META

Research in

Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy

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Topic:

Exploring the Undisclosed Meanings of Time, History, and

Existence: Paul Ricœur and Jan Patočka as

Philosophical Interlocutors

Guest Editors:

Ludger Hagedorn & Paul Marinescu

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Exploring the Undisclosed Meanings of Time, History, and Existence: Ricœur and Patočka as Philosophical Interlocutors: Introduction by the Editors

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This thematic issue of *Meta* is – as far as we know – the first and only extensive volume dedicated to the intellectual ties between Paul Ricœur and Jan Patočka. It examines the convergences and mutual inspirations to be found in the works of both thinkers. Jan Patočka (1907–1977) and Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) are both eminent representatives of the so-called "second generation" of phenomenology and crucial figures for the development of 20th century phenomenological and hermeneutical philosophy.

The main goal of this issue is twofold: on the one hand, it intends to highlight the potentials resulting from a synopsis of both thinkers and from the imbuing intersections of their thought, while on the other hand it depicts exemplary strategies of how to apply their phenomenological insights to

lived human existence in the vast fields of history, religion, and politics, as well as in regard to practical issues such as memory, culture, and ethics. Both goals are reflected in the issue's title which not only presents Patočka and Ricœur as "philosophical interlocutors", but takes their ideas as an inspiration to further "explore the undisclosed meanings of time, history, and existence." Published in 2017, this issue also commemorates the 110th birthday of Jan Patočka and the 40th anniversary of his death. This, however, is not meant to indicate any preference given to one thinker over the other – quite on the contrary: it is a highly remarkable feature of all the contributions selected for this volume that the authors deal with both philosophers quite evenly at a high level of scholarly expertise.

Background & Context

So far there has been relatively little research on the philosophical intersections between the works of Ricœur and Patočka. The few existing studies have approached the topic either by way of comparing a neatly delimited aspect of their thought or by pursuing a more biographical interest without adequately addressing the philosophical dimensions. This second aspect (the biographical interest) was also induced by Paul Ricœur himself who, shortly after Patočka's death, published an article in *Le Monde* entitled "Jan Patočka, le philosophe–résistant" (March 19th, 1977). Not only did it reveal to a broader readership the truth about the tragic death of the Czech philosopher, it also portrayed his destiny as the exemplary case of a philosopher whose life and moral convictions are inseparable from his thought. In this article, Ricœur did his best to highlight Patočka's emphasis of the moral life and his appeal to reason as a highly remarkable (and disturbing) legacy for Western philosophers whose efforts at that time were – as Ricœur puts it – mainly directed at getting rid of moralism and at deconstructing reason.

Yet Paul Ricœur undoubtedly also has the merit of being one of the very first leading international philosophers who significantly contributed to the recognition of Patočka's phenomenological thought. His "Préface" to the French translation of the *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*,

published in 1981, represented a fundamental text for Patočka's reception in the philosophical community at that time and continues to do so decades later. It is here where Patočka is rightfully situated within the phenomenological tradition, in the lineage of Husserl, Heidegger, and Arendt. It is here that a comparison between Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* and Patočka's last writings is drawn for the first time – a comparison that has been more intensely debated over the past years. And finally, it is here that Patočka's phenomenological heresies are clearly identified as original and profound manners of thinking the body-world relationship and the meaning of history.

These are not the only texts Ricœur devoted to the Czech philosopher. From 1981 to 2000, he continued to write introductions (such as the entry to the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*) and comprehensive studies of Patočka's work, from the difficult encounter of a theory that assumes the problematicity of all meaning with the spectre of nihilism ("Jan Patočka et le nihilisme"), to the intersection between two major issues that dominate Patočka's philosophy, namely the bodily presence in the world and the violence present in history ("Jan Patočka: de la philosophie du monde naturel à la philosophie de l'histoire"). Moreover, one may still add two other texts that, although not directly referring to Patočka, can be situated in the horizon of the relationship between the two philosophers. The first is the public lecture that Ricœur held within the series of *The Patočka Memorial Lectures at the Institute for Human Sciences* in Vienna, dedicated to "The Person: Its Ethical and Moral Structure" (1990), and the second is a presentation in Prague at an international congress for the abolition of torture, the title of which ("Fragile identité: respect de l'autre et identité culturelle", 2000) subtly reveals one of its most inspirational sources – Patočka.

However, the relationship between the two thinkers is by far not univocal: even though he did not write about Ricœur, Patočka intensely read his works and manifested a strong interest especially in the hermeneutics of the symbol and the hermeneutical critique of transcendental idealism. This can be seen clearly in his correspondence (as in the letters to Krzysztof

Michalski), but also in the spirit of some of the objections Patočka addressed to Husserl (e.g. in regards to consciousness as the site of pre-scientific life) and Heidegger, (the pre-eminence of Care or *Sorge* over other existential and unjustly ignored dimensions, such as action and corporeality).

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Exploring the Undisclosed Meanings of Time, History, and Existence: Paul Ricœur and Jan Patočka as Philosophical Interlocutors

Guest Editors:
Ludger Hagedorn & Paul Marinescu

I.
Heresy & Truthfulness:
Patočka and Ricœur in the Phenomenological Tradition

Oneself through Another:
Ricœur and Patočka on Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation

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Abstract

The paper offers a parallel exposition of Ricœur and Patočka in the narrow context of their respective reading of Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation. At the same time, it follows a broader goal, namely to confront a hermeneutics of the self with a phenomenology freed of subjectivism. Ricœur claims that phenomenology (and its method of intuition) presupposes interpretation. Under this assumption, even the paradox of intersubjectivity in the 5th CM can be restated as an interpretation of the self/other difference. Patočka in his interpretations of the 5th CM drew on his own observations regarding embodiment and a possible self-awareness of the bodily subject. He claims that the first form of explicit self-reflection is made possible through the other. It is against the background of this claim that he gives his original reading of the "appresentation" of the other as leading to the appresentation of myself in the other. At the end, the paper localizes the point in which Ricœur's hermeneutics of the self and Patočka's non-subjectivist phenomenology part ways: it is the possibility of the self to be oneself. While the emphasis in Ricœur and his hermeneutics of the multiplied forms of alterity is put on being oneself as another, in Patočka it is through another that being oneself (or coming to oneself) is possible.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Self, Intersubjectivity, Edmund Husserl, Jan Patočka, Paul Ricœur

It would be impossible to imagine the work of Jan Patočka and Paul Ricœur without their initial inspiration by Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. In the present paper, I trace

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this inspiration in one particular area: the problem of intersubjectivity. As the most influential phenomenological text on this topic is Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation, I will pay special attention to the fate of this text in the works of Patočka and Ricœur. This means that their reflections on intersubjectivity which are less connected with Husserl will mostly be omitted, even though they may constitute an original and important part of their thought. Husserl's other analyses of intersubjectivity will also be mostly ignored here.

Ricœur incorporates his reading of Husserl into a non-Husserlian framework, which is his own hermeneutics of the self. He suggests replacing the key concept of phenomenology – intuition – by the concept of interpretation. The self/other distinction is thus something to be understood and interpreted, not something simply given and grasped intuitively. Though this might seem to be the complete abandonment of Husserl's idea of phenomenology, Ricœur claims that this primacy of interpretation [*Auslegung*] over intuition is at work in some of the basic moves of the Fifth Meditation (5th CM).

Patočka fostered the original intention of Husserl to establish phenomenology as inquiry into the appearing of that which appears. In his own attempt to free phenomenology from subjectivism and the "metaphysics of consciousness," he abandons Husserl in many respects. Nevertheless, he retains and develops at least two aspects of Husserl's treatise: the understanding of the lived body as the crucial aspect of intersubjectivity and the idea of analogical transfer. Patočka, nevertheless, develops this idea as explaining not only the possibility of my experience of the other, but also of my knowledge of myself. The encounter of the other occasions the first form of an explicit self-reflection.

My parallel exposition of Ricœur and Patočka in this narrow context of their respective reading of the 5th CM has a broader goal, that is, a confrontation of the hermeneutics of the self with a phenomenology freed of subjectivism. As I will suggest at the end, if there is a remaining and unresolved problem with the very approach to the subject (or the self), it is in the hermeneutics of the self.

1. The Task of the Fifth Meditation

At the end of his Fifth Meditation, Husserl articulates a view that repeatedly aroused disagreement and was – together with certain assertions in *Ideas I* (Husserl 1976, for example, §§ 44 and 46) – generally taken to be the example of an extreme form of Husserlian subjectivism. Not only does Husserl say that every entity and every sense has to be analyzed in relation to the "ego", but he also claims that "all that exists" is constituted in this ego itself (Husserl 1960, 83) and that it is only "understandable as a 'product' of transcendental subjectivity" (ibid. 85; see also 84 and 91). Whereas the first claim affirms that there is a strict *correlation* between the ego and "all that exists", the second, stronger claim seems to affirm the *dependency* of "all that exists" on transcendental subjectivity. In connection with these claims, Husserl arrives at an understanding of phenomenology as a "self-explication of the ego" (Husserl 1960, § 41, 85; *Selbstauslegung des Ego*, Husserl 1950, § 41, 118).

Both Ricœur and Patočka believe that these claims forsake the original spirit of phenomenology by embracing an unacceptable idealism (Ricœur 1986), an "idealist metaphysics of consciousness" (Patočka 1970, 331). Nevertheless, both Ricœur and Patočka pay special attention to the analysis of intersubjectivity in the 5th CM as a way of showing the limits of the Husserlian position.

Husserl himself was well aware that his idea of an "egological science" may encounter objections precisely because of its radically subjective character. In his own articulation of the objection, phenomenology entails solipsism. It is precisely this objection which opens the last Cartesian meditation. Husserl's own phrasing of the objection (Husserl 1960, § 42, 89; see also Husserl 1959, 173–74) names with astounding clarity what is at stake – namely, the capacity of phenomenological *epoché* to institute a universal, philosophical reflection, and not only a mode of reflection that encapsulates the meditating "I" within himself or herself. A different, yet related way to put the objection is to doubt the capacity of phenomenology to account for the fact that we encounter and experience other people: "But what about other egos, who surely are not a mere intending and

intended *in me*... but, according to their sense, precisely *others*?" (ibid.)

Husserl emphasizes right from the start that the experience of others is a complex one: I experience the other (1) as an organism which really exists in the world; (2) as somebody who perceives the world, and myself, from his own perspective, that is, as a "subject for this world"; in addition (3), I perceive the world as accessible for anyone, as being "actually there for everyone" (ibid., 91). This "thereness-for-everyone" (92; "das Für-jedermann-da," Husserl 1950, 124) is implied in the very concept of objectivity. This is a deep conviction of Husserl: objectivity presupposes intersubjectivity. The same holds true for the concept of "cultural entity": cultural objects, such as books, tools, and traffic signs, are cultural objects only if other people exist who perceive and use them as such. It follows that the fate of phenomenology understood as a universal philosophy (which addresses the topics such as conditions of objective knowledge or the being of the world) depends on a well-grounded account of intersubjectivity. Nevertheless, in this idea of intersubjectivity, the other is not just another person I encounter in the world. It is another subject for whom the world exists, for whom objects have their meaning as natural objects, cultural objects, and so forth. The other is the other transcendental ego. Consequently, the intersubjectivity Husserl needs to account for is a "transcendental intersubjectivity" (Husserl 1960, 130).

There seems to be a contradiction between the universal (and intersubjective) pretention of phenomenology and the radically egologic character of phenomenological inquiry. Husserl believes he has done away with this semblance of contradiction precisely through his analysis of intersubjectivity in the 5th CM (Husserl 1960, 150). Before I deal with Ricœur's and Patočka's readings of the 5th CM, it is necessary to briefly recall the way Husserl proceeds. I will limit my exposition to four steps:

1. the reduction to the "sphere of ownness";
2. the *Leib / Körper* distinction;
3. the "analogizing apprehension" ("appresentation") of the other;

4. the particular mode of givenness of the other.

We can say, by way of anticipation, that while both Ricœur and Patočka highly appreciate steps 2 to 4, they have serious doubts concerning the possibility of step 1, the reduction to the sphere of my own.

(1) In the reduction to the "sphere of ownness" [*Eigenheitssphäre*], the meditating ego excludes all its intentional relations to others (to their bodily presence, to their behavior, and to the ways they aim at the ego itself), and it abstracts from all predicates that the world receives from others (from the world as existing objectively, that is, "for everyone," as comprising "cultural entities" and so forth). This reduction to the sphere of my own (of my own perceptions and movements) lays bare what Husserl calls the "mere nature" (Husserl 1960, 96; *bloße Natur*, Husserl 1950, 128) or "'nature' included in my ownness" (96; *eigenheitliche "Natur,"* 127; the quotation marks are Husserl's). This "mere nature" comprises only what is experienced by myself without any meaning that would depend on others.

(2) When describing what one finds in his or her experience reduced to one's own sphere, Husserl articulates an extremely influential observation concerning one's bodily experience. What one encounters in the reduced sphere is bodies. Yet one of them is special:

> Among the bodies [*Körper*] belonging to this "Nature" and included in my peculiar ownness, I then find my lived body [*Leib*] as uniquely singled out – namely as the only one of them that is not just a body but precisely a lived body [*nicht bloßer Körper…. sondern eben Leib*]: the sole Object … to which, in accordance with experience, I ascribe fields of sensation… the only Object "in" which I "rule and govern" immediately, governing particularly in each of its "organs" (ibid., 97, trans. modified; orig. 128).

The distinction between the (physical) body and the lived body does not mean that these characteristics (*Leib*, *Körper*) are mutually exclusive. My lived body is also a body. Yet other bodies are *not* lived bodies, at least not within the strict limits of the reduction to the sphere of my ownness. This is precisely one of the main results of this reduction: "If I reduce *other* men to what is included in my ownness, I get *bodies* included therein; if I reduce *myself* as a man, I get 'my animate

body' and 'my soul', or myself as a psychophysical unity" (ibid., 97, trans. modified).

(3) Nevertheless, in my everyday non-reduced experience, I always grasp other people not as mere physical bodies, but as others. How does this come about? It is at this point that the famous notion of appresentation intervenes. Husserl calls appresentation an operation by which the consciousness makes co-present something that is not immediately present. When perceiving an object, we understand the unseen rear side of it as being co-present with its front side. When encountering a body, we grasp it as another person precisely because we not only see a body, but we also make an ego co-present to it:

> Let us assume that another man enters our perceptual sphere. Primordially reduced, that signifies: In the perceptual sphere pertaining to my primordial Nature, a body is presented… Since in this Nature and this world, my lived body is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as a lived body…, the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as a lived body, must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my lived body* (ibid., 112; orig. 140).

This transfer of the meaning "lived body" from my own body to another one is based on the similarity between the two bodies [*Körper*], of "that body over there with my body" (ibid., 111/140). The other body is grasped as a lived body precisely because I make another ego co-present to that body. There is a similarity at the basis of the transfer (two bodies) and its outcome (my ego/the other ego). This is why Husserl speaks, regarding the outcome of the transfer, about assimilative apprehension [*verähnlichende Apperzeption*] (Husserl 1950, 141).

(4) The other is thus *given*: he or she is present in front of me, yet not fully or immediately perceived or grasped by me. When I see somebody smile, I perceive this behavior of another person "as having a physical side that indicates something psychic appresentatively." (Husserl 1960, 114) Yet I cannot grasp directly the enjoyment lived by the other: it is and always will be his or her own joy. This is the somewhat paradoxical and still understandable way that the other is given for Husserl: "The character of the existent other' [*der Charakter des seienden "Fremden"*] has its basis in this kind of verifiable

accessibility of what is not originally accessible." The experience of the other is thus an experience that can never be "fulfilled"; it is a "transcending experience" (ibid., 114), an experience that "never demands and never is open to fulfillment by presentation" (ibid., 119; *nie Erfüllung durch Präsentation fordert und zuläßt*, Husserl 1950, 148). It follows, for Husserl, that the experience of the other has its own kind of verification or falsification. The analysis of this particular mode of givenness of the other still falls within the domain of self-explication. Husserl concludes: "I… acquire by 'self-explication' (explication of what I find in myself) every transcendency." (ibid., 149)

2. Bibliographical Remarks on Relevant Texts by Ricœur and Patočka

From the early stages of their own philosophical work onward, both Ricœur and Patočka read and commented on Husserl's writings. Their first philosophical writings adopt Husserlian phenomenology as their own methodological basis. During the Second World War, while a prisoner of war, Ricœur worked on his commented translation of Husserl's *Ideas I* (published in 1950), and simultaneously on a phenomenological – Husserlian – description of the fundamental structures of the will (*Philosophie de la volonté I: Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, also published in 1950). In its closing chapters, Patočka's doctoral thesis (1931) on the concept of evidence culminates in a treatise on Husserl (now in Patočka 2008, 13–125), and his habilitation *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem* (1936; 2008, 127–261; English trans. Patočka 2016b) is deeply Husserlian.

There is, though, one point of divergence. Both Ricœur and Patočka accentuate the practical and affective dimension of the life of the subject. Yet, whereas Patočka believes this to be compatible with the idea of transcendental subjectivity, Ricœur does not. Though Patočka suggests that the "analogical appresentation" presupposes a more fundamental layer of "primordial, practical and affective tendencies" (Karfík 2008, 71–72; Patočka 2016b, III/6, esp. 80-81), he still assumes the role of an advocate when dealing with Husserl's account of intersubjectivity who is, for example, obliged to deal with the

objection of solipsism (Patočka 2016b, II/7; Patočka 2008, 308–21; see also Patočka 2014, 99–106). In contrast, Ricœur states his reservations. His analysis of voluntary acts (deciding, acting, executing a voluntary movement) focuses on the subject as an incarnate existence, not as a transcendental subjectivity. The latter idea makes it impossible, claims Ricœur, to address the problems of the embodiment and the experience of others. In his introduction to his *Philosophie de la volonté I*, Ricœur delivers a trenchant verdict on the 5th CM and Husserlian phenomenology as such: "it [Husserlian phenomenology] never takes my *existence* as a body really seriously, not even in the fifth *Cartesian Meditation*. My body is neither constituted in an objective sense, nor constitutive as a transcendental subject—it eludes this pair of opposites. It is the existing I." (Ricœur 1966, 16; orig. Ricœur 1950, 19)

Though in their later philosophy Patočka and Ricœur parted ways with Husserlian phenomenology because of its "subjectivism" and "idealism," they continued to write extensively about Husserl and about the 5th CM. In the remainder of this article, I will focus only on their later writings. In a different philosophical context – that of hermeneutical philosophy (Ricœur) or a-subjective phenomenology (Patočka) – the Husserlian analysis of alterity and its key paradox can be considered from a new perspective.

We have several Patočka texts on the 5th CM from the period 1965 to 1968 (Patočka 2009, 7–171; in English, Patočka 1996; Patočka 2009, 255–64; and Patočka 1992, in English, 1998, Lecture VIII). At this time, he became critical of Husserl in many respects: he no longer shared the idea of transcendental subjectivity, yet he still considered the project of phenomenology understood as unprejudiced analysis of the phenomenal field to be a philosophical endeavor of the utmost importance. In his own interpretations of the 5th CM, Patočka drew on his own observations regarding embodiment and a possible self-awareness of the bodily subject.

It is may be surprising to see Ricœur intensively and repeatedly addressing Husserl's account of alterity after his turn to hermeneutics, which is documented especially well in the 1969 volume *Le conflit des interprétations* (Ricœur 1969). In

1975, Ricœur published an article *Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* (1986; English tr. in Ricœur 2007, 25–52) in which he claims that phenomenology (and its method of intuition) presupposes interpretation. Under this assumption, even the paradox of intersubjectivity in the 5th CM can be restated as an interpretation of the self/other difference. In the subsequent years, Ricœur addressed intersubjectivity in the 5th CM in the decisive, concluding passages of two of his later works (Ricœur 1990 and 2004b).

The following exposition of Patočka's and Ricœur's writings on the 5th CM in their later philosophy will first address Ricœur's and Patočka's criticism of Husserl's idealism so that their diverging views on the way phenomenology can then be restated. Subsequently, I will focus on their resulting reading of the 5th CM.

3. Ricœur: Toward a Hermeneutical Reading of the Fifth Cartesian Meditation

In his article "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," Ricœur criticizes what he calls the "Husserlian idealism," which he summarizes as follows "The place of plenary intuition is subjectivity. All transcendence is doubtful; immanence alone is indubitable." (Ricœur 2007, 27) Ricœur describes the concept of intentionality, which he holds to be the key phenomenological discovery, in a way that explicitly draws on Sartre's 1939 article on intentionality (Sartre 1998). The same emphasis in Ricœur's own phrasing runs as follows: "That consciousness is outside of itself, that it is *toward meaning* before meaning is for it, and above all, before consciousness is *for itself*. Is this not what the central discovery of phenomenology implies?" (Ricœur 2007, 39) Consequently, it is necessary "to shift the axis of interpretation from the problem of subjectivity to that of the world" (ibid., 36), in order to preclude the subjectivist, the wrong, understanding of intentionality.

Moreover, when analyzing intentionality, "idealist" phenomenology committed another error: it made abundant use of the subject–object terminology. Without trying to denounce a certain legitimacy of this terminology, Ricœur claims that such a relation presupposes a larger context that it makes itself part

of: "the problematic of objectivity presupposes a prior relation of inclusion that encompasses the allegedly autonomous subject and the allegedly adverse object. This inclusive or encompassing relation is what I call belonging." (ibid., 30) To put it differently, the category of belonging – the Heideggerian "being-in-the-world" – is more fundamental than the subject–object relation. The "ontological priority of belonging" (ibid., 30) has, according to Ricœur, an important consequence: the primary epistemic act is not the intuition of that which is presently given, but an interpretation that situates it in a larger context, and explicates its implicit meaning, which "stands on the horizon," or – to use Heideggerian terms – understands something *as* something. Ricœur summarizes the opposition of intuition and interpretation by saying: "the key hypothesis of hermeneutic philosophy is that interpretation is an open process that no single vision can conclude." (ibid., 33)

The move from intuition to interpretation as the fundamental category of a philosophical reflection does not lead to the abandonment of phenomenology. Phenomenology, nevertheless, has to "conceive of its method as an *Auslegung*, an exegesis, an explication, an interpretation" (ibid., 43). According to Ricœur, certain of Husserl's descriptions of experience de facto proceed as its *Auslegung*. Ricœur himself endeavors to demonstrate the presence of the method of interpretation in *Logical Investigations* and *Cartesian Meditations*. If experience is always related to a horizon, it contains a "surplus of meaning" to be explicated. This holds true both for my perceptual experience of things and for my experience of others: analysis of experience proceeds as an unfolding (that is, explication, *Auslegung*) of the "surplus of meaning" which is present in my experience.

The paradoxical attempt to constitute the other "in me," while constituting it "as other" or, to put it differently, the paradox in which "another existence breaks away from my existence at the very moment when I posit the latter as unique," is present already on the level of the perceptual experience of things. Once I recognized that the thing is an entity that transcends my conscious life, the thing "tore itself away from my life as something other than me." (ibid., 49; see

also 1967, 116–17) The paradox becomes more acute once the problem of the other ego enters the scene.

According to Ricœur, the very first step of the 5th CM, the reduction to the sphere of ownness, is an example of *Auslegung* (Ricœur 2007, 51). The sphere of ownness is, on this reading, not simply "given" in "some sort of brute experience"; it is not a given "from which I could progress toward another given, which would be the other." It is a result of my interpretation of the experience (ibid., see also Ricœur 1967, 122),[1] arrived at by way of abstracting from all that is "foreign." The explication of that which is "my own" is thus inseparable from the explication of that which is "foreign." Or, as Ricœur put it, "[t]here is no better way to say that what is one's own and what is foreign are polarly constituted in the *same interpretation.*" (Ricœur 2007, 51; trans. modified according to Ricœur 1986, 80) Nevertheless, these two observations (namely, that the "sphere of ownness" is not a simple given and that its analysis is dependent on abstraction) do not constitute an objection against such an analysis. The reduction to the sphere of ownness uncovers, indeed, what it means to be an individual, embodied, and living being. In non-reduced experience, the body was tacitly presupposed. The reduction to the "sphere of ownness" is but a "coming to awareness" of the profound "wealth" (*richesse*) of this bodily life. It is important, however, that this coming to awareness is – according to this hermeneutical reading – an "endless" one (Ricœur 1967, 122; *interminable*, 2004a, 243).

How does the recourse to the *Auslegung* shed a new light on the key paradox of the 5th CM, that is, on the conflict between the description of the other as being "other than me" and the constitution of the other "in me"? The hermeneutical reading is capable of grasping the sense in which the other is "in me" without running into paradoxes. Ricœur resolutely refuses to read this "in me" as referring to my "sphere of consciousness." Instead, for him it refers to my existence. He makes his point clearly in the following passage, which is a commentary on the 5th CM (Husserl 1960, § 46, 102).

> The other is included not in my existence as given, but … as it [my existence] is characterized by an "open and infinite horizon", a

> potentiality of meaning which I cannot master in a glance. I can indeed say therefore, that the experience of others merely "develops" my own identical being, but what it develops was already more than myself since what I call here my own identical being is a potentiality of meaning which exceeds the gaze of reflection (Ricœur 2007, 52).

Concerning methodology, it is obvious that this hermeneutical reading of the 5th CM prioritizes certain Husserlian ideas, such as the claim that each experience has its horizon (see also Husserl 1985, § 8), while intentionally downplaying others, such as the Husserlian claim that there is a sphere of immanence which is – epistemologically – prior to transcendence. As we have seen, Ricœur believes that it is precisely by taking recourse to *Auslegung* (interpretation) that Husserl succeeded in settling the "latent conflict between two projects – a project of describing transcendence and a project of constituting in immanence." (Ricœur, 2007, 50) The other is neither "constructed" on the basis of some inner experiences nor simply "described" as being other than me. The first option would entail an idealism, according to which the other is dependent, in his or her being and meaning, on myself. The second option would run into some kind of empiricism, which is not true to experience, since it is unable to account for the combination of presentation and a-presentation that is implied in my experience of the other. The hermeneutic reading of the 5th CM avoids both the idealistic and empiricist analysis of the experience of the other. The "explication," as Ricœur states, is "held midway between a philosophy of construction and a philosophy of description" (1967, 140).[2]

Ricœur returns to his hermeneutical reading of the 5th CM at the end of his 1990 work *Soi-même comme un autre* (English trans. *Oneself as Another,* 1992). Let us briefly recall the "hermeneutics of the self" developed in this work. It constitutes the large framework of Ricœur's reading of the 5th CM. The hermeneutics of the self takes alterity or otherness to be constitutive of the self. Moreover, Ricœur explicitly emphasizes that there are different forms of alterity. "Polysemy of the Other" (1992, 21 and 318) explicitly precludes the reduction of otherness "to the otherness of another Person" (ibid., 317). Ricœur distinguishes three forms of alterity: the otherness of one's own body, the otherness of the foreign (of

another self), and the otherness of the conscience (*Gewissen*). He analyzes the first two types of otherness in his reading of the 5th CM.

The otherness of one's own body is, according to Ricœur, implied by the Husserlian *Leib/Körper* distinction, more precisely by the very concept of *Leib*, which he prefers to translate as flesh (*la chair*). I have already quoted the key passage according to which the lived body is "the sole Object… to which, in accordance with experience, I ascribe fields of sensation… the only Object 'in' which I 'rule and govern' immediately, governing particularly in each of its 'organs'." Ricœur suggests reading this passage as showing the lived body "as a paradigm of otherness" (ibid., 324). The primordial features which make this body mine – the sense of touch, for instance, – and which make it possible it to be the "organ of the will" (as Husserl says in 1989, § 38, 159) and the basis of my free movement, all these features are not objects of choice or desire: "I, as this man: this is the foremost otherness of the flesh with respect to all initiative. Otherness here signifies primordiality with respect to any *design*. Starting from here, I can *reign over*. … the 'I can' however, does not derive from the 'I want' but provides a ground for it" (Ricœur 1992, 324). Consequently, "selfhood" implies for Ricœur its own, proper otherness, which stands close to the Heideggerian concept of thrownness (ibid., 327). The passivity of my lived body with respect to all intentions and actions I can undertake represents the otherness in myself. My own body is the paradigm of this "primary otherness."[3] It is because there is an "irreducible distance of alterity at the very heart of our flesh" that the task of a hermeneutic mediation arises, as Richard Kearney suggests in his project of "carnal hermeneutics" (Kearney 2016, 38).

The *Leib/Körper* distinction brings Ricœur to another observation concerning otherness, that is, the otherness of other selves. The concept of the "body" (*Körper*), or, more precisely, the possibility to turn the lived body into *a* body, presupposes the otherness of the other person: "the otherness of others as foreign, other than me… seems to be… prior to the reduction to ownness. For my flesh appears as a body among bodies only to the extent that I am myself an other among all others." (Ricœur

1992, 326) Starting from here, Ricœur again – in a different way than in *Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* – shows the reduction to the sphere of ownness to presuppose the other. In *Oneself as Another*, Ricœur states this as follows: "all the arguments that are intended to 'constitute' the other in and on the basis of the sphere of ownness are circular… the other is presupposed." (ibid., 332) The body (*Körper*) which is the basis for the analogical transfer (as being a body among bodies) presupposes the other: "To say that my flesh is also a body, does this not imply that it appears in just this way to the eyes of others?" (ibid., 333)

For Ricœur, this "failure of the constitution of others" by no way disqualifies the Husserlian account of intersubjectivity. On the contrary, it provides an opportunity for what Ricœur holds to be the "authentic discovery" of the 5th CM, "namely the discovery of the paradoxical character of the other's mode of *givenness*." (ibid., 333) This mode of givenness is called "appresentation." In my experience, the other is not represented (on the basis of some sign or picture), but precisely given. And yet, he or she is not given immediately; the other's experiences can never be mine; "the gap can never be bridged between the presentation of my experience and the appresentation of your experience." (ibid., 333) The analogizing appresentation combines similarity (the other is also an ego, a subject of experiences) and dissymmetry (these experiences will never become mine). Now, for Ricœur, the final and most important result of the paradoxical operation called "analogical transfer" or "appresentation" is definitely *not* the constitution of otherness, but something else: "If it [the analogical transfer] does not create otherness, which is always presupposed, it confers upon it a specific meaning, namely the admission that the other is not condemned to remain a stranger but can become *my counterpart*, that is, someone who, *like* me, says 'I'." (ibid., 335)

Husserl claims in the 4th CM that transcendental subjectivity is a "subjectivity that constitutes the sense and being" of all imaginable entities (Husserl 1960, 84). Now, for Ricœur again, the real achievement of the "analogical transfer" has nothing to do with the *being* of the other; it is limited to the "sense of ego," which is being transferred from myself to the

other. This is a *transfer of similarity* (the uncovering of similarity in somebody who nevertheless stays other than me). It combines the (transferred) similarity and the (presupposed) alterity. It is strictly limited to the *sense* of his or her being other (and of my being myself): "Resemblance and dissymmetry have a bearing on the sense of ego and on that of alter ego. Kept within these limits, Husserl's discovery is ineffaceable." (Ricœur 1992, 334)

The last quotation also illustrates the philosophical position Ricœur adopts concerning the otherness of another person. He embraces neither the suggestion made by Lévinas, that the other precedes the self, nor the suggestion attributed to Husserl, that the self precedes the other. More precisely, he embraces both suggestions *simultaneously* by taking dissymmetry, be it in one direction or the other, to be an indispensable ingredient of our experience of the other. This can best be seen on the final pages of his 2004 book on recognition, *Parcours de la reconnaissance* [*The Course of Recognition*]. Ricœur suggests that the idea of mutual recognition (of myself by the other and vice versa) has its limitations. Both Lévinas and Husserl recall that there is, at the bottom of each mutuality, an original asymmetry:

> Admitting the threat that lies in forgetting this dissymmetry first calls attention to the irreplaceable character of each of the partners in the exchange. The one is not the other. We exchange gifts, but not places. The second benefit of this admission is that it protects mutuality against the pitfalls of a fusional union, whether in love, friendship, or fraternity on a communal or a cosmopolitan scale. A just distance is maintained at the heart of mutuality, a just distance that integrates respect into intimacy. (Ricœur 2005, 263)

Ricœur does indeed tend to see the movement of the self toward the other and the movement in the opposite direction as being "dialectically complementary." He understands the phenomenon of promise to corroborate this "intersecting dialectic of oneself and the other." Keeping a promise can be seen both as my own activity, and as a capacity accorded to me by the other: "If another were not counting on me, would I be capable of keeping my word, of maintaining myself?" (Ricœur 1992, 340)

One of the main assumptions of *Oneself as Another* consists in holding the self to have been constituted by different

forms of alterity: alterity of one's own body, of the other person, and of the conscience. The "as" in the title *Oneself as Another* is meant in a strong sense of implication: "oneself inasmuch as being other." (ibid., 3) Yet, if the self is always mediated and interwoven with different sorts of otherness, how can he or she be himself or herself? And what does it mean to be oneself? In his hermeneutics of the self, Ricœur gives no simple answer. Being oneself is related to a particular type of conviction or trust. Ricœur turns these categories into the concept of "attestation": it is an "attestation of self," an "attestation of being oneself acting and suffering." (ibid., 22-23) In *Oneself as Another*, the concept of self-attestation is related, for instance, to action (which may be attributed to myself or not) or to the life-unity grasped in the form of a story. With respect to action done by myself, I can *attest* that this is what I did. With respect to my own life-story, I can *attest* that this is who I am. But what is the relationship between self-attestation and the different forms of alterity (of my body, of the other person, of my conscience)? Even at the end of his work, Ricœur refrains from answering this question. He emphasizes, instead, "the need to maintain a certain equivocalness of the status of the Other on the strictly philosophical plane." (1992, 355)

4. Patočka: "Life's drive … to other beings makes us who we are"

In his writings on Husserl from the 1960s and 1970s, Patočka criticizes Husserl's phenomenology along similar lines as Ricœur does. For instance, in a 1970 article, Patočka praises Husserl for having established phenomenology as an investigation of the way things appear, as an inquiry into the sphere of phenomena. Nevertheless, the project of inquiry into the appearing as such [*das Erscheinen als solches*], which was Patočka's favorite expression at this time, was unfortunately conceived in a subjective manner. There is a "crude metaphysical theory" or an "idealist metaphysics of consciousness" in Husserl's heavy use of the transcendent/immanent distinction (Patočka 1970, 331; see also Patočka 1975, 81). In his criticism, Patočka finds Husserl's subjectivist stance wanting in at least in three respects:

Husserl (1) gives a false idea of the subject by overstating the capacities of explicit self-reflection of the consciousness, (2) offers an inconceivable account of the world by making it dependent on the consciousness of the subject(s), and (3) abandons the original ambition of phenomenology to analyze "appearing as such."

I will focus especially on the first point of the critique. In this regard, Patočka's own exposition of the "life" of the subject, of its capacity to know itself and to enter into an exchange with others, is more important than his critique of Husserl. Before discussing the Husserlian concept of intersubjectivity (and the 5th CM), Patočka deliberately analyzes the "self" as bodily dynamism (Patočka 1998, lectures I-VII; 1996, 137-51). His detailed reflections can be read as an alternative, non-Husserlian development of the idea of intentionality: every consciousness is directed to something. Patočka does not, however, refer to consciousness. Moreover, he reads "directedness" as referring not to an epistemological relation (as a form of knowledge of something), but to a movement of the living body, to "*our* being *toward things*" (1998, 42). The "centrifugal stream that governs our life" (ibid., 36) is oriented towards particular, practically relevant things that I can use, articles that can fulfill my bodily needs, and it plays out within horizons of the world I live in. Patočka uses the concept of horizon in the Husserlian sense (the "inner and outer horizon"), that is, as something that makes our experience not point-by-point orientation towards one object, but a continuous passage from one horizon of possibility to another one.

As we have seen, Patočka characterizes the directedness of the bodily self toward things and worldly possibilities as a movement. He takes this dynamic directedness to be the primordial structure of ourselves. He explicitly terms it "primordial dynamism," and describes it with regard to intention and its fulfillment (ibid., 40-41) or potentiality and actuality (ibid., 45), yet the vocabulary he uses is neither strictly Aristotelian (*dynamis-energeia*), nor strictly Husserlian, but more, so to speak, energetic or vitalistic: the self is repeatedly defined as a bodily thrust (in the Czech original, *elán*), energy, force (*síla*), or "the drive of primordial longing"

(ibid., 41; *původní prahnoucí elán*, 1992, 34). Patočka is willing to understand needs and instincts not as physiological mechanisms, but as components of this primordial dynamism (Patočka 1996, 145; see the remarkable note 22 on a possible phenomenology of instinct).

When developing his phenomenology of the bodily "primordial dynamism," Patočka distinguishes pre-reflective self-awareness from explicit reflective self-awareness. In our thrust, we are aimed at things and "turned away" from ourselves. This is what Patočka expresses by saying that the "I, too, is a horizon of a kind" (Patočka 1998, 39, 47, and 58) and he repeatedly quotes what Merleau-Ponty says about the "bodily space": "it is the darkness of the theater required for the clarity of the performance." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 103) Patočka shows that bodily dynamism (the self) can gradually become aware of itself in different ways: in pain and pleasure or in emotions I "find myself," but I am also given to myself in the sense of an objective body. In addition to this, Patočka makes an important claim that the first form of explicit self-reflection comes about through the other: the "I" defined as the incessant "projection into the world… returns to itself because it encounters a mirror…. a place from which further continuation is a return to itself. This place is other being – Thou" (Patočka 1998, 36). And, "This return to the self through the other is the *first type of explicit reflection.*" (ibid., 51) This might seem to be Sartrean (I see myself as seen by the other), yet Patočka's idea is actually different, as I will now try to demonstrate.

If I come to myself explicitly for the first time thanks to the other, it presupposes that I am able to refer to the other as another self. It is precisely here that the idea of the analogical transfer intervenes. Patočka obviously comes to the topic of analogical transfer with different presuppositions. That which is transferred from myself to the other is not the fact that he or she is also another ego (the "sense ego"), but that he or she is a "dynamism" similar to myself: "Other beings are the cores of analogous dynamism." (ibid. 55, 58) Consequently, the encounter between myself and the other is not a Sartrean objectification of the other by my gaze, but an analogizing transfer of the dynamic character of my own being. If I make

one step more, I can for the first time explicitly return to myself as to dynamism: "I see myself through the other not as an object only but also as a dynamism contained in the bodily presence." (ibid., 52) The idea of analogical transfer helps Patočka to reject the Sartrean concept of the intersubjective encounter understood by Sartre as an objectification of myself through the other or vice versa.

The commentary on the 5th CM (Patočka 1998, lecture VII, and 1996, chap. 8; see further Patočka's postface to CM 2009, 238-64) gives several interesting suggestions about how to make use of Husserl's analysis, and even how to defend it, without embracing the subjectivist idea of consciousness. Let us deal first with the presuppositions of the analogical transfer, and then with what Patočka takes to be its outcome.

Patočka clearly states that the analogical transfer presupposes the objective body: the "experience of the object-body, the experience of *oneself in the third person*"… "plays a primary role in the experience of the other." (1996, 152) This is indeed a restatement of the Husserlian passage in which Husserl says that the analogical transfer takes as its starting point the similarity of two objective bodies (*Körper*), of "that body over there with my body." (Husserl 1960, 111) In Patočka's rendering: "the objective appearance of my subjective body… associates itself with an analogous appearance of the second person" (Patočka 1996, 153). Now, this seems but a variant of the circularity objection we encountered in Ricœur: the other is not "constituted" but presupposed, since the very fact that I perceive my body as an object presupposes the other who sees me. Patočka occasionally admits that the other accomplishes the objectification of myself, but he still points out that the experience of my body as an object does not necessarily require the other. There is an experience of my body as an object which is still my own experience. In this experience, I am myself *"given to myself as an object, as a body that exists in alienation."* (ibid., 153-54) We experience "objective corporeity" (Patočka's term here) when our body is not an "organ" of our free movement or center of our activity, but something we have to care for (a hungry or thirsty body), or something we just sense without moving it. "A body which does not respond, which does not yield,

which is not skillful, ceases to be my body in one sense and becomes an object for me." (Patočka 1998, 44). Patočka separates the "body-as-mine: the body-subject, sensing, actively capable and realizing its possibilities," and the "body-object, body sensed and given in distantiating sensibility… body of the same order as all other objectivities." (Patočka 1996, 147) Patočka's term "body in the third person" refers precisely to this original experience, which is still *my* experience of *my body as an object*.

It is of the utmost importance for Patočka to defend the autonomous status of the subjective experience (my experience) of my own "objective corporeity." First of all, he thus makes clear his distance from Sartre (and from his "I cannot be an object for myself," Sartre 1992, 270): there is an experience of my own "objectivity" which is not merely a result of external objectification (Patočka 1998, 50-51). Secondly, it shows that my existence is not reducible to the immanent sphere of consciousness, that it is profoundly bodily and external. Thus, the idea of the "body in the third person," which Patočka attributes to Husserl, is an argument against a certain understanding of Husserl:

> This comment concerning the necessity of the objective body for the experience of the other as such… shows that it is not really possible to present all of the experience of the other on the level of the I as reduced to the subjective immanence. … Constitution of the other I, however, presupposes that I and the other I are not wholly isolated streams but share a common terrain. This common terrain cannot be the mere phenomenon of my body – that is still strictly private – but only the object-body… Thus the structure of intersubjectivity is another reason for rejecting the reduction towards purely subjective immanence (1996, 154, n. 33).

