose a nonstandard strategy to develop a foundation only for the well-behaved parts of mathematics through a different approach called model-theoretic local foundations. In the first part we introduce Penelope Maddy's concept of foundational virtue based on which we establish what is the foundational role of a theory and elaborate the basics of the local foundation project, then we examine how our local foundation for tame mathematics fulfills Maddy's foundational virtues and its impact on incompleteness and epistemology.

Penelope Maddy's foundational virtues

Aware of the foundational debate, Penelope Maddy's strategy is to dissect the mainstream approach of finding an appropriate foundation for mathematics with the intention of pinning down the foundational character of a theory by analyzing its nature and listing the so-called *foundational virtues* that a certain theory must have in order to be a suitable foundation. The traditional framework for foundation is made possible by set theory which is a remarkable case because almost all mathematical objects "can be modeled as sets and all standard mathematical theorems [can be] proved from its axioms".[1] The fundamental question concerning set theory is: "what's the point of this exercise? What goal, properly thought of as 'foundational', is served by this 'embedding'?".[2] From Maddy's perspective,

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[1] Maddy, „What do we want a foundation to do?", p. 294
[2] Maddy, "Set-theoretic foundations", p. 290

"Set theory hopes to provide a foundation for classical mathematics, that is, to provide a dependable and perspicuous mathematical theory that is ample enough to include (surrogates for) all the objects of classical mathematics and strong enough to imply all the classical theorems about them. [...]Thus set theory aims to provide a single arena in which the objects of classical mathematics are all included, where they can be compared and contrasted and manipulated and studied side-by-side".[3]

The first step towards identifying the foundational virtues concerns the dangers of inconsistencies. There must be some kind of apparatus to assess how risky a particular new construction is. Despite being plagued by paradoxes since its inception, the development of the iterative conception and the constructible universe diminished the hazards significantly for set theory. The introduction of large cardinal axioms facilitated the measurement of the consistency strength of various theories. This ability to expose these risks is essential for mathematicians: we must know how much mathematics can a certain foundational theory capture. The first foundational role set theory provides is called Risk Assessment.[4] Now, let's just ask ourselves the following question: if each domain is described by its own list of axioms, then how can we transfer information from one domain to another? This common ground occurs when these distinct mathematical areas are embedded into a single set theory, where every theorem is interpreted as a theorem of the same system. The Von Neumann universe – or the V universe - represents this final court where all mathematics takes place, where we study all structures and objects, their relations, interpretations and methods from different areas of mathematics. Thus, the discipline has a "Generous Arena" where all mathematical entities are located and a "Shared Standard of Proof" where set-theoretic proofs are the standard way of proving in mathematics. The aforementioned embedding also has the purpose of converting mathematics into a list of formal sentences. This makes possible the application of meta-

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[3]   Maddy, *Second Philosophy - A Naturalistic Method*, p. 354
[4]   Maddy, "What do we want a foundation to do?", p. 298

mathematical tools to prove theorems about the system itself. Therefore, we have a "Meta-mathematical Corral" through which we trace the origin of all mathematical life forms to a list of straightforward axioms.[5] The last virtue is about establishing a foundation that encapsulates the fundamental nature of mathematics that guides mathematicians "toward the truly important concepts and structures, without getting bogged-down in irrelevant details".[6] Maddy proposes an "Essential Guidance" in the hope of highlighting two paramount features of foundation: revealing the essence of the founded mathematics and guiding the progress along its essential features.

Model-theoretic foundation

Understanding what caused the abandonment of the set-theoretic foundations in our project is crucial. Besides being riddled with issues and prone to lose meaning, the global framework Zermelo-Fraenkel + Axiom of Choice set theory gave us seems far away from what we envisioned for mathematics and it based philosophy of mathematics on the myth that we can reduce all mathematics to certain foundations. Furthermore, the complications brought about by undecidability, incompleteness and the unsolvability of different mathematical problems from the axioms of ZFC made this foundational theory extremely problematic. The solution is to leave the traditional structure, replace it with a more suitable candidate - model-theoretic local foundations – and apply it only to the well-behaved parts of mathematics. Set theory is unsuitable for philosophical work and as a foundation for mathematics:

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[5] Ibidem, p. 301
[6] Maddy, "Set-theoretic foundations", p. 305

"we view the practice-based philosophy of mathematics as a broad inquiry into and critical analysis of the conceptual foundations of actual mathematical work. [...]The foundationalist goal of justifying mathematics is a part of this study. But the study we envision cannot be carried out by interpreting the theory into an über theory such as ZFC; too much information is lost. The coding does not reflect the ethos of the particular subject area of mathematics. The intuition behind fundamental ideas such as homomorphism or manifold disappears when looking at a complicated definition of the notion in a language whose only symbol is ε. Tools must be developed for the analysis and comparison of distinct areas of mathematics in a way that maintains meaning; a simple truth preserving transformation into statements of set theory is inherently inadequate".[7]

Influenced by modern model theory, our project takes the model-theoretic procedures introduced by Saharon Shelah's classification theory and develops the mechanism behind the local-foundation enterprise. Firstly, formalization[8] of specific mathematical areas is made possible by model theory and could be used to investigate both mathematical and philosophical problems. Secondly, if we have local formalizations for each theory, then we could systematically compare them. The last point concerns how geometrical properties of tame theories play an important role in analyzing models and solving problems in mathematics.[9] Here we need to briefly describe Shelah's classification project. It was originally designed to help mathematicians capture the pathological behavior exhibited by first-order theories with numberless non-isomorphic models for every uncountable cardinality. Intuitively, if $I(T,k)^{[10]} = 2^k$ for all uncountable cardinals k, then the number of models is too big and our theory cannot be classified. The apparatus consists

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[7] Baldwin, "Model Theoretic Perspectives on the Philosophy of Mathematics", p. 2

[8] By *formalization* we mean choosing the right vocabulary, the right logic and the right axioms for our theory.

[9] Baldwin, "Model Theoretic Perspectives on the Philosophy of Mathematics", p. 3

[10] $I(k,T)$ = T's number of unique models of cardinality k.

in a system of invariants that assigns a dimension to each structure in order to point up its geometric characteristics.[11] This makes way for a distinction between classifiable (or stable) theories and nonclassifiable (or unstable) theories. But there is also another relevant distinction at play: the one between tame and wild theories. We can make sense of this distinction just in a mathematical setting. For example, first-order arithmetic – i.e. $T(\mathbb{N}, +, \cdot)$ – is a wild theory because it lacks an effective axiomatization[12] and admits a pairing function.[13] The ring of integers $(\mathbb{Z}, +, \cdot)$ and the field of rationals $(\mathbb{Q}, +, \cdot)$ are also wild structures[14] because we can define an isomorphic copy of $T(\mathbb{N}, +, \cdot)$ in them.[15] These privileges do not extend to the field of complex numbers, whose uncountable domain cannot be definably interpreted in $T(\mathbb{N}, +, \cdot)$[16] and whose theory is finitely axiomatizable.[17] The field of real numbers,[18] algebraically closed fields and algebraically closed valued fields are other examples of tame structures.[19] Here lies the essence of model theory as van den Dries himself describes it: "a lot of model theory is concerned with discovering and charting the 'tame' regions of mathematics, where wild phenomena like space filling curves and Gödel incompleteness are absent, or at least under control. As Hrushovski put it recently: Model Theory = Geography of Tame Mathematics".[20] We find this behaviour in theories that are characterized by properties like superstability**,** stability**,** o-minimality, simpleness and so on.[21] In John Baldwin's opinion, through non-gödelian

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[11] Morales, "Around logical perfection", p. 6

[12] van den Dries, "Classical model theory of fields", p. 38

[13] Baldwin, *Model Theory and the Philosophy of Mathematical Practice*, p. 10

[14] Buss, "The Prospects for Mathematical Logic in the Twenty-First Century", p. 17

[15] Roman, *Mathematical Logic: On Numbers, Sets, Structures, and Symmetry*, p. 149

[16] Ibidem, p. 161

[17] van den Dries, "Classical model theory of fields", p. 38

[18] Buss, "The Prospects for Mathematical Logic in the Twenty-First Century", p. 17

[19] Baldwin, *Model Theory and the Philosophy of Mathematical Practice*, p. 314

[20] van den Dries, "O-minimal Structures and Real Analytic Geometry", p. 106

[21] Baldwin, "The Reasonable Effectiveness of Model Theory in Mathematics"

formal systems a better comprehension of modern mathematics can be achieved.[22] Our plan was to escape the ZFC-based global framework which is known for its "specter of undecidability"[23] and for the many fundamental questions that are formally unsolvable from its axioms.[24] Through model-theoretic procedures, we managed to do this by isolating the well-behaved part of mathematics that is characterized by a lot of interesting properties and is not subjected to incompleteness.