This quotation is important not only as part of a discussion between Patočka and Husserl, but also because it indicates the role attributed to the "objective body": it is a "common terrain" or "common ground," which makes possible the experience of the other. Since I can experience my own body from a distance, I can compare this body and the body of another person and see that they are similar. This secures the basis for analogical transfer (and precludes the objection of circularity).[4] Nevertheless, "objective corporality" is not the only common ground for analogical transfer. In his 1968 lecture

course, Patočka also includes here objects of daily use – a chair to sit on, a piece of chalk to write with. They are forms of "objectified subjectivity": "our subject is thus given in practical objects." Together they create a shared field, that is, they are a precondition for appresentation: "Appresentation presupposes a field common to more than one life stream." (Patočka 1998, 67) Things that I can use for something (like a piece of chalk or a chair) are open not only to "my thrust into objectivity," but also "to every similar [or, in the original, analogous] thrust." Consequently, I can "read off the meaning of that comportment and so also the meaning of other subjectivities." (ibid., 56)

To complete the picture, it is important to say that Patočka elaborates the idea of the "shared field" at an even more general level, which is the concept of the world. He comments on Alfred Schütz and his criticism of the 5th CM. He approvingly mentions one point of Schütz's critique: the common world cannot be based on the communication of many subjects. The opposite is more likely to be true: communication presupposes the commonality of the world (Patočka 2009, 260, see also 1996, 169). To this, Patočka adds: "The impossibility of deriving the common world from communication is linked to the impossibility of the meaningful structure 'the world' in the most elementary sense to be constituted at all, that is, to be explained as a complicated structure built upon more elementary operations." (Patočka 2009, 261) It is not the commonality of the world, but "only" the objectivity that is dependent on intersubjective interaction. In this respect, Patočka is still Husserlian, and also becomes more and more interested in the *historicity* of the intersubjectively established objectivity (which is an important topic of Husserl's late thought).

We have, I believe, established that analogical transfer *is possible* (thanks to the shared field of "objective corporeity" and "practical objects") and that *that which gets transferred* is "primordial dynamism": we understand the other as a being that – in a way similar to our own – 'throws' himself or herself toward things and other people. Now, what exactly is the result of this transfer? Husserl clearly states that the apperception of the other *makes the other similar* to myself [*verähnlichende Apperzeption*] (Husserl 1950, 141). Patočka claims, nevertheless,

that it implies a particular kind of dissimilarity: a dissimilarity of myself. In order to show this, he follows Husserl in comparing an appresentation to a memory (Husserl 1950, § 52): both in my remembrance of something past, and in my understanding of the other body as another self, I make present something that is not present. Nevertheless, I remember a past that I myself lived, whereas in the appresentation, I am never the other, appresented self. From this, Patočka concludes that appresentation – unlike memory – can substantially enrich one's self:

> In recollection as a phenomenon, there is nothing that could somehow enrich myself, that is, nothing that has not already been lived by me. Appresentation is in this respect something completely different. It opens the other to us not only in those respects that would correspond to myself, not only in his or her expressions that are, so to speak, a projection of my own experience into the other. I do not experience the other only as a projection of my experiences. Appresentation is capable of bringing me thoroughly new content. Living together is not just reproduction; it is possible enrichment. (Patočka 1992, 49; this passage is missing in the English trans. 1998, 65)

It follows for Patočka that appresentation contains a "component that shows me as incomplete, as needing, as receiving, as lacking." (1998, 65; see Karfík 2008, 79) The *alterity* of the other consists not only in the fact that his or her experience is not mine, as it is in Husserl, but also in the fact that certain possibilities of my existence can come only from him or her, that without which I would be "incomplete" or "lacking" something. Consequently, the encounter of the other – which is analyzed as the encounter of the "analogous dynamism," as its appresentation – contributes to my being myself. This is of course a very broad expression, which can and should be spelled out in more detail concerning the type of possibilities I can receive, the way I receive them, and so forth. At the most general level, Patočka is nevertheless clear about one thing: what I receive from the other is the first explicit, reflective knowledge of myself. Patočka summarizes this as follows:

> Life's drive into the world, to things and to other beings, makes us what we are. The most important drive is that toward other beings; reflection is a continuation of the drive toward the world at the point of encountering another being within our presence. The primordial act of reflection is probably something that belongs to the realm of

appresentation. I appresent myself as I am in the other life. (Patočka, 1998, 65)

This brings us back to the initial claim that introduces and crowns Patočka's reading of the 5th CM: the first form of explicit self-reflection is made possible through the other. Consequently, appresentation is not – or not only – the appresentation of the other self (grasped as co-present to the body which is present in front of me), but of myself: I grasp myself as being co-present to the other life. Not only do I appresent the other, but I also appresent myself in the other.

It is important to note that in many of his late reflections on intersubjectivity, Patočka prefers a non-Husserlian philosophical background, and sometimes explicitly rejects Husserlian ideas about the alter-ego (MS note C23, 2016a, 727). Patočka's emphasis on the existential dimension of intersubjectivity and on the concrete "other" finds its expression in a focus on such phenomena as the loving acceptance of a child by its parents or the devotion to the other (2009, 374; see also 2002, 43).[5] Among his expositions of the three movements of human existence, the article "The 'Natural' World and Phenomenology" merits special attention, since all three movements are described in their intersubjective meaning (2009, see 223-25). This, however, would be a topic for another paper.

5. Conclusion

Neither Patočka nor Ricœur believe that Husserl achieved what he had set out to do, that is, to show that it is the intersubjective community of transcendental egos that "constitutes the *one identical world*" (Husserl 1960, § 49, 107). Their objections are in some respects parallel, as I have sought to demonstrate in this article: they both reject Husserlian "egology," and offer several reasons why the reduction to the sphere of ownness is impossible. Thus the most important achievement of 5th CM, according to Patočka and Ricœur, consists in something *different* from the refutation of the objection of solipsism. As others are always present in the life of myself (and vice versa), this objection cannot reasonably be raised at all, not even by the philosophizing, meditating self.[6]

The question to be asked is different: what does it mean for our concept of the self (or the "subject"), if we understand it as already "captured" in the world (Patočka 1975) and pervaded with different forms of alterity. It is here that both Patočka and Ricœur locate one of the main achievements of the "analogical transfer": it moderates the potentially alien character of the world of inter-personal exchanges; even more, it rules out the possibility that human beings are condemned to live in an absolute and unsurmountable otherness (Ricœur 1992, 335; Patočka 1996, 159-160). Both Ricœur and Patočka underscore the *asymmetry* in the self-other relationship as a fundamental observation that cannot be abandoned in favor of a Hegelian approach to intersubjectivity. The result of the 5th CM, on these readings, is in a sense more modest than in Husserl's understanding. Its basic message is precisely intersubjective (or anthropological): the "plurality of first persons" (Patočka 1996, 155) is to be understood in its "mutual implication" (Patočka 2009, 261) or dialectical complementarity (Ricœur 1992, 340). Intersubjectivity is not supposed to perform the task of constituting "the *one identical world*", but to structure the concrete ways that human beings live in the pre-given world.

By way of a concluding observation, I would emphasize one essential point of difference between Ricœur and Patočka. I believe that hermeneutics of the self and phenomenology freed from subjectivism part ways in one important respect – namely, the concept of the self.

Hermeneutics of the self multiplies the forms of alterity which are inherent to the self, in order to show that if there is a self, it is *as* an other (in the strong sense of "inasmuch as being other"). But what is the self then? And how can somebody be himself or herself? Ricœur suggests that self-attestation is the only appropriate mode of self-certainty there can be, if we want to escape the choice between the Cartesian ego and the Nietzschean destruction of the self. Yet the self, in Ricœur, remains exposed to many sorts of alterity and left with not much support on the intersubjective plane (the Aristotelian and Hegelian passages in his "small ethics" of *Oneself as Another* notwithstanding). I suggest reading Ricœur's emphasis on self-attestation as the symptom of the fact that his own analysis

leaves the self suspended in a kind of void. Consequently, the last resort is an individual act (maybe even a voluntarist act) of self-attestation. Intersubjective relations are not conceived as that through which the self could "come to itself," but as something to which it is exposed in order to respond – in a somewhat lonesome way – by saying "here I stand."

Patočka, in his phenomenology of the living dynamism, offers a different description of the intersubjective relation. If it is true that the first form of explicit self-reflection (self-awareness) is made possible through the other, it is in the intersubjective encounter that I can come to myself (and so can the other). It may reasonably be objected that there might be forms of encounter that prevent me from coming to myself, and there are certainly different ways of coming to oneself. Consequently, the claim is too unspecific, as are some other concepts of his analysis (especially the concept of movement, the concept of "thrust" etc.). Yet it should not be overlooked that the basic groundwork sketched out by Patočka offers an approach to intersubjectivity and selfhood different from the one developed by Ricœur. Alluding to the title of the book by Ricœur, we can say that the self can be oneself not *as* another ("*comme* un autre"), but *through* another ("*à travers* un autre").

NOTES

[1] Ricœur quotes a "hermeneutical" passage of the 5th CM (§ 46): "My own too is discovered by explication and gets its original sense by virtue thereof" (Husserl 1960, 102; "Auch mein Eigenes erschliest sich durch Explikation und hat aus ihrer Leistung seinen ursprünglichen Sinn," Husserl 1950, 132).

[2] I believe, that it is, consequently, wrong to claim, as Zahavi does, that Ricœur embraces a "creationist" reading of Husserl. See Zahavi 2001, 214, n. 32.

[3] Ricœur develops this, for example, by reference to the oriented spatiality of the self in Husserl's unpublished manuscripts (1992, 325). It may be objected that Ricœur made a categorical mistake by confusing passivity and alterity. If we refer to the distinction between sense of agency and sense of ownership, it is possible to say that with regard to some involuntary, passive experience, we have the second without the first (Zahavi, 2005, 144).

[4] In his 1967 commentary to the 5th CM, Ricœur also reads Husserl close to this line (Ricœur 1967, 122-123). It is only in his later writings from 1975 (Ricœur 2007) and 1990 (Ricœur 1990) that he raises the circularity charge.

[5] In his writings on Patočka, Ricœur highly praises Patočka for having surpassed the "idealism of the *Cartesian Meditations*" (1991a, 77) and for

conceiving the relations to the other in terms of the movement of existence. In this context, Ricœur finds Patočka's emphasis on devotion to the other particularly inspiring (1991b, 88).

[6] For Patočka, this very question creates part of a misleading, Cartesian way to the *epoché*, to which he preferred different ways (for example, the one of "interest")**.**

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La fidélité des hérétiques. Ricœur et Patočka sur les *Méditations cartésiennes* de Husserl

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Abstract

The Fidelity of Heretics: Ricœur and Patočka on Husserl's *Cartesians Meditations*

In spite of making explicit their phenomenological influence, Ricœur and Patočka have been very critical with husserlian idealism. In that sense, although we can consider those remarks as "heresies" to Husserl's thought, they evidence their belonging to the phenomenological tradition. Following this trail, in this article, we ask the question: How to characterize the phenomenological conceptions of Ricœur and Patočka despite of their common critique of husserlian idealism? To answer this question, we analyze their respective commentaries to Husserl's *Cartesians Meditations*. In this "sacred" book of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity, both of them find a reconstruction of phenomenological idealism in the concept of methodical solipsism, and they find the introduction of the concept of *alter ego* in the last Meditation as an insufficient escape. We will show that the meaning of their critiques has to be understood in relation with their own trajectories where they converge in defending a particular conception of phenomenology. This conception implies a critical reflection of its own task and the renewal of its autonomous care for the phenomena.

Keywords: Solipsism, idealism, Cartesian Meditations, hermeneutic phenomenology, a-subjective phenomenology

Toujours soucieux de défendre leur appartenance à la tradition phénoménologique, Ricœur et Patočka ont pourtant été très critiques à l'égard de l'idéalisme transcendantal d'Edmund Husserl. Aussi ont-ils maintenu une fidélité

paradoxale à cet héritage, si l'on considère leurs propres réflexions phénoménologiques comme des « hérésies », au moins au regard de la philosophie de Husserl. Pour certains interprètes (Stevens 1990, Garrido 2007, Stanciu 2013), ces « hérésies » ont contribué à dépasser les problèmes de l'idéalisme de la phénoménologie husserlienne. D'aucuns (Richir 1988, Sivak 1990, Zahavi 2008) y voient la manifestation d'une phénoménologie renouvelée, d'autres (Petříček 2011, Mensch 2011, Michel 2013) une nouvelle philosophie en prise avec les débats contemporains. Pour d'autres encore, ils sont passés à côté du « vrai sens » de la phénoménologie et se sont éloignés de son foyer fondateur, pour laisser place à l'herméneutique (Reeder 2010, Romano 2010) ou à l'ontologie (Rodrigo 2011, Barbaras 2011). Aussi peut-on se demander (tel sera le fil conducteur de notre contribution dans cet article) : dans quelle mesure peut-on dire que Ricœur et Patočka ont construit une phénoménologie *en propr*e, malgré leur critique de l'idéalisme husserlien ?

Afin de répondre à cette question, nous étudierons leur interprétation respective[1] des *Méditations cartésiennes* d'Edmund Husserl. Ce livre est paradigmatique de la pensée phénoménologie pour autant que Husserl conjugue de manière forte la méthode transcendantale avec l'intersubjectivité. Nonobstant leurs différences, Ricœur et Patočka adressent l'une de leurs critiques contre l'idéalisme du solipsisme phénoménologique des *Méditations cartésiennes*. Ainsi les analyses d'autrui, dans la « Cinquième méditation cartésienne », leur apparaissent-elles comme une rupture insuffisante avec l'idéalisme. Mettre en lumière les tâches primordiales de la phénoménologie à travers la convergence de ces critiques, tel sera l'un des objectifs cardinaux de notre article. Ainsi leurs critiques peuvent être tenues comme la condition de possibilité d'une « fidélité créatrice » à l'héritage phénoménologique. Malgré la partition de la présente contribution en deux parties (l'une portant sur la commune « hérésie » des deux philosophes, l'autre se concentrant sur leur « fidélités créatrices »), chacune d'elle ne cesse d'appeler et d'impliquer l'autre.

1. Les hérétiques

Nombre d'interprètes actuels de Husserl (Bernet 1994, Rizo Patron 1996, Reeder 2010) considèrent que les *Méditations cartésiennes* ont été très mal comprises à l'endroit de la formulation du solipsisme méthodique assimilé à un avatar du solipsisme cartésien. Par ailleurs, grâce à la publication de l'œuvre inédite d'Husserl, de nouveaux interprètes affirment, comme on le verra, que le concept d'intersubjectivité a été présent dès la découverte de la méthode phénoménologique. Raison pour laquelle il n'y a pas eu de rupture entre la phénoménologie transcendantale et la phénoménologie de l'intersubjectivité. Nous interrogerons ici la question de la pertinence des critiques que Ricœur et Patočka adressent aux intentions husserliennes dans les *Méditations*.

Dans la première période de sa pensée, au cours de laquelle il développe une eidétique de la volonté (1950), Paul Ricœur consacre une grande partie de ses réflexions à la phénoménologie husserlienne[2] dans le but de proposer une conception propre de la méthode phénoménologique. C'est dans la période, qui va de la traduction des *Idées* I jusqu'à l'évolution d'une méthode phénoménologique eidétique, qu'il écrit deux textes consacrés à l'étude des *Méditations cartésiennes* de Husserl (Ricœur 1954, 1986b).

Pour sa part, Patočka rencontre Husserl pour la première fois à Paris, justement à l'occasion des conférences qui constitueront l'ossature des textes rassemblés dans les *Méditations*. Enchanté par ces conférences, il rejoindra ultérieurement Husserl à Freiburg (Chvatík, Abrams 2011, ix). En 1968, il rédige la postface de la traduction tchèque des *Méditations* (Patočka 1968), période au cours de laquelle il enseigne comme professeur à l'Université Charles de Prague. Même s'il n'a guère pu publier de livres à cette époque, à cause du contexte social-historique que l'on sait, « il médita la phénoménologie toute sa vie, en particulier celle de Husserl » (Richir 1988, 8). Ces contributions, tant celles de Ricœur que celles de Patočka, sont encore très peu considérées dans la bibliographie exégétique contemporaine des *Méditations*, les spécialistes estimant que les deux philosophes n'ont pas correctement appréhendé les idées du fondateur de la

phénoménologie. Selon notre hypothèse, cette interprétation concerne surtout les critiques que Ricœur et Patočka ont adressées à l'idéalisme husserlien. Une telle lecture passe à côté de l'apport substantiel de leurs commentaires des *Méditations*. Cet apport en revanche fera l'objet de notre plus grande attention.

Débutons donc par la présentation de leurs critiques de l'idéalisme husserlien. Le cadre restreint d'un seul article consacré en même temps à ces deux penseurs nous contraint à limiter certains développements. En contrepartie, les conditions qui rendent possible la mise en « convergence » des positions des deux philosophes occuperont une place essentielle dans notre démonstration. Le premier point critique concerne le statut de la subjectivité dans l'architecture de l'idéalisme husserlien. Ainsi, selon Ricœur, l'idéalisme dogmatique apparaît « si les choses se constituent non seulement "pour" moi, mais "en" moi, et "à partir de" moi » (Ricœur 1986b, 158). En ce sens, l'idéalisme ne reconnaît pas de place à l'autre dans son altérité : il n'est que « l'explicitation de la monade "moi" » (Ricœur 1986b, 158). Selon Patočka, ce qui est en jeu, c'est l'attitude subjectiviste de la position prise par Husserl dans ce livre (Patočka 1988, 174). Cette attitude est propre à une théorie insuffisante de l'*ego* qui ne rend pas compte du fait que la conscience n'est pas transparente à elle-même : « qu'elle représente un type de certitude empirique dont on ne peut s'assurer [que] par l'auto-objectivation réflexive » (Patočka 1988, 178). C'est de cette manière que Ricœur comprend aussi le « solipsisme transcendantal », lequel est la plus grande difficulté des *Méditations* : « Si la phénoménologie est "élucidation de moi-même" – "égologie" –, comment autrui justifiera-t-il jamais son altérité ? Comment, par suite, pourra se constituer l'objectivité véritable d'un monde commun à nous tous ? » (Ricœur 1954, 109). C'est ici que la « Cinquième méditation », selon Ricœur, répond à ces objections (Ricœur 1954, 109), mais de manière insuffisante.

En plus, Ricœur dresse clairement un parallèle entre Husserl et Descartes qui renforce le pôle idéaliste : la place du problème d'autrui pour le premier et la véracité divine pour ce dernier « en tant qu'elle fonde toute vérité et toute réalité qui

dépasse la simple réflexion du sujet sur lui-même » (Ricœur 1986b, 197). Là où Descartes transcende le Cogito par Dieu (en tant que fondement supérieur de l'objectivité), Husserl le dépasse par l'*alter ego* (Ricœur 1954, 77). Un deuxième aspect de cette convergence apparaît ainsi dans le rapport idéaliste de Husserl à Descartes. Force également de reconnaître avec Patočka que, tant pour Husserl que pour Descartes, la conscience de soi est expression de la clarté pure et du règne de l'évidence (Patočka 1988, 178).

Cela débouche sur un autre problème, le problème du *sens du monde*, dès lors que celui-ci n'a pas la même originalité que la subjectivité, sinon dérivé de celle-ci (Patočka 1988, 183) à partir de la communication. La critique de Patočka met l'accent sur « le monde » et non sur « autrui » comme chez Ricœur. Ainsi, pour Patočka, le problème qui pose l'intersubjectivité concerne le fait qu'elle apparaît comme productrice du sens du monde commun aux subjectivités. Au contraire, selon Patočka, l'intersubjectivité est certes un présupposé fondamental, mais un présupposé non suffisant : « On ne trouve pas chez Husserl le pas suivant vers une saisie de l'univers des choses tel qu'il nous est donné dans son originalité, non pas comme présence originaire des *étants*, mais comme manière historique dont l'essence des choses s'ouvre dans son mouvement infini » (Patočka 1988, 185). Par conséquent, selon les deux philosophes, Husserl traite l'intersubjectivité de manière insuffisante.

Il y a ainsi trois aspects convergents dans leur critique de Husserl. En premier lieu, l'importance exacerbée de l'ego dans la constitution du sens donne au solipsisme méthodique un caractère d'idéalisme ou de subjectivisme. En deuxième lieu, la dérivation du monde par une phénoménologie d'autrui, qui dérive en même temps de l'égologie, s'abîme dans un solipsisme dans le sens cartésien du terme. En troisième lieu, la place d'autrui adossée au subjectivisme ne permet pas de frayer la voie à une théorie forte de l'intersubjectivité.

À l'appui du texte même de Husserl, on peut affirmer que Ricœur et Patočka sont des hérétiques à la parole du maître. En effet, déjà dans le paragraphe 13 des *Méditations*, le

risque que l'égologie se transforme en solipsisme est clairement évoqué :

> Certes, il est conforme au sens de la réduction transcendantale de ne pouvoir poser au début aucun autre être que le moi et ce qui lui est inhérent, et cela avec un halo de déterminations possibles, mais non encore effectuées. La dite science commencera donc à coup sûr comme égologie pure et, de ce fait, elle semble nous condamner au solipsisme, du moins transcendantal. Nous ne voyons nullement encore comment, dans l'attitude de la réduction, d'autres « moi » pourraient être posés – non comme simples phénomènes du « monde », mais comme d'autres « moi » transcendantaux, – donc comment de tels « moi » pourraient devenir à leur tour sujets qualifiés d'une égologie phénoménologique. (Husserl 1992, 60-61)

Un tel solipsisme auquel nous conduit la méthode phénoménologique n'est donc qu'un solipsisme apparent, dont l'explicitation est seulement méthodologique selon Husserl. Le vrai but de l'analyse égologique est l'intersubjectivité transcendantale, laquelle doit être nécessairement explicitée pour accomplir les besoins d'une philosophie transcendantale :

> Novices en philosophie, des doutes de ce genre ne doivent pas nous effrayer. La réduction au moi transcendantal n'a peut-être que l'apparence d'un solipsisme ; le développement systématique et conséquent de l'analyse égologique nous conduira peut-être bien au contraire, à une phénoménologie de l'intersubjectivité transcendantale, et par là même – à une philosophie transcendantale en général. Nous verrons, en effet qu'un solipsisme transcendantal n'est qu'un échelon inférieur de la philosophie. Il faut le développer en tant que tel pour des raisons méthodiques, notamment pour poser d'une manière convenable les problèmes de l'intersubjectivité transcendantale. Ceux-ci appartiennent, en effet, à un ordre supérieur. (Husserl 1992, 61)

Husserl nous donne ici deux formes de compréhension de l'égologie : l'une seulement d'apparence, celle du solipsisme ; l'autre, systématique et conséquente, qui débouche vers l'intersubjectivité transcendantale. Identifier donc l'égologie comme une forme de solipsisme pose à l'évidence un problème majeur de la compréhension de la phénoménologie husserlienne. Cette mésinterprétation, selon Bernet, est la conséquence de la confusion entre deux aspects différents de la subjectivité transcendantale, lesquels apparaissent, par nécessité, avec la pratique de la réduction transcendantale. D'un côté, le « moi phénoménologique » ou « spectateur

phénoménologique » est celui qui exécute la réduction et
« contemple » la constitution sans y participer. D'un autre côté,
le « moi transcendantal », en tant que sujet qui exécute la
constitution et apparaît, également, avec la réduction lorsque le
« moi phénoménologique » se tourne vers lui-même. En d'autres
termes, l'évidence de l'aspect intersubjectif comme partie
prenante de la constitution se révèle à un sujet spectateur qui
contemple de manière « neutre », en première personne : un
« moi phénoménologique » qui opère la réduction – solipsiste au
sens méthodique – révèle les éléments de transcendance à soi-
même. Ainsi, selon Bernet,

> S'il est vrai qu'il y a un solipsisme du sujet transcendantal chez
> Husserl, il ne concerne donc pas, comme une lecture trop hâtive des
> *Méditations cartésiennes* pourrait le faire croire, le sujet qui constitue
> le monde. La constitution du monde est une œuvre communautaire et
> l'être du monde constitué est un être-intersubjectif-commun. Mais cet
> être-commun du monde constitué ne se révèle que dans l'évidence
> solitaire d'un sujet transcendantal qui par le truchement du
> spectateur phénoménologique a pris conscience de son apport
> individuel à l'œuvre communautaire de la constitution du monde.
> (Bernet 1994, 17)

De cette manière, à la différence de ce qui a été compris par
Ricœur et Patočka, pour lesquels la place de l'altérité était la
« Cinquième méditation », nous sommes convaincus, avec
Bernet, que la figure de l'altérité au cœur de la subjectivité
transcendantale est présente d'une manière subtile dans la
totalité des *Méditations cartésiennes* :

> Si c'est le spectateur phénoménologique qui fait apparaître la
> conscience constituante, cela implique aussi que le rapport à soi de la
> conscience constituante est marqué par une hétérogénéité ou une
> altérité. Car le rapport à soi de cette conscience constituante se fait
> par le truchement d'un soi différent, à savoir le spectateur qui est un
> autre soi du même sujet transcendantal. (Bernet 1994, 15)[3]

Toutefois, ladite altérité ne doit pas être comprise au sens d'une
duplicité effective dans le sujet transcendantal. Par contre,
nous la comprenons au sens d'une « identité dans la
différence » :

> La divergence qui règne entre les intérêts et les œuvres de la
> conscience transcendantale et ceux du spectateur phénoménologisant
> ne doit pas nous faire oublier cependant que cette opposition surgit au
> sein d'un seul et même sujet transcendantal. Il s'ensuit que « l'unité de

> la vie transcendantale » est « identité dans la différence, opposition au sein de ce qui reste égal à soi-même ». (Bernet 1994, 17-18)

C'est le sens plus cohérent, à notre avis, de la réplique à l'adresse du solipsisme que Husserl désigne lui-même au début de la « Cinquième méditation ». À cet égard, nous sommes d'accord avec Rosemary Rizo Patrón, qui soutient que « Husserl must have heard this objection during his time, since it was frequently adopted by his critics in order to make his point clear » (Rizo Patron 1996, 223). Selon Husserl, cette objection affecte la prétention même de la phénoménologie transcendantale à être une philosophie transcendantale :

> Lorsque moi, le moi méditant, je me réduis par l'ἐποχή phénoménologique à mon *ego* transcendantal absolu, ne suis-je pas devenu par là même *solus ipse* et ne le resté-je pas tant que, sous l'indice « phénoménologie », j'effectue une explicitation de moi-même ? Une phénoménologie, qui prétendrait résoudre des problèmes touchant l'être objectif et se donnerait pour une philosophie, ne serait-elle pas à stigmatiser comme solipsisme transcendantal ? […] Mais qu'en est-il alors d'autres ego ? Ils ne sont pourtant pas de simples représentations et des objets représentés en moi, des unités synthétiques d'un processus de vérification se déroulant « en moi », mais justement des « autres ». (Husserl 1992, 148-149)

Husserl montre pourtant que cette objection n'est qu'un contresens par rapport à une compréhension consistante de la phénoménologie transcendantale telle qu'elle est exposée dans les quatre premières *Méditations*. En réponse à cette objection, il explicite le sens du concept d'*alter ego*, lequel a été toujours présent, quoique de manière implicite, dans la constitution. Telle est la tâche de l'explicitation phénoménologique (Husserl 1992, 149).

Ladite tâche a un sens important pour notre compréhension de l'intention de Husserl. Il nous semble qu'il n'a pas en effet la volonté de faire une opposition entre les quatre premières *Méditations* et la « Cinquième méditation ». S'il y a une opposition, elle correspond, à notre avis, à celle entre une interprétation « inconsistante » et une interprétation « consistante » des quatre premières *Méditations*. En suivant l'interprétation consistante, l'*alter ego* est présent, bien qu'implicite, en attente d'être dévoilé :

> Il nous faut bien nous rendre compte du sens de l'intentionnalité explicite et implicite, où, sur le fond de notre moi transcendantal, s'affirme et se manifeste l'*alter ego*. Il nous faut voir comment, dans quelles intentionnalités, dans quelles synthèses, dans quelles « motivations », le sens de l'*alter ego* se forme en moi et, sous les diverses catégories [*Titel*] d'une expérience concordante d'autrui s'affirme et se justifie comme « existant » et même, à sa manière, comme m'étant présent « lui-même ». (Husserl 1992, 50)

Par conséquent, les critiques de Ricœur et Patočka à l'adresse du solipsisme méthodique des *Méditations cartésiennes* apparaissent dissonantes si l'on se fie aux intentions husserliennes. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils peuvent être caractérisés – en un sens – comme des phénoménologues *hérétiques*. Toutefois, il n'en reste pas moins une forme de « fidélité » à l'égard de Husserl, malgré l'importance de ces critiques. Une fidélité que, en dépit de ces hérésies, les deux ont maintenu à l'endroit de l'héritage phénoménologique. Une fidélité, au-delà ces dissonances, qui leur permet d'enrichir encore le dynamisme du mouvement fondateur husserlien. Car les conceptions de ces deux « hérétiques », comme nous allons essayer de le montrer dans la deuxième partie de cet article, aboutissent, sur certains plans, à une transformation heuristique de la phénoménologie. D'une part, la distance prise à l'égard de l'idéalisme s'inscrit dans le projet d'une critique de la phénoménologie par la phénoménologie. C'est le sens que l'on donnera à leurs critiques du solipsisme dans les *Méditations*. D'autre part, en cherchant à s'éloigner de l'idéalisme husserlien, leurs propositions débouchent sur de nouveaux champs fertiles pour féconder autrement la tradition phénoménologique.

2. La fidélité

Comment qualifier les projets phénoménologiques de Ricœur et Patočka ? Les deux convergent, indéniablement, dans le sens d'une phénoménologie ouverte ; ce qui implique un travail interminable de réflexion autonome de la phénoménologie sur elle-même. Ainsi, pour Ricœur, la phénoménologie est un mouvement qui se comprend uniquement à partir de la pratique de la méthode, laquelle risque toujours de se transformer en idéalisme. Pour Jan

Patočka, le propos de la phénoménologie « est d'abord percer à jour les préjuges qui règnent aussi bien dans la vie journalière que dans la connaissance naturelle, d'élaborer, au cours de cette œuvre d'élucidation, sa propre méthode, ainsi qu'un questionnement original, et de fonder un domaine du savoir entièrement autonome » (Patočka 1988, 263). Nous montrerons ainsi dans quel sens les deux philosophes ont pris une attitude hérétique face à l'idéalisme husserlien, une telle attitude étant une condition de possibilité pour maintenir une fidélité à l'égard d'une phénoménologie autonome, réflexive et ouverte aux phénomènes.

Ricœur distingue, dans sa conception de la phénoménologie, l'interprétation idéaliste de la méthode et la pratique phénoménologique elle-même. Cette distinction permet à la pratique de la méthode d'être comprise au sein de la critique de l'idéalisme. Ainsi, dans la reconstruction d'une interprétation qui renforce le risque d'un possible idéalisme, se dévoile une conviction herméneutique forte : la monstration de la chose dans l'explicitation de ses apparitions paradoxales donne un caractère fragile et ouvert à son interprétation. C'est en ce sens que Ricœur « interprète » la phénoménologie husserlienne des *Méditations* :

> La phénoménologie husserlienne apparaît alors collée à un combat entre deux tendances : comme description dévouée aux choses telles qu'elles se donnent, la phénoménologie est un effort généreux pour respecter la diversité de l'apparaître et pour restituer à chacun de ses modes (perçu, désiré, voulu, aimé, haï, jugé, etc.) sa charge d'étrangeté et, si je peux dire, d'altérité ; en tant qu'interprétation idéaliste de son propre comportement descriptif, la phénoménologie husserlienne est un effort radical pour réduire tout altérité à la vie monadique de l'ego, à l'ipséité. De là vient le malaise que l'œuvre de Husserl entretient chez ses lecteurs ; d'un côté, nul penseur contemporain n'a plus que lui contribué à nous rendre la présence pleine et inattendue de la réalité ; nul pourtant n'a poussé aussi loin que lui la réduction de la présence de l'autre à mon présent, la dissolution de l'altérité dans l'explication de soi (Ricœur 1954, 108-109)

Face aux mêmes réflexions husserliennes telles qu'elles sont développées dans les *Méditations*, Ricœur se livre à une interprétation paradoxale de « la pratique de la méthode » par rapport à son « interprétation idéaliste ». La pratique de la

méthode se comprend ainsi « comme description dévouée aux choses telles qu'elles se donnent », y compris la place d'autrui dans la constitution. Comme « interprétation idéaliste », la phénoménologie de Husserl réduit l'altérité à l'explication de soi. On peut ici identifier une radicalisation de l'intention méthodique de Husserl qui lui a fait opposer ce que nous avons appelé, dans la première partie de cet article, « une interprétation consistante » de la phénoménologie à une « interprétation inconsistante ». L'interprétation de Ricœur est donc complètement en accord avec les intentions husserliennes dans les *Méditations*.

Du côté de la description de l'idéalisme, Rosemary Rizo Patrón conteste, cependant, l'identification de la réduction de l'altérité à l'explication de soi dans la « Cinquième méditation cartésienne » (que Ricœur et Patočka rapprochent du cartésianisme). En premier lieu, selon elle, « [...] beyond the strict problem of the I, intersubjectivity itself is not a notion only introduced by the late Husserl (in the *Cartesian Meditations* or in his *Formal and transcendental Logic*). Its relevance is noticeable since 1905, *viz.*, since the introduction of the phenomenological reduction » (Rizo Patron 1996, 70)[4]. En second lieu, le parallélisme entre Husserl et Descartes n'est pas ici appropriée si l'on considère que Descartes opère une dérivation du monde en termes inférentiels ou déductifs, sachant que : « The real phenomenological question has [...] nothing to do with a supposed exit – via inference – from the (inmanent) cogito to the transcendent world and the *alter egos* which would thus be recovered after their loss during the reduction » (Rizo Patron 1996, 70)[5].

Pour Ricœur, toutefois, Descartes ne donne pas prise à une réflexion de nature inférentielle. Tout au contraire, il représente le mode de penser propre à la tradition de la philosophie réflexive à travers laquelle Ricœur n'a cessé de plaider son appartenance : « j'aimerais caractériser la tradition philosophique dont je me réclame par trois traits : elle est dans la ligne d'une philosophie *réflexive* ; elle demeure dans la mouvance de la *phénoménologie* husserlienne ; elle veut être une variante *herméneutique* de cette phénoménologie » (Ricœur 1986c, 25). Une philosophie réflexive, selon Ricœur, loin d'être

fondée sur le déductivisme, se préoccupe notamment de « la possibilité de la compréhension de soi comme le sujet des opérations de connaissance, de volition, d'estimation, etc. » (Ricœur 1986c, 26). Mais dans ce mouvement de réflexion il doit y avoir, par nécessité, un moment de dispersion ou d'oubli du sujet (Ricœur 1986c, 26). Ce mouvement empêche ainsi la subjectivité de se renfermer sur elle-même : l'idée d'infini et la preuve ontologique de l'existence de Dieu trouvent alors leur pleine justification dans l'argument cartésien.

De même, pour Ricœur, la phénoménologie constitue la réalisation, au sens de continuation et de dépassement, de la philosophie réflexive. C'est pour cette raison que Ricœur valorise l'intentionnalité comprise comme « le primat de la conscience de quelque chose sur la conscience de soi » (Ricœur 1986c, 26). Si la phénoménologie d'autrui est le dépassement encore insuffisant du solipsisme ou de l'idéalisme, l'herméneutique en représente l'accomplissement cohérent du projet phénoménologique. De cette manière, l'herméneutique, en se greffant sur la phénoménologie, entretient « à son égard le même double rapport que celui que la phénoménologie entretient avec son idéal cartésien » (Ricœur 1986c, 27). À cet égard, dans son texte programmatique et réflexif s'agissant du passage de la phénoménologie à l'herméneutique « en venant de Husserl » (Ricœur 1986c, 39-73), Ricœur reprend la tâche de l'explicitation phénoménologique telle qu'elle est décrite dans la « Cinquième méditation ». En tant que « l'explicitation » est toujours une explicitation de l'expérience, Husserl n'y voit que la coïncidence de l'intuition et de l'explicitation « sans en tirer toutes les conséquences » (Ricœur 1986c, 72). Reste ici tout le poids de l'idéalisme dont la critique laisse alors une place en creux à la fameuse « greffe » de l'herméneutique :

> Toute la phénoménologie est une explicitation dans l'évidence et une évidence de l'explicitation. Une évidence qui s'explicite, une explicitation qui déploie une évidence ; telle est l'expérience phénoménologique. C'est en ce sens que la phénoménologie ne peut s'effectuer que comme herméneutique. (Ricœur 1986c, 72)

En ce sens, l'herméneutique n'est que la radicalisation de la « pratique de la méthode » dont le sens apparaît avec la critique de l'idéalisme. L'interprétation de Ricœur du thème de

l'intersubjectivité au sein de « la pratique de la méthode » (et non de l'idéalisme) a, en outre, une importante essentielle pour refonder sa philosophie sociale[6] et sa théorie des institutions[7]. On en trouve une bonne illustration dans l'article « Hegel et Husserl sur l'intersubjectivité » (Ricœur 1986c, 281-302). Pour conjurer le risque de réification de l'esprit objectif hégélien, Ricœur mobilise la phénoménologie d'autrui explicitée par Husserl dans la « Cinquième méditation » (en la couplant avec la sociologie wébérienne). Ricœur salue en Husserl « […] son refus sans compromission d'hypostasier les entités collectives et dans sa volonté tenace de les réduire toujours à un réseau d'interactions » (Ricœur 1986c, 301).

Alors que Ricœur, dans sa lecture des *Méditations*, met l'accent sur la réflexion du sujet, son dépassement par autrui (dans sa philosophie de l'intersubjectivité) et les « personnages de haut rang » (dans sa philosophie des institutions), Patočka, de son côté, met la focale sur la notion de « monde ». A ce propos, son texte sur les *Méditations* (Patočka 1988, 182) « reprend, au fil de la critique, la nécessité de concevoir la priorité originaire du monde en tant que lieu d'un véritable sens commun phénoménologique » (Richir 1988, 11). Comme nous l'avons déjà dit, à la différence de Husserl qui fonde, dans ses descriptions sur l'intersubjectivité, le monde naturel sur la communication, Patočka fait en quelque sorte le trajet inverse : « le monde en ce sens ne sera pas le *résultat*, mais bien le présupposé de la communication » (Patočka 1988, 182). Patočka cherche ainsi à dépasser l'idée selon laquelle la sphère de l'appartenance serait une sphère *absolument privée* : « Au contraire, elle aura un sens relatif, le sens d'un aspect personnel dans le cadre de la totalité déjà anticipée du monde » (Patočka 1988, 182).

Cette critique témoigne du caractère singulier de son cheminement phénoménologique. Ainsi, l'hypothèse du caractère originaire du monde fait tenir ensemble, dans une même ligne directrice, sa première œuvre philosophique, sa thèse doctorale, *Le monde naturel comme problème philosophique*, jusqu'à son œuvre de maturité, *Essais hérétiques sur la philosophie de l'histoire*. Dans la préface, rédigée par Ricœur pour l'édition française, la critique de l'idéalisme

husserlien, présent dans les *Méditations*, permet de faire un rapprochement heuristique entre Patočka et Heidegger : « À ce dernier il emprunte la conviction que c'est l'homme tout entier, dans ses capacités de connaissance, d'action et de sentiments, qui est ouvert au monde » (Ricœur 1999, 11). C'est justement, dans ce livre, que Patočka témoigne de son intention hérétique face aux traditions auxquelles il appartient – y compris la phénoménologie. Dans ce contexte, il fait allusion aux problèmes idéalistes de la phénoménologie d'autrui. Selon lui, au cours de l'élaboration de la phénoménologie, par laquelle la conscience transcendantale s'élargit en « intersubjectivité transcendantale » (en inversant le rapport entre la conscience et le monde objectif), « la tournure subjective donnée précisément aux problèmes du monde naturel conduit ainsi à un idéalisme radical » (Patočka 1999, 26). En contrepoint de cet idéalisme, il laisse place à une phénoménologie a-subjective d'inspiration heideggérienne qui apparaît lorsque, « laissant de côté l'orientation unilatérale sur les objets » propre de l'idéalisme (Patočka 1999, 30), se fait jour « le domaine que Heidegger nomme l'ouvert » (Patočka 1999, 30).

Cependant, la phénoménologie a-subjective de Patočka ne peut pas être assimilée à une variante de la philosophie heideggérienne. En effet, selon Patočka, le concept d'*être* ne réfère pas de manière immédiate à son apparaître (Patočka1971, in Garrido 2007, 132), ce qui est le caractère premier de l'*être* pour Heidegger. Et bien que Barbaras interprète la spécificité de la phénoménologie de Patočka comme une ontologie proche à Heidegger – par rapport au caractère originaire du monde, il défend, en même temps, l'idée qu'elle (la phénoménologie de Patočka) doit être comprise comme une hénologie : le monde apparaît comme une « unité » (*hen*), et non comme un être métaphysique, dans la diversité de ses *étants* (Barbaras 2011, 100-101). Ainsi, il est clair que Patočka reste entièrement fidèle de ce point de vue à la phénoménologie dans son souci pour l'apparaître des phénomènes, tout en critiquant les limites des phénoménologies idéalistes. En ce sens, nous sommes d'accord avec Petříček, sur le caractère « hérétique » de la phénoménologie de Patočka :

> this mode of heretical thinking implies a reflection on the very limits of the thought to be understood, and it implies such an extension of these limits which can transform even the basic definitions and fundamental concepts while preserving the core of the thought in question. (Petříček 2011, 6).