Taming the foundational virtues

In this third section I am going to apply the foundational virtues proposed by Penelope Maddy to this well-behaved part of mathematics in order to find out if our project has foundational character. The first essential feature concerns the testing of the proposed foundational theories' levels of consistency via the hierarchy of large cardinals. Model theory cannot provide risk assessment and it leaves the justification of its tools to the traditional system.[25] As Vladimir Voevodsky himself said, "Set theory will remain the most important benchmark of consistency".[26] A common framework where all mathematical areas are embedded into a unique set-theoretic universe and all theorems are theorems of the same system is provided by a generous arena.[27] This Von Neumann universe – which seems to be a mathematician's *promised land* – is far away from what mathematicians dreamed of. The hope for such a place in the V universe was shattered when Cohen demonstrated that the continuum hypothesis cannot be proved from the

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[22] Baldwin, *Model Theory and Philosophy of Mathematical Practice*, p. 14

[23] Woodin, "Strong Axioms of Infinity and the Search for V", p. 526

[24] Woodin, "The Transfinite Universe", p. 449

[25] Baldwin, "Entanglement of Set Theory and Model Theory Eventual Behavior and Noise"

[26] Voevodsky, "Univalent foundations and set theory"

[27] Maddy, "What do we want a foundation to do?", 298

ZFC axioms.[28] In our model-theoretic worldview, the universe consists only of tame theories and MT "provides a different organization of mathematical topics which better preserves the methods and ethos of various areas than set theory does".[29] The following foundational feature concerns the "Shared Standard of what counts as a proof".[30] This means the axioms of ZFC are setting the standard of proof in mathematics and model theory relies, once again, on set theory.[31] The meta-mathematical corral involves "tracing the vast reaches of mathematics to a set of axioms so simple that they can then be studied formally with remarkable success".[32] Through classification theory we could provide a nicer meta-mathematical construction: if we have an Essential Guidance for general mathematical research, then we have one for set theory. Hence, it guides set-theoretic research towards new meta-mathematical territories where "various instances of model-theoretic problems engendering new animals in the corral".[33]

The last foundational virtue guides mathematicians towards the really fundamental concepts and structures without focusing on irrelevant details. Named Essential Guidance by Maddy, its main task is zeroing in on the following details: such a foundation aims to reveal the fundamental aspects on which mathematics is based without being distracted by other developments, and guide mathematical progress with the help of these aspects. Unfortunately, set theory cannot provide such a virtue.[34] Model-theoretic Essential Guidance, by contrast, establishes a formal framework suitable for every mathematical subject in order to clarify arguments in that area and reveals via stability how combinatorial principles forge connections

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[28] Woodin, "Strong Axioms of Infinity and the Search for V", p. 504

[29] Baldwin, "Entanglement of Set Theory and Model Theory Eventual Behavior and Noise"

[30] Maddy, "Set-theoretic foundations", p. 296

[31] Baldwin, "Entanglement of Set Theory and Model Theory Eventual Behavior and Noise"

[32] Maddy, "What do we want a foundation to do?", p. 301

[33] Ibidem, p. 378

[34] Maddy, "Set-theoretic foundations", p. 305

between different subjects.[35] In conclusion, model theory can provide a Generous Arena, a Meta-mathematical Corral and Essential Guidance for its tame foundations, but it cannot acquire the set-theoretic giants: Shared Standard of Proof and Risk Assessment. The model-theoretic tame foundation, despite being a much safer approach to foundations than the global framework, is in some ways still dependent on its set-theoretic host.