Ricœur et Patočka convergent ainsi avec le propos de la *Sixième Méditation cartésienne* d'Eugen Fink en proposant, soit la voie de l'herméneutique, soit la voie de l'a-subjectivisme, en tant que réflexion *phénoménologique* sur la phénoménologie elle-même. Avec la même intention, quoiqu'en termes différents, dans la *Sixième Méditation cartésienne*, Fink identifie en effet une « théorie transcendantale de la méthode » dans le sens d'une « phénoménologie de la phénoménologie » : « la science phénoménologique de l'activité phénoménologisante » (Fink 1994, 64). De la même manière, mais sans la développer, dans ses *Méditations cartésiennes*, Husserl lui-même a souligné la nécessité d'une « critique même de l'expérience transcendantale, et consécutivement celle de la connaissance transcendantale en général » (Husserl 1992, 25) :

> Toute théorie de la connaissance transcendantale phénoménologique, en tant que *critique de la connaissance, se ramène à la critique de la connaissance transcendantale phénoménologique*, et tout d'abord de l'expérience transcendantale elle-même ; en vertu du retour essentiel de la phénoménologie sur elle-même, cette critique exige, elle aussi, une critique. (Husserl 1992, 25)[8]

La réflexion critique de la phénoménologie sur elle-même présuppose la tâche de la recherche d'un sens propre susceptible d'être exprimé à travers les voix hétérogènes de ses représentants. En ce sens, Zahavi a raison d'affirmer le point suivant :

> Although phenomenology has in many ways developed as a heterogeneous movement with many branches; although, as Ricœur famously put it, the history of phenomenology is the history of Husserlian heresies (Ricœur 1987: 9); and although it would be an exaggeration to claim that phenomenology is a philosophical system with a clearly delineated body of doctrines, one should not overlook the overarching concerns and common themes that have united and continue to unite its proponents. (Zahavi 2008, 661)

Ces thèmes et ces préoccupations communs doivent être compris comme une invitation au renouvellement de la

phénoménologie. C'est ainsi que Romano affirme, à propos de l'unité de la phénoménologie, qu'elle « est toujours une question philosophique à part entière, et nullement une question historique » (Romano 2010, 30-31). Un tel dynamisme philosophique peut être assuré, selon Zahavi, par rapport à une double stratégie : d'une part, poursuivre le travail d'analyse de sa propre tradition ; d'autre part, chercher les convergences communes avec les autres traditions philosophiques (Zahavi 2008, 684). On rencontre, justement, cette double stratégie à l'œuvre dans les conceptions phénoménologiques développées par Ricœur et Patočka. En outre, dès lors qu'ils ont ouvert de nouvelles perspectives phénoménologiques, c'est ainsi leur concéder que « in their attempt to radicalize phenomenology they have disclosed new types and structures of manifestation, and thereby made decisive contributions to the development of phenomenology » (Zahavi, 2008, 684).

Ainsi considéré, Ricœur et Patočka ont construit une phénoménologie comme telle *à partir et au sein de* leur critique de l'idéalisme, même si celle-ci n'est pas toujours fidèle avec l'exégèse orthodoxe des textes de Husserl. Tout d'abord, ils ne critiquent que la phénoménologie centrée sur la subjectivité, et non la phénoménologie tout court. En deuxième lieu, ils comprennent la pratique de la phénoménologie en y incluant une réflexion critique, de la même manière avec laquelle Fink parle de la critique transcendantale de la méthode dans la *Sixième méditation cartésienne*. Enfin, ils ont exploré de nouveaux champs de descriptions phénoménologiques à la lumière des débats philosophiques contemporains. Une mise en dialogue de Ricœur et Patočka nous montre ainsi comment on peut rester fidèle à la phénoménologie tout en renouvelant cette tradition. Ainsi pourrait-on parler d'*hérésies créatrices ou productrices* à propos à propos de Ricœur et Patočka[9].

NOTES

[1] Nous nous concentrerons notamment sur les textes que chacun à consacré aux *Méditations cartésiennes* : un article de Ricœur, « Étude sur les *Méditations Cartésiennes* de Husserl » (1954), publié dans la *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* et repris dans *À l' école de la phénoménologie* (Ricœur 1986a, 161-195); un texte de Ricœur, « Edmund Husserl – La

cinquième méditation cartésienne » (Ricœur 1986b), publié pour la première fois dans *À l' école de la phénoménologie* (Ricœur 1986a, 197-225); et la postface faite par Patočka à la traduction tchèque des *Méditations* (Patočka 1968), publié sous le titre « La phénoménologie, la philosophie phénoménologique et les *Méditations cartésiennes* de Husserl » (1968), publié aussi dans *Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie ?* (Patočka 1988, 149-188). Cependant, nous ferons constamment référence aux autres textes de Ricœur et de Patočka pour mettre l'accent plutôt sur leurs critiques de l'idéalisme husserlien que sur le sens de leur fidélité commune à la phénoménologie.

[2] Voir notamment les articles publiés dans les années 60 recueillis dans *À l'école de la phénoménologie* (Ricœur 1986a).

[3] Il affirme aussi : « Le fait que la conscience constituante soit entièrement tournée vers le monde et s'enlise en lui empêche qu'elle puisse s'apparaître à elle-même d'une manière immédiate. Le spectateur phénoménologique, par contre, est bien doué d'une conscience de soi immédiate, même si celle-ci demeure implicite aussi longtemps qu'il continue à observer la constitution du monde au lieu de se regarder lui-même. Il y a donc une différence importante entre le spectateur phénoménologique et la conscience constituante en ce sens que pour le premier la reconnaissance de soi s'accomplit dans l'homogénéité, alors que pour la seconde la reconnaissance de soi implique une forme d'altérité ou d'hétérogénéité au sein de la vie transcendantale. La conscience constituante a besoin du spectateur pour s'apparaître à elle-même, mais le spectateur phénoménologique ne dépend que de lui-même pour réfléchir sur son activité de spectateur. Au niveau du spectateur, c'est-à-dire au niveau de l'activité déployée par le phénoménologue, il y a itérabilité de la réflexion dans l'homogénéité. Il y a en revanche hétérogénéité entre la conscience qui constitue le monde et le spectateur phénoménologique qui porte cette conscience constituante à la reconnaissance d'elle-même ». (Bernet 1994, 15-16)

[4] L'argument de Rizo Patron est le suivant : « Husserl introduces the reduction in order to attain a privileged field of experience, where the mystery of the relation between objectivity ("the reign of the in itself") and subjectivity ("the domain for us") is to be solved. The reduction enables us to overcome naturalism. But Husserl warns us that this is not enough. *Functioning subjectivity* (*fungierende Subjektivität*) cannot be *isolated* if what we wish to found is precisely *objectivity*, namely, that which is valid at all times and for all people. The basis of objectivity can only be intersubjectivity. In this sense, in his 1910-1911 lectures on the *Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology*, Husserl attempts an extension of "the reduction to intersubjectivity" (Bernet, Kern & Marbach, *o.c.*, p. 144 [*D*], p. 261 [*I*]). In order to do so, he initiates his analysis of the intentional consciousness of *the other* (context in which the theory of the pure I also emerges), adopting Theodor Lipps term "empathy" (*Einfühlung*). However, he reinterprets the content of this term both in the context of his own theory of the *Vergegenwärtigungen*, on the one hand, and of bodily subjects in a "natural concept of the world" (*natürlichen Weltbegriff*), on the other, where W. Diltheys strong influence starts to be felt ». (Rizo Patron 1996, 70)

[5] Voir aussi, « it is well known that Descartes infers the existence of God in the third meditation in order to revoke the hypothesis of the evil genius and recover the world overthrown by de methodical doubt ». (Rizo Patron 1996, 70, n. 2)

[6] Selon Johann Michel (2015, 19), Ricœur s'aligne dans l'héritage des travaux de la socio-phénoménologie d'Alfred Schütz.

[7] Sur le fondement phénoménologique de la philosophie des institutions chez Ricœur, voir les réflexions de Johann Michel (2015, 75 ss.).

[8] Sur la critique de l'expérience transcendantale, voir aussi, Husserl, (2002, le chapitre no. 7 : « Apodiktische Kritik der Transzendentalen Erfahrungsgewissheiten », 115 ss.), et Rizo Patrón (2015, 111 ss.).

[9] En ce sens, Sivak (1990, 512) parle de « l'interprétation, fidèle et créative, de Husserl par Patocka », qui, selon lui, « complète celles de Fink, Landsgrebe, Ingarden, Ricœur, Merleau-Ponty »).

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Retrouver la Lebenswelt, par-delà Husserl.
Patočka et Ricœur, lecteurs de la *Krisis*

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Abstract

**Uncovering the Lebenswelt, beyond Husserl: Patocka's
and Ricoeur's readings of the *Krisis***

The main goal of my inquiry is to lay out the proximity between Patočka's and Ricœur's readings of Husserl's Krisis and to stress the role played by the concept of the life-world in the unfolding of their original philosophical undertakings. In the first part, I show the importance both Patočka and Ricœur assignedto the Husserlian project of an "ontology of the life-world". In the second part, I expose the criticism these two authors addressed to Husserl's understanding of the life-world and, more precisely, to the idea that the exploration of the life-world is merely another way of gaining access to transcendental subjectivity. In the last part, I show how the concrete descriptions of the life-world given by Patočka and Ricœur depart massively from the Husserlian perspective.

Keywords: Lifeworld, asubjective phenomenology, Patočka, Ricœur

Patočka et Ricœur ont été très tôt sensibles aux résonances novatrices apportées par la *Krisis*, aux promesses que cet ouvrage contient, aux bouleversements que l'enquête husserlienne est à même d'induire non seulement dans l'espace de la philosophie traditionnelle, mais également dans le champ déjà balisé de la phénoménologie. Dès 1936, Patočka engage une exploration de l'ensemble problématique qui gravite autour de la question du monde naturel, en y consacrant sa thèse d'habilitation[1]. De son côté, Ricœur propose, en 1949, une

traduction de la conférence de Vienne qui inaugure le cycle de la *Krisis* et tente de cerner, dans un essai publié la même année, les contours du concept phénoménologique d'histoire qui émerge au premier plan dans le dernier ouvrage de Husserl[2]. Pourtant, cet intérêt pour les questions développées dans la *Krisis* n'est pas confiné au début de leurs carrières philosophiques respectives. Patočka revient à maintes reprises sur la thématique du monde naturel dans les dernières années de sa vie[3], alors que Ricœur souligne, en 1986, la proximité de son projet philosophique à l'égard du geste caractéristique de cette œuvre, et va jusqu'à soutenir que « le retour à la *Lebenswelt* peut jouer un rôle paradigmatique pour l'herméneutique » (Ricœur 1986b, 62).

Lorsque dans leurs œuvres de maturité les deux philosophes reprennent explicitement la tâche husserlienne de fournir une description du monde de la vie, ils mettent en place une stratégie de lecture homologue. Je me propose dans ce qui suit de tracer les coordonnées selon lesquelles se déploient ces appropriations critiques de la perspective husserlienne et de faire apparaître les infléchissements que chacun des deux philosophes apporte au projet philosophique que la *Krisis* expose pour la première fois. Trois moments logiques scandent le parcours que ces deux auteurs proposent. En premier lieu, il s'agit de faire apparaître l'extrême fécondité de l'entreprise husserlienne, son importance non seulement pour porter à l'avant-plan une thématique négligée par la tradition, mais aussi pour reconfigurer le champ interne de la phénoménologie. Deuxièmement, il s'agit de révéler les insuffisances du geste husserlien, qui sont dues au maintien d'un ensemble de présupposés – notamment, la détermination de la subjectivité comme origine de tout sens et de la science comme régime privilégié de vérité – que Husserl semblait pourtant vouloir dépasser. Enfin, sur le versant positif, Patočka et Ricœur se proposent, chacun à sa façon, de radicaliser le projet husserlien et de donner une description plus approfondie et plus conséquente de la *Lebenswelt*.

Patočka et Ricœur souscrivent à la démarche globale de la *Krisis* et cautionnent le projet husserlien d'un approfondissement de la rationalité, visant à montrer l'inanité

des prétentions d'une pensée qui substitue ses propres productions symboliques aux articulations spécifiques du monde, qui fait passer les idéalités qu'elle forge pour la charpente même du réel, qui croit donc, selon le célèbre mot de Galilée, que « le grand livre de la nature est écrit en cercles et en triangles ». Ainsi, le projet de retrouver la *Lebenwelt* se décline, sur son versant négatif, comme une méditation portant sur « les dangers de la fécondité » (Patočka 1988, 230), qui cherche à reconduire une rationalité scientifique aveuglée par ses propres réussites vers le lieu de son enracinement. La méthode spécifique de la *Rückfrage* (questionnement-en-retour), que la *Krisis* met en scène, vise à réinscrire ces opérations de niveau supérieur dans le sol d'où elles procèdent et qu'elles ne peuvent jamais tout à fait abandonner. Patočka restitue la visée de cette démarche dans les termes suivants :

> Husserl a pu, dans sa grande œuvre de ses dernières années, mettre en évidence, pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la pensée, le rapport fondamental qui lie l'*epistêmê* à la *doxa* : si le produits de l'*epistêmê*, de la pensée activement réflexive, passent effectivement dans le monde de la vie et en modifie à la fois la forme et le fonds, dans ses singularités comme dans ses structures essentielles, ils ne pourront pour autant jamais le dépasser et le rendre caduc, mais au contraire restent au principe liées à ce monde et ne sont intelligibles qu'à partir de lui. (Patočka 2007, 38)

La conviction qui sous-tend cette démarche est que le sens plein de l'activité scientifique ne peut être explicité que s'il est mis en rapport avec ce qui le précède. Qui plus est, ce préalable n'est pas réductible à une poussière de sensations ou de *data* sensibles, mais il est, d'ores et déjà, articulé comme monde : « toutes les disciplines positives et objectives présupposent, antérieurement à elles-mêmes, un monde, dans un certain sens, déjà achevé et fonctionnant, qui ne perd à aucun moment sa validité pour nous tous, un monde préalable, qui n'est pas un résultat de l'activité théorique, mais au contraire, la précède » (Patočka 2002, 212). Ce monde préalable, antérieur à toute formation théorique, fonctionne comme la présupposition constante, l'assise jamais interrogée de tout le travail de l'idéalisation et de vérification propres à l'enquête scientifique. En effet, « le penseur scientifique lui-même […] ne quitte jamais tout à fait le sol de ce monde préalable dans

lequel il vit toujours non seulement en sa qualité d'homme, mais encore en tant qu'il opère la vérification de ses conceptions » (Patočka 2002, 213). C'est cette même thèse, selon laquelle les donations de sens de la science dépendent de la pré-donation du monde de la vie, qu'exprime Ricœur lorsqu'il note que la *Lebenswelt* est « le référent ultime de toute idéalisation, de tout discours » (Ricœur 1986a, 375). Ainsi, à l'encontre d'une science et surtout d'une philosophie qui se prétend la porte-parole de ses acquis, il faut rappeler que les corrélats objectifs du savoir scientifique ne saurait être investis du prestige de la réalité même, que l'efficacité d'une méthode n'est pas une garantie pour l'accès au réel. Le monde que nous habitons, le site de notre séjour est la présupposition dernière de toute activité d'idéalisation et peut ainsi être caractérisé comme le lieu d'origine de tout sens.

La priorité que la *Krisis* assigne à la *Lebenswelt* est à même d'induire des déplacements considérables au sein même du dispositif phénoménologique. En effet, dans la mesure où le « monde naturel » en vient à nommer le lieu d'origine et le site d'inscription de tout sens, la tâche d'opérer une description de son articulation interne, le projet de développer une « ontologie du monde de la vie » s'avère être identique avec la phénoménologie tout court. Ainsi, en dépit de son apparition tardive, la *Lebenswelt* ne représente pas le titre pour un des problèmes particuliers avec lesquels la phénoménologie s'est vue confrontée au cours de son développement, mais constitue plutôt son champ propre, son domaine spécifique. Comme Patočka le note dans un texte de 1967 intitulé « Le monde naturel et la phénoménologie », « même si le monde naturel comme problème spécifique ne devient thème de la réflexion de Husserl qu'à titre d'exception et relativement tard », il n'en demeure pas moins que « toute phénoménologie est au fond une phénoménologie du monde naturel » (Patočka 1988, 24).

La conséquence la plus importante qui découle de la promotion de la *Lebenswelt* comme thème central de l'enquête phénoménologique est la destitution la subjectivité de sa position légiférante. Lorsqu'il est appréhendé dans toute son amplitude, le thème du « monde naturel » induit un décentrement dans le dispositif classique de la phénoménologie

et permet de rejeter l'assimilation implicite du champ phénoménal à une structure subjective. Patočka se dresse résolument contre cette interprétation subjectiviste, contre l'identification que Husserl opérait encore dans la 4e *Méditation cartésienne* entre la phénoménologie et la doctrine de la subjectivité – l'égologie – lorsqu'il affirme que « la formulation, qui présente la phénoménologie comme une doctrine de la subjectivité, serait-elle transcendantale, *n'est pas assez radicale*, en ce sens qu'elle nous présente non pas *l'apparition* de l'étant, mais un étant déterminé, quelque chose de déjà dévoilé, aussi fluide, aussi affiné soit-il » (Patočka 1983, 49). La voie qui, à ses yeux, permet d'éviter cette impasse subjectiviste et de poser le problème du monde naturel avec toute la clarté requise passe par l'élaboration d'une phénoménologie asubjective. Même s'il n'emploie pas la formule de « phénoménologie asubjective », Ricœur assume une position similaire lorsqu'il note que « la phénoménologie est toujours en danger de se réduire à un subjectivisme transcendantal. La manière radicale de mettre un terme à cette confusion toujours renaissante est de déplacer l'axe de l'interprétation de la question de la subjectivité à celle du monde » (Ricœur 1986b, 53). Mais Patočka et Ricœur insistent tous les deux sur le fait que ce revirement ne conduit pas à abandonner la phénoménologie comme telle, mais seulement à montrer l'insuffisance d'une des interprétations – fût-elle celle à laquelle Husserl a longtemps souscrit – qu'elle a donné de sa propre démarche. Dans cette optique, le dernier grand ouvrage du fondateur de la phénoménologie peut apparaître comme un important correctif vis-à-vis de l'interprétation qu'il a lui-même proposée de sa propre découverte, en ce qu'il déjoue et discrédite « la théorie idéaliste de la constitution du sens dans la conscience [qui] a abouti à l'hypostase de la subjectivité » (Ricœur 1986b, 53).

Il reste à savoir si Husserl a suivi jusqu'au bout le chemin qu'il a amorcé dans la *Krisis*, si sa thématisation du « monde naturel » satisfait aux réquisits qu'il a lui-même posés. Lorsqu'il jette un regard en arrière sur les résultats de cette entreprise, Patočka est amené à conclure qu'ils sont « décevant[s] à plus d'un égard » (Patočka 1988, 238). Quelle est

la source de cette insatisfaction ? Qu'est-ce qui motive le constat de l'insuffisance de la saisie husserlienne de la *Lebenswelt* ?

On peut relever trois points critiques que Patočka et Ricœur formulent à l'égard de la thématisation husserlienne de la *Lebenswelt*. En premier lieu, il s'agit de contester l'orientation globale de la démarche que la *Krisis* met en scène et, partant, de refuser à faire du « monde de la vie » une simple voie, un nouveau chemin d'accès à la subjectivité transcendantale. En effet, même si Husserl octroie au monde de la vie une position centrale dans le dispositif de la *Krisis*, ouvrant ainsi la voie pour une phénoménologie capable de se situer par-delà le subjectivisme transcendantal, il faut reconnaître que dans la mise en œuvre de cette enquête, Husserl recule devant les conséquences radicale de son entreprise, restaure la subjectivité comme lieu ultime de la constitution et « envisage le monde comme l'accomplissement d'une intersubjectivité fondamentale […] qui serait dans son fond raison » (Patočka 1988, 228). Derrière la pré-donation du monde de la vie, Husserl retrouve une pré-constitution subjective. Or, à l'encontre de Husserl, il faut affirmer que le retour au monde de la vie est sans appel et qu'un développement conséquent et radical de cette problématique permet de contester que « le lieu de la fondation dernière soit la subjectivité » (Ricœur 1986b, 49)[4]. Ainsi, avec les mots de Ricœur, il est essentiel d'« affranchir l'idée de monde de la vie […] de la tutelle du sujet transcendantal qui ne cesse de se prolonger jusque dans la *Krisis* » (Ricœur 2007, 198).

La deuxième difficulté a trait à la voie particulière que Husserl suit pour mettre au jour le monde de la vie, c'est-à-dire une méditation sur la crise des sciences. Selon le diagnostic qu'il avance, pour autant qu'elle s'interprète elle-même à travers les instruments que lui fournissent l'objectivisme et le naturalisme, la science devient incapable non seulement de répondre aux questions fondamentales que l'homme pose, mais, en outre, de rendre compte de ses propres opérations. Privée de la clarté qu'apporte une fondation évidente, la science devient une simple *technè*, un instrument en vue d'une transformation matérielle du monde. Si le retour au monde de la vie vise à rappeler à une science aveuglée par son succès et qui prend

l'efficacité de ses procédures pour gage de leur vérité, l'assise sur laquelle elle repose, il se peut que l'association entre ces deux thématiques – la mise au jour du monde de la vie et la recherche d'un fondement dernier pour les accomplissements (*Leistungen*) de la science – soit la source de difficultés considérables. En effet, comme le note Patočka, « on peut se demander si le monde naturel de la vie, considéré comme fondement oublié de la rationalité scientifique, est saisi dans son originalité première, ou, au contraire, si en donnant la priorité à cette optique, nous ne l'envisageons pas de façon unilatérale » (Patočka 1988, 238)[5]. En quoi réside cette unilatéralité ? En effet, même si Husserl insiste à quelques reprises sur l'autonomie de ce nouveau domaine – autonomie y compris à l'égard de la question du fondement des accomplissements de la science[6] – dans la mise en place de l'analyse il devient évident que la prospection du monde de la vie est commandée par l'impératif de fournir une garantie génétique pour les accomplissements de la science. Comme Husserl l'admet lui-même, le monde de la vie est un « thème subordonné », un « problème partiel à l'intérieur de la totalité déjà dessinée de la science objective (à savoir, au service de la pleine fondation de celle-ci) » (Husserl 1976, 139). L'unilatéralité de cette optique est la source de son abstraction :

> la *Lebenswelt* au sens de Husserl demeure une abstraction régie par la fonction spéciale de la science – la *Lebenswelt* n'est pas un monde au sens propre; la conception husserlienne escamote, ne thématise pas, oublie le monde en tant que plan purement phénoménal. En bref, la problématique du monde de la vie appelle la même critique que Husserl adresse pour sa part au « monde vrai » des sciences de la nature, auquel il reproche d'avoir oublié ce qui la fonde. (Patočka 1990, 212)

Cette objection, selon laquelle la motivation qui commande le retour à la *Lebenswelt* n'est pas celle de retrouver le monde comme tel, mais celle de fournir à la *ratio* une fondation plus profonde, est formulée, dans des termes extrêmement proches, par Ricœur : « le retour à la *Lebenswelt* n'est qu'un moment, un degré intermédiaire d'un "retour" plus fondamental, le retour à la science en tant que telle, à la raison en tant que telle, par-delà les limitations de la pensée objective » (Ricœur 1986a, 372). Afin de pouvoir accéder au

monde de la vie dans son originalité et son autonomie, il devient impératif de dissocier la tâche de procurer un fondement inébranlable aux résultats de la science, de les soustraire à tout scepticisme du projet de décrire le monde de la vie lui-même. Ou, avec les mots de Ricœur, il s'agit de distinguer « la fonction ontologique de la *Lebenswelt* comme étant là avant toute interprétation, de sa fonction épistémologique en tant que prétendant à la validité » (Ricœur 1986a, 371)[7]. La superposition de ces deux fonctions ou, plus précisément, la priorité accordée à l'enquête épistémologique qui englobe en son sein la démarche ontologique est responsable de l'appauvrissement que subit le monde naturel sous la plume de Husserl. Le seul visage du monde qu'une telle enquête laisse apparaître est celui, austère, d'un domaine d'évidences préalables, un « sol de validité constant, une source toujours prête d'évidences » (Husserl 1976, 138). À cet égard, Patočka note que « tout en insistant sur l'importance de la tâche de la saisie du monde naturel, [Husserl] n'effectue pas son analyse structurale [et] ne porte pas l'analyse jusqu'à l'homme dans les phénomènes concrets du travail, de la production, de l'action et de la création » (Patočka 1999a, 24). C'est la même optique qui détermine la caractérisation du monde de la vie comme produit de l'intersubjectivité et sa saisie comme fondement oublié de la rationalité scientifique : le monde n'apparaît pas comme un domaine autonome, structuré par une légalité spécifique, mais seulement comme un être constitué. Le retour au monde de la vie apparaît plutôt comme une voie détournée pour accéder à la source de tout sens, à la subjectivité transcendantale.

A un examen plus attentif, cette orientation « épistémologisante » s'avère non seulement préjudiciable pour la tâche de fournir une description du monde de la vie *lui-même*, mais apparaît, en elle-même, comme entachée de difficultés insurmontables. En effet, on peut se demander si le monde de la vie peut – en dépit des affirmations expresses de Husserl[8] – véritablement fonctionner comme le « fondement » de l'activité scientifique. À cet égard, il est important de souligner, avec Ricœur, « l'équivocité du concept de fondement qui désigne tantôt le sol (*gründender Boden*) sur quoi quelque chose est construit, tantôt le principe de légitimation qui

gouverne la construction des idéalités sur cette base » (Ricœur 1976a, 376)[9]. S'il est incontestable que le monde de la vie constitue le sol dans lequel toute idéalisation s'enracine, peut-on pour autant affirmer qu'il en est le fondement de leur validité ? Si la priorité de la *Lebenswelt* est indéniable dans l'ordre de l'être, l'est-elle également dans l'ordre de la validité ? Comment un monde subjectif-relatif pourrait-il être identifié comme le fondement inébranlable qui fournit aux opérations objectivantes leur garantie ultime ? Et, plus généralement, comment quelque chose de l'ordre du pré-théorique peut-il « fonder de manière évidente » ce qui se situe au niveau théorique ? Ricœur fait apparaître l'impossibilité d'un tel rapport de légitimation en insistant sur l'hétérogénéité de cette quête fondationnelle à l'égard du monde de la vie :

> La question de la fondation ultime […] n'appartient pas elle-même au monde de la vie. Elle a été posée par ce que Husserl appelle la « nouvelle humanité » (*Krisis*, §33), c'est-à-dire par les Grecs. La question grecque du fondement ultime n'appartient plus au monde de la vie en tant que telle, si celui-ci doit signifier la vie immédiate au niveau d'une praxis radicalement pré-scientifique. (Ricœur 1986a, 371)

La distinction formulée par Ricœur entre « la thèse de la référence ultime » et celle de la « légitimation ultime » (Ricœur 1986a, 376) nous permet de préciser davantage le rapport qui s'établit entre le monde de la vie et les accomplissements de sens propres à la science. La *Lebenswelt* peut légitimement être caractérisée comme le sol (*Boden*) dans lequel tout sens demeure nécessairement inscrit, comme cette dimension opaque ou terrestre qui est l'envers de l'idéalité, comme l'échelle qui une fois empruntée demeure la présupposition cachée de toute vision panoramique. Mais la démarche régressive ou archéologique qui parvient à saisir le monde de la vie comme le lieu d'enracinement de tout sens ne peut pas être doublée d'une démarche progressive ou généalogique qui dévoile le monde comme le fondement de validité de tout sens. Autrement dit, les arguments avancés par Husserl permettent uniquement de soutenir que la *Lebenswelt* est le sol où toute production de sens plonge ses racines, mais non pas qu'elle peut être investie de la fonction de légitimer, de fonder-en-raison le processus d'idéalisation.

Pour résumer la *pars destruens* de cette enquête, nous pouvons indiquer que Patočka et Ricœur s'accordent pour soutenir que la description husserlienne de la *Lebenswelt* est unilatérale et abstraite. Le monde de la vie est envisagé comme une voie d'accès vers la subjectivité transcendantale et dans une optique fondationnelle, comme l'instance à même de fournir un sol d'évidences apodictiques sur laquelle l'édifice de la science pourrait reposer. Afin que l'ampleur véritable du monde naturel puisse être ressaisie, afin que cette « ontologie du monde de la vie » que Husserl appelait de ses vœux puisse être déployée dans toute sa radicalité, il est nécessaire de dépasser les étroitesses de la conceptualité husserlienne. Il s'agira, plus précisément, de reconnaître que le monde de la vie possède une consistance et une légalité propres, ce qui impose à son tour de le détacher de la problématique de la fondation de l'idéalité et d'admettre son caractère a-subjectif. Si Patočka et Ricœur assument une stratégie homologue pour dénoncer les insuffisances de la conceptualisation husserlienne, les analyses positives qu'ils donnent du monde de la vie se situent dans des horizons conceptuels différents.

Pour Patočka, libérer le monde de la vie de l'association avec une quête fondationnelle conduira à le saisir comme le lieu que nous habitons, le domaine de notre séjour. La description de la syntaxe du monde naturel qu'il propose gravite autour de deux foyers : la question de la *praxis* humaine et celle de l'apparaître. Ainsi, Patočka écrit que « le monde de la vie est avant tout le monde de la *praxis* humaine, le monde où nous mangeons et travaillons, où nous vaquons à des tâches à accomplir par l'intermédiaire du fonds jamais expressément aperçu mais toujours disponible que représente notre existence physique, corporelle » (Patočka 1988, 238-239). Envisagée selon cette perspective, toute action humaine est déterminée par une appartenance à… et par une tendance vers… . Le terme ultime de ces deux orientations est le monde : le monde est le sol à partir duquel tous mes projets se déploient, mais aussi l'horizon total vers lequel tout *hou heneka*, tout « en vue de quoi » se dépasse. Conçu à partir de la question de la localisation de la subjectivité en son sein, le monde apparaît comme un système de lieux qui renvoie à la *praxis* humaine. Une telle saisie se

répercute sur la détermination du sens propre de la subjectivité : la saisie de soi de la subjectivité n'est pas d'ordre réflexif, car la réflexion n'est pas à même de recueillir toute l'ampleur de sens que la *praxis* recèle. Pourtant, le sens propre de la *praxis* n'est pas réductible à une intervention dans le champ chosique, à la transformation de l'environnement vital, mais nomme premièrement un mode de compréhension, une forme de clarté dans laquelle les choses se dévoilent. Tout commerce avec le monde prend appui sur la structure de renvois dans laquelle les choses se trouvent d'abord insérées : le maniement présuppose l'émergence de la chose comme maniable.

L'explicitation du monde de la vie selon le fil conducteur offert par la *praxis* permet à Patočka de récupérer toute la concrétude de ce monde, d'intégrer dans sa description l'ensemble de phénomènes qui émergent en son sein. Pourtant, détachée de tout lien avec l'universalité que la science met en jeu, cette analyse ne risque-t-elle pas de rester cantonnée dans un monde purement subjectif, de restituer une vision particulière du monde et non pas le monde de la vie lui-même ? En effet, la mise en avant de la *praxis* n'implique nullement l'abandon de toute prétention ontologique et ne marque pas d'adoption d'une optique anthropologique. La *praxis* est envisagée dans sa dimension dévoilante, elle est prise en vue selon sa teneur phénoménale. Ceci permet à Patočka d'opérer un passage vers la caractérisation du monde de la vie comme la dimension de l'apparaître comme tel. Restituer les axes et les coordonnées du monde naturel revient pour Patočka à opérer une description du champ phénoménal. Comme il le note :

> le monde de la vie n'a d'autre fonction que de s'éclipser lui-même devant les choses et les personnes qu'il révèle et manifeste. Ce monde appartient à la dimension spécifique de l'être qu'on pourrait appeler la manifestation. Les règles et les structures de la manifestation ne sont pas celles des êtres manifestes. L'être de la manifestation n'est pas l'œuvre des hommes ; le temps qu'elle présuppose n'est pas créé par l'existence ; la manifestation englobe certainement l'homme, elle a besoin de lui, mais également d'autres choses. Et c'est en dernière analyse la manifestation, l'être du phénomène que vise, à mon avis, la phénoménologie. (Patočka 1988, 242)

L'assimilation du monde de la vie à la manifestation, à l'apparaître permet non seulement de mettre en évidence sa

dimension a-subjective, mais plus encore à montrer que celui-ci constitue le thème par excellence de la phénoménologie.

Ricœur suit une voie autre voie dans son examen du monde de la vie. Il insiste, en premier lieu, sur le caractère indirect de l'accès au monde de la vie et reprend à son compte la solidarité que Husserl établit entre la *Lebenswelt* et la *Rückfrage*, même s'il l'investit d'une signification plus vaste. L'accent mis sur le caractère nécessairement médiat de l'accès au monde de la vie vise à conjurer le phantasme d'une donation de celui-ci dans une intuition pleine et entière :

> le concept de *Lebenswelt* ne peut être isolé de la méthode même de *Rückfrage* qui a son point de départ dans a couche d'idéalisations et d'activités produites par l'activité scientifique et culturelle. En ce sens la *Lebenswelt* est hors de notre atteinte. C'est la présupposition ultime qui, en tant que telle, ne peut jamais être transposée dans une nouvelle vie paradisiaque. (Ricœur 1986a, 370)

Le modèle husserlien de la « question-en-retour » qui implique le caractère médiat de l'accès au sol que le discours scientifique présuppose est transposé par Ricœur à l'ensemble des productions symboliques. Grâce à cet élargissement, il est à même de rendre compte de la manière dont les discours artistiques, historiques ou sociologiques visent le monde :

> Le retour de la nature objective et mathématisée par la science galiléenne et newtonienne à la *Lebenswelt* est le principe même du retour que l'herméneutique tente d'opérer par ailleurs dans les sciences de l'esprit, lorsqu'elle entreprend de remonter des objectivations et des explications de la science historique et sociologique à l'expérience artistique, historique et langagière qui précède et porte ces objectivations et ces explications. Le retour à la *Lebenswelt* peut d'autant mieux jouer ce rôle paradigmatique pour l'herméneutique que la *Lebenswelt* n'est pas confondue avec je ne sais quelle immédiateté ineffable et n'est pas identifiée à l'enveloppe vitale et émotionnelle de l'expérience humaine, mais désigne cette réserve de sens, ce surplus de sens de l'expérience vive, qui rend possible l'attitude objectivante et explicative. (Ricœur 1986b, 61-62)

Loin de désigner un « sol d'évidences apodictiques », le monde de la vie nomme l'envers de toute construction symbolique, une forme d'excès qui n'est jamais disponible pour une saisie directe, mais qui représente pourtant la source qui nourrit les différents édifices symboliques. Ricœur assigne au discours poétique et, plus généralement, au discours de fiction,

la tâche de dévoiler les linéaments de sens qui l'articulent en profondeur, car la *Lebenswelt* est « la dimension référentielle de l'œuvre de fiction » (Ricœur 1986b, 114). L'œuvre de fiction est capable de faire résonner ce champ *tacite* précisément dans la mesure où il « "suspend" cette fonction référentielle de premier degré qu'il libère une référence de second degré, où le monde est manifeste non pas comme ensemble d'objets manipulables, mais comme horizon de notre vie et de notre projet, bref comme *Lebenswelt* » (Ricœur 1986b, 52).

La question du monde naturel représente, au sein de la tradition phénoménologique, un problème stratégique, car à travers l'examen de la *Lebenswelt*, la phénoménologie accède à son domaine propre et cherche à réhabiliter une expérience du monde qui n'a pas encore été soumise à la prospection calculante de la pensée objective. Le monde naturel constitue également un des lieux théoriques où s'entrecroisent et se séparent les voies suivies par les héritiers de Husserl. Si sur leur versant négatif, les démarches proposées par Patočka et Ricœur se recoupent et s'éclairent mutuellement, en ce qu'ils dénoncent tous les deux – en employant des arguments homologues – la soumission de la *Lebenswelt* par Husserl à une optique fondationnelle, ces deux philosophes se séparent lorsqu'il s'agit d'en fournir une description positive. Si, pour Patočka, le monde de la vie équivaut au monde de la *praxis* humaine et, en dernière instance, au champ phénoménal – qu'une enquête phénoménologique asubjective peut entièrement prendre en charge –, pour Ricœur le monde de la vie demeure une « réserve de sens », accessible seulement de manière indirecte.

NOTES

[1] *Cf.* Patočka 2016 [1936]. Dans ses « Souvenirs de Husserl », Patočka évoque l'impression profonde que lui a laissé la conférence que Husserl a prononcée à Prague en Novembre 1935 et rappelle le rôle central que la thématique du monde de la vie jouait dans cette conférence : « pour la première fois, tout était édifié sur le "saut par-dessous le monde de la vie" (*übersprungene Lebenswelt*) : malgré tous ses résultats, on voyait la crise de la raison et celle de l'humanité se dessiner au-delà de la crise des sciences qui éclatait en dépit de tous les succès enregistrés, on prenait en vue une crise des Lumières qui n'a cessé de se creuser depuis des siècles et qui ne sera pas à surmonter en se

détournant de la raison, mais au contraire en se haussant à un degré de raison et de science jusque-là insoupçonné » (Patočka 1999, p. 100-101 ; trad. modifiée).

[2] *Cf.* Husserl 1949 et Ricœur 1949.

[3] Citons entre autres : « Le monde naturel et la phénoménologie » (1967), « Méditation sur "Le monde naturel comme problème philosophique" » (1969), « La philosophie de la crise des sciences d'après Edmund Husserl et sa conception d'une phénoménologie du "monde de la vie" » (1972) (ces trois essais ont été édités in Patočka 1998); le premier essai des *Essais hérétiques sur la philosophie de l'histoire* (1975) (*Cf.* Patočka 1999) ; Patočka 1990.

[4] Cette réserve formulée par Ricœur peut être mise en rapport avec un passage d'un manuscrit de travail où Patočka formule une exigence similaire : « Le "sujet" n'est qu'une composante de cette structure : au se-montrer, à l'apparaître appartient aussi ce *à quoi* l'apparaissant apparaît. Ce sujet étant aussi peu une réalité comme l'apparaître comme tel, on est en droit de le séparer du réel en le qualifiant de ''transcendantal''. Mais loin d'être le sol et le fondement de la structure de l'apparition, il n'est est qu'une composante vide, une pure existence qui n'acquiert la concrétion d'un étant qu'étant incorporée dans la structure d'un sujet réel. Or, ce sujet apparaissant ne pourra jamais rendre raison de l'apparaître » (Patočka 1995, 169).

[5] *Cf.* aussi Patočka 1988, p. 89 : « les esquisses présentées (du monde naturel) sont manifestement orientées sur le problème de l'idéalisation, de l'objectivation, de l'origine des sciences de la nature. Par conséquent, elles relèvent avant tout les traits du monde de la vie naturelle et naïve qui fournissent une base signifiante à l'objectivation et au processus ultérieur de naturalisation ».

[6] *Cf.* par exemple le § 33 de la *Krisis* où Husserl se donne pour tâche d' « exhiber pour lui-même le problème du sens d'être du monde de la vie » et, partant, de « laisser hors-jeu toutes les visées et toutes les connaissances objectivo-scientifiques » (Husserl 1976, § 33, 140). Pour une discussion de ce passage, nous renvoyons à Bégout 2007, 80-81.

[7] C. Romano commente cette distinction de la manière suivante : « Une chose est de dire qu'il existe une relation de "dépendance ontologique", comme dit Ricœur, entre la science et la *Lebenswelt*, une autre de soutenir que cette relation de dépendance (ou de présupposition) est aussi une relation de justification, que l'arrière-plan (*Untergrund*) est aussi un fondement (*Grund*) au sens strict du terme » (Romano 2013, p. 61).

[8] Husserl 1976, 139 : La *Lebenswelt* fournit « une fondation évidente (*evidente Begründung*) pour la science objective ».

[9] *Cf.* à cet égard aussi la discussion de cette ambiguïté proposée par C. Romano, qui exige de « trancher l'ambiguïté du vocabulaire de Husserl, qui tantôt désigne la *Lebenswelt* comme *Grund*, fondement (des sciences) et tantôt comme *Untergrund*, sous-sol, soubassement, arrière-fond. Suivant ce second concept, il ne s'agit plus de dire que le monde de la vie procure une "justification évidente" pour la science objective, mais seulement qu'il possède le statut d'une présupposition (*Voraussetzung*), d'un arrière-plan pour les opérations méthodiques qu'elle accomplit » (Romano 2010, 931).

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II.
Recognition & Rationality:
Ethical Challenges in the Work
of Patočka and Ricœur

Devotion and Attestation.
Rational and ethical life in Patočka and Ricoeur

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Abstract

This article presents a comparison between Ricoeur's and Patočka's ideas on the subject as a rational and ethical person. Despite differences in style and interests, their work manifests important resemblances and agreements. The comparison focuses on the primordial embedding of the individual subject in natural and social structures, on the ethical implications of this situation of the subject, and on the differences in both philosophers' evaluation of modern culture.

Keywords: Subjectivity, Rationality, Self-Care, Phenomenological Ethics, Embodiment

In early modern philosophy the rational subject was a very successful figure. Rationality was man's essence and pride. With precise objective argumentation and calculation all scientific problems could in principle be solved and man should be able to understand, dominate and perhaps even control the world he lived in. In addition, because of his (usually not her) rational capabilities, man was capable of coping with his emotions and making deliberate ethical decisions. In the age of Enlightenment, he could even play a main role in the historical development of victorious progress. But since Romanticism, from the nineteenth century on, his self-understanding radically changed. Schopenhauer, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud undermined his position as rational master of the world and changed him in an irrational puppet that is guided by natural, social, cultural and psychical forces beyond his control.

In the twentieth century this fate is widely discussed in many currents of thought.

Paul Ricoeur has played a prominent role in these discussions. He takes the critical approaches of the "masters of suspicion" seriously, but at the same time he looks for what can be saved from the modern human subject as a rational and ethical person. This project, the "hermeneutics of the subject" can even be seen as the core of his philosophical projects.

In his writings on the thought of his colleague Jan Patočka, Ricoeur claims that Patočka takes the same position. The first of these texts was written for *Le Monde*, on March 19, 1977, as an *in memoriam* after Patočka's tragic death, caused by severe interrogations by the Czechoslovak secret police. Ricoeur situates Patočka's dissidence in the line of the philosophical attestations of his teacher Edmund Husserl, who argued for a "…recovery [*réveil*] of the subject", and against the resignations of reason by scientism, Romanticism and nihilism (Ricoeur 1991a, 69-70). Through Husserl, the intellectual resistance in Prague against the communist regime finds its roots, according to Ricoeur, in eighteenth century European rationalism:

> Without any doubt I can discern in this appeal of Husserl one of the links by which the current claim for liberties and human rights in Prague is connected to the great European rationalism of the classic age, through the 19th century socialisms. (Ricoeur 1991a, 70)[1]

Ricoeur places this moral appeal for freedom and human rights in opposition to various forms of critique of reason that were widespread in Western Europe in the 1970s:

> For western intellectuals, who are very busy with getting loose of moralism and deconstructing rationalism, it is difficult to understand this recourse of Czech intellectuals to morality in the very field of political requests. (ibid.)[2]

By referring to an open letter by Václav Havel, Ricoeur shows how the communist tyranny leads to "an incredible spiritual corruption", to which a rational ethical attitude and an appeal to human rights are the only right answer. He ends his short article in honour of Patočka with the statement that "[…] in the case of extreme humiliation of a people, the philosophical

plea for subjectivity becomes the only recourse of the civilian against the tyrant." (ibid., 73)[3]

Without any doubt we can praise Ricoeur for the way he honoured Patočka and for asking attention and support for Charta 77. But one might ask if Ricoeur was right in his sketch of Patočka's philosophy as a rationalist defender of subjectivity. As Ricoeur knew very well (Ricoeur 2007), in critical studies of Husserl's Cartesianism, Patočka had elaborated on an a-subjective phenomenology (Patočka 1989a; 1989b; 1990a; 1990b; 2000; 2015; Karfík 2008; Mensch 2016; Učnik 2015); and in his *Heretical Essays* as well as in other publications he had given a very critical analysis of modern Western thought and culture (Patočka 1996). Can he also be seen as a defender of the modern rational and ethical subject?

In this article I shall make a comparison between Ricoeur's and Patočka's ideas on the subject as a rational and ethical person. This comparison will manifest important resemblances and agreements in their points of view, in spite of differences in style and interests. The comparison will focus on the primordial embedding of the individual subject in natural and social structures (a) and on the ethical implications of this situation of the subject (b). Further it will be shown that the main difference between their philosophies can be found in their evaluation of modern culture (c).

1. Patočka

Ricoeur and Patočka both belong, together with philosophers like Sartre, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty, to the second generation of phenomenologists, who thoroughly studied Husserl, but were also deeply influenced by Heidegger. With Heidegger, all five made the move from a Husserlian phenomenology that mainly focused on epistemological matters to an existential phenomenology that saw human life as its central topic of research. But they also moved, each in their own way, beyond Heidegger, by emphasizing the bodily, social and cultural embedding of the subject, that was admittedly mentioned, but also neglected by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*. They all regard the human person as originally embodied, social and practical; these features of intersubjectivity,

worldliness and praxis are all constitutive for the subject's way of being. An important difference between these phenomenologists lies in the way this being embedded of the subject is actually thought. Sartre and Levinas, on the one hand, discuss the singularity of the human person in such a way that their view of the subject starts with a sharp separation between subjects. Merleau-Ponty, Patočka and Ricoeur, on the other hand, underline intersubjectivity as primary to any subjectivity and as an insurmountable pre-reflective layer of existence. Furthermore, Patočka and Ricoeur stress, more than Merleau-Ponty, the responsibility of a subject for the other. A good understanding of human existence necessarily includes this notion of responsibility, in order to recognize human life as the life of an ethical subject (Jervolino 2007). Let us take a closer look at this specific existential phenomenology, starting with the reflections of Jan Patočka.

a) *asubjective phenomenology*

More than his contemporary phenomenologists, Patočka stays close to the Husserlian phenomenological method of *epochè* and reduction. However, in Husserl's phenomenology Patočka recognizes a problematic Cartesian tension, i.e. the effort to find absolute certainty in reflection, in the *cogito*. According to Patočka, the transcendental reduction does not lead to subjective or intersubjective consciousness as the "field of appearing", but to a field that cannot be equated with a specific being that appears, to a field of appearing that is presupposed by all beings. In several texts, Patočka calls this field "world", which means that all phenomena can only appear within a larger context, within a horizon (Patočka 1991, 2000). Worldliness is the main characteristic of every appearance. The world is not reducible to consciousness, as Husserl tried to show with his famous thought experiment (Husserl 1982, 109-112). To the contrary, consciousness can only understand itself as always already constituted in relation to the world, within the field of appearing. The world as the original horizon within which phenomena appear, organizes the subject as a centre around which they appear:

> But then, through the universality of the *epochè*, it also becomes clear that, precisely in the same way that the self is the condition of the possibility of the appearing of what is worldly, the world – as the original horizon [*Urhorizont*] (and not as the sum of realities [*Realitätenall*]) – presents the condition of the possibility of the appearing of the self. […] [The] I is only experienced as the organizational centre of a universal structure of appearance that cannot be reduced to a being as such, appearing in its particularity [*Einzelsein*]. (Patočka 2015a, 49)

Through this elaboration of the transcendental *epochè* and reduction, Patočka develops an "asubjective phenomenology", which he later labels as "phenomenology of the appearing as such". "Asubjective" does not mean that the subject does not play any role in the manifestation of phenomena, but it does mean that the subject cannot find an unprejudiced transcendental position to describe the appearance of phenomena, for it is itself shaped by the field of appearing.

Consequently, the subject can never entirely grasp itself. In his lecture course from 1969, Patočka describes the subject as a "primordial dynamism", as a dynamic stream of centrifugal energy, always directed outward, towards the world (Patočka 1998, 29-53). When the subject reflects on itself, it does not find this original dynamic I, but a "me", that appears for the pre-reflective I. In other words, the I is itself a horizon, that can never be surveyed: "The horizon is the appearance of what does not appear, appearing only in a certain sense and belonging to an appearance." (Patočka 1998, 39)

The main goal and orientation of this pre-reflective dynamism of the I is another I, is 'Thou'. Only in relation to other subjects the I can realize its first reflection. As in a mirror, "…I see myself in the eyes of the other. The other need not be concretely instantiated. It is a constant structure of our experience; I see myself ever as the other, as the other sees me." (Patočka 1998, 51) The subject, therefore, is originally embedded in worldly and intersubjective structures, that are primordial to any reflection (Mensch 2016, 3-63). These structures are not fixed; they are, just like the I itself, always in movement. In these phenomenological analyses of the dynamic

human existence, the subject is clearly de-centred, it is always being constituted by the world that it participates in.

b) *Movement and dedication*

Patočka's reflections on movement belong to his most important contributions to phenomenology. He has written a profound study on the history of the concept of movement, with Aristotle as its main protagonist (Patočka 2011). According to Patočka, the Aristotelian notion of movement as purposeful actualisation of potentialities, needs to be taken up again in phenomenology. In modern philosophy the concept of movement was narrowed to a quantifiable pattern in an abstract space. Bergson has tried to develop a more insightful understanding of movement, as a synthetic unity of lived experience. Patočka tries to deepen this approach by combining Heidegger's analyses of *Dasein* with the Aristotelian idea of movement as realisation of potentiality (Patočka 1998, 143-145). This also implies that Aristoteles' view of movement, being related to a static kernel, needs to be radicalized:

> To understand the movement of human existence, for that we need to radicalize Aristotle's conception of movement. The possibilities that ground movement have no pre-existing bearer, no necessary referent statically at their foundation, but rather all synthesis, all inner interconnection of movement takes place within it alone. All inner unification is accomplished by the movement itself. (Patočka 1998, 146-147)

Human existence is first of all a bodily existence. The body is a complex of movements that are interrelated and find their unity in themselves. These movements do not have a body as their substrate, they constitute the body in a constant flux of movements. In addition, the body-subject is not something in itself, it is always in dynamic relation with its environment, with the world. The world to which the subject relates, opens itself up in a spatial movement to the subject. The things in the world move towards the subject as a call, as an appeal of possibilities to be realised. "Our own dynamics, the verve that brings us to things, finds a counterpart in the orientation of the world towards us, in the original dynamic traits of space." (Patočka 1995, 68)[4] The movements in our body, the movements

in connections with other people, the dynamic relations with the world make us who we are:

> Before we could be able to do whatever, the world has already obtained us, the world holds us, in and by our disposition. Such is the contribution of that domain to the original movement that we are – movement towards the world, from and through the world, back to ourselves. The disposition, 'where one in is', always already tells us in the most general way that we are in the world and *where* we are in it. (Patočka 1995, 69)[5]

This circular movement between subject and world within the always comprising horizon of the world is constitutive for our human existence. We become ourselves by finding our place in the world. Patočka develops a deeper understanding of this dynamic intersubjective and social constitution of our existence by emphasizing the ethical side of it. Since human existence is always in movement and never fixed, it is a task and a responsibility. We have to take our life upon us, to realize it and to give an account of it. We can only find and understand ourselves, if we take the circular relation with the world, by which we exist as human beings, as a point of departure for our self-understanding. In other words, the relation between man and world is understood as a relation of surrender. In general terms, Patočka describes this surrender as a circular relation with the world that enriches our self: "The return to the self is not analogous to a reflection in a mirror; rather, it is a process in which we seek and constitute ourselves, lose ourselves, and find ourselves again." (Patočka 1998, 57)[6]

Patočka has further analysed this complex of circular relations between man and world in his idea of the three movements of human life. "Each of these three movements," Patočka states, "is always a movement shared." (Patočka 1998, 149) The basic movements of human existence thus are all movements in which we are connected with the world and with other subjects. In several texts he has discussed this threefold movement in different contexts and with a different terminology.

The first movement is described by Patočka as "the movement of sinking roots, of anchoring – an instinctive-affective movement of our existence." (Patočka 1998, 149) This concerns first of all our embodied existence: "…the original control over our own organism which is presupposed in all our

further, freer modes of comportment, of relating to humans and things." (Patočka 1998, 148) It also consists in the way we always share our life with others. This is manifest "…in our dependence on an other who provides us with safety, with warmth, it is manifest in attachment, protection, sympathy." (Patočka 1998, 149) All our relations to the world thus start from out of a natural and cultural belonging, which is obvious in the first years of our life, but which also remains a basic need during our entire life. Patočka calls this the mutual love and acceptance between parents and children, but also speaks about it as a mutual compensation for every individual existence. "This compensation takes place in all to whom this existence is devoted, whom it loves and whom it itself accepts in turn." (Patočka 1996, 30; 1998, 149) Devotion and love are thus primordial aspects of human life. In short, "humans are beings for others." (Patočka 1998, 177) This movement finds its boundaries in the earth as the unmoving ground on which it takes place, as well as in what is strange, unfamiliar and dangerous, the opposite of the safe and sound.

The second movement is defined as "the movement of self-sustenance, of self-projection – the movement of our coming to terms with the reality we handle, a movement carried out in the region of work." (Patočka 1998, 148) This is the realm of active relation to our environment, of the everyday use of things, which Heidegger called *Zeug*. Patočka calls it "the sphere in which we usually live, […] the sphere of meaning." (Patočka 1998, 150) The intersubjective relations of work and cooperation find their reverse in concurrence, conflict and suffering. We can express ourselves in our work, but labour is also a burden. Nevertheless, Patočka describes this second movement also as a movement of self-denial, be it a self-denial in service of a self-interest through rational behaviour:

> The ideal of the second vital line is the ascetic ideal. Self-extension takes place in the context of self-denial, overcoming instinctual, immediate desire. Though ultimately it follows an instinctual goal, the means is self-control. (Patočka 1998, 159)

The third movement is the one that makes our existence really human and authentic. Patočka describes it as "the movement of existence in the narrower sense of the word which

typically seeks to bestow a global closure and meaning on the regions and rhythms of the first and second movement." (Patočka 1998, 148) This means that humans are able to transcend the relations to things and to other humans in the world and to relate to the world as a whole, as well as to their own existence.

There are several sides to this movement. It is a movement of truth in the sense that we can take a distance from the usual and traditional views on things and ask how they really are. By rational reflection, humans can put the knowledge and ideas of their seemingly self-evident perspectives between brackets and take a critical stand that asks for precise perception and argumentation.

> Nothing of the earlier life of acceptance remains in peace, al the pillars of the community, traditions, and myths, are equally shaken, as are all the answers that only preceded questions; the modest yet secure and soothing meaning, though not lost, is transformed. It becomes as enigmatic as all else. (Patočka 1996, 39-40)

Questioning our traditional worldviews is part of this attitude; it asks for a rational understanding of the world. In this movement of transcendence, humans can find a meta-perspective on the standards, procedures and perspectives by which they are connected with the world and with others. Such a meta-perspective, however, does not give survey over the whole world or one's existence as a whole. It remains a perspective that is grounded in the first two movements of anchoring and self-projection.

The finitude of this perspective implies an ethical side of the same movement. Since we cannot find definite answers to our questions about the essence of the world and of ourselves, we have to give an account of our views and judgments. The rationality of the third movement, its effort to find truth by reflection and argumentation, is thus directly connected with the ethical obligation to testify for our opinions. In other words, the third movement is the movement of responsibility. Only through this movement, the subject can understand itself as taking the position of openness towards the world and other beings: "…the world opens itself to it for the first time." (Patočka 1996, 39) Humans are now able to understand

themselves in relation to the field of appearing, to being, they "…are *called* to things, to give them what they lack, to make that encounter possible. […] …human life is a service." (Patočka 1998, 170)

Moreover, only in this third movement the human being can understand itself as an ethical subject. Patočka calls it a movement of breakthrough, because it breaks through the boundaries of the first and the second movement, that were still tied to traditional patterns of thought and behaviour. The third movement reaches beyond our desire for safety and self-development, beyond any self-interest. It is the highest movement of surrender, in which the individual human being gives up itself, loses itself and finds itself in a life of devotion to what is of higher importance than its own life. Patočka does not have in mind here a devotion to a higher entity, but a devotion toward the openness of being itself. The third movement is a movement of transcendence: "Not intentionality but transcendence is the original trait of life, […] the transcendence of humans towards the world, to the whole of what is brought to light." (Patočka 1996, 48) This relation to the appearing as such, to the world as a whole, is not only and not primarily a matter of knowledge and thought, it is an ethical relation of praxis and freedom: "The transcendence to the world […] is originally not given by the activity of thought and reason; […] its foundation, rather, is freedom." (Patočka 1996, 49) This ethical relation of surrender and devotion to being and to beings can also be described as a relation of love. (Patočka 2015b)

In short, human life, in Patočka's view, is an ethical life of self-surrender, in response to the call of other beings, an openness and devotion to other beings, beyond all self-interest (Mensch 2016, 92ff):

> My being is no longer defined as a being for me but rather as a being in self-surrender, a being which opens itself to being, which lives in order for things—as well as myself and others—to be, to show themselves as what they are. This means: life in self-surrender, life outside oneself, not a mere solidarity of interests but a total reversal of interest—I no longer live in that which separates and encloses, but rather in that which unites and opens, being openness itself. (Patočka unedited, 189)

c) modernity

The third movement of human life, therefore, is what makes humans truly human. It is a breakthrough to a rational and ethical "life in truth". Can we find here an affirmation of Ricoeur's statement that both Patočka's philosophy and his activities for Charta 77 might be placed in line with the tradition of modern European rationalism? On the one hand, yes, an understanding of the rational and ethical life of the human subject is in the heart of Patočka's philosophy. On the other hand, Patočka regards his defence of the subject's rationality and responsibility as radically different from this modern rationalist tradition. At the end of his lecture series, Patočka stresses this difference as one of the main conclusions of his course:

> Here phenomenology touched upon something that all modern humanism neglected, what that humanism lacks. Modern humanism thrives on the idea that humans are in some sense the heirs of the absolute […], that they have a license to subjugate all reality, to appropriate it and to exploit it with no obligation to give anything in return, constraining and disciplining ourselves. Here phenomenology touched upon the fundamental problem of humanism, that humans become truly human only in this non-indifference to being, when being presents itself to them and presents itself as something that is not real and so also is not human, something that challenges them and makes them human. (Patočka 1998, 178)

In contrast to modern humanism, the human subject can only understand its own rational and ethical being, if it takes into consideration its de-centred position, if it surrenders itself to the world and to being, which are constituent to the subject in a way beyond the subject's own understanding. Patočka has always elaborated on this view by making sharp contrasts with modern philosophy and modern culture, that located the subject in opposite to the world, in order to grasp and control it. Building on analyses by Husserl and Heidegger on the crisis of the modern sciences and on modern technological culture as *Gestell*, framing, Patočka vehemently criticises modernity (Patočka 1989c). In a text from the 1950s, he characterises modern culture as a "supercivilization", a civilization that is radically and completely rationalised in all its domains, in such a way that everything becomes calculated, scheduled,

disciplined and manipulated (Patočka 1990c). All meaning has been reduced to calculable profit by "…a rationalism that wants to master things and is mastered by them." (Patočka 1996, 110) In his *Heretical Essays*, Patočka describes how modern civilization has unchained gigantic technological forces that have no orientation and finally unleash their powers in violence and war. Thus, nihilism, decadency and war are the dark outcome of modern rationalism.

A better understanding of human life can only be achieved through a radical break with this modern rationalism. A new breakthrough by the third movement of human existence is needed, a *metanoia*, that can uncover again the relation of man to the field of appearing, to being. From the viewpoint of modern instrumental rationality such a conversion can only be seen as an irrational movement, beyond calculation and self-interest, as a sacrifice.

In the sixth *Heretical Essay*, Patočka discusses this sacrifice as it comes to the fore in the front experience in the first World War, referring to testimonies of Ernst Jünger and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. At the deepest low of modern European culture, this experience of absurd atrocities opens up the possibility of profound understanding of human existence and its relation to Being. In this context, Patočka takes up the Heraclitan notion of *polemos*, unity in conflict, as a characterisation of Being. Being needs to be understood as a unity, but this unity can never be described from one and the same point of view, there are always conflicting powers and perspectives. In the middle of a devastating war, therefore, one can find a testimony of the real *polemos* of human life: there can be no unity without inner conflicts. These conflicts undermine a full comprehension of being and of human existence as one totality in one theory or system. Genuine rational insight in human life, according to Patočka, is exactly a denial of modern rationalism that tries to grasp and dominate the whole of reality (Patočka 1998, 178; Dodd 2011; 2015; Hagedorn 2016).

Nevertheless, in his defence of Charta 77 Patočka appeals to the modern notion of human rights, implicitly referring to Kant:

> The idea of human rights is nothing other than the conviction that even states, even society as a whole, are subject to the sovereignty of moral sentiment. […] …already a hundred and eighty years ago, precise conceptual analysis made it clear that all moral obligations are rooted in what we might call a person's obligation to himself – which includes, among other things, the obligation to resist any injustice done him. (Patočka 1989d)

Although he elsewhere refers to the pre-modern sources of human rights (Patočka 1990c), this appeal at least shows a tension in his evaluations of modern culture.

2. Ricoeur

Despite differences in style and in subjects of research, the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur shows many similarities with the thought of Patočka. Ricoeur's early work, his phenomenology of the will, describes the tensions within the human subject of rational and irrational drives. The relation of consciousness to its own body shows its embeddedness in bodily, intersubjective and social structures, beyond its own influence and comprehension. Later, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the subject consists of several works that culminate in his anthropological work *Oneself as another*, where he develops an ethical view on the subject and its personal identity. His approach of history and modernity, however, is very different from Patočka's perspective. These three features will be discussed in this section.

a) The Voluntary and the Involuntary

One of the first studies of Paul Ricoeur on the human being as an ethical subject is his phenomenology of the will. He uses Husserl's eidetic method, looking for a pure description of the will, but from the start he also recognizes that the first object of the will, one's own body, that is supposed to act according to the will, can never be completely guided or grasped by it. A phenomenology of the will has to start with the subject as an "I will", "je veux", which is an intentional relation: "I will this or that". The description of this intentional relation of consciousness in its practical functioning, is on all its levels confronted with the involuntary – with bodily needs and

desires, with emotions, habits, etc. – that does not entirely give in to the will, but remains a mystery. The human subject is not transparent. "The Cogito is broken up within itself." (Ricoeur 1966, 14)

On the other hand, these involuntary aspects can only be recognized through the will. The voluntary and the involuntary, freedom and nature, consciousness and its object, are therefore always already intertwined:

> […] the initial situation revealed by description is the reciprocity of the involuntary and the voluntary. Need, emotion, habit, etc., acquire a complete significance only in relation to a will which they solicit, dispose, and generally affect, and which in turn determines their significance, that is, determines them by its choice, moves them by its effort, and adopts them by its consent. The involuntary has no meaning of its own. Only the relation of the voluntary and the involuntary is intelligible. (Ricoeur 1966, 4f.)

This reciprocity is described by Ricoeur on many levels throughout the book. He discerns three main phases of willed action: decision, actual movement and consent: "To say 'I will' means first 'I decide", secondly 'I move my body', thirdly 'I consent'." (Ricoeur 1966, 6) All these phases are described on three levels: Ricoeur starts with a general "pure eidetic description", which is followed by descriptions of the lived bodily experience of performing and implementation, and finally by an analysis of the several steps of this enactment.

Ricoeur starts his phenomenological analysis of the decision with an eidetic description: "a decision signifies, that is, designates in general, a future action which depends on me and which is within my power." (ibid., 43) Already with regard to pure reflection, he recognises a profound reciprocity within the subject. It is me who decides, as the French reflexive pronominal form of the verb indicates: "je me décide". The fact that I relate my actions and my decisions to myself, presupposes a pre-reflective self-consciousness in which the self relates to itself. In willing and deciding I discover myself as my own possibility. In the temporal mode of the decision, its relation to the future, I find myself dispersed in time. In addition, my will, as it is part of a project, has to connect to the possibilities it finds in the world. These possibilities make the projected action possible, but also determine its limits:

> The possibility of my action is determined by the *entire* actual order of events which presents my action with a point of application, that is, by a collection of prohibitions and opportunities, obstacles, and feasible routes. That is the world of the voluntary agent – a complex collection of resistances and opportunities, of walls and of ways. (Ricoeur 1966, 53)

In a way that is comparable with Patočka's asubjective phenomenology, although in perhaps a bit less radical manner, Ricoeur locates the human will and action in the world, as always already embedded in situations and horizons:

> […] the first possibility inaugurated by the will is not my own can-be but the contingent possibility that I open in the world by projecting acting in it; it is the can "be done" intended on the world, this world that always remains on the horizon of my choice like the field of operation of my freedom. (Ricoeur 2016, 56)

The will is not an arbitrary urge, it has its reasons and motivations. Here, again, activity and receptivity go together. Values and motivations are instances that move us to act. I encounter these values and reasons in my decisions, they form the course through which I decide and by which I legitimise my actions (Ricoeur 1966, 66-84).

Ricoeur finds the same ambiguity in the relation to our bodies. First of all, the existence as such of the body precedes my will, is involuntary. "The 'I am' or 'I exist' infinitely overwhelms the 'I think'." (ibid., 85) Our conscious will is embodied, is embedded in the body and cannot but act through it. On the one and, I live my body from within and "traverse" it in my actions, on the other hand the body has its own vital values and needs. These vital tendencies are much more complex than the usual distinction between pleasure and pain. At the root of choice, they introduce an ambiguity that leads to hesitation as a profound feature of decision (ibid., 110f.; Boyer 2010). Hesitation, attention and choice constitute the decision in a temporal process that is not completely transparent and that cannot be grasped in a pure eidetic reflection.

Ricoeur's analysis of the decision thus consists of three stages: a pure eidetic description, an account of the body with its largely involuntary needs and motivations, and an examination of the temporal performing of the decision; the latter two stages manifest the limits of the eidetic description.

The same threefold structure can be found in the other two phases of wilful action in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*: action and consent. Ricoeur starts the second phase with an eidetic analysis of intentional acts and movements. Then the spontaneous bodily constitution of the action by irretrievable emotions and habits is discussed, followed by an analysis of how our muscular efforts and our emotions and habits take place at the limit of our understanding of them. Through all these actions, our voluntary movements adjust to the powers that make them possible (Ricoeur 1966, 199-337).

In the third phase, which Ricoeur calls consent, the tendency of reflection to be total and transparent and to be its own source, is countered again by the involuntary. He starts with a pure description of consent, which is followed by the "experienced necessity" that shows itself in the first person singular, in my character, my unconscious and even my life. The way of consent, then, leads through an acceptance of its own finitude that can never be completely grasped rationally and gives rise to poetic expressions of this consent, in the myths of Stoicism and Orphism. Other myths are discussed in his later book *La symbolique du mal*.

These myths are answers to the limits of our rational self-understanding. Human freedom can only be understood well by means of limit-ideas, like Kant's regulative idea, in which the unity of human existence is thought, through the experience of a dramatic duality. These limit-ideas take together in reciprocity the activity and receptivity of will and action, its consent and necessity, in short, the voluntary and the involuntary:

> We need to recover a similar function for regulative ideas in relation to the originary phenomenological field. I will say therefore that there is a "human" signification, a signification of human unity, which is the *idea* of a motivated, incarnate, contingent freedom. […] We have no access to this signification of the human as *one* except through the deciphering of the relations between the voluntary and the involuntary. It is therefore solely an intentional unity toward which the experience of a dramatic duality points. […] Against this background, this horizon of unity, I live out the dramatic duality of being human. (Ricoeur 2016, 71)

In his early work, therefore, in a very different style, Ricoeur's phenomenological analyses of human freedom and will manifest an understanding of human existence which is remarkably similar to Patočka's asubjective phenomenology. Rational and ethical human life can only be understood against the background of fundamental structures of world and intersubjectivity (*cf.* Colin 1991).

b) *Oneself as Another*

Ricoeur's view on man as a rational and ethical agent is further developed in several works and reaches its summit in *Oneself as Another*. This is a rich and complicated study of the human being as an ethical person. The question "who is the human person?" is analysed and discussed on several levels: "Who is speaking? Who is acting? Who is recounting about himself or herself? Who is the moral subject of imputation?" (Ricoeur 1992, 16) Human self-understanding is thus examined on the level of language, action, narrative and morality. In the same manner as he did in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, Ricoeur steers a middle course between the modern self-positing *cogito* and its deposition: "the hermeneutics of the self is placed at an equal distance from the apology of the cogito and from its overthrow." (Ricoeur 1992, 4) Human self-understanding cannot do without the "I think", but its rational reflection is already embedded in and relates itself to layers of its existence that are not transparent. In his typical style, Ricoeur describes these tensions as dialectical relations between poles that presuppose each other, but cannot be reduced to each other.

Several dialectics are thus grafted on each other: firstly the relation of the I to itself in such a way that it never coincides with the self; secondly, the relation between sameness and selfhood; thirdly the relation between self and other:

> To say self is not to say I. The I is posited – or is deposed. The self is implied reflexively in the operations, the analysis of which precedes the return toward this self. Upon this dialectic of analysis and reflection is grafted that of idem and ipse. Finally, the dialectic of the same and the other crowns the first two dialectics. (Ricoeur 1992, 18)

In his discussion of human identity from the perspective of language and action, Ricoeur has encountered several aporias that all have to do with the temporality of human existence. The human person is dispersed in time, without having a clear objective kernel that remains the same. Only narrative theory can deal with these aporias in a convincing way. It is through stories that we understand and identify ourselves. It is through narrative only that the temporal permanence of human existence can be understood. Theoretical approaches of personal identity have always been looking at an objective *what*: What is the human person? What am I? Narratives can answer the question: *Who* am I?

Ricoeur distinguishes two sorts of permanence in time: *idem* and *ipse*, sameness and selfhood. Sameness is what allegedly remains the same, selfhood is the active self-maintenance that cannot be objectively defined. In his description of sameness, Ricoeur takes up again his notion of character, which he also used in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (Ricoeur 1992, 119-120) and describes it here as: "Character […] designates the set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognized." (Ricoeur 1992, 121) In his new analysis in *Oneself as Another*, character appears less immutable than in the previous works. A human personal character is actually changing and in development, but it manifests itself as durable and lasting, as if it does not change at all. It is the sedimentation of a personal self-realisation (*ipse*) that appears as if it has always remained the same:

> […] character is able to constitute the limit point where the problematic of *ipse* becomes indiscernible from that of *idem*, and where one is inclined not to distinguish them from one another. […] … precisely as second nature, my character is me, myself, *ipse*; but this ipse announces itself as *idem*. (Ricoeur 1992, 121)

In other words, the identity of character is an expression of the adherence of the *what* to the *who*: "Character is truly the 'what' of the 'who'." (Ricoeur 1992, 122) Bodily dispositions, talents and capacities go together with circumstantial opportunities, upbringing and choices, in such a way that they lead to sustainable personal traits, a second nature.

Selfhood is the constant development of the self in relation to character. Ricoeur describes it as a self-maintenance [*maintien de soi*] by keeping one's word, keeping promises. Self-identity is not a given, it is a task that has to be accomplished. It does not make sense, therefore, to try to express personal identity in terms of "what". The question of personal identity can only be articulated in terms of "who": who am I? The answer to this question needs to be given in a story, a narrative, that also functions as an ethical account of oneself. Personal identity is developed in the plot and intrigue of a historical narrative, that, on the one hand, finds a coherence of actions and experiences, and, on the other hand, is open for new events and for moments of discontinuity. A narrative, as Ricoeur puts it in *Time and Narrative*, is a "concordance discordante." (*cf.* Ricoeur 1990, vol. I, 42-45, resp. 64-70) In narration, self-identification remains a dynamic process, in which the dialectics between *idem* and *ipse*, between sameness and selfhood, can develop. Through narratives, selfhood has to cope with the alleged given of character. Personal identity thus needs to be acquired at several levels: practices, life plans and life as a whole.

With regard to a comparison with Patočka's notion of the third movement, in which it is stated that human existence as a whole cannot be surveyed, we might ask whether, in Ricoeur's approach, a narrative can give an overview of life in its totality. Ricoeur recognizes several problems in this regard. Both historical and fictive stories have a beginning and an end, whereas we do not have experiences of the beginning and ending of our own life. In addition, we can tell different stories with varying plots about different life plans (our career, our family, our hobbies, etc). Can these stories be taken together in the emplotment of one encompassing life narrative? Ricoeur criticizes Alasdair MacIntyre for too easily accepting the unity of life in a biography. For Ricoeur it remains an open question, whether several life stories can be united in one biography (Ricoeur 1992, 175-180). The unity of one's personal identity is an infinite ethical task that can never be completely fulfilled (Rasmussen 1996).

In *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur introduces narrative as a way to combine descriptions of human behaviour by theories of action with a moral perspective. Storytelling appears as the bridge between description and prescription. It extends the field of praxis and can serve at the same time as a "laboratory for moral judgment." (Ricoeur 1992, 140) In addition, our life story is told to others, as an ethical justification. In sort, self-maintenance by keeping one's word, being accountable for others, is the kernel of our ethical selfhood. With a reference to Levinas, Ricoeur describes self-reference as an ethical response to the other: "…the idea of a response to the question 'Where are you?' asked by another who needs me. This response is the following: 'Here I am' [*me voici*], a response that is a statement of self-constancy." (Ricoeur 1992, 165) Therefore, our narrative identity may be fragile, it is indispensable for our ethical responsibility. In this opposition Ricoeur sees a fruitful tension that needs to be understood in a dialectical manner (Waldenfels 1996).

Ricoeur makes a distinction between ethics and morality. Ethics refers to the orientation of the good life; morality to the implementation of this orientation in norms that pretend to be universal and imply the use of force. An Aristotelian teleological perspective is thus combined with a Kantian deontological perspective. Again, Ricoeur takes two approaches together in a dialectical style. There is a primacy of ethics over morality; the ethical orientation needs to pass the sieve of morality; and morality needs to be legitimized by ethics. Parallel to this distinction, Ricoeur divides the ethical self-understanding in self-esteem and self-respect. There is a primacy of self-esteem over self-respect; self-esteem receives the form of self-respect under a moral regime; if morality is confronted with aporias, self-respect serves as source and help for self-respect. (Ricoeur 1992, 170-171)

The ethical orientation is further divided in three relations: to the self, to the other and to many others, or, in Ricoeur's own terms: in "…a view of the 'good life', with and for the other, in just institutions." (Ricoeur 1992, 172) A thorough discussion of Ricoeur's ethics, as it is developed in the 7th, 8th and 9th study of *Soi-même comme un autre*, exceeds by far the

limits of this article. As the triple distinction cited above already indicates, he tries to combine an Aristotelian, Kantian and Hegelian approach of ethics, in such a way that the many paradoxes and aporias can be made fruitful in dialectical analyses. A Kantian autonomy is preserved within the *Sittlichkeit* of institutional contexts, in such a way that it is "…entrusted to the practical wisdom of moral judgment in situation." (Ricoeur 1992, 274; Carter 2014)

Ricoeur's discussion of all these aspects of ethical selfhood culminates in the notion of attestation, the testimony we can give of ourselves, that needs to be trustworthy. The certainty I and others can have of myself, is a matter of trust. Reliability to the other, to whom I must be able to give an attestation, an account of myself, is the kernel of my self-understanding (Ricoeur 1991c; 2013; Greisch 1996).

> So far, we can see many similarities in the philosophies of Patočka and Ricoeur. Human life is primordially embedded in natural and social horizons. What makes this life human, is the ethical call within these horizons and the rational manner of responding to them. Ricoeur was well aware of his proximity to Patočka. In a lecture he gave in Naples in 1997, he explicitly discusses these elements of Patočka's thought and their connection. He recognizes an elliptic and reciprocal relation between, on the one hand, Patočka's elaborations on the notion of the "natural" world in his a-subjective phenomenology, and, on the other hand, his reflections in the *Heretical Essays* on the meaning of history, that originates in a mythical pre-historical world. These two sides of Patočka's philosophy are related by presupposing a "fundamental pre-scientific and pre-historical anteriority", i.e. they are always already embedded in a natural and cultural world. (Ricoeur 2007, 193-217)

c) *modernity*

Critique of modernity as such, as it can be found in the work of Patočka, is not a theme for Ricoeur. He develops his thought in line with traditions of modernity, without feeling the need to recover ideas that were lost in modern philosophy and in modern culture. Patočka discusses modern culture as a supercivilization in such a way that he not only describes its inner conflict – between its radical and moderate forms – but denounces the whole principle *per se* of complete domination of reality. Such a radical opposition to modernity cannot be found

in Ricoeur's philosophy. To the contrary, in his introduction to the *Heretical Essays*, Ricoeur utters his concerns about Patočka's profound and radical criticism of modern culture: "…the strange, frankly shocking passages about the dominance of war, of darkness and the demonic at the very heart of the most rational projects of the promotion of peace…" (Ricoeur 1996, viii).

Ricoeur does discern inner conflicts in modern civilization, but only in order to make them fruitful in a dialectical fashion. To give an example, in the course of modernity, rationalism was first established and then tends to undermine itself by rational self-critique. This inner tension is taken by Ricoeur as a point of departure in *Oneself as Another*. He is looking for a dialectical route in between the *cogito* as posited by Descartes and the *cogito* shattered by Nietzsche. Furthermore, the ethical part of *Oneself as Another* is for a large part an elaboration on the tension between Kantian morality and Hegelian ethical *Sittlichkeit*. The whole discussion of personal identity, therefore, takes place in the framework of modern philosophy. In another example, the same goes for his work on recognition, in which Ricoeur in large measure elaborates on Hegel (Ricoeur 2005).

With regard to Ricoeur's views on communist totalitarianism – one of the main features of what Patočka calls supercivilization – a gradual change can be discerned. Ricoeur has always been in favour of socialist economic reforms, while at the same time defending individual human rights. He was very well aware of the profound problems of totalitarian communist states, like the Soviet Union and China, but he refused to take sides in a too simple antagonism between these totalitarian states and the so-called "free world". In his earlier works he pleads for internal reforms in the communist societies (Ricoeur 1955; 1991b). This attitude shifts, when it appeared to be impossible to alter these regimes from the inside into a "socialism with a human face". The violent suppression of the Prague Spring and the tragic death of Patočka, due to the regime's response to Charta 77, have certainly played a role in this change of thought. One can see a testimony of this

influence in the quotations from Ricoeur's commemoration of Patočka at the beginning of this article (Michel 2008).

Another target of Patočka's critique of supercivilization is modern technology. Again, this is not an issue that Ricoeur has reflected upon extensively, but neither is it absent in his work. In various articles, he recognizes the well-known tension between instrumental reason and ethical values, and mentions the urge to avoid a technocracy by democratic means. However, he always approaches these problems of modern technology as questions that need to be answered within the confines of modern culture (Kaplan 2003; 2011; Lewin 2012).

Conclusion

The comparison in this article has manifested that the work of Patočka and Ricoeur, despite huge differences in style and topics of research, contains a profound consensus in the understanding of the human being as a rational ethical person. Both philosophers regard humans as insurmountably embedded in natural, cultural, and intersubjective structures. By rational reflection we can and need to attain insight in this embedding, but this insight is finite. Therefore, we shall never be able to completely grasp all facets of our lives. This is, however, no reason to endorse irrationalism or scepticism. The finitude of our reflection is exactly the main reason to look for a rational understanding of our existence. Since our choices and our way of life are not self-evident, we need to reflect on them in order to give an ethical account of ourselves. Furthermore, reflection can show us how our being embedded in social and intersubjective structures implies ethical relations as constitutive for our existence. Patočka and Ricoeur have conceptualized this characterization of human life as, respectively, devotion and attestation. In devotion and attestation, humans can understand themselves as rational ethical persons.

The main difference of Patočka and Ricoeur lies in their evaluation of modernity. Whereas Ricoeur elaborates on major tensions and aporias in modern philosophy and culture, Patočka calls for a thorough reconsideration of modern rational

culture as a whole. His appeal to human rights, however, reveals a tension in his critique of modernity.

In conclusion, Ricoeur's claim that Patočka's view on the human being as a rational ethical subject is representative for modern European rationalism, can at least be seen as paradoxical. On the one hand, many aspects of Patočka's anthropological reflections and analyses, e.g. his view on human freedom and rationality, can easily be traced historically to developments in modern philosophy. On the other hand, he has explicitly and profoundly criticized main elements of modern civilization, especially its rationalism. Nevertheless, each in their own way, Ricoeur and Patočka have offered major contributions to our understanding of humans as rational ethical subjects, by revealing the essential role of devotion and attestation.

NOTES

[1] Author's translation from the French original; *cf.*: "Je n'hésite pas à discerner dans cet appel de Husserl un des relais par lesquels la présente revendication des libertés et des droits humains, à Prague, se rattache au grand rationalisme européen de l'âge classique, par-delà les socialismes du XIXe siècle."

[2] "Il est difficile pour les intellectuels occidentaux, encore tout occupés à se déprendre du moralisme et à déconstruire la raison, de comprendre ce recours des intellectuels tchèques à la morale dans le champ même de la revendication politique."

[3] "[…] le plaidoyer philosophique pour la subjectivité devient, dans le cas de l'extrême abaissement d'un people, le seul recours du citoyen contre le tyran."

[4] Author's translation from the French edition: "Notre dynamique propre, l'élan qui nous porte vers les choses, trouve un pendant dans l'orientation du monde vers nous, dans les traits dynamiques originaires de l'espace…"

[5] Author's translation from the French edition: "Avant que nous ne soyons en état de faire quoi que ce soit, le monde s'est déjà emparé de nous, le monde nous tient, dans et par notre disposition. Telle est la contribution de ce domaine au mouvement originaire que nous sommes – mouvement vers le monde, puis, à travers le monde, de retour à nous-mêmes. La disposition, « ou l'on en est », nous dit toujours déjà de la manière la plus générale que nous sommes au monde et *oú* en lui nous sommes."

[6] It is at this point that Patočka's existential phenomenology takes a turn that is different from Merleau-Ponty's understanding of embodiment and intersubjectivity (*cf.* Evink 2013).

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De la lutte pour la reconnaissance au don de soi. Patočka et Ricœur lecteurs de Hegel

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Abstract

**From the Struggle for Recognition to the Gift of Self.
Patočka and Ricœur's Reading of Hegel**

In this paper we will highlight the Hegelian heritage in Patočka and Ricœur's thoughts. This heritage is particularly clear in their ideas of gift of self and of community bonding. The critical resumption of Hegel leads the two philosophers to discover some forms of recognition that overtake the struggle to the death, i.e. the two figures of the gift of self: the ceremonial gift and the authentic sacrifice. Patočka and Ricœur compare to Hegel also on the political thought. On one side they agree with the idea of a conflictual origin of the community connections and of the institutions; on the other side they refuse every synthetic reconciliation, whether it is the hypostasis figure of the State or the absolute subjectivity. While preserving the tragic element of the history and of the historic human praxis, Patočka and Ricœur seem to analyze and overtake the Hegelian idea of struggle in the direction of a community connection which finds its foundation in the gift of self.

Keywords: ceremonial gift, self-dedication, sacrifice, conflict, polis, Hegelian dialectics

Dans cet article, nous aborderons la question de l'héritage hégélien chez Patočka et Ricœur, par le biais de leurs « phénoménologies du don ». L'idée que nous tâcherons d'expliciter dans ces pages est que l'élément conflictuel et tragique du négatif hégélien demeure fondamental, bien que transfiguré, dans les idées de don de soi et de lien communautaire développées par les deux philosophes.