Main outcomes

First and foremost, the basic idea behind tameness is that a theory characterized by it does not have enough power to formulate a Gödel-sentence. Through model-theoretic tools we establish that many mathematical theories of general interest are tractable, but not foundational. Both ZFC and Peano arithmetic are equally unruly. Avoiding the gödelian phenomenon means formalizing topics locally by "axioms which catch the relevant data but avoid accidentally encoding arithmetic and, more generally, pairing functions".[36] Consequently, the tame areas of mathematics escape incompleteness and simultaneously could open the door to new approaches in philosophy of mathematics and new methods of testing and researching theories in mathematics. Our most philosophically charged subject concerns the relationship between epistemology and model theory in the context of the traditional reliability-based approach represented by the set-theoretical foundations. Model theory breaks away from this tradition and emphasizes instead the notion of clarification as a salient feature of knowledge. This undertaking concerns why philosophy of knowledge addresses exclusively problems of reliability and does not deal with the problem of the nature of clarity, especially when a close "look at achievements in mathematics shows that genuine mathematical accomplishment consists primarily in making

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[35] Baldwin, "The dividing line methodology: Model theory motivating set theory", p. 378

[36] Baldwin, *Model Theory and the Philosophy of Mathematical Practice*, p. 148

clear by using new concepts".[37] Reliability represents a necessary feature of knowledge, but our obsession with it has led to a poorly distorted theory of knowledge. In consequence, any provable mathematical sentence, with or without an intelligible proof, is now an item of knowledge and mathematical progress has been reduced to a hierarchy of theorems.[38] In Manders' own words, "proof by itself is insufficient for comprehension".[39] Concomitantly, he was aware of the universality of set-theoretic language - if everything is expressible in a language, nothing important follows. Model theory, on the other hand, formalizes "one object at a time in a language no richer than absolutely necessary to do so, carefully chosen to display the relevant 'underlying structure'".[40] The primacy of MT is motivated by our need "to be able to emphasize special features of a given mathematical area and its relationships to others, rather than how it fits into an absolutely general pattern".[41] In order to make mathematical problems more accessible, Manders develops a syntactic theory for information transfer between theories and wants to discover which structural properties of the new theory are simplifying the transferred information.[42] These relationships are called *reconceptualization relationships* because they render contents from the original setting comprehensible. Our model-theoretic formalization of all tame theories allows the transfer of information and the examination of all mathematical properties. The idea of transferring mathematical problems from a theory to a new one where they are more tractable is based on the successful applications of model-theoretic methods in other mathematical fields: the Ax-Grothendieck theorem which is hard to solve using the tools of algebraic geometry, but easy to solve in model theory and the Ax-Kochen theorem

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[37] Manders, "Logic and Conceptual Relationships in Mathematics", p. 193

[38] Manders, „Logic and Conceptual Relationships in Mathematics", p. 194

[39] Manders, „Logic and Conceptual Relationships in Mathematics", p. 199

[40] Ibidem, p. 200

[41] Ibidem, p. 193

[42] Ibidem, p. 203

from number theory, characterized by Bruno Poizat as "the first witness to the maturity of model theory, its first indisputable application outside the narrow scope of logic".[43] Regarding his must-have properties, he calls them *accessibility properties[44]* since they seem to elucidate why some statements become accessible to inquiry once transferred to theories characterized by them. Philosophically speaking, mathematical understanding is located outside of proof because in a reliability-based framework increasing the precision of proofs is achieved at the expense of understanding, this is why "fully formalized proofs are usually unintelligible. Whatever goes into clarity of mathematical ideas can be obscured by the way those ideas are represented in reliability theoretic mathematical foundations".[45] Since formalized proofs are settling questions of reliability and they are simultaneously inimical to understanding, then we cannot obtain mathematical understanding from proofs.[46] Our clarity-based theory of knowledge keeps in touch with mathematical practice, the epistemological goal of clarity is obtained by a change of framework and proofs are an expression of success, but not its essence.[47]

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[43] Poizat, *A Course in Model Theory*, p. 105-106
[44] Model completeness and quantifier elimination are some examples of accessible properties.
[45] Manders, "Logic and Conceptual Relationships in Mathematics", p. 202
[46] Macbeth, "Proof and Understanding in Mathematical Practice", p. 35
[47] Manders, "Logic and Conceptual Relationships in Mathematics, p. 195

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