1. Hegel dans l'œuvre de Patočka et Ricœur

Un fait indubitable est que ces deux auteurs entament un dialogue constant et serré avec le philosophe allemand. Ricœur développe l'idée de don, qui fera l'objet de nos analyses, à partir des paradigmes de la reconnaissance exposés dans *Parcours de la reconnaissance* ; les chapitres III et IV de la troisième section de cet ouvrage sont consacrés au concept hégélien d'*Anerkennung*. C'est précisément au cours de la confrontation avec Hegel et par le biais de sa réactualisation par Axel Honneth, que Ricœur peut déployer l'idée d'une convergence paradoxale entre lutte et don. Dans une conférence donnée en 2003 et intitulée « La lutte pour la reconnaissance et l'économie du don », il aborde de façon condensée la même question. D'autres importantes récurrences du dialogue avec Hegel se trouvent dans *Temps et récit III*, en particulier dans le chapitre intitulé « Renoncer à Hegel », et dans « Hegel aujourd'hui », conférence prononcée en 1974.[1] Malgré le renoncement explicite aux conclusions ultimes de la philosophie hégélienne de l'histoire, Ricœur reste persuadé du fait que

> le génie inégalé de Hegel, qui nous donne sans cesse à penser – voire contre lui –, est d'avoir exercé avec une amplitude sans précédent la *Darstellung*, l'exhibition de notre expérience historique dans toutes ses dimensions, sociale, politique, culturelle, spirituelle. (Ricœur 1986, 299)

Au cours des années 1960 et 1970, Patočka élabore ses idées de dévouement et de sacrifice authentique de soi, à partir d'une conception conflictuelle ou « polémique » de l'histoire et du monde commun – conception dont nous mettrons en lumière la dette hégélienne, demeurant plus subtile et moins explicite que celle héraclitéenne. Les lieux du dialogue avec Hegel dans l'œuvre de Patočka sont d'ailleurs nombreux : traducteur de la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* et de l'*Esthétique*, Patočka consacre son dernier cours publique à l'ouvrage hégélien de 1807 (*Hegelova « Fenomenologie Ducha »*, 1949-1950, inédit). Les *Essais hérétiques* ainsi que les textes réunis en traduction française dans *L'art et le temps* témoignent également d'une confrontation avec Hegel sur les thèmes de l'art, de l'histoire et du temps.[2]

Le Hegel de Patočka et de Ricœur est d'ailleurs le même, si l'on peut dire, dans la mesure où les deux auteurs se réfèrent avant tout aux ouvrages de jeunesse et à la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*. Ils se placent d'autre part tous deux dans le socle de la réception française de Hegel des années 1940, dont les acteurs principaux sont Hyppolite et Kojève – ce dernier marquant particulièrement Patočka qui, à l'occasion de son cours de 1949-1950, se réfère constamment à sa célèbre *Introduction*, où la lutte pour la reconnaissance acquiert, comme on le sait, une place décisive. En plus de l'héritage phénoménologique, Patočka et Ricœur nous semblent ainsi partager une certaine lecture de Hegel : si, d'un côté, les deux philosophes participent au mouvement de redécouverte des écrits de jeunesse, de l'autre côté ils en proposent une interprétation tout à fait originale qui prend ses distances des lectures les plus courantes. En fait, chez les deux auteurs le rapport à Hegel est fortement ambivalent : si la philosophie et, en particulier, la dialectique hégéliennes gardent à leurs yeux une certaine légitimité, ce n'est que dans la mesure où elles aident à décrypter la *praxis* humaine dans l'histoire. Chez Patočka et Ricœur, la reprise critique de Hegel va donc dans le sens d'une phénoménologie pratique, qui refuse toute réconciliation absolue des conflits de la vie morale et de l'histoire. Ainsi, Hegel serait le premier, d'après Patočka, « à penser l'histoire comme réalisation de l'impératif catégorique », qui reste chez Kant abstrait et anhistorique (Patočka 1990, 316). En ce sens, c'est aussi par le biais de la philosophie hégélienne que Patočka arrive à donner une épaisseur pratique et historique à la phénoménologie transcendantale de Husserl et à l'analytique existentiale heideggérienne, selon l'ellipse aux deux foyers évoquée par Ricœur (Ricœur 1997, 1).

2. De la lutte pour la reconnaissance au don cérémoniel

Comme il a été évoqué plus haut, dans *Parcours de la reconnaissance* Ricœur aborde le concept hégélien d'*Anerkennung*, en s'appuyant sur l'ouvrage d'Axel Honneth, *La Lutte pour la reconnaissance*. Notoirement, la question de la reconnaissance chez Hegel est en effet indissociable de l'idée de

lutte des autoconsciences, représentée dans la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* par la célèbre dialectique du maître et de l'esclave. En outre, Ricœur ouvre sa communication de 2003 – qui synthétise précisément le débat avec Hegel – en disant que « le titre de cette conférence, "La lutte pour la reconnaissance et l'économie du don", semble marier l'eau et le feu, le mot "lutte" et le mot "don", […] mais ce qui est en jeu c'est le mot "reconnaissance" » (Ricœur 2003, 17).

L'enjeu de ces textes est précisément de soustraire le processus de la reconnaissance au seul paradigme conflictuel, mis en avant notamment par l'interprétation de kojèvienne de la phénoménologie hégélienne.[3] A cette fin, au lieu de prendre le départ de « cet ouvrage très achevé » qu'est la *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, Ricœur préfère remonter aux débuts philosophiques de Hegel, à savoir aux écrits de la période de Iéna, entre 1802 et 1806 (*Système de la vie éthique*, *Realphilosophie*). Ici apparaîtrait un concept élargi et non encore systématisé d'*Anerkennung*. Le Hegel de Iéna cherche en effet, contre Hobbes, un fondement moral distinct de la peur et de la défiance, « un fondement moral dont on peut dire qu'il donne la dimension humaine » à l'entreprise politique (Ricœur 2003, 19). Il n'est pas question, dans ces ouvrages de jeunesse, ni d'une morale abstraite ni d'un conflit infini, mais de la pratique des mœurs, à savoir des pratiques humaines concrètes qui amenèrent à la réalisation d'institutions de plus en plus complexes. Ensuite, dit Ricœur,

> sur ce projet se greffe une méthode qui est de faire apparaître la négativité – c'est-à-dire tout ce qui, d'une façon ou d'une autre, nie – comme le moteur dynamique de l'avancée des idées et des pratiques. La sortie de la vie naturelle, le fait d'être simplement là, « *Dasein* » comme on dit en allemand, se fait par le négatif qui pousse toujours plus loin. (Ricœur 2003, 20)

Le politique naît donc par cette « poussée spirituelle » et sous l'action de la négativité vivante : toute conquête pratique, juridique, institutionnelle générant un ordre humain se fait ainsi « par la multiplication des négations » (Ricœur 2003, 20). Si, d'un côté, dans son idée de lutte pour la reconnaissance, Hegel découvre la « détermination réciproque de la conscience de soi et de l'intersubjectivité », de l'autre côté, le processus

d'*Anerkennung* ne se réalise finalement que de manière abstraite (les autoconsciences « se reconnaissent tous deux comme partageant la pensée » – chapitre IV de la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*) ou bien dans la synthèse absolue de l'État (chapitre VI) (Ricœur 2003, 18-19). Cela signifie que : a) toute humanité se réalise dans une relation ; b) toute relation est initialement un conflit ; c) toute conflictualité trouve sa réconciliation dans l'institution. Alors que, dans la relation horizontale entre autoconsciences, la reconnaissance demeure unilatérale et asymétrique, elle se réalise pleinement dans la dimension verticale de l'État.

Or, d'après Ricœur le problème c'est que, « si nous restons seulement dans l'horizon de la lutte pour la reconnaissance, nous créerons une demande insatiable, une sorte de nouvelle conscience malheureuse, une revendication sans fin » (Ricœur 2003, 18). Parallèlement, dans la réactualisation de la lutte pour la reconnaissance opérée par Honneth, qui met l'accent sur la notion de conflit destructeur de reconnaissance, Ricœur découvre une véritable « phénoménologie du mépris ». De la méconnaissance surgirait en effet le désir de reconnaissance, le désir du désir évoqué par Kojève ; cela risque toutefois d'engendrer une « demande insatiable » et appelle de ce fait « une remise en question du rôle quasi fondateur attribué à la notion de conflit et de lutte ». A la « négation insatiable » et à la « revendication sans limite » des autocosciences, Ricœur tente alors d'opposer des expériences, « sans doute rares mais précieuses » (Ricœur 2003, 22-23), montrant la possibilité d'une reconnaissance pacifique et non-violente. C'est pourquoi le paradigme du don vient se greffer sur cette origine conflictuelle du rapport à l'autre, ouvrant ainsi l'horizon d'une reconnaissance mutuelle à complément et correction de la lutte.

Pour aborder la question du don, Ricœur s'appuie sur les œuvres de Marcel Mauss, *Essai sur le don*, et de Marcel Hénaff, *Le prix de la vérité*. Proposant une « économie du don », Mauss réduit le don à la dimension économique de l'échange marchand, manquant ainsi son caractère exceptionnel et incommensurable. Ricœur s'attache alors à trouver une alternative à la lutte et au paradoxe de la réciprocité dans des

expériences hors de l'ordinaire, qui reposent sur «des médiations symboliques soustraites tant à l'ordre juridique qu'à celui des échanges marchands» (Ricœur 2004, 341). C'est sur l'aspect cérémoniel de l'échange que Ricœur insiste à la suite de Hénaff : en effet, dans «l'échange cérémoniel des cadeaux nous avons un modèle d'une pratique de reconnaissance, de reconnaissance non-violente» (Ricœur 2004, 26). La cérémonie de l'échange de dons ne relève pas de la quotidienneté ordinaire des échanges marchands, se soustrayant ainsi à la logique paradoxale de l'obligation du don en retour ou contre-don. En ce sens, plutôt que de relation de réciprocité ou de reconnaissance réciproque, Ricœur propose de parler de mutualité, concept-clé exposé à la fin de la troisième étude de *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, intitulée «La reconnaissance mutuelle». Aux yeux de Ricœur, l'idée de mutualité peut surmonter le paradoxe de la réciprocité du don et les apories de la reconnaissance conflictuelle, à savoir le risque d'une demande infinie et l'oubli de «l'indépassable différence» entre deux existences qui se font face : contrairement à la réciprocité, la mutualité désigne une «générosité libérée des règles d'équivalence», c'est-à-dire de l'obligation de donner en retour.

Représentant un substitut et un gage, le don cérémoniel devient le symbole d'une reconnaissance tacite : dans l'échange de dons, ce n'est pas la chose donnée qui par sa force exige le retour mais «c'est l'acte mutuel de reconnaissance de deux êtres qui n'ont pas le discours spéculatif de leur connaissance» (Ricœur 2003, 25). La reconnaissance mutuelle a donc moins le sens d'une connaissance théorique que celui d'une reconnaissance comme gratitude, sentiment qui «relie le donner et le rendre» – la langue française permet d'ailleurs de tenir ensemble ces deux sens du terme. Le don cérémoniel est donc au gré de soustraire la relation de reconnaissance tant à la dimension épistémologique qu'à la dimension marchande, suscitant «une rupture à l'intérieur de la catégorie des biens» (Ricœur 2004, 366). Le rapport avec les biens non marchands, tel que la pratique du don, acquiert également une signification libératrice puisqu'il exclue la notion d'obligation dans le procès de reconnaissance. Nous verrons que le sacrifice authentique

comme don de soi chez Patočka ouvre également cet horizon de liberté.

Pour résumer, le but de Ricœur dans son analyse de la lutte et du don est double : a) démontrer que, tout en demeurant une puissance de cohésion, l'élément conflictuel n'est pas pourtant le fondement ultime du processus de reconnaissance ; b) soustraire la reconnaissance (et le don) à la contrainte de la réciprocité, au paradoxe du don et du contredon entrainant une demande infinie. La lutte pour la reconnaissance « se perdrait dans la conscience malheureuse s'il n'était pas donné aux humains d'accéder à une expérience effective, quoique symbolique, de reconnaissance mutuelle, sur le modèle du don cérémoniel » (Ricœur 2004, 243). Sans faire l'économie du conflit impliqué dans les processus de reconnaissance, Ricœur met donc l'accent sur ses formes non-violente : la pratique du don montre justement que le conflit, tout en représentant un moteur de la relation intersubjective, n'est pas le dernier mot de l'*Anerkennung*. La pratique de l'échange de dons fait donc partie des « ces expériences rares qui protègent la lutte pour la reconnaissance de retourner à la violence de Hobbes » (Ricœur 2003, 27) : réalisant une convergence paradoxale entre lutte et don, Ricœur fournit ainsi un nouveau fondement à la reconnaissance, qui peut se réaliser non de façon conflictuelle mais plutôt de façon mutuelle. En conclusion de sa conférence, Ricœur pose néanmoins la question suivante : « jusqu'à quel point peut-on donner une signification fondatrice à ces expériences rares ? » (Ricœur 2003, 27). Nous essayerons d'y répondre après avoir abordé la question du sacrifice, qui acquiert chez Patočka le même statut exceptionnel que le don mutuel chez Ricœur.

3. Le dévouement aux autres, le sacrifice pour « rien »

Nous considérerons ici la célèbre théorie du triple mouvement de l'existence humaine élaborée par Patočka au cours des années 1960[4], en nous arrêtant en particulier sur le deuxième et le troisième mouvement. Le deuxième mouvement de l'existence marque l'entrée dans la sphère de la *praxis*, bien

qu'il s'agisse d'une *praxis* aliénée. Ce mouvement de projection de soi se trouve en effet partagée entre le travail et la lutte :

> dans le travail l'homme s'affronte aux choses, dans la lutte il s'affronte aux hommes comme virtuellement asservis ou asservisseurs. Dans la pratique, les deux se combinent : l'organisation de l'homme en vue du travail est le résultat d'une lutte et est elle-même une lutte. (Patočka 1988, 117)

On retrouve donc à ce niveau les idées hégéliennes de lutte pour la reconnaissance et d'extériorisation ou aliénation (*Entäusserung*). En effet, ce mouvement désigne en même temps l'affrontement des autres hommes au sein de la société et le prolongement de soi dans le commerce avec les choses : il exprime à la fois un processus d'extériorisation et de conséquente identification au monde du commerce quotidien, et un rapport aux autres marqué par la compétition et la contraposition. Le rapport humain au monde prend ici la forme d'une *praxis* de transformation au moyen du travail ; une telle transformation active ne correspond pas pourtant à une approche problématique au monde, qui demeure inquestionné, considéré comme allant de soi : l'homme s'y situe « de la manière requise et au lieu assigné » (Patočka 1990, 309), sans problématiser sa propre situation. Comme le remarque Ricœur, l'a-problématicité de la vie naturelle, de la simple vie vécue dans l'acceptation (premier mouvement), se prolonge dans le cycle du travail, qui plonge l'homme dans les mécanismes de la civilisation technique et du système économique (*Cf.* Ricœur 1991, 79).

Néanmoins, si d'un côté l'enracinement et le prolongement cachent la possibilité du redressement, de l'autre côté ils en ouvrent la possibilité : le deuxième mouvement « ne rompt pas les bornes de l'existence préhistorique » (Ricœur 1991, 79), mais y ouvre une faille. En amont du libre dévouement et en aval de la fusion propre à la vie naturelle, cet affrontement a une valeur éminemment dialectique, puisqu'il porte en soi le principe négatif de son propre dépassement, de façon que nous puissions considérer les trois mouvements comme étant dans un rapport d'*Aufhebung*. De cette manière, le deuxième mouvement désigne à la fois le premier jalon de la lutte de l'existence pour se redresser de la simple vie et l'échec

de cette même poussée au redressement : il représente un prolongement de l'enracinement (l'ancrage naturel devient ancrage social) et le principe de son renversement dans le mouvement de liberté.

Ce n'est que dans ce troisième mouvement que l'affrontement ou la « simple solidarité des intérêts » – qui caractérisent la vie en commun dans le monde de la lutte et du travail – subissent un véritable revirement. Dans le mouvement de percée « on ne vit plus dans ce qui sépare et enferme » – les conflits sociaux, les choses, les relations objectivées – mais dans « ce qui unit et ouvre » (Patočka 1988, 122). Délivré de notre singularité, de nos intérêts subjectifs et particuliers, nous pouvons nous détourner de nous-mêmes et nous donner aux autres. Alors que le nivèlement de l'individualité propre au deuxième mouvement ne peut que dresser les hommes les uns contre les autres, dans le troisième mouvement

> l'affrontement a désormais la signification du dévouement. Mon étant n'est plus défini comme un être pour moi, mais comme un étant dans le dévouement, un étant qui s'ouvre à l'être, qui vit pour que les choses soient, pour que les choses – et aussi moi-même et les autres – se montrent en ce qu'elles sont. (Patočka, 1988, 122)

Comme c'était le cas chez Ricœur, ici également c'est la positivité du don de soi qui permet d'aller au-delà de la simple opposition conflictuelle, de la lutte destructive. Non seulement : ce mouvement qui, par le don de soi, représente une conquête de soi, devient en même temps un « rapport explicite au monde en totalité » (Patočka 1988, 11) ; il s'agit d'un « revirement total de l'intérêt », à savoir de la manière dont l'homme est dans le monde et parmi les autre (*inter-esse*). Pour Patočka, être homme spirituel demande de problématiser son installation dans le monde et de se découvrir non seulement comme enraciné et affairé, mais aussi comme libre et historique. Si, d'un côté, la liberté est le propre de l'esprit – à savoir si elle relève d'une tension vers la totalité qui s'oppose à la dispersion dans le monde simplement donné – de l'autre côté, elle ne se réalise que dans une *praxis*, dans une transformation de nos rapports pratiques au monde et à autrui. Tout comme la conscience hégélienne de la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, qui

cherche sa vérité à travers l'expérience dialectique, « dans le dévouement, j'atteins à la conscience de moi comme essentiellement infini » (Patočka 1988, 40). Le renoncement à soi se retourne donc dialectiquement dans son contraire, il devient conquête de soi à la lumière d'un plus haut, en manifestant l'écart entre fini et infini, chose et existence : « je manifeste mon être comme infini en renonçant entièrement à mon être fini, en le donnant entièrement à l'autre » (Patočka 1988, 40). Le dévouement représente ainsi le paradoxe d'un don qui enrichi notre être : infinie, la conscience ne s'y découvre qu'en renonçant à soi, qu'en consacrant sa finitude à autrui. Mais « infini » ne veut pas dire ici absolu au sens hégélien : il n'y a dévouement que s'il y a un mouvement centrifuge, un détournement radical par rapport à soi en tant que subjectivité close. Dévoués, nous sommes donc en même temps déracinés, puisque

> ce n'est plus la terre qui dispose de notre finitude et, à travers elle, nous domine ; nous voulons la « dominer » nous-mêmes, nous expliquer avec elle – il n'y a en cela aucune volonté de puissance mais au contraire une acceptation de la réalité et une transformation qui va de pair avec cette acceptation. (Patočka 1988, 112-113)

La lutte à mort pour la reconnaissance et la transformation du monde, sous le signe de la préoccupation pour les choses, se retournent ainsi dans une acceptation responsable et une *praxis* se rapportant à sa possibilité la plus propre.

Existe-t-il une expression éminente du mouvement de dévouement, un phénomène qu'atteste concrètement, dans notre monde et à notre époque, de cette consécration de soi et libre adhésion à la finitude ? D'après Patočka, ce serait le sacrifice, question qui prend toute son ampleur dans les textes des années 1970 consacrés à la surcivilisation et à l'ère technique. Or, Patočka distingue une forme authentique et une forme naïve ou inauthentique du sacrifice. La seconde indiquerait un sacrifice pour *quelque chose*, « sacrifice au sens objectif, on pourrait presque dire chosique » : le sacrifice inauthentique reste donc dans la perspective de « l'échange d'un étant contre un autre » (Patočka 1990, 274). Même l'immolation volontaire pour quelque chose (l'État, un bien, voire autrui)

ainsi que le sacrifice des victimes de guerre, impliquant toujours un « pour-quoi », seraient alors de l'ordre du sacrifice naïf.

Si le sacrifice naïf est en principe comparable à un paiement, qui s'attend et demande un rendement en retour, le sacrifice authentique est au contraire une « non-prestation », de façon que « le se-sacrifier-pour quelque-chose devient un se sacrifier pour ce qui n'"est" aucune chose ni rien de chosique » (Patočka 1990, 274). Le sacrifice au sens authentique, écrit Patočka, est « à comprendre dans la seule perspective de la protestation, comme un "non" qui ne s'adresse pas à des états de fait singuliers et concrets, mais – au fond – au mode de compréhension qui les sous-tend » (Patočka 1990, 274). L'enjeu du sacrifice authentique n'est alors rien de positif ou d'affirmatif, rien qui ait un contenu assignable ; il est plutôt l'attestation négative ou la « manifestation *in concreto* » d'un acte de liberté qui vient déchirer l'*in-différence* de l'ordre des choses. La manifestation de cette différence radicale, que nous allons examiner dans le paragraphe suivant, fait tout le *discrimen* entre sacrifice authentique et sacrifice inauthentique ou naïf.

Arrivés ici, on pourrait se demander si le sacrifice ainsi décrit ne représenterait pas une déclinaison solipsiste du mouvement de liberté, qui s'achevait au contraire dans un dévouement aux autres. Si le sacrifice authentique est un sacrifice pour rien, à savoir pour rien d'étant, il est néanmoins un sacrifice *pour tout* (pour le tout du monde, qui n'est plus une somme de choses indifféremment échangeables), et un sacrifice pour tous (Tardivel 2011, 275), car il *s'adresse* à tous. Ce qui empêche de penser à un issu solipsiste du sacrifice c'est, il nous semble, le fait qu'il est un appel adressé à l'humanité – au double sens de communauté humaine et d'essence de l'homme – puisque « celui qui se montre capable d'un tel sacrifice se donne et offre aux autres – aux autres peut-être plus qu'à lui-même – un nouveau motif de compréhension de l'être » (Patočka 1990, 310). Dans le sacrifice, il y a un appel qui ne s'adresse à personne, mais qui fait signe à tous vers ce qui dans l'existence est essentiel et fondamental. Le sacrifice où il y a « simple » perte (perte d'un bien, jusqu'à la perte de la vie) n'a pas une telle valeur « symbolique ». Le sacrifice authentique est pourtant un symbole qui n'a rien d'abstrait, car il a le sens d'un

geste inaugural : c'est un appel qui s'adresse au proche et au lointain, dans le temps et dans l'espace, instituant un horizon nouveau de la compréhension et de la *praxis*. Il nous semble alors que dans le sacrifice l'idée de dévouement à l'autre n'est pas destituée, mais plutôt mise à l'épreuve du nihilisme : le sacrifice authentique, sacrifice pour « rien », ne se perd pas pourtant dans le rien. Il est au contraire générateur de nouvelles pratiques capables de résister aux tendances destructives de l'ère contemporaine, réaffirmant, bien que négativement, l'humanité de l'homme.

4. Don et sacrifice : « failles » de la dimension marchande et de la civilisation technique

La surcivilisation radicale repose pour Patočka, qui se place dans le socle de l'analyse heideggérienne de la technique, sur la « pénétration et la domination absolue de l'étant (à la fois humain et extrahumain) » (Patočka 1990, 126). D'où la conception de la vie humaine elle-même comme objet, également calculable, dominable et manipulable. En ce sens, l'idée de surcivilisation renvoie aussi bien à la logique marchande à laquelle Ricœur oppose la pratique du don cérémoniel. Le don cérémoniel et le sacrifice fêlent donc respectivement la logique marchande et la logique technique, qui s'avèrent d'ailleurs solidaires. C'est justement la méconnaissance de la différence radicale entre le mode d'être de la chose et le mode d'être de ce qui n'est pas un étant – et qui donc ne se soumet pas au calcul et à la domination – qui caractérise la civilisation technique et marchande : elle ne reconnaît pas de plus haut, « aucune distinction de rang au sein de l'étant », ce qui ne laisse que des différences quantitatives (Patočka 1990, 271). Le sacrifice inauthentique, tout comme le don réduit à l'échange marchand, ne brisent pas cette logique et par conséquent ne mettent pas en question les limites du monde technique de l'étantité dominable, ni percent au-delà de l'horizon économique de l'utilité calculable.

Le don cérémoniel et le sacrifice authentique expriment au contraire l'idée d'un engagement vers un plus haut et impliquent par conséquent l'idée d'une *différence* entre le mode d'être de l'homme et celui de la chose, entre valeur marchande

et valeur morale, équivalence et mutualité. C'est donc l'idée d'une « distinction de rang au sens authentique » qui est en jeu dans ces pratiques : dans le don et le sacrifice, la forme de vie économique et technique est « battue en brèche, sur toute la ligne, par l'apparition de la différence », à savoir par la « l'instauration d'une toute autre hiérarchie » au sein d'un monde autrement unidimensionnel. Autrement dit, l'exceptionnalité de ces gestes relève de la manifestation de ce qui est « sans commune mesure avec tout le reste ». C'est donc l'idée d'incommensurabilité qui met en question la logique du prix ainsi que l'optique du *Gestell*, qui représentent un « nivèlement absolu dont les seules mesures sont quantitatives » (Tardivel 2011, 313).

Faisant signe vers un autre mode de compréhension, le don de soi qui se concrétise dans le don cérémoniel et le sacrifice authentique crée une faille, dont le propre est de pouvoir se propager, d'instaurer un tout autre horizon de sens. Pour ces deux pratiques, nous pourrions donc faire valoir le mot de Ricœur, pour qui ces gestes

> ne peuvent faire institution mais, en portant au jour les limites de la justice d'équivalence et en ouvrant un espace d'espérance à l'horizon de la politique et du droit au plan post-national et international, […] déclenchent une onde d'irradiation et d'irrigation qui, de façon secrète et détournée, contribue à l'avancée de l'histoire vers des états de paix. (Ricœur 2004, 354)

5. Patočka : une pensée du tragique

Arrivés ici, nous nous attachons à mettre en lumière l'aspect tragique, relevé par Ricœur lui-même, de la réflexion patočkienne sur l'histoire et la politique. Les deux philosophes se rejoignent d'ailleurs, par le biais d'une reprise critique de Hegel, dans leur conception de la vie morale et du statut des institutions.

Nous avons désormais compris que les hommes du sacrifice sont ceux qui se rendent compte que

> le monde et la vie immédiate ne sont pas tout, qu'on peut les sacrifier et, dans ce sacrifice, entrevoir l'éclair au milieu des ténèbres dont parlait Héraclite. Au-delà des horreurs de notre époque, il y a cette conscience du sens du sacrifice. (Patočka 1990, 256)

Ce n'est que dans le danger, dans le péril de la « puissance immense et inquiétante » de la domination technique que le sacrifice apparaît ; elle en est presque la condition de manifestation, de façon que « le corrélat de l'aliénation est l'apparition de "ce qui sauve" » (Patočka 1990, 256). Cela veut dire aussi qu'une existence véritablement libre et problématique ne peut se déployer que dans une « explication avec le péril affronté sans crainte », à savoir dans l'affrontement du tragique du monde et de l'histoire. En ce sens, « tout rapport libre est nécessairement un conflit, la vie libre est nécessairement une lutte » (Patočka 1988, 43) ; non une lutte qui nous oppose à autrui, comme dans le mouvement de prolongement, mais une lutte qui nous oppose au monde de la vie simplement donné, la vie réduite à la survie ou à la satisfaction des besoins. Dès lors, le mouvement de percée et de dévouement représente un véritable épochè de la vie naturelle ; *épochè* qui pourtant n'a pas avant tout un sens théorique ou épistémologique, mais qui acquiert plutôt une dimension morale et socio-politique : en effet, « si le conflit de la vie se projette dans la sphère du savoir, il n'en découle pas. Le conflit de la vie est plus ancien et plus profond » (Patočka 1990, 256). Par cette *épochè*, nous accédons à l'existence problématique, nous faisons face à l'in-évidence du monde et assumons la « responsabilité du non-sens » (Patočka 1990, 91). C'est en ce sens que Patočka écrit qu'il faut comprendre la vie « non pas du point de vue du *jour*, du point de vue du simple vivre, de la vie acceptée, mais aussi du point de vue du conflit, de la *nuit*, du point de vue du *polemos* » (Patočka 1981, 57). L'homme libre met sa vie à découvert, s'expose au mystère du monde ainsi qu'au conflit qui gouverne l'histoire : face à l'insuffisance d'une résolution théorique (Husserl) ou esthétique-ontologique (Heidegger) du conflit propre à notre époque, Patočka propose un affrontement praxique du *polemos*. De plus, aucune réduction ni réconciliation du conflit n'est possible : la solution du conflit ne peut donc qu'être conflictuelle elle aussi, car ce n'est qu'en perçant à jour la négativité qu'on peut réaliser une conversion concrète, non seulement de notre regard mais aussi de notre action.[5]

La récurrence du thème du conflit et sa centralité ont fait parler de la pensée de Patočka comme d'une polémologie (Tardivel 2011, 99 *sq*.). De ce conflit on pourrait cerner, il nous semble, au moins 3 formes :
– la lutte intérieure à l'apparaître, conflit entrainé par le retrait de l'être : on pourrait parler de lutte ontologique ou cosmologique ;
– la lutte pour la reconnaissance sociale, qui oppose les individus dans le monde du travail, de l'échange économique e de la production : c'est la lutte pour la reconnaissance au sens hégélien ;
– la lutte de l'esprit contre ce qui tire l'existence vers le bas, qui la rabatte sur son niveau biologique : on peut parler ici d'une lutte métaphysique en tant que lutte pour un plus haut.

Si le premier sens de la lutte est « éthiquement neutre », le deuxième et le troisième ne le sont évidemment pas, car ils engagent notre rapport au monde et aux autres. Le conflit acquiert dès lors une valeur morale, qui apparaît encore plus essentiel là où, « sans savoir raffiné ni dialectique, on le voit sous la forme pure d'un homme qui entre en conflit avec la concentration du pouvoir » (Patočka 1990, 286). Le sacrifice assume ici une forme « radicale et paradoxale » qui ne peut que nous rappeler le célèbre verset d'Hölderlin : « là où croît le péril, croît aussi ce qui sauve ». C'est donc au sein du monde technique (Patočka) et économique-marchand (Ricœur) que les expériences exceptionnelles de don de soi peuvent apporter une « transformation principielle du rapport de l'homme à la vérité » (Patočka 1990, 271). Alors que l'ère technique nous a habitué à vouloir toujours davantage, à « revendiquer constamment et à en appeler à nos "droits" », le sacrifice montre que « l'humain ne consiste pas seulement à exiger […] mais au contraire à refuser » (Patočka 1990, 324). La liberté et le sacrifice qu'en est l'expression radicale réalisent *in concreto* ce « non » faisant apparaître un ordre nouveau dans le monde. Nous vivons dans une époque où le retour vient avant le don et ce faisant empêche tout don véritable : mais c'est justement dans cet horizon dominé par le principe de calculabilité et d'équivalence et par la force de l'obligation et de l'oppression, qui surgissent des gestes *dissidents*, capables de lutter contre les logiques

dominantes et d'instaurer des nouveaux horizons de compréhension et d'action.

5.1. Le conflit et la fondation de la cité : de la lutte solitaire à la lutte solidaire

La pensée de Patočka pourrait être définie une « pensée tragique » et une pensée du tragique. C'est d'ailleurs sur ce côté conflictuel que Ricœur insiste dans sa Préface aux *Essais hérétiques*, lorsqu'il évoque la « Nuit » et « *Polemos* » comme les traits majeurs de la description patočkienne du politique et de l'histoire. Il se demande alors :

> Qu'est-ce donc, dans cette avancée de la Nuit, qui correspondrait au plan collectif, à la lucidité du philosophe solitaire ? Jan Patočka n'a guère qu'une formule qui vaut réponse : « La solidarité des ébranlés, de ceux qui ont subi le choc, malgré leur antagonisme et le différend qui les sépare. (Ricœur 1991, 82)

La solidarité des ébranlés « s'édifie dans la persécution et l'incertitude : c'est là son front silencieux » (Patočka 1981, 145) ; c'est là, de cette origine conflictuelle, qu'elle puise également sa force négatrice, qu'elle « peut se permettre de dire *non* » à ce qui ébranle, aux événements tragiques du XX siècle. Si la liberté – ce mouvement de l'esprit que Patočka appelle ailleurs « dialectique de l'affection négative » (Patočka 2011, 133) – est la capacité de l'homme de lutter contre la domination de l'étant en vue de son dépassement, on pourrait dire que la solidarité des ébranlés en est l'expression sur le plan communautaire. Comme l'écrit bien Ricœur, « cette pensée prolonge, au-delà de la sphère individuelle, le thème socratique du "soin de l'âme" et de la "vie examinée" », de façon que Patočka est au gré de « transférer de l'individu à la communauté européenne toute entière la méditation sur le rapport entre sens, non-sens et quête » (Ricœur 1991, 81 ; 83). Le dévouement décrit dans le cadre du troisième mouvement – désignant le renoncement à soi pour autrui – trouve ainsi dans la solidarité des ébranlés, d'un côté, et dans le sacrifice, de l'autre côté, une sorte d'achèvement et de radicalisation communautaire. La lutte « solitaire » de l'esprit contre l'actualité figée et objectivée du monde, devient ici la lutte « solidaire » d'une communauté contre l'oppression politique ou

des institutions meurtrières. La solidarité des ébranlés exprime justement ce fondement négatif du lien communautaire, en opposant à la négativité absolue de l'état d'oppression la négativité libératrice du geste dissident.

Comme le remarque Ricœur, c'est par rapport à l'entrée dans l'histoire que Patočka introduit le thème de *polemos*, réactualisant le mot d'Héraclite : « "*Polemos*, père de toute chose". La constitution de la *polis*, qui marque cet étape de l'humanité, naît en effet d'un "esprit d'unité dans la discorde, dans la lutte" » (Patočka 1981, 55). *Polemos* est donc à l'origine de la vie et de la vie en commun. Ricœur parle à ce propos d'une « violence fondatrice » qui se trouve à l'origine de toute institution et en particulier de tout ordre étatique, et qui n'a pas encore vu sa fin dans l'Etat de droit : « c'est un fait – écrit-il – qu'il n'existe pas de communauté historique qui ne soit née d'un rapport qu'on peut dire originel à la guerre » (Ricœur 2000, 4). Nous vivons dans le plein héritage de cette violence fondatrice, dont le plus grand théoricien a peut-être été Hegel. C'est du conflit qui naît pour Hegel un mouvement progressif de réalisations d'institutions de plus en plus élaborées et compréhensives : le négatif est ainsi le moteur de ce processus qui permet de surmonter l'atomisme vers des formations socio-politiques.

Si, d'ailleurs, Ricœur admire le concept hégélien de *Sittlichkeit*, la morale effective et concrète des pratiques humaines, il en refuse en même temps la relève dans une institution hypostasiée, l'État, censée résoudre toute conflictualité propre à la vie morale (*cf.* Brito 2013, 392 *sq.*).[6] C'est l'idée d'une réconciliation transcendante et métahistorique qui ne peut convenir ni à Patočka ni à Ricœur : le monde issu des totalitarismes et des guerres demande en effet une réalisation, sur le plan historique et sociale, de certaines exigences morales, si l'on entend par « morale » ce qui est là non « pour faire fonctionner la société, mais tout simplement pour que l'homme soit l'homme » ; cela demande que « les États et la société toute entière se placent sous la souveraineté du sentiment moral », qu'ils reconnaissent que « quelque chose d'inconditionnel les domine, les dépasse » (Charte 77, *Le Monde*, 10 février 1977).

Le dialogue avec la pensée hégélienne joue alors un rôle clé dans la fondation d'une philosophie pratique qui ne fasse pas l'économie du tragique de l'action morale et du lien communautaire. Ricœur et Patočka retiennent en fait l'idée que le conflit occupe une place essentielle dans la vie morale : si l'on doit quelque part « renoncer à Hegel », selon l'expression de Ricœur, ce n'est donc pas à l'occasion de son traitement de la tragédie. La synthèse hégélienne qui fait l'objet de la critique des interprètes contemporains, « ce n'est précisément pas dans la tragédie qu'on la trouve », puisque celle-ci indique l'action pratique qui rompt une harmonie préétablie (Brito 1995, 390). La critique ricœurienne de la philosophie de l'histoire hégélienne rejoint ainsi l'expérience patočkienne de la résistance/dissidence. Loin de représenter la réalisation de la liberté de tous, l'État peut au contraire se faire porteur d'une « *Sittlichkeit* meurtrière » ; et au moment où les institutions se corrompent, la liberté ne peut que s'exprimer dans une forme de résistance : « c'est finalement dans la conscience d'un petit "reste" (d'un petit nombre d'individus que le mensonge et la peur ont cessé d'intimider) que se réfugie "l'esprit qui a déserté des institutions devenues criminelles" » (Ricœur 1990, 298). C'est alors à l'expérience de la dissidence, vécue en première personne par Patočka, que Ricœur lui-même fait appel car, là où les institutions entrent en conflit avec l'exigence morale de l'existence, c'est précisément la dissidence qui « atteste de façon paroxystique l'indépassable tragique de l'action, auquel Hegel lui-même a rendu justice dans ses belles pages sur *Antigone* ». La dissidence, dont Patočka témoigne par sa vie, est aux yeux de Ricœur la réponse non violente à la violence fondatrice.

6. Conclusions : le sacrifice comme don paradoxal

Sacrifice et don cérémoniel représentent deux formes du don de soi dans lesquelles se réalise une reconnaissance authentique. Si ces deux perspectives ne dissipent pas le tragique et la conflictualité de l'existence libre et de la vie communautaire mis en avant par Hegel, elles élargissent néanmoins l'horizon de la reconnaissance au-delà du concept hégélien de lutte. D'ailleurs, les idées de don mutuel, de dévouement solidaire et de sacrifice radical, se présentent comme

autant de formes de dissidence par rapport aux logiques objectives de l'économie marchande et de l'ère technique : c'est ainsi dans « la différence entre le don et le marché que la phénoménologie du don retrouve sa vigueur », écrit Ricœur (2004, 358).

C'est toutefois sur le plan de la radicalité de ces gestes exceptionnels qui se joue à nos yeux l'écart entre les positions de Patočka et de Ricœur. Malgré son caractère symbolique, le don cérémoniel présuppose toujours « quelque chose », alors que le sacrifice authentique abandonne radicalement l'horizon de l'étant. En même temps, il faut admettre que le don cérémoniel garde un gage de mutualité intersubjective qui pourrait sembler se perdre dans certaines descriptions du sacrifice authentique, visant ce « plus haut » au détriment même du rapport à l'autre. Le don cérémoniel est une pratique – exceptionnelle et « instituante », bien sûr – mais qui concerne des rapports de proximité, entre un donateur et un donataire. Est-il alors encore légitime de parler du sacrifice comme d'un don mutuel ? Oui, dans la mesure où il prend le sens d'un appel adressé, sans prétention de retour, à la communauté humaine ; non, dans la mesure où les figures du rapport de donation, jusqu'au don lui-même (qui n'est « rien »), disparaissent dans ce geste radical.

Mais, de ce fait justement, le sacrifice ne représenterait-il pas la figure la plus extrême et paradoxale du don et de la reconnaissance qui s'y réalise ? Une reconnaissance qui ne peut être mutuelle, car ne se joue pas que dans l'horizon du présent et de la proximité : le sacrifice pour rien s'adresse à tous et ne s'adresse à personne ; il parie sur l'éveil de l'humanité entière. Peut-être qu'alors, plutôt qu'un acte accompli de reconnaissance, il serait le geste inaugural d'un horizon dans lequel des pratiques de reconnaissance mutuelle *peuvent* se réaliser.

NOTES

[1] Pour un aperçu général sur la confrontation de Ricœur à la pensée hégélienne, et en particulier sur le concept d'*Anerkennung*, voir : Brito, Emilio. 1995. « Hegel dans Soi-même comme un autre de Paul Ricœur. » *Laval théologique et philosophique* 51 (2): 389-404; Castiglioni, Chiara. 2008. « Il sé e l'altro. Il tema del riconoscimento in Paul Ricœur », *Esercizi Filosofici* 3: 9-21; Picardi, Roberta. 2015. « Le lieu de la dialectique

hégélienne dans la pensée de Paul Ricœur », *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 99 (4) : 599-639.

² Malgré l'absence d'études systématiques portant sur le thème du dialogue de Patočka avec Hegel, nous signalons les articles suivants, qui peuvent en éclairer certains aspects : Cerutti, Patrick. 2014. « Le soin de l'âme. Patočka et l'idéalisme allemand », *Archives de Philosophie* 77 (4) : 649-662 ; Legros, Robert. « Patočka et Hegel. » In *Jan Patočka. Philosophie, phénoménologie, politique*, éd. Etienne Tassin, Marc Richir, 45-53. Grenoble: Million ; Sobotka Martin. 1997. « Patočkova přednáška z r. 1949 o Hegelově *Fenomenologii ducha.* » *Filosofickýčasopis* 45 : 845-862 ; Srubar, Ilja. 1992. « Phénoménologie asubjective, monde de la vie et humanisme. » In *Jan Patočka. Philosophie, phénoménologie et politique*, éd Etienne Tassin, Marc Richir, 85-100. Grenoble : Million.

³ « Se présenter soi-même comme pure abstraction de la conscience de soi consiste à se montrer comme pure négation de sa manière d'être objective, ou consiste à montrer qu'on n'est attaché à aucun être-là déterminé, pas plus qu'à la singularité universelle de l'être-là en général, à montrer qu'on n'est pas attaché à la vie. Cette présentation est la double opération : opération de l'autre et opération par soi-même. En tant qu'elle est opération de l'autre, chacun tend à la mort de l'autre. Mais en cela est aussi présente la seconde opération, l'opération sur soi et par soi ; car la première opération implique le risque de sa propre vie. Le comportement des deux consciences de soi est donc déterminé de telle sorte qu'elles se prouvent elles-mêmes et l'une à l'autre au moyen de la lutte pour la vie et la mort » (Hegel 1807, 158-159).

⁴ Nous rappelons brièvement les trois mouvements décrits par Patočka : le premier mouvement, d'enracinement ou d'ancrage, indique l'acceptation que, lors de notre venue au monde, nous recevons par autrui dans le cadre d'une orientation « naturelle » de la vie, où la *physis* exerce une « domination universelle sur le tout de notre vie. » (Patočka 1988, 107) Ensuite, le deuxième mouvement désigne le prolongement, la sortie partielle de la vie naturelle au moyen d'une transformation active du monde par le travail : autrui devient ici un adversaire ou un moyen à utiliser, au même titre que les choses. Ce n'est que dans le troisième mouvement, de percée et de liberté, que l'homme accède à une compréhension authentique de soi-même, d'autrui et du monde. Ce mouvement marque l'ouverture de l'existence à la problématicité ; il permet donc l'accès de l'homme à l'histoire ainsi que la prise en charge de sa propre finitude.

⁵ « Ce que j'appelle la solution conflictuelle du conflit implique en revanche une compréhension du rôle positif de la souffrance, exige qu'on se rende compte de la positivité de cette quantité négative » (Patočka 1990, 298).

⁶ Voir le § 258 des *Principes de la philosophie du droit* : « Si l'on confond l'État avec la société civile et si on lui donne pour destination la tâche de veiller à la sûreté, d'assurer la promotion de la propriété privée et de la liberté personnelle, c'est l'intérêt des individus comme tels qui est le but final en vue duquel ils se sont unis et il s'ensuit qu'il est laissé au bon vouloir de chacun de devenir membre de l'État. Mais l'État a un tout autre

rapport avec l'individu ; étant donné que l'État est Esprit objectif, l'individu ne peut avoir lui-même de vérité, une existence objective et une vie éthique que s'il est membre de l'État. » (Hegel 1821, 258-259).

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III.
Memory & History: Philosophical Core Issues
in Patočka and Ricœur

Ricœur and Patočka on the Idea of Europe and its Crisis

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Abstract

This paper undertakes to reconstruct the idea of Europe in the writings of Jan Patočka and Paul Ricœur alongside those of their common inspiration, Husserl. In doing so, it shows that one of the main originalities of this standpoint is to characterize Europe's crisis as being a spiritual crisis, and its potential overcoming as being rooted in a specific attitude. With this ideal description in mind, the paper proceeds to descriptively assess the present day political situation in the European Union and the several challenges it faces, from the deep divisions between debtors and creditors following the 2008–2009 sovereign debt crisis, to the possibility of unraveling initiated by the Brexit process and the so-called populist threat lingering in different countries. Finally, it contends, following some insights by Patočka, Ricœur and Richard Kearney, that in order to avoid the decay or even death of the E.U. a rekindling of Europe's ideal is needed, one that is not based in a de facto dominance of some countries over others, or even in a totally homogenous and all-imposing narrative, but rather on mutual understanding through the sharing of stories that can perhaps refocus Europe's different peoples towards the reconstruction of common goals.

Keywords: Crisis, Europe, Hospitality, Human Rights, Husserl, Kearney, Patočka, Ricœur

Introduction

In this paper I analyze some of the contributions of two major 20th Century philosophers, Paul Ricœur and Jan Patočka, for whom philosophical reflection was not isolated in some sort of ivory tower and whose works thus displayed, albeit in different forms, specific mixes of philosophical, political and ethical analyses, and whose civic interventions were important contributions to the political situations of their own times. They

both also left specific marks on those younger philosophers and politicians who were connected with them. Patočka's influence on Václav Havel[1] is a well-known example and, curiously enough, Emmanuel Macron's[2] recent rise to power in France establishes a peculiar parallelism. Whatever judgment, more lenient or more critical, one may pass on the merits of Havel and Macron as politicians, the fact that both philosophers with whom we are dealing here had direct contact and influence in the formation of two major political figures is not without importance for the practical import of these two philosophies. And it is also proof of the capacity these philosophies have to let themselves be partially institutionalized.

As such, this paper will display a specific blend of normative reconstruction and philosophical critique or, in other words, it will place itself between ideal theory and a description of the current situation. More specifically, I endeavor to reconstruct the "idea of Europe" such as it can be found in the works of Ricœur and Patočka, and also in the work of their main common inspiration, Edmund Husserl, in order to pit the present-day situation against this ideal reconstruction and make a few suggestions concerning the possible solutions for what comes next.

Thus, in the first section, I start by recalling Husserl's and Patočka's depictions of the core traits of Europe. I present them alongside one another because it seems to me that Patočka's description of Europe is influenced to a great extent by Husserl, even though Patočka's bold and intriguing claim – according to which this core is none other than "care for the soul" – departs significantly from Husserl. The aim of this section will be to present a trait that is common to Husserl, Patočka and also, to a lesser extent, Ricœur: namely, that Europe is above all a cultural and even spiritual reality, marked by a certain kind of theoretical core and a very specific positioning towards tradition. I will not conflate the respective positions of these thinkers, given the significant differences that we can find in their writings on this matter, nor will I ignore some of the problems raised by their accounts: the limits to universalism and to what can be described as a Eurocentric standpoint. But I will nonetheless insist in this common

emphasizing of a cultural and spiritual Europe, over against thinner, more common accounts that stick to the political and economic dimensions of Europe and, more specifically, the European Union. In this longer section, I will not refrain from mentioning some of the historical political events that allow us to better understand how these philosophers looked at Europe (and which are of the utmost importance in the case of Patočka, given the extent to which he was personally implicated in them).

Then, in the second section of the paper, I describe and assess the present-day political situation in the European Union and the several challenges it faces, from the tensions between debtors and creditors following the 2008–2009 sovereign debt crisis to the possibility of unraveling initiated by the Brexit process and the so-called populist threat lingering in different countries. Against this backdrop, I then turn to Ricœur's and Richard Kearney's claims on the role of narrativity and imagination in the rethinking of European identity, and follow their support of hospitality as one of the core values to uphold in Europe, which of course is also rooted in a defense of human rights that finds in Patočka one of its most powerful symbols.

1. Husserl and Patočka on Europe: from the "Heroism of Reason" to "Care of the Soul"

It might seem odd and out of place to provide a thick account of European identity as being grounded not only on a cultural but even a theoretical and, as it were, "spiritual" level. This of course raises a number of significant objections that I shall evoke below. However, in the present context, it is important to recall why these features are also important.

We can trace a significant part of this ideal back to Husserl. In his 1935 lecture at the University of Prague (the so-called "Vienna Lecture") he laid down an influential description of what can very easily be called an "idealized Europe." And let us recall in passing that he of course did this at a moment when the barbaric ascension of Nazism was already taking place and as part of an effort to countervail the spirit of his time, i.e., the fact that "European nations [were] sick." (Husserl 1965, 150) According to Husserl, the "spiritual image of Europe" is marked

by an "immanent teleology" grounded in "rational ideas and infinite tasks." (ibid., 156) This view, as can easily be guessed, has its roots in ancient Greece and in the philosophical attitude. Indeed, for Husserl, in the VI and VII Centuries B.C., "[in Greece] grows up a new mode of sociality and a new form of enduring society, whose spiritual life, cemented together by a common love and creation of ideas and by the setting of ideal norms for life, carries within itself a horizon of infinity for the future – an infinity of generations finding constant spiritual renewal in ideas." (ibid., 160) And Husserl goes so far as to identify this mode of being, and the appearance of the so-called "special sciences," to borrow his phenomenological parlance, with philosophy itself. What is more, these ideal achievements grant mankind access to a qualitatively different type of temporality: "Scientific achievements, once the method of insuring their successful creation has been attained, have an entirely different mode of being, an entirely different temporality. They do not wear out, they are imperishable." (ibid., 161)

So we can see that, already for Husserl, the "idea of Europe" cannot be understood apart from a specific "way of living." We cannot understand the dedication to *theoria* without grasping the existential attitude that went along with it. Philosophy was almost communal in character, as if we could speak of some sort of philosophical *Sittlichkeit*: "These are the men who, not isolated but with each other and for each other, i.e., bound together in a common interpersonal endeavor, strive for and carry into effect *theoria* and only *theoria*." (ibid., 165) Of course Husserl did not mean that this way of living entailed that all people dedicated to it needed to coexist at the same time; but it does evoke the founding of the "standing on the shoulders of giants" (to borrow Newton's expression) type of attitude, since the notion of a dedication to the regulative ideal of the quest for truth as an all-embracing mission, each time broken down in several intermediary tasks, itself forms a tradition and is thus transmitted through time and generations. And, what is more, this is a type of attitude that, under the banner of quest for truth, is not grounded on pre-existing (mythical or religious) traditions. On the contrary, it is founded and exercised as a specific type of *critique* and

reasoning (and both go together, *logon didonai*, as Plato would put it): "a universal critique of all life and of its goals, of all the forms and systems of culture." (ibid., 169) And for Husserl it is this "community of ideal interests" (ibid., 175) that forms the basis of "supernationality of a completely new kind," i.e. "the spiritual form of Europe." (ibid., 177)

But it was precisely this entity that he diagnosed as being "ill," in a state of profound crisis, in 1935. According to Husserl, the crisis had its roots in a "mistaken rationalism," given that "one-sided rationality can become an evil." (ibid., 178 resp. 180) For Husserl, this was tied to the triumph of Enlightenment and its objectivistic, naturalistic version of rationality. However, Husserl's text ends with a note of hope and even "heroic" exhortation: "The crisis of European existence can end in only one of two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit; or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism." (ibid., 192) And he pushes "good Europeans" to "do battle with this danger of dangers with the sort of courage that does not shirk even the endless battle." (ibid.) For those who are acquainted with Husserl's other writings and with his almost ascetic phenomenological method, it is very striking to read these words which only attest to the graveness of the situation he was diagnosing.

Much of this ideal depiction makes its way through to Patočka who was a student of Husserl. In what follows I will mostly draw my reconstruction of Patočka's idea of Europe from *Plato and Europe* (Patočka 2002), a series of lectures he gave at friends' homes at a period in which he had been banned from academia by Czech authorities, and also, to a lesser extent, from the *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*. (Patočka 1996)[3] Just like Husserl, Patočka saw in ancient Greece the ideal model from which Europe had allegedly been founded. He shared and even deepened Husserl's stance according to which Europe's sweeping characteristic was spiritual. And he emphasized the fundamental role of the philosophical attitude (also characterized by a fierce critique of tradition and a certain dedication to *theoria*) in the making of this supranational

whole. And indeed Patočka likewise saw himself as responding to a situation of crisis, and renewing an effort that he saw no one undertaking at that time; in fact, he claimed, no one since Husserl had taken upon himself to accomplish that fundamental task (Patočka 2002, 152).

Nevertheless, Patočka's intriguing conception of Europe has a certain set of features that make it unique. And one of the most salient is the peculiar claim according to which this spiritual unity was brought about by the Greek *care of the soul*. Patočka is of course not alone in this contemporary reappraisal of care of the soul in Antiquity. Pierre Hadot (Hadot 1995) and of course Foucault (Foucault 2005) did much to draw our attention to this phenomenon, albeit with greater emphasis on the Hellenistic period (with special attention to the Stoics) as well as on the more general notion, which Hadot draws from Ignacius of Loyola and retrospectively applies to that period, of "spiritual exercises." Nonetheless, as Petr Lom makes clear, Patočka goes further than Hadot or Foucault because he "gives care of the soul even greater importance, insisting it is the fulcrum for all the great thinkers of antiquity." (Lom 2002, xv)

Expanding on Husserl's earlier claims, Patočka maintains that European tradition "is a tradition of insight" and that "European civilization is abstract," which, for him, explains the fact that "European history could generalize itself in such a way." (Patočka 2002, 223) Moreover, this particular generalization principle brings with it the necessity to confront every "myth" or "tradition" with the standards put forth by reason. This, of course, forms what came to be known as Western rationality and it is not, Patočka himself acknowledges, without exercising a specific violence or domination against other cultures. Concerning the notion of history and its generality, Patočka mentions the "spiritual violence" done to other civilizations when imposing this Western conception (ibid., 222), and in this critique we of course find echoes of the first generation of Critical Theory.

However, Patočka's definition of Europe is ultimately more practical than theoretical (unlike Husserl's), given the importance ascribed to the "care of the soul" in its threefold aspect, well broken down by Petr Lom: a relation to truth and

individual internal transformation; a relation to justice and care for the community, and a reflection upon mortality (Lom 2002, xvii-xviii). This is all found by Patočka in Plato (Patočka, 2002, 180), but he extends this analysis to include aspects he also finds, for instance, in Democritus or Aristotle because, for him, Greek philosophers expressed freedom through this care of the soul (Patočka 2002, p. 13) whether they believed in its immortality or not (Patočka 2002, p. 13) – the overall claim thus being that "Europe […] arose out of the care of the soul." (ibid., 89)

Patočka was aware of the deeply paradoxical nature of this larger claim and maybe did not defend it *tout court*, but only drew attention to a much forgotten aspect of philosophical praxis and the way in which it can assume ethical, political and existential relevance. On the one hand, as Aviezer Tucker recalls, there is a connection between philosophy and politics that "is taken for granted in the Czech tradition." (Tucker 2000, 8) On the other hand, this recovery of an ancient topic felt even more needed because it was seen as a response to the deepening of a crisis. Patočka saw in the Hellenistic period the appearance of the "conception of mankind as something universal, where everyone has a share in the common" (Patočka 2002, 11), and likewise saw in the subsequent Roman Empire and Christianization of Europe some sort of high points of the expansion and universalization of this ideal he was aiming to reconstruct[4]. In Modernity and the Enlightenment, however, he saw pivotal points that began a movement of crisis that in his own time seemed almost unbearable, given they were reaching a state of extreme nihilism. Indeed, Patočka draws from Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche to posit a claim concerning a loss of meaning. In the *Heretical Essays*, commenting on Nietzsche, he affirms "let us be truthful, facing the fact that we are nihilists, not making ourselves believe what is not – thus alone will we be capable of overcoming the moral crisis which underlies and contains all else." (Patočka 1996, 92) This is conveyed as both a critical diagnosis and a timid hope, as we shall see. For Patočka, already with Francis Bacon and Descartes care of the soul was disappearing from the European horizon. And this disappearance is tied with the appearance of modern science. In his view, Renaissance science still had similarities with Greek

theoria but later science and mathematics, especially from the Enlightenment onwards are already "technical" in their aims (Patočka 1996, 86). Indeed, in their spirit of technological domination, they draw from Bacon's conception of knowledge as a form of power and from the Cartesian assertion according to which knowledge is to make us "masters and owners of nature." (ibid., 84) According to Patočka this results in a reversal of the ancient Greek world order. In a nutshell, care for the soul is transformed into "care to have,"[5] which, of course, is reinforced by the appearance of the capitalist world order: "The simultaneous organization of economic life along modern capitalist lines is part and parcel of the same style in principle." (ibid., 84) This same organization is one which, might we add, came to impose itself in such an automatic and one-sided manner as to constitute what Max Weber described in the stark terms of the famous "iron cage" analogy (Weber 2003, 181).

For all these reasons, Patočka's diagnosis was more sober than Husserl's. Lom sums it up as follows: the crisis "is the triumph of technical instrumental reason, which understands nature as a tool for domination and exploitation rather than for respect and contemplation." (Lom 2002, p. xviii) The result being, as Tucker contends, that "Husserl's poetic optimism had no credibility forty years later, when it appeared to Patočka that Husserl's first possibility, the downfall of Europe, had already occurred." (Tucker 2000, 69) Let us also not forget the difficult political circumstances in which Patočka was living. His pessimism stems not only from the awareness of what the rise of Fascism and Communism had done to Europe, with all the internal strife, intense suffering and crushing of human rights during World War II. More specifically, he certainly had in mind the crushing of the so-called "Prague Spring" in 1968, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the significant political and social repression that followed, including Patočka's ban from academia. As is well known, these events took a tragic turn for the worse for him. Following the organization of Czech intellectuals around the Charter 77 movement and its defense of human rights, coalescing around Patočka as one of its main figures, the Czech phenomenologist died after a police interrogation at a time when he was already

in fragile health. However, in spite of his pessimism, what remains to be debated in this context is the ethical and political significance of the intriguing legacy that the "Socrates of Prague" left us.

As Ricœur himself puts it in his preface to the French edition of the *Heretical Essays*, the main question becomes: does "Socratic politics" have a chance? (Ricœur 1996a, xvi). Ricœur admits that "the diagnosis is more certain than the cure," given that the prospects of "the destiny of Western Europe beyond nihilism […] are not bright." (ibid., xv) But he does emphasize two very important traits to be drawn from Patočka: 1) the capacity to think of Europe through means of a collective appropriation of the individual, existential capacity to relate meaning, the absence of meaning and the search for meaning (ibid., xiv); and 2) the capacity of resistance in what Patočka called the "solidarity of the shaken." (ibid., xv) Ricœur also underscores the lesson according to which "politics is always of another order than economic management or the projection of humans in work" (ibid., viii) which is, of course, an Arendtian topic in Patočka that finds echoes in Ricœur himself.

Actually, it is not only that Ricœur paid significant attention to the situation in Czechoslovakia, namely to the Charter 77 movement, as well as to Patočka himself, it is also noteworthy that his important reflections (to be found in the "The Political Paradox," republished in *History and Truth*; Ricœur 1965) on the existence of a specific mode of political alienation, which is independent from but no less important than economic alienation, were written as a direct response to the shocking events that followed the Prague spring. Even though Ricœur was no resistant in a strict sense, at least not in the same way that Patočka was almost forced to be so, he was no less responsive to the political events of his own time[6]. He went from being a pacifist before World War II to being enlisted and captured as a part of the French army, spending almost all that time as Prisoner of War. He also wrote in a committed manner on the international political situation from the 1950s onwards for the influential French journal *Esprit* and had a very active involvement, for example, in opposing the Algerian war[7].

To be fair, as Tucker reminds us, Patočka did have a lasting influence, at least in his home country, given the fact that the Velvet Revolution of 1989 was so much inspired by the Charter 77 movement and its style as a political critique that expresses itself in strictly philosophical (and sometimes even pre-political) terms. This is something that, according to Tucker, is a Czech feature connecting philosophy, politics and history with the goal of letting ethics guide a non-technocratic form of politics (Tucker 2000, 8), and is certainly a hugely important legacy that can be applied to many different contexts. But how should we assess this idea of Europe today? Firstly, I think we should not hide some of the difficulties it encounters. The first one is obviously the danger of providing too thick a description. This is what Tucker calls Patočka's communitarianism. Patočka's account of a spiritual Europe seems to be at odds with thinner accounts of what binds Europe together. Also, Patočka's implicit link to some sort of Transcendence risks making us uneasy, causing a "fear of mixing spirituality with political or social life, because historically such combinations have been generally disastrous." (Lom 2002, xx) Certainly, his "conception of the good," to speak in contemporary political philosophy terms, over and above much more circumspect normative theories of the just, goes against the grain of the dominant liberal, Rawlsian or post-Rawlsian stances in political philosophy in the Anglo-American landscape, and in a way is more substantive than other communitarian accounts such as Charles Taylor's or Michael Walzer's.

To this problem we might add another one that Patočka's idea of Europe shares with Husserl's: namely, their strict universalism and what could certainly be called their Eurocentric vision. As Tucker contends: "in his attempt to find what is specifically European, Husserl displayed the cultural biases of his place and time against non-Western cultures." (Tucker 2000, p. 62) Even Patočka's notion of care of the soul could be said, at least in a weak sense,[8] not to be *really* exclusive to the Greek heritage. As Tucker notes, Eastern religions such as Buddhism seem to advocate a similar notion of spirituality (Tucker 2000, 64), even though with different political implications. Tucker also accuses Husserl and Patočka

of failing to acknowledge this due to "cultural biases" (ibid.) and is probably right in his claim.[9] Be that as it may, it must be possible to recover a subtler, less metaphysical notion of Europe as having an "ideal" or "spiritual" existence that is characteristic of its possible identity, without, however, falling back into the pitfalls of a Eurocentric worldview.

Husserl and Patočka might have been right in their claim that it was Western, i.e. European, thought that "invented" the forms of generality and universality that became characteristic of our own way of thinking and that were imposed everywhere (along with a specific type of violence that not only Critical Theorists and Post-Colonial thinkers admit to, but, as we have seen, Patočka admitted to as well). But to see this and other, let us call them, "cultural endeavors" and features as specifically European and even to grant them some sort of value does not, and indeed *must not*, *eo ipso*, entail their alleged superiority over other forms of rationality, thought, or modes of existence – quite the contrary. Even though the history of Modernity is, to some extent, the history of European peoples imposing themselves in other parts of the world, and even though this Eurocentric vision has been prevalent at least until the 20th century, we obviously have the duty to resist the absurd temptation to reproduce that same scheme of thought.

Now, with this more open and plural framework in mind – which is perhaps more in tune with Ricœur's own depiction of Europe; let us not forget that also for Ricœur Europe should focus on its ethical and spiritual realizations (Ricœur 1996b, 3) – the question that Patočka asks concerning the possible European unity remains: "You hear about the integration of Europe: but is it possible to integrate something regarding some kind of geographical or purely political concept?" (Patočka 2002, 179) According to him, of course, it is not. But the problem is that in the history of the European Union, the recent supranational entity with which we must grapple, European identity has indeed been thought of first and foremost as being political as well as economic. But we must side with Patočka and admit that at some levels this is not enough. What is more, as I shall contend in the next section, we are today once again living a European crisis and running the risk, as Patočka put it,

of Europe "stopping believing in itself." (Patočka 2002, 151) Ricœur, who was of course heavily influenced by Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt and also Patočka, partially partakes in the diagnostic that this section drew with Husserl and Patočka. But Ricœur's description of Europe and his proposal of possible cures for its ailments is perhaps less one-sided, more multidimensional, and more suitable to address the present situation, and thus I will leave it for next section, after a description of the current crisis.

2. *Quo Vadis* Europe? From the endless crisis to Ricœur's and Kearney's New Ethos for Europe

As Marcel Hénaff has recently claimed, it might just be that not only is Europe in crisis but also that it has *always* been in crisis and that the crisis is its own specific mode of being (Hénaff 2017). Others, like Myriam Revault d'Allonnes, go even further, tying the concept (or the metaphor) of crisis with the experience of Modernity itself (Revault d'Allonnes 2012). Revault d'Allonnes thus speaks of an "endless crisis" stemming from the modern experience of incertitude that is the result of the escape from ancient traditions. These accounts obviously run the risk of extending the notion of crisis so much that it might lose some of its relevance and distinctiveness. Be that as it may, as Runciman (2016) argues, also partially following Koselleck, at least one sense of the crisis is useful in practical terms, as it identifies a point in time that calls for fundamental decisions in response to a threat.

Europe is, of course, both geographically, culturally and, why not say it, spiritually, more than the supranational political entity that came to be known as the "European Union" (E.U.). Nevertheless, it is impossible, today, to think about the present and future of Europe without taking account of the E.U. And from its inception the E.U. has of course been fashioned as being rooted in an ideal of peace and prosperity. On the one hand, this is *the* project that, also by being partially founded in the strong defense of Human Rights in the wake of World War II, has been able to bring enduring peace to the most embattled continent in human history. On the other hand, the viability of this political project was by and large a result of

its economic success. Fostered by common shared interests and the liberal belief (and set of policies that went along with it) in the free circulation of people and goods, unequivocally accepting globalization and becoming a large player within it as it grew larger and eventually occupied almost the whole continent, the E.U. was – is? – a success precisely because it worked. The social model that went along with it, displaying a specific blend of liberal, democratic and open societies respecting human rights, striving for economic growth based on free trade and trying to provide its citizens with generous schemes of social protection was made possible not only because the bloc was economically viable, but also because it kept advancing. Europe was seen as an entity always moving forward, always striving for more integration, both in terms of new members joining the club and of more institutional solutions that made sure that more and more competences were transferred from a national to a supranational level.

In all fairness, it must be admitted that this was always a difficult process, and not a very democratic one. It is evident that its progress was only possible because national constituencies continuously elected representatives that were "pro-European" and were able to negotiate the adhesion or the specific aspects of each new solution, but the processes were almost always *top down*, driven by elites, and very seldom *bottom up*, that is, resulting from instruments of direct democracy, such as citizens' initiatives or referenda. On the contrary, the process of moving forward was often made despite a sentiment of popular suspicion in different countries, and when referenda were in fact held, they often resulted in the contrary of what elected, pro-European officials stood for: the two most striking examples being the rejection of the European Constitution in 2005 as a result of referenda in France and the Netherlands and of course the Brexit referendum in 2016 that will lead the United Kingdom out of the E.U. However, up until the last years of the first decade of this century the process did keep moving forward; but not anymore.

Today, Europe and the E.U. are faced with a set of unprecedented challenges. The rejection of the European Constitution in 2005 (solved rapidly by the adoption of the

Lisbon Treaty in 2007) was only a small presage of the problems that were to come. Starting with the aftershocks of the 2007–2008 subprime crisis that rocked the U.S. and the global financial crisis that ensued,[10] the E.U. was hit by what became a sovereign debt crisis in some of its weakest economies (namely in Greece, Portugal, Cyprus and Ireland, but also, to a lesser extent, in Spain and Italy), exposing the fragilities of the Eurozone: a system with a common currency but no common budget and no set of shared fiscal policies. This crisis, and the bailouts that followed, left a bitter rift between net lenders and net creditors, exposing some cultural prejudices, old national sentiments and sometimes leading to dramatic situations in terms of the loss of quality of living of some peoples, Greece's situation being a case in point.

These difficulties led to some deep and unforeseen changes in Europe's social reality, threatening to put at significant risk the old goals of social cohesion and ever-growing integration between member states. This claim is easily backed by data from recent European inquiries and reports. For instance, Diamond et al. (2015), analyzing this reality in the immediate aftermath of the economic crisis, offer a glimpse into the current situation in terms of 1) European economies and labor markets; 2) inequality and poverty; 3) education and health; and 4) politics and culture, showing how each of these domains was affected by the crisis. They notice that "the starkest divergence in living standards is between the north and south of Europe" (Diamond et al. 2015, 12) and that "trends on poverty have been significantly worse in more austerity-hit countries, especially Greece" (Diamond et al., 2015, 30). Another important rift is intergenerational and it too got worse with the crisis, given that "young Europeans are increasingly at risk of joblessness and social exclusion" (ibid., 34). With the stark increase of unemployment rates in those countries more affected by the crisis, the prospect of a "lost generation" was only mitigated by migration, but this only worsened "the endemic weaknesses in the southern labor markets" (Diamond et al. 2015, 36). In a nutshell:

Europe is increasingly a continent of division: of growth versus stagnation; rising real incomes versus falling real

incomes; impressive jobs growth versus markedly higher unemployment. The depth of this divide and its social and political consequences pose major questions about the future viability of the European project (ibid., 57).

These problems have been magnified by the intense rise of nationalism and populism,[11] which is not exclusive to the E.U. – lest we forget Russia or the U.S. – but that has been felt in an acute manner in places like France, Hungary or the U.K. and which, leading to a rise of euroscepticism and general distrust in the E.U., eventually resulted in the Brexit vote in 2016. As is evident, the exit of one of the bloc's most important members poses an unprecedented existential threat to the existence of the E.U. as such, given that it is the first time that one of its members will leave and the threat of contagion to other members that might follow it is real. At the same time, from a geostrategic standpoint, other difficult challenges lie ahead. On the one hand, Russia's occupation of Crimea in 2014 and the more recent isolationist tendency shown by the U.S., following the election of Donald Trump – also questioning the importance of NATO – leave the E.U. in a more fragile situation than that which it had envisioned for itself. Finally, amid the refugee crisis that resulted from the Syrian war, it can be argued that the E.U. has not been doing enough to uphold its ideal of defense of human rights and the welcoming of others, given the number of refugees turned down or left to die in the Mediterranean sea.

Lack of solidarity, existential threat, deep divisions. This is the image of the E.U. in 2017 and there is indeed the risk of a deepening of some or all of these problems, especially if populist right-wing parties keep becoming more popular and fueling xenophobic and anti-European sentiments. But the question then becomes: has European political leadership been doing enough to countervail these tendencies? And what does this situation entail in terms of Europe's capacity to live up to its ideals, think its identity and formulate its own political and, let us say it, existential project?

It is in this context that I would like to turn to some of Paul Ricœur's[12] and also, albeit to a lesser degree, Richard Kearney's intuitions and possible solutions. But first let me add

that Husserl's and Patočka's framing of the problem prove invaluable for understanding some of its *causes*. As I already mentioned, a large part of the problem lies in the fact that the E.U. has basically been a political and economic project that largely overlooks the importance of the cultural and spiritual European traditions. In that context, when the economy starts faltering, it is likely that political problems appear which, in turn, menace the whole project. As Ricœur shows in *Oneself as Another* (Ricœur, 1992), there is a fundamental difference between *power-over* (and the political alienation he denounced in the "Political Paradox," Ricœur 1965) and the exercise of *power in common* (Ricœur 1992, 220). The latter is an integral part of the making of a *project*, even a project of a good life "with and for others in just institutions" (ibid., 172) which is the definition he puts forward in the so-called "little ethics" of *Oneself as Another*. In the European context this means, firstly, that the relations between different "players" at different levels should perhaps be more horizontal and less vertical; not a *de facto* dominance, for instance of richer and more influential countries over the less influential ones. But it should also mean that citizens should be more actively empowered in the decision-making processes – and let me note in passing that the so-called citizens' initiative,[13] made possible by the Lisbon Treaty is already a step in the right direction – and involved in the dynamic renewal of institutions themselves.[14]

Second, there should be an assessment of what this European project stands for. In the *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (Ricœur 1986), Ricœur claims that societies have symbolic structures, a "social imaginary" which they rely on, both for constitutive functions of maintaining order and stability and for "subversive" functions that keep them open to change – these functions being mainly the work of ideologies and utopias. In this case, an ideology is what legitimates a certain use of power and, as it were, keeps together a certain collective entity because it allows it to keep finding in its history, its living traditions, the meaning for its existence and for the exercise of its shared practices – thus addressing, in some way, in its constitutive function, Patočka's worry about the loss of meaning. If this is so, then, can we not claim that the

E.U's ideology in its positive sense is precisely tied to the ideals of solidarity among its peoples and the defense of human rights so well exemplified by the Charter 77 movement? And can we not also argue that what we are faced with in the sovereign debt crisis, rise of nationalism and refugee crisis is some sort of betrayal of that founding ideology?

With this backdrop in mind, I would like to contend, following Ricœur and Kearney, that a possible solution to this thorny problem will at least partly have to resort, on the one hand, to a suppler notion of European identity (even though not renouncing its spiritual dimension, quite to the contrary) while at the same time finding innovative practical solutions to live up to the ideals of diversity, solidarity, hospitality and the more general protection of human rights as a whole. In "Reflections on a new ethos for Europe," an essay whose English version was edited by Kearney, Ricœur proposes that we should "formulate the problem of the future of Europe in terms of imagination." (Ricœur 1996b, 3) He underscores that envisioning a new kind of supranational entity is itself unprecedented and thus calls for a work of imagination that explores the possible new institutions needed for it. In this effort of political imagination, he emphasizes the need to count on the contribution not only of individuals but also "intellectual communities, churches and other religious denominations" because the ethical and spiritual activities of individuals and groups are fundamental for this task (ibid.). He makes clear that transfers of sovereignty that remain at a purely political or juridical level are itself insufficient, if they are not accompanied by "the will to implement these transfers deriving its initiative from changes of attitude in the ethos of individuals, groups and peoples" and that what is at stake is the combination between "identity" and "alterity" at numerous levels, adding that what we need are models that will allow us to think and put this combination into practice (ibid., 4).

Ricœur then goes on to list several modes of diversity that must be cherished and intersubjective relations that must be preserved in order for the European project to be a success. He mentions three possible models to mediate between the poles of identity and alterity and to help us in that fundamental

task: the model of translation, the model of the exchange of memories and the model of forgiveness. The first form of diversity that Ricœur mentions and wants to cherish as a part of our possible European identity is linguistic diversity. According to him "Europe is and will remain ineluctably polyglot." (ibid.) He acknowledges that this might constitute a risk, namely that of "a protective withdrawal of each culture into its own linguistic tradition" (ibid.), but advocates nonetheless that the right form to honor this diversity within a common European whole is to put forward an ethics of translation in what he calls *linguistic hospitality*. For Ricœur, translation is an a priori of communication, but one which must always be reinstated. As such, he proposes that in order to secure the protection of languages that are not in a dominant position, all over Europe one should encourage the teaching of at least two living languages (Ricœur 1996b, 5). Going a step further, into the "spiritual level," he proposes that the same principle apply to cultures themselves, in what he calls a "translation ethos" whose goal would be to "repeat at the cultural and spiritual level the gesture of linguistic hospitality." (ibid.) Indeed, as Scott-Baumann reminds us, Ricœur saw translation as a paradigm for philosophy and reciprocally ascribes to philosophy the need to model the process of translation (Scott-Baumann 2010, 70).

The second model, that of the exchange of memories, is effective at the level of the norms, beliefs and convictions. Ricœur is well aware of the fact that European identity is not monolithic. There are important differences in the customs and traditions that make up the different European national identities. But he does think that, on the one hand, these are not fixed structures, but instead are mutable, evolving entities with a narrative consistency (Ricœur 1996b, 6), and that, on the other hand, they have to be *shared* and *exchanged*. This is of utmost importance because it takes the ethical task to a higher level: "that of taking responsibility, in imagination and sympathy, for the story of the other, through the life narratives that concern that other." (ibid., 6-7) It is clear that what is at stake here are not only the lives and stories of individuals but also of peoples. Ricœur insists that this does not involve

abandoning important historical landmarks but rather "an effort of plural reading" (ibid., 7), which is one of learning to see through the eyes of the other and thus acknowledging the legitimacy of his or her own reading. To Ricœur, this means, at the same time, to respect the commemorations and traditions of other national cultures, including those of their ethnic and religious minorities, but also to let these traditions partake in an effort of renovation and plurality of readings that prevent them from becoming too rigid (ibid., 8).

Going a step further, Ricœur talks about the importance of reappraising traditions in terms of "discerning past promises which have not been kept" (Ricœur 1996b, 8), which brings us back to the constitutive function of the founding ideologies alluded to above. What Ricœur here calls the "unfulfilled future of the past" (ibid.) is actually an encouragement to hold present actions close to the expectations of the past. In what concerns the founding ideology of the E.U., this would mean to see whether or not it has lived according to its ideals, namely those of solidarity and defense of human rights. As I hinted, in these past few years it has *not* and it is not certain whether or not, amid the present complex crisis and the many threats it faces, it *will*. But it is of course part of our task to shed light on this disparity by means of this genealogical critique and "history of the present time."

Ricœur's third model, that of forgiveness, entails imagining the suffering of others in the past and in the present and being capable of "shattering the debt." (ibid., 10) In a moment when the discussion revolves so much on strict budgetary rules and sovereign debt levels, over and above care for the social conditions of European peoples, perhaps we could also find here an interesting suggestion – even though, of course, forgiveness stems from the logic of superabundance, not strict reciprocity, and is thus very difficult to institutionalize. Nevertheless, and drawing from the reflections that Ricœur offers on the possible conflict between respect for universal laws and respect for persons in *Oneself as Another* (Ricœur 1992, 262), perhaps it would not be absurd to suggest that in the present context a desire to live in common at the European level should do well to focus on collective wellbeing rather than in blind rule-following. Indeed, for Ricœur, "it is necessary that

the peoples of Europe show compassion for each other" (Ricœur 1996b, 11) and the same could of course apply to Europe's *others*, both within and without. To give just a simple example, a recognition of the Islamic tradition as being, alongside the Greek and Jewish traditions, an integral part of the making of European identity would of course be invaluable in easing some of today's tensions. Likewise, welcoming in a more proper manner forced migrants, refugees, the same way in which different European citizens were forced to flee and on many occasions were indeed welcomed in different countries during World War II, would certainly be tantamount to rekindling the European ideal I have been mentioning.

My concluding remarks highlight the need to find proper solutions which foster these values and which sometimes have to go beyond existing institutional arrangements. And it is in this context that I mention Richard Kearney's plea for a "mutual exchange of recognized narratives at a European level (Marcelo 2017, 788f.) and, more specifically, his activities at the Guestbook project[15] as a concrete step towards the promotion of the values I have been putting forward. In a recent interview I conducted with him, Kearney, following Ricœur, advances two tasks: "an exchange of narratives of the woundedness that we have suffered" and a recovery of the "therapeutic power of stories, the narratives of healing" (ibid., 789). He gives the very concrete example of interreligious exchange. If the public space is totally secularized in an enforced manner, a part of the (sometimes wounded) identities of individuals and groups are prevented from entering that public space of appearance and thus being shared and exchanged. As a consequence, Kearney argues, this forecloses the possibility of a genuine intercultural, interethnic and interreligious dialogue. This "pedagogy of narrative exchange" (ibid., 790) is where, for Kearney, the future of Europe lies. This is a future that, in the search of the best solutions, calls for affect and *phronesis* in the quest to recognize the "plurality of voices in our culture" in order to avoid the "rise of tribal extremism in our world." (ibid.) Likewise, the work he puts forward in the context of the Guestbook project, inviting divided communities to go from the

impossible to the possible, from hostility to hospitality, is certainly a first step towards this concrete instantiation.

      To borrow two terms that were dear to Ricœur, maybe we could say that the E.U., and even Europe in its spiritual sense, is not a given but rather an *effort* and a *task* that really depends on the exercise of our collective will and choices. If today it is in crisis, as it has been so many times before, such as those that were denounced by Husserl or Patočka, it will perhaps be up to *us*, Europeans, to see whether or not it can still be reborn from its ashes.

NOTES

[1] Since this influence is obvious and well-documented, I do not need to spell it out in detail here. For the history of Czech dissidence from Patočka to Havel, see Tucker (2000). For a more detailed depiction of this influence, and also of Havel's intellectual legacy and political thought (including his insistence on meaningful political discourse and his conception of liberal agonism) see Brennan (2017).

[2] Macron was a one-time editorial assistant of Paul Ricœur. He contributed to the preparation of Ricœur's seminal *Memory, History Forgetting* (Ricœur, 2004) and the two became close acquaintances at that time (the original French version of the book was published in 2000). Even though knowing to what extent Macron's thought and policies are actually influenced by Ricœur's philosophy is a matter for contentious debate, the fact is that Macron often invokes Ricœur as a guiding inspiration.

[3] Although I am not analyzing it here, a fuller account of Patočka's claims on Europe should also take into account the texts published in French with the title *L'Europe après l'Europe* (Patočka, 2007). In that book Patočka puts forward a more elaborate description of the "planetary era," marked by a "Post-Europe" against whose backdrop we should assess the European heritage more carefully. It goes without saying that Central European and, more particularly, Czech political thinking produced many views on Europe, some of them emphasizing not so much its universal aspect, as Patočka and Husserl do, and more the specificity of Central Europe as an unwavering respect and cherishing of diversity. For a striking example of this latter view see Kundera (1984), who, in the 1980s, saw culture as a main locus of resistance, and its atrophy as one of the deep-rooted problems of the Central European identity crisis.

[4] This is made clearer in the *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* (Patočka 2002).

[5] Notice here the echoes of French Christian existentialism, namely of Gabriel Marcel (Marcel 1949).

[6] Ricœur was, of course, one of the main French philosophers of the second half of the 20th century and among his many contributions to philosophy (for

instance to phenomenology or hermeneutics) the specific importance of his political thinking was not always emphasized. However, in recent times, the secondary bibliography on Ricœur definitely emphasized the usefulness and importance of his philosophy for political thinking. See, for example Michel (2006), Dauenhauer (1998) and Monteil (2013).

[7] On this, see Dosse (2008, 267-278).

[8] Tucker distinguishes a weak and a strict sense of care of the soul: in the strict sense, it would amount to a "life in truth that assumes the political freedoms that enable life in truth, justice" whereas in its weak sense "it is merely a certain concern for the soul that transcends everydayness, whether or not it involves life in truth" (Tucker 2000, p. 64). For a more detailed account of the Platonic care of the soul in Patočka, including the implications it has for his take on the problems of the world, subjectivity, meaning and life, see Merlier (2009).

[9] I believe this is a real problem that cannot be easily brushed off. However, as I stated, the Eurocentric vision is certainly more prevalent in Husserl than in Patočka. And, in all fairness, one must point out the existence of more benign readings of Patočka that try to reformulate his conception of European universalizable values in a way that is not Eurocentric and is thus more suitable to intercultural understanding. See Lau (2007, 2011 and 2016).

[10] I cannot mention here all the details of the so-called subprime crisis in the US, the housing market bubble or the financialization of capital that were some of its direct causes. For detailed accounts on this matter, see the Financial Crisis Inquiry Report (2011) and McLean and Nocera (2010). For a very exhaustive account of the way in which policy makers tend to downplay the likelihood of crises even though the warning signs might be there, see Reinhart and Rogoff (2009).

[11] Populism is another phenomenon with which we cannot deal here in a sufficient manner. I believe that, as Laclau (2005) contends, populism is a fundamental political logic. As such, and even though it has often had a very bad reputation in the social sciences, populism should not be considered a totally negative phenomenon, as it has the merit of shaking up the *status quo* and leading us to consider alternative political solutions, thus enlarging the domain of what is politically thinkable or even feasible. However, given that the dominant mainstream parties in Europe have been, in the last decades, favorable to the E.U. project, most of the "populist" projects that have sprouted throughout Europe in recent years have been Eurosceptic. Moreover, this phenomenon has spiked with the crisis and the debate on "austerity measures": "Austerity in particular appears to have driven support for both the populist left and right in Europe. In the south, the experience of austerity has driven voters towards parties determined to scale austerity back, while many voters in the north felt they have paid too high a price for profligacy on the Mediterranean" (Diamond et al., 2015, 48). It goes without saying that, in this specific case, many of these populist phenomena, especially those on the right (which are often xenophobic if not downright racist) are a threat to democracy and must be repudiated.

[12] Here I am concentrating on Europe's crisis, the crisis of its project, at a somewhat general level, and my use of Ricœur aims at providing some

indications of how to solve it at the political level by resorting to imagination and intercultural dialogue. This, however, is rooted in a desire to live in common and entails the protection of what Ricœur called the "capable human being." Elsewhere, I described the social consequences of the crisis in terms of what Axel Honneth calls "social disintegration" and tried to put forward what a "Ricœurian" answer to the crisis would be. These two aspects of the crisis, and of a "Ricœurian" solution to it are obviously tied together. See Marcelo (2013).

[13] The European citizens' initiative is a tool that allows citizens (at least 1 million of them from at least a quarter of member states) to ask the European Commission to propose specific legislation. As such, it is an interesting instrument to make possible the exercise of direct democracy and the discussion of matters that might be of real interest to European citizens.

[14] What I am suggesting, even though this aspect cannot be dealt with here, is that European decision-making processes should be increasingly *bottom-up*, i.e., more radically democratic (perhaps applying what Nancy Fraser has called the "all-affected principle") while European institutions, if they are to be actualized and kept alive, should, to borrow Axel Honneth's terminology, be geared towards the realization of social freedom and mutual recognition (Honneth 2014). This, in turn, is also part of Ricœur's conception of the good life, which, as recalled earlier, cannot refrain from striving for just institutions. Some of the pathologies of the European project I am invoking here are also, of course, structural impediments that might lead to the reification, decadence or disappearance of European institutions or the European project, and that must therefore be dealt with as swiftly as possible.

[15] See guestbookproject.org

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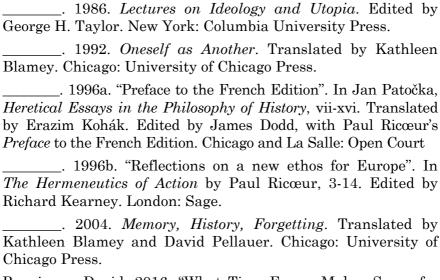
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The Holding Back of Decline: Scheler, Patočka, and Ricoeur on Death and the Afterlife

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Abstract

Jan Patočka and Paul Ricoeur are well known for their accounts of history and the historical understanding of human life. Lesser known are their phenomenological accounts of death and the afterlife. Although their thoughts are available only in fragments, they show a peculiar theoretical richness, as their conceptions of the afterlife are connected to fundamental topics like history, intersubjectivity and memory. In my article, I will attempt to shed light on these fragments, to show how they are embedded in already existing phenomenological theories of the afterlife such as Max Scheler's essay Tod und Fortleben, and to trace their relation to each other. As I will try to show, Patočka and Ricoeur's thoughts can offer an alternative formulation of the phenomenology of death that differs from Martin Heidegger's analysis of death and human mortality in Being and Time. Such an alternative phenomenology of death would not so much focus on the authentic but rather on the intersubjective understanding of death, human mortality, and the afterlife.

Keywords: Scheler, Patočka, Ricoeur, Afterlife, Death, Survival, Memory, Immortality, Eternity

Introduction

Jan Patočka and Paul Ricoeur are well known for their accounts of history and the historical understanding of human life. Lesser known are their accounts of death and the afterlife. Their thoughts on life beyond death are available only in fragments, yet they show a peculiar theoretical richness, as their conceptions of the afterlife are connected to fundamental topics like history, intersubjectivity, and many more. In what follows, I will attempt to shed light on these fragments, to show

how they are embedded in already existing discourses, and to trace their relation to each other. As I will try to show, Patočka and Ricoeur's thoughts can offer an alternative formulation of the phenomenology of death that differs from Martin Heidegger's analysis of death and human mortality in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1996).

For Patočka and Ricoeur, it is clear that a phenomenology of death and the afterlife must begin with a thorough account of life's intersubjective character. Against the background of the Heideggerian idea that an authentic form of being can only be reached by setting oneself apart from the spell of the "they", it seems to be clear for these two thinkers that one can only attain the full form of existence by immersing oneself in the intersubjective sphere. Moreover, they make parallel claims that one can only reach a deeper understanding of human mortality and the possibility of an afterlife through the intersubjective connectedness of human beings. In order for an afterlife to be possible, there needs to be someone who will carry my life further than I will be able to carry it. In *Critique and Conviction*, Ricoeur expressed this idea in the very powerful metaphor of the "horizontal resurrection" (Ricoeur 1998, 161), i.e. the living-on and being resurrected within the other.

At the very beginning of *Plato and Europe*, Patočka claims "that man always is essentially in a 'hopeless adventure'" (Patočka 2002, 2-3). Even though man knows that he will die, he acts or has to act as though life were eternal. He states that man is "committed to an adventure, which, in a certain sense, cannot end well" (Patočka 2002, 2-3). Simply by living, man accepts this contradiction, and so in a certain sense his mere act of breathing is already a minor revolt against mortality. Overcoming this contradiction commits man to a sphere that breaks with the egotism of the individual life. Here, we can find an idea that Filip Karfík magnificently expressed in his study as an *Unendlichwerden durch die Endlichkeit* (Karfík 2008), a becoming infinite or eternal through finitude. Living-on becomes a revolutionary act, which in the end may not win but is the specifically human attempt at resisting death, or is rather "the holding back of decline" (Patočka 2002, 3), as Patočka says.

1. Death and the Afterlife in the Phenomenological Discourse — Max Scheler

Martin Heidegger's analysis of death and mortality in *Being and Time* usually is taken as the point of origin for the phenomenological discourse on death. His thoughts figure as the foundation for the entire discourse on death in the 20th century; whether authors affirm it or critique it, it remains a touchstone. However, it is worth mentioning that the phenomenological discourse on death did not start with Heidegger but rather with Max Scheler's essay *Tod und Fortleben* (Scheler 1957), which Scheler wrote in the years 1911–1914 and expanded with two appendices in 1916. The reason why this essay is so important is the simple fact that it maintained a tension that is characteristic of the history of philosophy but one that Heidegger purposefully neglects in his reinterpretation of the problem: namely, the tension between death and eternity, or in Scheler's specific formulation, the tension between death and the afterlife, or what he calls "living-on"[1] [*Fortleben*].

Scheler's analysis is guided by one central question: why is the modern Western European civilization losing its "belief in immortality"? (*cf*. Scheler 1957) As Scheler tries to show, the rise of the natural sciences is not entirely to blame, since their rise is only a symptom of the greater change that is happening to Western European society as a whole. Scheler's bold claim is that we do not believe in immortality or the afterlife anymore because we have lost our relation to death. Scheler writes: "The type 'modern man' does not have much to say about the afterlife because he denies the core and essence of death at its roots." (Scheler 1957, 15) Hence, Scheler's essay consists of two parts: in the first part, Scheler investigates the "essence and epistemology of death" (Scheler 1957, 16-36), while he addresses the main question of "living-on" (Scheler 1957, 36-52) in the second part.

Scheler's analysis of the "essence of death" anticipates many of the crucial motives for which Heidegger's analysis became famous.[2] Scheler makes clear that death is not a theoretical "fact" that we know by an act of inductive logic; rather, he states that death is given for consciousness "in a

manner that is incomparable with all knowledge of experience" (Scheler 1957, 26). Scheler further argues that death is not given in the form of knowledge but rather in a manner that he calls "intuitive certainty" (Scheler 1957, 22).

> The actual death presents itself always only as a confirmation unexpected after the moment and kind of its happening of an intuitive certainty that is an element of any experience. In the form of this certainty, death does not stand at the real end of life, or would be only an expectation of this end that is grounded in the experience of a different being, but rather death accompanies the entire life as a constituent part of every moment of life. (Scheler 1957, 26)

In very clear lines, he rejects the idea that death is just the mere end of life, adding nothing substantial to life. Rather the opposite is the case: as death accompanies every moment of life, death becomes what Scheler even calls the "apriori of all experience" (Scheler 1957, 18) that structures how we experience our lives and how we perceive the world, other human beings, and ourselves as human beings. Scheler shows this with remarkable clarity in the following passage:

> Death is thus not a mere component of our experience, but it belongs to the essence of experience of every life, and also our own life, that experience has the direction toward death. Death belongs to the form and structure in which every single life is given to us alone, our own and every other life and this *from the inside and from the outside*. It is not the framework that comes coincidentally to an image of a single psychic or physiological process, but rather a framework that belongs to the image itself and without this framework the image would not be one of *life*. (Scheler 1957, 22)

Throughout his investigation of death and the afterlife, Scheler maintains a strictly phenomenological standpoint and method. That means that Scheler investigates death only in terms of the *how* and *what* of its givenness (Scheler 1957, 16). He brackets all judgements based on metaphysics, positive sciences, religion and even rational but abstract theories. Concerning the afterlife, he outlines three possible ways to investigate it, only the last of which he deems to be phenomenological and hence feasible. There he writes:

> Sharpest distinction between the *immediate* "*ex-perience*" of life and world in its pure what — and all objective being, also the "lived life" that becomes manifest in lived experience: "inner perception and

observation", and treatment of this question from this point. Only the last way is practicable. (Scheler 1957, 42)

Scheler's treatise on the afterlife investigates the afterlife only inasmuch as it is *part* of life and not as something which comes after life or exists outside of life. By definition then he excludes every speculation that reaches beyond that which is immediately given. In his account, the afterlife can only be based on the very same experiences by which we experience life, since only these experiences are immediately given to us. In reference to Gustav Theodor Fechner's method of "inductive metaphysics", he argues for an "principle of immanence", i.e. that one can only talk about the afterlife by means of analogy with the structures of life. In a very subtle move, Scheler turns Fechner's motivation to reach beyond the confines of worldly experience into an argument for how to reach beyond the confines of life while relying on nothing other than the very experiences of life. Paraphrasing Fechner, Scheler states that one has to "transcend experience by holding the hand of experience." (Scheler 1957, 58)

In a long and complex argument, Scheler tries to show how the human person is tied to but not reducible to their body. The body is rather the mere "expression" of the person and not the person itself. By means of showing the "essential independence" (Scheler 1957, 36) [*Wesensunabhängigkeit*] of the person from organic life, Scheler hopes to also show the independence of the person in the case of death. If the person is not reducible to the body, that would mean that the person would not cease to exist in the case of death. It would only mean that this person does not express him-/herself anymore, but the mere fact that all expression is missing does not necessarily entail that the person who does not express themselves has ceased to exist. In the lecture *Das Wesen des Todes* from 1923/24, Scheler sketches the somewhat witty illustration of slamming the door on Hans, whom I do not see now anymore behind the closed door. But the fact that I do not see Hans anymore with the door closed does not mean that Hans does not exist anymore behind that door, or anywhere else for that matter. It merely means that I cannot see Hans expressing himself anymore (Scheler 1987, 302).

Since Scheler understands the human being as a "spiritual person" [*geistige Person*], he prohibits any reduction of the person to the body. His argument reaches even further since he will hold that the spiritual person in fact cannot even be seen during life. Scheler argues: "This spiritual person is 'invisible' so to speak even when I talk to her or when she expresses herself. That we do not see her after death says very little since one cannot see her in a sensory way in any case." (Scheler 1957, 37) This argument is interesting not so much for its claim regarding the existence of the spiritual person in the afterlife, but rather because it posits the immaterial existence of the person in life as well as in death. For this, Scheler finds the very interesting metaphor of the "swinging out and beyond" (Scheler 1957, 47) [*Fort- und Hinausschwingen*] of the spiritual person. In his argument, the human person is defined by and mainly exists through spiritual acts, feelings and values. In these very acts, the person is not reducible to his or her body; further, more than one person can partake in the same spiritual act, such as feelings, values, etc. (Scheler 1973, 23-24) In these acts, "my spirit as feeling swings beyond the confines of the states of my body." (Scheler 1957, 45) Since this is the case already during life, it is very likely that this also holds true for death. And since the spiritual person swings beyond the very moment in which the person exists, it is highly likely that the person will also transcend this unshakable moment of death.

What is interesting in Scheler's work regarding the question concerning the afterlife in Patočka and Ricoeur, however, is the simple idea that the person is not confined by its bodily existence. Even more, the body does not figure as the container of the person since the subject is able to transcend its bodily existence. In the spiritual acts that Scheler outlines, subjects can transcend their bodily confines and exist with each other beyond their bodily vessels. Since the body is not identical to the spiritual person, this means that the spiritual person could possibly live on in a non-bodily manner. Although this sounds like the traditional split between body and soul, Scheler's position is more nuanced since he argues for an *essential* connection between body and spirit that serves as the very basis for the definition of the person (Scheler 1957, 48-49).

Scheler's focus on the afterlife restricts itself to an analysis of how the person experiences this afterlife. These thoughts raise the question: how could one address the afterlife in a more elaborate way, i.e. by taking into account the intersubjective condition of human life?

2. The Other in Me, I in the Other — Jan Patočka

In a fragment that was probably written in the late 1960s[3] called *Phénoménologie de la vie après la mort*, Jan Patočka thinks about how one could approach the afterlife in a theoretically coherent way. In his analysis, he does not want to repeat the classical "mistakes" in the history of philosophy, such as positing a dualism between the body and the soul. In the very beginning of the text, Patočka states that in the philosophical tradition, this question has been reduced to "the question of the mortality or immortality of the soul"[4] [*la question de la mortalité ou de l'immortalité de l'âme*] (Patočka 1995, 145). However, he holds that this idea of the soul is a "metaphysical fiction, an invention of the dualistic philosophy" [*une fiction métaphysique, une invention de la philosophie dualiste*] (Patočka 1995, 145). Patočka solely investigates how an afterlife could take place or have its basis within the very structures of our lifeworld. Hence, Patočka thinks that "phenomenology provides […] a methodical apparatus which makes possible such a questioning." [*La phénoménologie fournit […] un appareil méthodique qui rend possible un tel questionnement*] (Patočka 1995, 145). Patočka's connection to Scheler's phenomenology of death and the afterlife here seems obvious since they share the aim and method of treating the question of the afterlife solely within the realms of experience and its systematic observation and explication.

Like Scheler, Patočka eschews philosophical speculations and begins with what is immediately given, namely the concrete experience of life itself. In contrast to Scheler, Patočka does not focus on how life is structured by death. Rather, he turns to a fundamentally constitutive feature of our lives, and that is: intersubjectivity.[5] According to his thoughts, life is essentially intersubjective and hence, every phenomenology of the afterlife would have to take into account

this essential structure. In Patočka's own words: "Life is essentially life with others" [*La vie est essentiellement vie avec les autres*] (Patočka 1995, 151). Since this life with others is the primordial sphere of all considerations of death and the afterlife, the two extreme cases of death and afterlife must figure as profound modifications of this primordial sphere — the question therefore is how death and the afterlife modify the very structures of life and life with others. The above cited passage is striking in its context:

> Life is essentially life with others, and the other who has withdrawn from it does not cease to be simply by ceasing to be according to the mode of presence. His being is according to the mode of definitive absence, fundamentally different from non-being, and this *stéresis* has a content of life that is essentially positive. Life after death is thus originally a privative mode of life with the other under all its fundamental figures. (Patočka 1995, 151)

> [*La vie est essentiellement vie avec les autres, et l'autre qui s'en est retiré ne cesse pas d'être simplement en cessant d'être selon le mode de la présence. Son être est selon le mode de l'absence définitive, foncièrement différent du non-être, et cette* stéresis *a un contenu de vie essentiellement positif. La vie après la mort est ainsi originellement un mode privatif de la vie avec l'autre sous toutes ses figures fondamentales.*]

Patočka embeds his theory of death and the afterlife in a very sophisticated theory of intersubjectivity. In this theory, Patočka distinguishes five aspects of our complex relation with ourselves and the other (Patočka 1995, 146-147)[6]: 1. my being within me [*mon être en moi-même*], 2. my being for myself [*mon être pour moi-même*], 3. my being for the other [*mon être pour autrui*], 4. the being of the other for me [*l'être de l'autre pour moi*], and 5. my being in itself [*mon être en soi*]. This fivefold structure highlights the nuances of how I relate to the other, how the other relates to me, and how I relate to myself. As such, this structure lays the groundwork for understanding how the experience of death transforms that intertwined relationship and how it prevails or is modified in what Patočka calls the afterlife. Let us look more closely at each of the components of this fivefold structure:

1. My being within me [*mon être en moi-même*] is the very ground on which everything is built. It is the being within

me that I cannot touch and which constantly actualizes itself anew. As such, it is not accessible to the other, and it is not even accessible to me since it is the very basis of who I am and of the mere fact of my existence. As such, it is not objectifiable since I lack the necessary distance to do this; I cannot take an independent stance on it.

2. My being for myself [*mon être pour moi-même*] is different from my being within me precisely in the aspect of objectification. Whereas I cannot reflect upon or objectify my being within me, I can of course reflect upon myself and make it an object of my ponderings. This reflection presupposes a distance that I create within myself, namely between the subject that is me and the subject that I am for myself. Filip Karfík expresses this poignantly: "It is not my being anymore insofar as it lives, but rather insofar as it is experienced."[7] (Karfík 2008, 83) [*Es ist nicht mehr mein Sein, insofern es lebt, sondern insofern es erlebt wird.*]

3. My being for the other [*mon être pour autrui*] is how I am perceived and experienced by the other. This is significant insofar as this component of my intersubjective relations does not originate within me. Whereas my being within me was not accessible to me because of the lack of distance that I have towards myself, my being for the other is not accessible to me since the point of origin of this relation does not originate within me. To put it otherwise: this form of being is a being that I cannot be for myself but which is given to me by the other.

4. The being of the other for me [*l'être de l'autre pour moi*] is the inversion of my being for the other. This means that the other has a being which he is not for himself but which he is given through me. In this respect, the self does not coincide with itself; this mode of existence does not originate in and is not for a self, hence it provides the leeway for a being which transcends itself beyond the narrow confines of its physical existence. This will become especially important in Patočka's treatise of the afterlife within the narrow confines of life.

5. Finally, my being in itself [*mon être en soi*] consists of all the former four components but does not coincide with them. It is based on my being within me, the possibility to reflect upon myself and my being for the others, but also the impact that

others have upon me. As such, it concerns my project for my own being in this world as a whole, which is shaped by this complex intersubjective interplay and my own relation with myself.

What is so interesting in Patočka's conception of intersubjectivity is that it goes against the entire discussion of a phenomenology of death that stems from Heidegger's analyses in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1996, §§ 46-53). In the infamous §47, Heidegger frames the question of the importance of my own death and the death of the other as a matter of how we gain access to the experience of death. Here, the problem is that one never fully experience one's own death, since death interrupts the very relation between the subject and the object of experience. Hence, Heidegger very quickly dismisses this "experience of death" as a possible basis for a phenomenological investigation of death. Instead, he turns to the death of the other, which he dismisses all too quickly.[8]

Whereas death interrupts the correlation between the subject and the object, this is not the case with the death of the other. No matter how painful this experience might be, we can observe the process of another person's dying without being lifted out of the experience. However, this seems to be exactly the problem since we can experience death as it unfolds phenomenologically, but we do not get an insight into what death means *to us*. This motivated Heidegger's infamous claim:

> Death does reveal itself as a loss, but as a loss experienced by those remaining behind. However, in suffering the loss, the loss of being as such which the dying person "suffers" does not become accessible. We do not experience the dying of others in a genuine sense; we are at best always just "there" too. (Heidegger 1996, 222)

In short, Heidegger assigns little importance to the death of the other and instead emphasizes the primacy of the subject's experience. The death of the other is something which happens to a fully constituted subject and is therefore of only accidental importance. Patočka's conception of intersubjectivity seems richer here since his conception does not fall into the trap of understanding human mortality through the very process of death. On the contrary, his conception of subjectivity is a non-foundational concept of intersubjectivity, which means that intersubjectivity is manifest through an intertwinement of self

and other that lacks a single primary point of origin. As Filip Karfík puts it:

> [A]ll this leads at last to a conception of intersubjectivity in which there is just as little priority of the I in relation to the other as there is priority of the other in relation to me and in which one can only discuss the different aspects of the I and the other in its mutual intertwinement. (Karfík 2008, 84)

> [[A]ll das mündet zuletzt in eine Konzeption der Intersubjektivität, in der es eine Priorität des Ich in bezug auf den anderen ebenso wenig gibt wie eine des anderen in bezug auf mich und in der man lediglich über die verschiedenen Aspekte des Ich und des anderen in ihrer gegenseitigen Verflochtenheit sprechen kann.]

Patočka's focus on this mutual intertwinement gives him the means to develop an account of human intersubjectivity in its richness and without reducing the other to my projects as a mere means towards authenticity. Instead, Patočka puts all the emphasis on what he calls "reciprocity", i.e. that idea that I keep the other within me and the other keeps me within him, or to give it great terminological precision: there is a reciprocity of my being for the other and the being of the other for me. Since this is also connected to my own being for myself, this leads to the dynamic that I somehow need the other in order to reach myself in the higher sense, i.e. my being in itself. Hence, this reciprocity between me and the other is of crucial importance:

> Reciprocity is the fundamental factor in the synchrony of the two originalities: the originality of the being of the other for me (with my consciousness of its originality for himself) and my originality for the other (with his consciousness of my being original in myself). (Patočka 1995, 148)

> [La réciprocité est le facteur fondamental de la synchronie des deux originalités : l'originalité de l'être de l'autre pour moi (avec ma conscience de son originalité pour soi) et mon originalité pour l'autre (avec sa conscience de mon être original en moi-même).]

With reference to Hegel and Alexandre Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, Patočka tries to show that this reciprocity is not just based on the fact that I need the other and the other needs me; rather it expresses that peculiar and complex relationship with the other in which I even need the other's need for me. Patočka develops this further in a comparably long discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre where he

analyses the structure of desire and how I not only desire the other but also desire the desire of the other for me. I do not want to lead us astray from the discussion of death and the afterlife, but reciprocity is a useful way to show how complex those topics become in relation to human intersubjectivity and how such a conception of intersubjectivity can be a means to show the true complexity of a possible life after death within the very structures of the intersubjective lifeworld.

As Hans Ruin points out in his analysis, it is in this sense that "we live through each other" (Ruin 2015). This points to a possibility where the structures designated as "my being for the other" and conversely, "the being of the other for me" make the possibility of an afterlife intelligible. In the case of my death, the other keeps me within him and in case of his death, I keep the other within me. As Ruin puts it, Patočka focuses on "this strange phenomenon of how the dead other continues to live, and thus how, in a certain sense, there is life after death" (Ruin 2015). And to be more precise, Patočka's investigation centers on how there is life after death but strictly within the realms of life itself and through this sophisticated concept of intersubjectivity.

The remarkable fact is that Patočka, in the very few lines of this fragment, arrived at an understanding of not only the afterlife but moreover an understanding of an intersubjectively shared human mortality. It is an understanding that we live *with, through, and among* the dead and that the dead live within us, through us, and among us.[9] It is in that sense that one could think — phenomenologically speaking — of a transgenerational notion of life or even a quasi-eternity that manifests itself in the very midst of our contingent and finite lives. As Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback stresses, this also leads to the problem that one has to think in some way of a transgenerational notion of responsibility, which she tries to develop under the title of an "a-subjective negative responsibility" (Sá Cavalcante Schuback 2014, 43-60). This urge to think about ways of engaging with this peculiar life after death stems from the fact that, from this perspective, the "living being is indeed always a life after the death of others, living

existence is not only co-existent with other living beings but also with no longer living beings" (Sá Cavalcante Schuback 2014, 58).

Patočka's remarkable fragment not only demonstrates a phenomenologically sound and interesting way to deal with death and the afterlife within the very boundaries of life itself, it gives way to a very interesting and fruitful conception of intersubjectivity that captures the true richness and depth of mutual intersubjective relations and exchanges. Patočka manages to show how we become ourselves through others and in doing so he levels a scathing critique at Heidegger's narrow notion of authenticity. In his fragment, Patočka is able to show that there is indeed a form of authenticity in which I only reach an authentic self with the help of the other and vice versa. In the specific discussion of human mortality, Patočka undermines many of the common and very well known arguments that are framed in terms of the opposition between the experience of my own death and the death of the other. Patočka is able to show that our very lifeworld is not only a world of the living; others who have already departed haunt this very lifeworld, others who we keep alive by carrying them within us.

3. Horizontal Resurrection — Paul Ricoeur

In the final decade of his life, Ricoeur worked on a variety of thoughts which gravitated around the topics of history, memory, and death. The clearest exposition of this complex of ideas can be found in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Ricoeur 2004, 343-368) where Ricoeur tries to frame the *conditio historica* in reference to Martin Heidegger's accounts of human mortality and historicity. There, he proposes "an alternative reading of the meaning of mortality". He states: "This reading without pretension would pave the way for a multiple attribution of dying: to the self, to close relations, to others; and among all these others, the dead of the past, which the retrospective gaze of history embraces" (Ricoeur 2004, 350). In other words, his analysis of mortality pays attention to these aspects of mortality that Heidegger's analysis of death either neglected or perhaps even consciously suspended. Whereas Heidegger calls any understanding of the other's death (or the mediation of one's own death through the other) "inauthentic",

Ricoeur seems to start exactly with these aspects of death: others in close and distant relations, or even the dead others encountered through history.

Among the many things that Ricoeur tries to consider in his approach — including a completely under-investigated topic in phenomenological research: the relation between death and the body (Ricoeur 2004, 345; 357—358) —, he focuses on what he calls the "plurality" of mortality. He pursues the question: "What is there to say about death in light of our manner of being among other humans — regarding the *inter-esse* that Heidegger expresses in the vocabulary of *Mitsein*?" (Ricoeur 2004, 359). By going in this direction, it is hardly surprising to see that Ricoeur engages with a reading of Emmanuel Lévinas as a correction of that under-representation of the other in Heidegger's analysis. But before he does this, he clearly formulates his critique of Heidegger while outlining the unexplored paths that his analysis offers.

First and foremost, he states that the Heideggerian approach suspends and even avoids the question of how our relation to the departed other may open up revelatory ways of relating to death. The experiences of loss and mourning should not be seen as an obstruction to an authentic understanding of death but could indeed be a way to even get to the truth of the phenomenon of death. Ricoeur writes:

> What it is important to plumb instead are the resources of veracity concealed in the experience of losing a loved one, placed back into the perspective of the difficult work of reappropriation of the knowledge about death. Along the road that passes through the death of the other — another figure of the detour — we learn two things in succession: loss and mourning. (Ricoeur 2004, 359)

Loss and mourning are the most fundamental "positive" phenomena that have to do with the question of death and which Heidegger failed to consider (Derrida 2001; cf. Sternad 2012). It is through the experience of loss and mourning that we are carried towards a deeper understanding of death which Heidegger dismisses as being within the realm of the "they" and hence as being inauthentic. As Ricoeur writes, "Loss and mourning display […] unprecedented forms that contribute to our most intimate apprenticeship of death" (Ricoeur 2004, 360).

Although the loss of the other is only an external event of death as Heidegger would have it, it is itself a positive phenomenon of death. We experience death first and foremost as the loss of a beloved other; we experience it through the mourning in which we keep the departed other with us. The loss of the other and the subsequent mourning is a way of growing into the phenomenon of death and which also prepares oneself for one's own death. In fact, there is no learning how to die without mourning for the death of the beloved other. Ricoeur goes even further and claims that the death of the other is even connected to the identity of the self since it points to a partial loss of the self:

> As for loss, separation as rupture of communication — the deceased, someone who no longer answers — constitutes a genuine amputation of oneself to the extent that the relation with the one who has disappeared forms an integral part of one's self-identity. The loss of the other is in a way the loss of self and as such constitutes a stage along the path of "anticipation". (Ricoeur 2004, 359)

This rupture of communication happens in every single case of death, in our relation with our beloved others but also in society in general. However, it is also the case in history since history as such is the presence of an astonishing legion of the dead. Paraphrasing Ricoeur, we can say that being historical is to be with the dead (Ricoeur 2004, 364). Indeed, history is the memory of those who passed, or in Ricoeur's own words: "Death marks, so to speak, the absent in history" (Ricoeur 2004, 365). As such, history becomes the peculiar afterlife of our (collective) memory[10] in which we keep the dead with us in our memory and allow them to still live through us today. However, such a perspective is only possible if one moves away from the narrow discourse Heidegger set up, since all these phenomena would not be of interest for Heidegger. Even more, Heidegger would discredit these phenomena as mere "cases of death" which only allow for an inauthentic understanding of death (Heidegger 1996, § 52).

In 1995/96, Ricoeur began writing some fragments on death, which were collected and published posthumously in *Living up to Death* (Ricoeur 2009). Although they are just fragments, they deal with death in a rather systematic way and connect with his thoughts in *Memory, History, Forgetting* concerning the intersubjective dimension of death. Among these

many fragments, one can find a rather consistent and longer text with the title *Up to Death. Mourning and Cheerfulness* (Ricoeur 2009, 1-55) in which he develops all the main motives of his thought. In the opening of these fragments, one can find a little sketch of how Ricoeur wanted to elaborate his thoughts on death. He writes:

> The living and the dead?
> No, the living and the memory of the dead in the memory of the living.
> Bond of memory. (Ricoeur 2009, 4)

From the very first page of these fragments, Ricoeur treats death in relation to intersubjectivity. This is only comprehensible if one takes the aforementioned considerations in *Memory, History, Forgetting* into account, i.e. that Ricoeur regarded the Heideggerian discourse as incomplete and in some respects even misleading. By taking the other as a starting point for his reflections, Ricoeur shows that his analysis will go in a completely different direction from that of Heidegger. And in fact, his considerations follow three key problems, which from the very onset show themselves to be the missing aspects in the traditional discourse departing from Heidegger.

In a first step, he turns to the death of the other. In a second step, he reflects upon the impossibility of an experience of death from a first person perspective. Hence, he will shift from an experience of death to an experience of being with the beloved dying or dead person. In a third consideration, he addresses the very complex idea of survival, mainly against the background of the Holocaust and the testaments of survival Jorge Semprun and Primo Levi articulate. One can easily see what severe consequences his thoughts and his methodological shift brings about if one considers this trauma of civilization and the complex question of memory that comes with it. Here, I will only deal with the key methodological idea in the first step and unfold it against the background of our discussion of Max Scheler and Jan Patočka.

It was Emmanuel Lévinas who in *God, Death, and Time* claimed: "The death of the other: therein lies the first death" (Lévinas 2000, 43). This statement has been understood as the most radical critique of Heidegger's analysis of death, hence it

provoked a methodological reflection on the proper departure point for an adequate analysis of death. Ricoeur seems to repeat this radical gesture when he also raises the question of where to begin. His first reflection begins with the straightforward statement: "There is first of all the encounter with the death of a loved other, of unknown others" (Ricoeur 2009, 8). In this short statement, Ricoeur makes clear that the encounter with the death of the other is the starting point for every reflection on death. This unshakable event of death provokes a peculiar question within the one who survives: "[W]hat are, where are, how are the dead?" (Ricoeur 2009, 9) The survivor has to ask himself the question "what has been lost? " and "in what sense does the departed remain here?" The peculiar, painful and unique moment of the death of the other consists in that strange problem: how could it be that this beloved person was just here, and somehow still lingers here but proves to be gone at the same time? This strange moment demands an answer that tells us about the kind of existence that just has been erased but also tells us about the possible continuing existence that follows after the erasure.

It is clear that this "continuing existence" is completely different from how the living continue existing. The life after death becomes a question of survival. How does the survivor keep the dead alive? And what does that mean for the peculiar form of intersubjective existence we have with one another during our lifetimes? Here, Ricoeur touches upon a very complex relation that I maintain with the other and the other maintains with me. This relation will be first and foremost a temporal relation, of shared time within life but also a time that transcends death in both directions: from the living to the future dead, and from the already dead to the still living. Regarding this complex relation, Ricoeur writes:

> It is tomorrow's [dead], in the future perfect tense, so to speak, that I imagine. And it is this image of the dead person I will be for others that takes up all the room, with its load of questions: what are, where are, how are the dead?[11] (Ricoeur 2009, 9)

The dead will be kept alive in the memory of the living. But it is also already during life, that the living as "future dead" relate to the others as possible survivors, as the future

keepers of their memories. They will be the survivors of my death and they will keep the memory of me within them and hence allow for a peculiar afterlife of mine, which I will not be there to experience. Since this is a mutual structure in the realm of intersubjectivity, one has to take this up as a "positive" phenomenon, and moreover, a phenomenon of the afterlife within the realm of life itself. Jacques Derrida, in his *Memoires: for Paul de Man*, beautifully describes this signature of death within life: "[E]verything that we inscribe in the living present of our relation to others already carries, always, the signature of *memoirs-from-beyond-the-grave*" (Derrida 1989, 29).

One can easily see now, that death is a phenomenon which has in its core this signature of intersubjectivity and life. To think about the afterlife in Ricoeur's sense, requires that we first and foremost think about the other and to think about the specific relationship that I maintain with the other. As Ricoeur puts it:

> The question of survival is thus first of all a question about the survivors who ask themselves whether the dead do continue to exist, in the same chronological time or at least in a temporal register parallel to that of the living, even if this mode of time is held to be imperceptible. (Ricoeur 2009, 10)

In one of the attached fragments, he finds an even more pithy formulation; there he states in a fashion that reminds one of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Huis clos*: "Survival is the others" (Ricoeur 2009, 41; *cf.* Sartre 1989, 45). The others become my survival. If there is an afterlife at all, then one can only think this peculiar afterlife in this context of intersubjectivity. Hence, the phenomenon of death is a phenomenon of intersubjectivity. And the phenomenon of the afterlife is a phenomenon of survival. In both cases however, the phenomenon of death and the afterlife is a phenomenon of life. Only within life can all these structures arise and unfold their complex relationship.

In conclusion, one can say that Ricoeur emphasizes aspects that are generally missing in the Heideggerian discourse on death. Aspects such as intersubjectivity, memory, the body, etc., seem to be the primary starting point for Ricoeur. In the case of memory, Ricoeur develops an impressive conception of how the dead live-on within the realm of the

living. Hence, his conception of the afterlife is first and foremost situated within the realms of life and intersubjectivity. Like Scheler and Patočka before him, Ricoeur too seems to follow the phenomenological demand that we analyse the afterlife solely in terms of how it is given within experience. By taking into account the importance of the experience of the loss of the other and the mourning for the other, his reflections work as a profound correction of the limitations of the Heideggerian discourse. In addition, his reflections open up a way to approach the potentially eternal persistence of the dead others within the memory of history. Since the living keep the dead alive in their memory, this of course leads to a certain politics of remembrance, which we can only point to here.

4. Conclusion

Phenomenology is well known for its rich exploration of death and human mortality. According to the main premises of the phenomenological method, this exploration restricts itself to an analysis of how death appears in the structures of our meaningful world. In doing so, it embraces all assumptions conveyed by culture, religion, society, etc. As Hans Ebeling once emphasized, this can be conceived of as a major turning point in philosophical thanatology, since death ceases to be the transition into something unknown, but becomes the irrevocable end that nevertheless constitutes the very meaningful structures of our lives (Ricoeur 2009, 41).

Given these methodological premises however, phenomenology loses a question that has driven philosophy from the very beginning and that is the question concerning the relation between time and eternity — the relation between life and the afterlife, however it is imagined. Up to this point, only a few phenomenologists dared to think of this peculiar afterlife in a phenomenological way. Among these few phenomenologists, Max Scheler, Jan Patočka, and Paul Ricoeur are the only thinkers who thought about the afterlife in a methodically consistent way.

In their accounts, the afterlife is not a phenomenon that comes after life's end. Instead, they all try to situate the afterlife within the realm of life, since the phenomenological method can only give a clear account of this quasi-phenomenon

within the realm of life. The evanescent phenomenon of the afterlife hence gains a very concrete materiality that it otherwise lacks.

Instead of framing this afterlife as a mysterious ghost that lingers around among the living, their accounts focus on one of the most evident structures of everyone's life, i.e. intersubjectivity. Especially in Patočka and Ricoeur's accounts, we see the afterlife as a phenomenon that we can only observe in the intersubjective sphere. It is the complex intersubjective relationship that keeps the other within me and myself within the other. In this way, the departed still continue to live among the living and in a way, the lifeworld becomes permeated by "that which is no longer", namely a world filled with the dead. We keep our beloved with us, we keep unknown others with us, and in fact, we keep historical others with us.

It is in this sense that our relation with the other is always already marked by this signature beyond the grave, as Jacques Derrida put it. We encounter the other as the possible keeper of our memory and hence as our only way to go beyond the irrevocable threshold of death. If there is a possibility to survive death, then this possibility is only thinkable by means of our relation to the other. Heidegger's analysis of death was blind to this as he put all the emphasis on the relation to our own death. By putting all the emphasis on the "non-relationality"[12] of death, his analysis fails to account for the very ways in which we live together as mortals and mutually share our mortality — and together even reach beyond the confines of the limits of our individual lives.

When Patočka formulated his thoughts on our essentially "hopeless adventure" (Patočka, 2-3), he had in mind the break-through of our individual life to eternity by means of philosophy. Yet, this breakthrough could also be thought differently, by means of the other, all the others with whom and through whom we are holding back the inevitable decline.

NOTES

[1] Scheler's *Tod und Fortleben* is not yet translated into English. All English quotes are translated by the author of this article with the help of an unpublished

draft-translation by Zachary Davis whom I want to thank for generously sharing the draft of his translation with me.

[2] Although the essay remained unpublished, it is difficult to believe that Heidegger was unacquainted with Scheler's ideas on death in one way or another, mostly likely through conversation. One of the terminological traces of Scheler's essay can be seen in the following sentence in Heidegger's *Being and Time* where Heidegger discusses the methodological exclusion of the afterlife from his questioning: "If death is defined as the 'end' of *Da-sein*, that is, of being-in-the-world, no ontic decision has been made as to whether 'after death' another being is still possible, either higher or lower, whether *Da-sein* 'lives on' or even, 'outliving itself,' is 'immortal.'" (Heidegger 1996, 230). [*Wenn der Tod als 'Ende' des Daseins, das heißt des In-der-Welt-seins bestimmt wird, dann fällt damit keine ontische Entscheidung darüber, ob 'nach dem Tode' noch ein anderes, höheres oder niedrigeres Sein möglich ist, ob das Dasein 'fortlebt' oder gar, sich 'überdauernd', 'unsterblich' ist.*]

[3] Cf. Erika Abrams in the bibliographical notes: Patočka 1995, 295. Abrams mentions a rumour according to which this fragment might have been written upon the death of Patočka's wife in 1967.

[4] All quotes in English are translations by the author of this article, C.S. As reference posed the French translation of Erika Abrams and Filip Karfík's critical annotations in: Karfík 2008, 82-100; especially 87, 90. For clarification of the Czech original, I am thankful to Daniel Leufer.

[5] Also Hans Ruin mentions that Patočka takes intersubjectivity as his "starting point": Ruin 2015.

[6] For a very clear depiction of this fivefold structure, see: Karfík 2008, 82-83.

[7] Translation by the author of this article, C.S.

[8] One of the earliest critiques was advanced by Dolf Sternberger, who in 1931 wrote his dissertation *Der verstandene Tod* under Paul Tillich solely on §47 and the question of the death of the other. See Sternberger, 1981.

[9] I tried to show this mechanism in reference to Jacques Derrida's conception of hauntology in: Sternad, 2015.

[10] This term was coined by Maurice Halbwachs who looms large in Ricoeur's thoughts. Cf. Halbwachs, 1992.

[11] Modified translation of the French because of a mistake in translation: "le mort" in this sentence clearly refers to "the dead" and not to "death".

[12] Heidegger defines death as that "possibility which is one's ownmost, non-relational, not to be outstripped, certain, and yet indefinite." (Heidegger 1962, 356).

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Of the Memory of the Past: Philosophy of History in Spiritual Crisis in the early Patočka and Ricoeur

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Abstract

This paper argues that Jan Patočka and Paul Ricoeur endured their own cognitive-spiritual crisis, particularly during the development and outbreak of war in the 1930s. Their philosophies of history are thus, on the one hand, born of a rethinking of modern philosophy from the time of Galileo and Descartes, and on the other, a suffering of crisis that Europe itself was suffering. Stemming from the historical and philosophical context of Husserl's epistemology in the Krisis, both Ricoeur and Patočka had to confront history and the decadence of European sciences, as it concerns the difficulty of remembering the past and describing events in history. These responses to the problem of modern philosophy and science in Europe point to the symptom of spiritual crisis due to 'modern man' having no unified worldview. By means of care of the soul and the challenging of the state in action, a hermeneutics of peace emerges from their spiritual crises.

Keywords: History, Crisis, Memory, Peace, Violence, Jaspers, Masaryk

> "While an enmity to culture is grinding to powder all that has hitherto existed (with an arrogant assumption that the world is now beginning entirely afresh), in the process of reconstitution the mental substance can only be preserved by a sort of historical remembrance which must be something more than a mere knowledge of the past and must take the form of a contemporary vital force." (Jaspers [1931] 1957, 130)
> "Peace is an immense task if it is to be the crowning of justice." (Ricoeur [1949] 1967, 226)

Behind Jan Patočka's *Heretical Essays* (*Kacířské eseje*, 1975) and Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et récit*, 1983-5) and *Memory, History, Forgetting* (*La mémoire,*

l'histoire, l'oubli, 2000), works that encompass a lifetime and encapsulate a century, lies a shadow. A shadow that haunts Europe.[1] The question of how to remember the past conjures up ghosts, particularly remembering trauma rooted in crisis. World War I had been the "suicide of Europe" (Ricoeur 1998, 15; Patočka 1996, sixth essay). Writing between the wars during the birth of Czechoslovakia as a nation, Jan Patočka (1907–1977) endured a cognitive-spiritual (*geistige*) crisis, particularly during the development and outbreak of war in the 1930s, before the *Shoah*. Yet his early writings are a kind of prophecy of what might occur. Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) endured a spiritual crisis during the *Shoah* and likewise responded to the need for both care of soul and state.

Our aim is to trace these two philosophers' thoughts and efforts to cope with the event, as linked as it is to the role of violence in culture and history.[2] While most scholars emphasize their later works, this article will entirely situate their original interest in history and the philosophy of history *within* their own early philosophical history. Since our goal is not primarily biographical even if their personal stories are a form of history and are woven together with their philosophy, this essay rather uncovers the fact that these early writings were closer to the event. Following Patočka and Ricoeur on the historical crisis in this period helps illuminate what was invisible – the event brings to light what was only previously implicit. Born from the ashes of memory and its inherent trauma, the possibility of action arises. "In this respect, 'action…looks like a miracle'." (Ricoeur 2004, 489)

Aviezer Tucker, in his *The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence from Patočka to Havel*, poses the following question: "What is the reason for the crisis that apparently led to the self-destruction of Europe in the twentieth century?" (2000, 59)[3] This question gets at the heart of an inquiry into the *historical* event of the *Shoah*, an event which cannot be taken lightly or glossed over. Was it reason or rationality that caused the self-destruction of Europe? Or was it senseless acts of cruelty? Our answer, if Tucker's question can possibly be answered, is that a spiritual crisis in Europe occurred, a crisis of reason which following Patočka and Ricoeur requires a

coming to grips with how the Enlightenment project and its trust in reason has truly failed us. For the two philosophers considered here, we must read backwards (or what Ricoeur calls "questioning back"[4]), and reflect anew on what has happened. Their proposal in light of the event is thus action – writing a philosophy of history as a therapeutic act in the face of trauma. Their *telos* is to make meaning of the senselessness of World War I and World War II. But this is not historical as such. Thus, to pose the problem of spiritual crisis in history is to retain some sense of historical science, which is neither based on (deductive-nomological) laws nor entirely subjective.[5] "Historical explanation, therefore, is essentially retrospective, not predictive" (Eldridge 2016, 22). Simply speaking, meaning is not causal in the way that science is, and history requires narrative. It is thus a small part of this story to which we turn.

1. Coming to History

> "a calling…endowed with memory, astuteness of the spirit, and a noble and affable mind." (Plato, Republic, 487a)

The history that is come to after the event is not the same history that is come to before the event. The difference is one of memory. The overriding interpretation of history in the Anglo-Saxon context was that of positivism. Ever since Leopold van Ranke, (philosophy of) history has concerned itself primarily with evidence. "Patočka's starting point is the history of thinking, with particular focus on the idea of evidence. He sketches the historical unfolding of this concept" (Učnik 2015, 39). As the topic of Patočka's dissertation, *The Concept of Evidence and its Significance for Knowledge* (1931) already pointed out, evidence is historical and modern science must "navigate between the Scylla of empirical evidence, which is by definition changing, and the Charybdis of the 'rationalists' immutable, *a priori* ideas, which are supposedly innate." (Učnik 2015, 32) Evidence is neither owned by empiricism nor by rationalism, but rather originates with Descartes's clear and distinct ideas.[6] This means that meaning replaces analysis, or critique replaces evidence, as stuck as it

is in between the Scylla of empiricism and the Charybdis of rationalism.[7] Unlike Descartes or Locke, according to Patočka in 1933, "Plato is the person who conceived of a society which is governed purely spiritually and founded on the life of the spirit." ([1933] 2007b, 13) Spirit here thus refers to "being itself" and the "ultimate bases of all value." It is by means of purification that "inner and active" philosophy gives "necessary unity to the life of the individual and of society, to give life that inner center that one potentially nurses within oneself as the unfulfilled meaning of one's life" (ibid.). Patočka's emphasis on both Plato and myth, which as a "symbol that suggests unity and continuity," contrasts modern philosophy's need for clarity and distinctness. Philosophical myth is "the naïve manifestation of spiritual needs, which express themselves in an instinct for mythology" (ibid., 16). Myth is useful for life in allowing us to care for the soul which, as Patočka quotes from Plato's *Republic*, is "a calling…endowed with memory, astuteness of the spirit, and a noble and affable mind" (ibid., 15, quoting Plato 487a).[8]

In his comments on the mundane and extramundane, Patočka prefaces his thoughts with the fact that he is not doing philosophy, but rather "only a modest attempt to rend philosophy from forgetting… an anamnesis" (Patočka 2007b, 18). Already this is a thesis for the memory of the past spread throughout his works. The mundane position in philosophy, as stated in "Platonism and Politics," is intellectualism as a "mode of mundane life, a way to fill time" (ibid., 14), whereas an extramundane [*mimosvětské*] position assumes a separation between the world and philosophy, which has no point of contact. "The world can cancel the existence of the philosopher and, behold, philosophy *enters into history* by means of it!" (ibid., 23) Whereas the goal of present-day science emphasizes quantitative and technical understanding, the goal of ancient philosophy was understanding. "The unreflective life gives rise to myth and poetry, mighty visions that are the depositories of an immediate self-understanding of life in the form of models seen, of exalting events, of intoxicating, appealing enthusiasm" (ibid., 24). The poet and the hero live by courage and danger, challenged by the

philosopher, and it was their shadows that executed Socrates, since philosophy does not bring salvation in this world or the next. This is the message of how the extramundane enters the world and is put to death. "Philosophizing brings joy to those who philosophize (in varied ways, to be sure, and entailing a hard, painful struggle with oneself for oneself), because there lives in it the passion to understand…. it contains a calm clarity about the whole of life." (ibid., 26)

What is important here, whether for Ricoeur or Patočka, is action.[9] We might at this early stage call them Arendtian *avant la lettre*. Action in the face of the *Shoah* was the only way to cope with this spiritual crisis, and for all of them, publishing their thoughts was a form of action. This is where, as early as 1934 when Arendt is 28, Patočka is 27 and Ricoeur 21 years old, without reading each other or interacting, they may whole-heartedly agree. The entirety of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was a reaction to the shock of the *Shoah*, as Anya Topolski calls it.[10]

In two early essays of Patočka's, "Some Comments on the Concepts of History and Historiography" ("Několikpoznámek k pojmůmdějin a dějepisu") and "Some Comments on the Concept of 'World History'" ("Několikpoznámek o pojmu 'světových dějin'"), he takes this a step further.[11] When Patočka writes, "*Gnothi seauton* is a call to recognize its own limits, an invitation to *sophrosyne*" ([1934] 2007a, 140),[12] this calling or vocation of a philosopher is to bring the extramundane, the knowing of oneself or care of the soul, *into* the world and action. Acting in time, in history, is the problem of the "sciences de l'esprit" (ibid.). Why do we study history, he asks, or better, why read works of history? The answer, to put it simply, concerns care of the soul. This is the purpose of the memory of the past, not to dwell melancholically or nostalgically on that which is past, but to propose action in light of it.[13] "All that which we understand to traverse history is charged with signification in our actual life; history is incompatible with indifference," Patočka writes, and it carries with it an "irresistible fascination" (Patočka [1934] 2007a, 145, my translation). This fascination cannot be understood in a Kantian, Hegelian, or even Diltheyan vein,

but rather "manifests [itself] under the species of esteem and contempt, love and hate, admiration and compassion" (ibid.). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, history is a science of the past, which means the "science of the real par excellence." As with their later works, *Heretical Essays* and *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Patočka and Ricoeur point to the ontological and epistemological "real," which in Patočka's words of 1934 can be read "under a lively [*vécue*] figure, savage, a final expression of the ultimate lack of a common measure between life and knowledge." (ibid., 144) The important point here is the insistence on the ontological-spiritual and epistemological-spiritual together with the ethical. Philosophy of history thus enters history by means of spiritual crisis, and this already as early as the 1930s. "The past," for Patočka, "is thus an urgent call launched to our freedom, which engages it to awaken to its own question" (Patočka 2007a, 151, my translation). Here he expands upon this urgent call, articulating a core agreement which he will have with Ricoeur: "The construction of the historical world commences by memory, passes by decision and develops itself by repetition. Memory opens the horizon of the past; the decision assigns a perspective and a measure; repetition conducts to vision a complex of relations, a general outline of the meaning of the historical process," (ibid., 153) This historical inquiry cannot exist "without esteem and love, hate and resistance," thus making it "one of the most powerful factors of historical life itself" (ibid.).

Jaspers believes that the condition modern man finds himself in is due to both western (primarily European) consciousness and spiritual crisis, and that this, in turn, effects the wider culture. What he means by spiritual crisis seems to be the same as for Masaryk and Patočka. "The natural sciences," Jaspers writes, "with their rationalization, mathematicization, and mechanization of the world … denuded [that world] of spirit…. The despiritualisation of the world is not the outcome of the unfaith of individuals, but is one of the possible consequences of a mental development which here has actually led to Nothingness." (Jaspers [1931] 1957, 20) The historical period of "the present situation" concerns the period after WWI, and he finds this to be the

second time "man has broken away from nature to do work which nature would never have done for herself, and which rivals nature in creative power." (ibid., 22) As Masaryk and Husserl were also to point out, the first time that this occurred was when Bacon, Descartes, and Galileo were writing. For Jaspers, as in his work regarding the Axial period, an epoch has a "spiritual principle" in the sense of "a specific feeling of life," "a sociological structure," and a "particular economic order or a particular system of government." (ibid., 28-9) It follows that the spiritual ties to the political and moral as much as a religious crisis and should not be reduced to one of these value-spheres, all of which is contrasted to titanism or nihilism.[14] Arendt also gained this emphasis on the political-moral from Jaspers.

Whereas "Masaryk believed that the order of history could provide a clue to the meaning of being human and the being of the cosmos" (see Kohák 1989, 26), Patočka is challenging a "spirit" behind – or moving – history.[15] The impulsion of war, Masaryk claims, is derived from the myth of the omnipotent absolutist State. Moreover, when Patočka looks at the State, he sees "an example of such originary power" at once imperialist and legal, another "that which is often named spirit, tries to know the conscious relations of the human and his own world in the forms of philosophy (and science), art, practical knowledge, religion" (Patočka 2007a, 160, my translation). He considers what "powers" mean here with regards to historical processes. "In reality, these powers are only effective in historical configurations, philosophies, political movements, States." (ibid., 161)[16] What this means is that facts do not point to a life, a history, or an event, what Ricoeur will later term narrative. In speaking of profound and superficial history, however, it is impossible to read current events or the specific crisis into this text. There appears no particular historical reference.[17] Memory of the past, or coming to history, means *true* and *good* memory and thus transcends "an idea, realized in the annals of such and such people, or such and such nation." (Patočka 2007a, 152) Instead, the "construction of a historical world commences by memory, passes by decision and develops itself by repetition."

(ibid., 153) This threefold movement of memory, decision, and repetition becomes important later as anchoring, self-extension, and breakthrough (see Patočka 2016, 160-180). Memory of the past is necessary for survival in that it becomes a therapy or cure for history. Thus, coming to history is as much a hermeneutical as a care-filled event in which the future is uncertain.

2. The Personal and the Professional

> "At these times the troubled soul, languishing with a presentiment, a foretaste of the future, has something akin to a prophetic vision." (Dostoyevsky [1846] 1985, 138)

As a close friend of Patočka's for over forty years, Ludwig Landgrebe speaks to the life of the man himself and not just his thought: "our conversations were never purely philosophical," and that they took place "for nights on end in my Prague years between 1933 and 1939." (Patočka 2016, ix) These years haunt the philosophy of the time, and perhaps the life and country, if not all of Europe itself. They are the transition place of both a country and between wars. No one knew what would come. Compare these words of Landgrebe to Ricoeur's own words about the same time period: "I had been warned by André Philip, who himself had not made that choice: he was clearly opposed to Munich, while I was hesitant." (Ricoeur 1998, 15)[18] Experiencing these years in "a kind of exile" in Prague, Landgrebe says, "[t]alk of personal life, family, comments on the alarming political situation in Europe, common concern for the future of Germany… For me, the development of Patočka's philosophy is inseparably linked with the history of a friendship." (Patočka 2016, ix) While being guided through the homeland and Prague in particular, "[h]istory came alive on these occasions in its interwovenness with art and literature." (ibid., x) Here is a document in history concerning a time "near and far, familiar and alien" (ibid., xv). Similarly, Ricoeur mentions Patočka as regarding these years: "We see this, moreover, in all the writings of

Patočka: he says everywhere in them that it was the First World War that constituted the turning point; the First War was the 'suicide of Europe'." (Ricoeur 1998, 15).

The most important text, however, for Patočka's spiritual crisis was "Masaryk's and Husserl's Conception of the Spiritual Crisis of European Humanity" (Patočka [1936] 1989a). He asks whether an article can help through "constructive violence." "Both Husserl's and Masaryk's philosophical activity," Patočka writes, "is marked by a conviction that European humanity is passing through a protracted spiritual crisis whose roots must be sought deep in the past, at the very beginning of modern thought." (ibid., 146)[19] This crisis was to disrupt life, and Husserl specifically sees this in terms of "a lack of clarity at the foundation of the sciences." (ibid., 147) According to Patočka, both Husserl and Masaryk see the symptom of this state in terms of irreligiosity: "The decline of religion in general consciousness then goes hand in hand with the decline of awareness of the ultimate tasks and possibilities of philosophy." (ibid., 149) It is, however, at least for Masaryk, "a feeling of trust and love in a dedication to the world and to one's task," which allows one to be able to act in light of the crisis.[20]In spite of the fact that Jaspers, Masaryk, and Husserl were already speaking of a spiritual crisis, especially concerning politics and the sciences, Patočka's sense of cultural crisis was broader than the looming Munich declaration. It is not that there are two different Patočka's, one before 1938 and one after, but the texts which we have looked at so far are presciently pointing to the difficulty that was to come to bear on the Czech nation itself. While there certainly is a crisis for Ricoeur as well, who was in a camp from 1940-1945 and the threat to France was a real one, their respective senses of crisis are different. In 1938, when Patočka publishes "The Idea of Culture and its Contemporary Relevance," it is important to see how the death of both Masaryk and Husserl were to affect him even before the Munich declaration. To speak of the spiritual crisis and to ignore its personal history is to miss something crucial. Since Patočka is interested in a man "who was capable of turning thoughts into acts, to whom thinking and living was one and

the same thing,"[21] the memory or discovery of Masaryk points to his truly Socratic approach to philosophy.

3. Loving Struggle

> "Is not the attempt to identify oneself with this question by a sort of 'loving struggle' quite akin to the efforts we make in order to communicate with our friends?" (Ricoeur [1949] 1967, 170)

We now leap to a period after the *Shoah*. The historical context is different, but the crisis still remains. Replacing Hegel's master/slave dialectic or ruse of history is the notion of loving struggle in which each term stands for the agonistic. For Ricoeur, "the terror of history and the terror of the psyche mutually precipitate each other": the same thing could be said about the city and the soul, as seen in Plato's *Republic*. If history (or the *polis*) is not at peace, then the soul must also be restless. Ricoeur also points to the Copernican Revolution and the unease in Descartes's *cogito* as being at the root of this crisis. In a number of his earliest publications, including *Freedom and Nature* [*Le voluntaire et l'involuntaire*,1950]and *History and Truth* [1955], there is a debate with the nihilism and crisis of science and history.[22] In "Husserl and the Sense of History," Ricoeur seeks to trace the contours of Husserl's sudden turn towards history in the *Crisis*[23] as events turned upon him.[24] As with Patočka's analysis of Masaryk and Husserl, Ricoeur's is a fascinating glimpse into several questions that would illuminate Ricoeur's work for decades. It is, both for Husserl and for Ricoeur, an attempt at an etiology of crisis – the rise of National Socialism–and, especially for Ricoeur, a sketching out of a project for avoiding or overcoming it.[25] Husserl's first foray into history identifies two competing concepts of the other, seen either naturalistically (from the point of view of the great objectifying project, Science), or idealistically (as a transcendental subjectivity). The first, to put the case very briefly, empties the other of meaning, rendering it indifferent, while the second endows her with immediate concern. The historical movement from the

first to the second is, for Husserl and Ricoeur, the ground of crisis; the movement back from the second to the first represents, for Ricoeur, a profound choice.

Learning to apperceive the Other as a "subject like me," Ricoeur argues, is the touchstone for what he calls "loving struggle,"[26]and the decision to undertake it represents for him the first and most basic ethical decision. In the other 1949 essay, Ricoeur considers the *political* implications of a historiography emptied of subjects, ideas, or imperatives, and reduced instead to the naturalistic and objective: such a history, he will argue, speaks violence. The project there will be to infuse meaning, or "consciousness" into politics by way of nonviolent *action* – love. This point rhymes through much of his later work, and may be called his categorical imperative: to re-connect the interior and exterior worlds, and to fill them both with subjects. In such a world, there cannot be violence, murder, or genocide. It is, moreover, a proposal for an active, engaged, thoughtful, and purposive life of peace.

Ricoeur enumerates several tasks of the "dynamic reason" that he believes guides Husserl's argument (and his own). The first is what later, in *Time and Narrative*, re-appears as configuration – the task of unifying "all significational activities," including "the whole field of culture." (Ricoeur [1949] 1967, 157) This involves a *decision* to endow the world with sense (or senselessness), to "give a rational form to himself and to his surrounding universe." (ibid., quoting Husserl 1970, §2) One "task" of "dynamic reason" is simply this choice, with a crucial new twist. "A task of an ethical character," he writes,

> involves a time having a dramatic character, for the awareness of crisis assures us that the infinite Idea can be buried, forgotten, and even debased. The whole history of philosophy is an open struggle between an understanding of the task as infinite and its naturalistic reduction, or, as the *Crisis* puts it, between transcendentalism and objectivism. (ibid., 158)

It is an interesting and unexpected interpolation: the choice is *dramatic* because it is *historical*, and also *ethical* because it is *present*; this stitching of the ethical into the temporal allows him to think through all four as linked pairs,

and therefore also to project them into the future, as a *task*. In what will become a paradigmatic Ricoeurian move, history and choice are woven into a single *quasi-drama*: loving struggle. Ricoeur puts it simply: one can engage "the object or the *cogito*." (ibid., 161)[27]

A dense and sometimes obscure discussion follows, of Husserl's long meditations on Galileo and Descartes. The first, the story goes, turns increasingly to "experimental logic" and the formal proof of exterior, objective truths. As a result, for Husserl, the psychic became separated from the physical, "since the physical is mastered only in consequence of abstraction from consciousness." (ibid., 164) Descartes, whose *cogito* formed the foundation of a universal transcendental subjectivity, remained "a prisoner of the evidences of Galileo; likewise, as he saw it, the truth of the physical is mathematical, and the whole enterprise of doubt and the cogito only served only to reinforce objectivism." (ibid., 165) This applies as much to Descartes and Galileo as to Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff. Even Kant's "transcendental subjectivism" still managed to miss the point for Ricoeur, because "the consolidation of objectivity by this subjective founding preoccupied him more than the operation of the subjectivity which gives sense and being to the world." (ibid., 166) All three, Ricoeur explains, represent for Husserl a turn away from a universal science of the *ego-cogito*, the "ultimate source of every positing of being and value," to the exterior, objective world, and the truth-procedures associated with it. "The aim of the entire history of philosophy," Ricoeur argues, "is the catharsis of the sick modern spirit. This return to the ego is modern man's opportunity." (ibid., 167)

In his closing "critical remarks," Ricoeur undertakes a critique that contains many germs of later ideas: chiefly, the search for the consecration of sense, or reason, in history; the importance of the creative use of history in service of truth; and finally, the content of loving struggle, the question that links the interior *ego-cogito* with the world of history. As François Dosse has emphasized, Ricoeur's favorite motto was: "La plus court chemin de soi à soi passe par autrui."[28] Ricoeur, though, is not talking only about *Sorge* in the Heideggerian

sense, but *love*. Like Patočka, his decision to undertake this work is an ethical decision to take up hermeneutic, literary, and poetic tools. It is a horizon, rather than a destination in which Ricoeur's proposal for a project grounds his fundamental thesis of *l'homme capable.*

4. The Violence of History

> "For it is history and not the purity of our intentions that counts" (Ricoeur [1949] 1965, 224)

In Ricoeur's essay, "Non-violent man and his Presence to History" (1949), which was "to all appearances…so contingent in its origin," he attempts to relate history and (non)violence. He used the stateless citizen Garry Davis as the key example for how one "actor" in history imposes itself through the power of nonviolence.[29] The occasion of this article is the now lost event of Garry Davis, who after serving as an Allied pilot in WWII gave up his American citizenship in 1948 to become a world citizen. He believed that peace would be actualized if everyone were to give up nationalism. Garry Davis is "the non-violent man" of the article's title.[30] Ricoeur's "notes devoted to violence and non-violence […] presupposes the prior conviction that there is some value in non-violence." (Ricoeur [1949] 1965, 223) However, Ricoeur wants to show that nonviolence is not a passive or powerless activity – he later places this article as the first within the section entitled "The question of power" in *History and Truth*.[31] Nonviolent forms of resistance, as in the case of Garry Davis, are forms of power.

Ricoeur's task here, unlike the etiology of Husserl, is to fulfil a project of understanding violence in history, and can be tied to Ricoeur's project in "Husserl and the Sense of History," not in terms of explicit reference, but in terms of a practical task or act subject to consciousness. But there is a presupposition (or prior conviction) at work behind his article: that Jesus' "*Sermon on the Mount* has to do with our history and the whole of history, with its political and social structures, and does not deal merely with private acts without historical significance." (ibid.) This sermon demands

something *difficult*, Ricoeur says, and introduces a vertical dimension into history, which does not easily assimilate itself: "the *Sermon on the Mount*, with its non-violence, wishes to enter history, that its intention is practical, that it calls for incarnation and not evasion." (ibid., 224) History thus spells out "the complete meaning of what we have willed" through action and not intention (ibid.).

A mere four years after the end of the second World War, all were inescapably aware of the lack of nonviolence as a tactic of political power, and perhaps disenchanted with its idealism. On every doorpost, under each rug, the reality of violence lingered. Yet writing about it can be a form of healing: "The *ethical* nature of consciousness is essentially opposed to the *historical* course of events. History says: violence. Consciousness rebounds and says: love." (ibid., 228) Writing expresses the paradox that is known in the human heart–that we have violence as a part of ourselves, but we are not only violent. If pacifism does not take into account the reality of violence, does not become aware of it, it is naïve and worthless. But having encountered it and *chosen* otherwise, it is an action of deep consciousness, which "can only come from *elsewhere*." (ibid.) This "empire of violence" is as much personal as political, as much empirical as ideological, as much structural as cultural. Nonviolence as much as violence is not particular to the left or right, but undergirds human nature. Ricoeur utilizes the example of a riot exploding in the street, in which "something in me is unleashed, something for which neither profession, nor home, nor daily civic duties provide an outlet." (ibid., 225) This is the savage "nether regions of consciousness" or what Patočka will later call the orgiastic. Yet the psychology of such a consciousness is not the same as the history: "something savage, something wholesome and unwholesome, youthful and unformed, a sense of the novel, of adventure, of availability, a flair for rugged brotherhood and for prompt action" (ibid.). One can see how aspects of Husserl's "sense" of history compare to a sense of violence at the heart of humanity. History concerns the structural aspects of this violence, what Ricoeur calls "the structures of terror." It is the relationship of the psychic to

history, the personal to the philosophical, the soul to the city, where one realizes how "terror becomes history while history nourishes itself with terror. This is what the pacifists, hypnotized by battle-fields, too readily overlook." (ibid., 226) What is it that pacifists miss in the consciousness of violence? Conflict and violence is as central to the State as it is to the individual person. The city reflects the soul, and thus the political is always engaged whenever one acts just as, for Husserl, in developing a science one cannot avoid history. "What is at stake in politics in the strict sense is power: on the level of the State it is essential to know who commands and who is subordinate – that is, who retains the sovereignty, for whose profit, within what limits, etc." (ibid.)

As in Husserl's *Crisis*, so catastrophe lies at the very heart of the collective:

> It is principally when the group bound by the State is in a catastrophic situation that the depths of the civilized (*policée*) consciousness, rejoining the pathos of abstractions, bursts into the open, it is at the moment where I discover my belonging to a perishable communal adventure, to a history broken into many histories, to a thread of history threatened with being cut, it is at this moment that I am carried by the lyricism, bitter and bloody, that *La Marseillaise* symbolises: this grand historical death, in which my individual death is intertwined, elicits the most solemn emotions of existence – 1789, 1871, 1914, 1944 … and they resonate in the deepest and most profound levels of our unconscious. (ibid., 227, ellipses in the original)

Whereas the English translations break this passage into sentences, it is all one complete thought in the French and should be tied together with the phenomenology of any patriotic song in which the glories and barbarism of war or nations are praised.

To take nonviolence seriously is as much a task as the achievement of science. For Ricoeur, achieving science or truth is to recognize one's fallibility and tendency towards conflict and crisis, becoming conscious of the fact that we wish to reduce the Other/ the external to oneself/ the internal. Taking violence seriously and the violence of history, then, "is already to transcend it by judgement. The *ethical* nature of consciousness is essentially opposed to the *historical* course of

events." This is the loving struggle of coming to consciousness: "Its bond is a bond of indignation; by this bond it poses an end to history: its suppression as violence; at the same time it poses the human as a possible friend to the human" (ibid.).

As an ending to Ricoeur's own text of 1949, he asks the question of whether nonviolent resistance can be a "historical success" or is it just a "symbolic gesture." It suffers from a negative motto, "thou shalt not kill." (ibid., 231) Ricoeur's main question, however, for both of these articles is whether it is possible to formulate history and nonviolence in positive, affirming, truthful, and practical terms, not reducing interiority to exteriority, or Other to self. One way of doing this has to do with the loving struggle born of spiritual crisis, the transformation of "thou shalt not kill" to "thou shalt love." There is still a danger in the "cyclical nature of the actions which I perform" since I am led again "to oppress" and the nature of violence begets violence.[32] If the inevitable course of history is the curse of progressivist violence and this same logic runs through the scientification and objectification of the external world, then Galileo's, Descartes's, and Husserl's violence to truth are structurally the same as the state's desire for progressivist violence: all wish to reduce the other to the same.

Echoing much of the spiritual crisis in Patočka's work, there is a fundamentally practical conclusion to these two early articles of Ricoeur's: in imagining otherwise, consciously living, and acting,

> there is neither compromise nor synthesis […] if faith is not total, it denies itself. If nonviolence is the vocation of a few, it must appear to them as the duty of all; for someone who lives it and no longer merely looks at it, nonviolence aims to be the whole of action, its will is to construct history (ibid., 233).

This lay sermon echoes an ancient Greek tragic figure, Antigone, who Ricoeur discusses later and who was a vulnerable and yet powerful woman who acted nonviolently "in the face of power." (Ricoeur 1992, 245) Her words ring out still today: "These laws weren't made now or yesterday. They live for all time, and no one knows when they came into the light." (Sophocles 2003, 21)

Precisely in the way that Husserl's epistemology in the *Krisis* had to confront history and the problem of European sciences, both Ricoeur and Patočka veer from Husserl regarding the difficulty of remembering the past and describing events in history.[33] Patočka's writings includes references to "home," "refuge," "alien," but he is still aware of the human and the extrahuman dimension.[34] Their responses to the problem of modern philosophy and science in Europe point to the symptom of spiritual crisis, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, due to modern man having no unified worldview, living in a double world "at once in his own naturally given environment and in a world created for him by modern natural science, based on the principle of mathematical laws governing nature." (Patočka [1936] 2016, 3) These first sentences of Patočka's habilitation of 1936 profoundly prophesy not only the following forty years of his own work, but also Ricoeur's need through memory of the past to find the harmony between capability and fallibility as much in his earlier as his later works. This paper has been a key for reading their later works by posing some of the missing pieces in history and science. Their Socratic philosophical project, that is, the care of the soul and state, as seen in Antigone or Chelčický in their epochs, can be seen as the red thread that ties both Patočka's and Ricoeur's work and lives together in the same historical epoch.[35]

NOTES

[1] See Derrida 1994, ch. 1. It could equally be said that this shadow still haunts America, Asia, Africa and civilization as we know it. The crisis that haunts the philosophical scene of the twentieth century and still today is Husserl's "philosophical-historical idea of Europe," which concerns the so-called "triumph of reason in history." (Carr 2010, 84-5, quoting Husserl 1970, 269)

[2] As Michael Staudigl has put it in his recent edited volume *Phenomenologies of Violence*, "It follows thus that violence can neither be comprehensively treated from the perspective of discursive constructivism, nor with respect to the theory of social action alone. In light of this insight, not only essentialist and naturalist, but also instrumentalist and socio-ontological theories of violence, which have long shaped the discourse on violence in terms taken from the philosophies of history and theories of civilization, have become more and more unacceptable in recent decades. Anti-essentialism and anti-naturalism consequently determine the recent discourse on violence." (Staudigl 2013, 3) Staudigl only briefly mentions Patočka in this volume (19n), and claims that "[Ricoeur's] account

fails to acknowledge the fact that our bodily integrity is neither a pre-given nor static entity, whereas our personal identity were to be held as something dynamic, open, and malleable" (24). However, he has recently returned to Ricoeur much more positively in Staudigl 2016.

[3] See Nicolas de Warren's comments, "Patočka's reflections can equally be seen as a call to conscience in the 20th-century's quest for the cultural meaning of the first World War, and through such remembrance, for the secret of Europe's historical destiny. And yet, Patočka's reflections elicit unease, if not bewilderment and alarm" (Staudigl 2013, 207).

[4] It is, in other words, what Ricoeur describes as "a method of questioning back. This method, practiced by Husserl in his *Krisis*, stems from what Husserl calls a genetic phenomenology – not in the sense of a psychological genesis but a genesis of meaning. The question that Husserl raised concerning Galilean and Newtonian science, I am raising concerning the historical sciences" (Ricoeur [1983] 1985-1988, i. 179). *Cf.* also Patočka's*Heretical Essays*: "Yet European civilization became a global link in precisely that form which Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences* showed to be decadent, that in it a loss of meaning takes place, the loss of that very meaning-bestowing teleological idea that, for Husserl, makes up the inner, spiritual essence of Europe." (Patočka 1996, 45)

[5] Both science and history share this problem, which Ricoeur discusses in *Time and Narrative* ([1983] 1985-1988, i.182-192) and *Memory, History, Forgetting* ([2000] 2004, 331ff.). For a more recent discussion, see Eldridge 2016, 16-28.

[6] Cf. Ricoeur [1940] 2016, 23-52. If, as Učník writes, "all the claims that Patočka addresses in his lifelong *oeuvre* are, *in nuce*, already there: situational knowledge; the problem of the body; the question of meaning, which is the goal of life and the world; and the two different constitutions of the world, objective and subjective" (2015, 39), then Ricoeur also addresses the main themes *in nuce* in his "Attention" from 1940.

[7] To point to the second part of Ricoeur 2004 on "History, epistemology" or the fourth essay of Patočka 1996, they both provide and presuppose the necessary background of this emergence of the discipline of philosophy of history. For a more introductory but fair treatment to both continental and Anglo-Saxon philosophies of history, see Day 2008.

[8] Myth, or the symbol, "gives rise to thought" and is equally important for Ricoeur. *Cf.* Ricoeur [1960] 1965, 6-12; [1960] 1967, 3-10 &161- 174, 347-357; Deckard & Makant 2017.

[9] Ricoeur's very first publication was in 1935 and titled "L'appel de l'action." (Vansina 2000, 68) See also Ricoeur [1940] 2016.

[10] Topolski 2015, 11ff. There she is showing the commonality between Levinas and Arendt, but most of the things that Levinas and Arendt share, Patočka and Ricoeur might share as well (i.e. phenomenology and reacting to Heidegger). See also Učnik 2016, ch. 3.

[11] It is interesting to note that this same year Ricoeur defends a master's thesis and an *agregation*, but also loses his sister and grandmother, and this after losing his parents as an infant and becoming a "pupille de la nation." (Dosse 2008, 22-3; see also Pellauer and Dauenhauer 2016)

[12] For the best work on the development of Patočka between 1934-1936, see Martin Rabas 2015, "Spor o smysl lidských dějin a dějiny člověka jako boj o smysl. K prvním Patočkovým statím o problematice historie a historiografie" [A Dispute over the Meaning of Human History and History of Manas a struggle for meaning. On the first Patočka's Writings on the Issue of History and Historiography]. However, I am broadening the work of this time period beyond the dispute.

[13] What is missing in Gasché 2009 and Carr 2010 is how Masaryk and Jaspers were guides, even more than Husserl and it may have been under Masaryk's influence that Husserl came to an understanding of the crisis of European sciences (see Kohák 1989,

11). Although Jaspers is quite critical of pacifism and its naiveté (see Jaspers [1931] 1957, 100-106), there are seeds for a more optimistic philosophy of peace in Ricoeur than seen in Jaspers or Dodd (2017).

[14] *Cf.* Ricoeur 1991, 84-92, for Patočka's relation to nihilism as well as his preface to *Heretical Essays*.

[15] This is best developed in his "Some Comments on the Concept of Universal History" from 1935, the same year Husserl was to come to Prague. See Patočka [1936] 1989b, for a further discussion of titanism and nihilism.

[16] Inasmuch as a later Wittgenstein lifeworld philosophy imbues this text, so might Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and *Two Sources*. There has not been much written on Bergson's influence on Patočka, but is worth mentioning that he wrote an introduction to the Czech edition of *Two Sources* published in the following year. That title might also be behind Patočka's text of 1936, "Two Conceptions of the Meaning of Philosophy." For another reading of the Bergsonian memory-image, see Deckard and Overcash 2016.

[17] Just a couple years later, however, when he writes, "The idea of culture" and "Czech culture in Europe," he does refer much more to particular historical events and the particular country of Czechoslovakia (see Patočka 1991).

[18] See also Carr 2010 for his description of Husserl's personal and philosophical crisis.

[19] During the 1940s, he worked on a recovery of history: the Strahov Nachlass show Patočka's need to re-read and present a renewed humanism in Europe. His writings on the Renaissance, 17th and 18th centuries, which comprise 1000s of pages of manuscript (held in the Patočka archive in Prague) are intended to tell a different story of the birth of natural science as *the shadow* behind the world wars of the twentieth century. However, many of these manuscript pages are more a "metaphysical daybook" rather than a system.

[20] The recent film *Masaryk* (2016), directed by Julius Sevcík about Jan Masaryk (1886-1948) concerns this crisis in history, revealing both a political and personal side. See also Albright 2012 for a similar intertwining of the personal and the professional with respect to Czech history. In spite of the fact that Jaspers, Masaryk, and Husserl were already speaking of a spiritual crisis, especially concerning politics and the sciences, Patočka's sense of cultural crisis was broader and can be situated with regards to the context of Czechoslovakia. Ricoeur (1998) also speaks of a crisis in France and for the best discussion of it, see Dosse 2008, chapters 4-6.

[21] See Chvatík, 2015, 141, quoting 1938, "A Year Ago He Died," *Sebranespisy* XII: 542. See also the text of 1946 on Masaryk: "'the idea of our entire life as a state so far was fundamentally Masaryk's' and that Masaryk is a philosopher of the modern-day crisis of mankind who 'could see all of the new life as a crisis, as a moment of illness, as a state pregnant with horrors and demons.'"

[22] See also Arendt [1943] 1978, 55-66. For another, more recent discussion of this, see Butler 2015, ch. 3.

[23] A series of lectures given by Husserl in Prague and Vienna on "The Crisis of European Humanity" during 1935 and 1936, collected together later as *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* in 1954 [translated as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Husserl 1970)].

[24] Ricoeur 1967, 143-174; the original essay was published in France in 1949 in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* as "Husserl et le sens de l'histoire," collected in *À l'école de la Phénoménologie* (Ricoeur 1986).

[25] *Cf.* Staudigl's comment, "the dream of reducing violence found in the meta-narrative of historical progress, that 'basic credo of the theories of civilization (actively promoted,

with supposed justification, in the name of Enlightenment reason), has met with profound disillusionment." (Staudigl 2013, 4)

[26] This phrase appears in Ricoeur [1949] 1967, 170. The term comes from Karl Jaspers.

[27] He puts it even more simply in Volume 3 of *Time and Narrative:* "either one counts the cadavers or tells the stories of the victims" (Ricoeur 1985-1988, iii.188). Cf. Staudigl 2016, 769.

[28] Dosse 2008, 532-546.

[29] See Ricoeur [1949] 1965, 10. I have fiddled with the translations of the French from this text – with a nod to Al Lingis' translation in Ricoeur 1964.

[30] The original publication of this article was in an issue of *Esprit* (février 1949), of which the entire issue was dedicated to the pacifism of Garry Davis. See Dosse 2008, 160-1.

[31] The French, *Histoire et Vérité*, was originally published in 1955, but with further French editions published in 1964 and 1967. The English translation is of the 1964 edition (Ricoeur 1965), and was the first book of Ricoeur's translated into English.

[32] Unlike Staudigl (2013, 17-18), who quotes Merleau-Ponty, violence is not inevitable or part of our fate. Ricoeur's *l'homme capable* allows for another metaphysic. The rhyming of Ricoeur's loving struggle and violence of history with Patočka's later terminology of responsibility and orgiastic in *Heretical Essays* seems uncanny. See Patočka 1996, fifth essay; Derrida 2008; Staudigl 2016, 764.

[33] For example, Hus, Comenius, or Masaryk for Patočka or Jesus, Garry Davis, and Patočka himself for Ricoeur.

[34] We do not have the space to compare Patočka's use of these terms to Arendt's "We Refugees," (1943) "The Jew as Pariah," (1944) "The Moral of History," (1946) and others (see Arendt 1978), but her essays here prepare her for *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt 1951), and she certainly rhymes with this philosophy of history in spiritual crisis.

[35] Earlier versions of parts of this paper have been presented to the SRS (Society for Ricoeur Studies) in Rochester, New York, the WNCCCP (Western North Carolina Circle for Continental Philosophy) in Asheville, NC, and the Polish Phenomenological Association in Warsaw, Poland. Thank you to the audiences there, to the anonymous reviewers of this journal, and particularly to Gordon Cappelletty, Paul Custer, Devon Fisher, Mindy Makant, and Mark Valcourt in the Ricoeur reading group, and to my students Jordan Makant and Denisa VonSchmittou for their comments on an earlier draft. I also wish to thank Ivan Chvatík and Jan Frei of the Patočka archives in Prague, but especially Lucie Čermáková for her hospitality.

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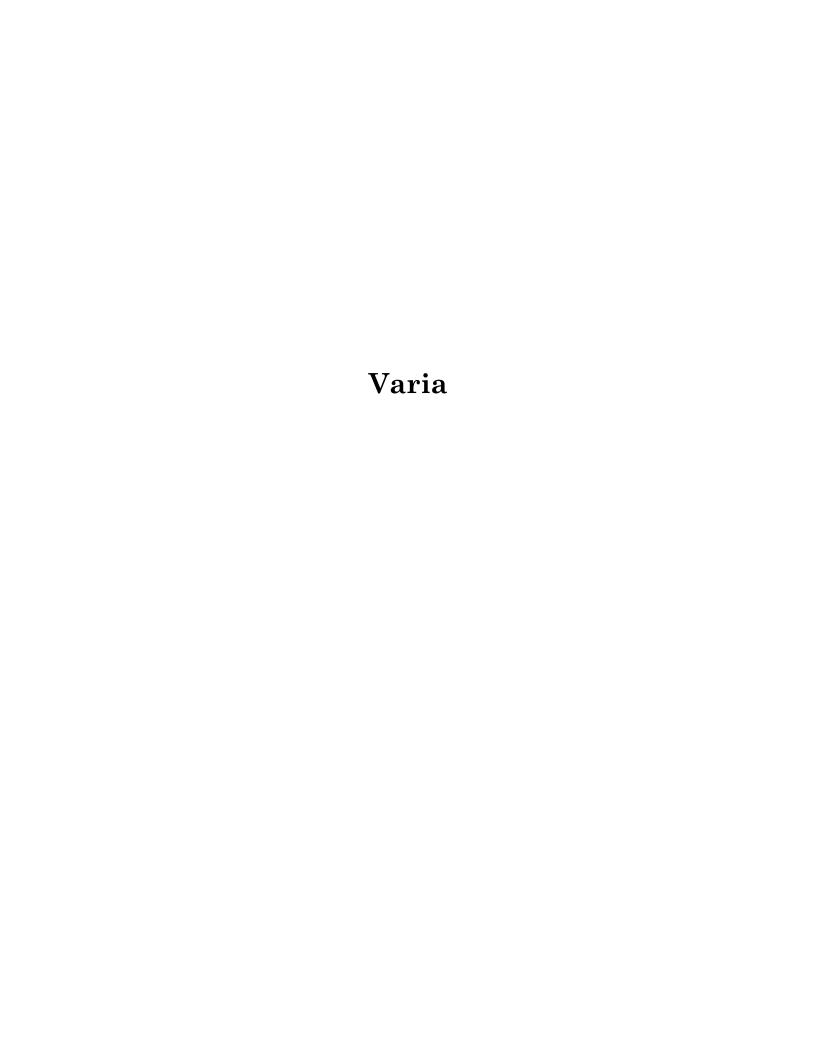
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Varia

La quête du sens : Action et argumentation

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Abstract

The Quest of Sense: Action and Argumentation

The category of Action, being the last of the material categories predicted by Eric Weil in his Logique de la Philosophie, constitutes the discursive center of our time, subjecting all other discourses to the idea of a history reoriented by the formal category of Meaning, in which violence proves to be insensate and the individual revolt loses its reason for being. It becomes clear, then, that such a perspective supposes the progressive decline of the warlike politics, to allow the history of an effective freedom. However, notwithstanding the many improvements, this equation is not only slow to materialize, as our age is increasingly marked by uncontrolled and uncontrollable violence. How should we understand this state of affairs? The hypothesis we intend to stress is that Action presupposes a set of conditions that makes it particularly vulnerable either to the generalized incomprehension of its ends or to the intervention of other categorical discourses with their alternative worldviews. To this end, we analyze extensively the logic of the category and of the attitude that it involves, stressing the constitutive fragility of its rationality, which requires, as a sine qua non condition, what we suggest being a democracy of meaning.

Keywords: Eric Weil, Action, Meaning, Resumptions, Democracy, Contemporary politics

> « La philosophie a affaire dans le présent au présent et à ce que ce présent porte en lui d'avenir » (Eric Weil)

La catégorie de l'action est la dernière des catégories concrètes prévues par Eric Weil dans sa *Logique de la Philosophie*. Bien que, comme le soutient l'auteur, toutes les catégories soient présentes à chaque moment de l'histoire (Weil 2000, 429), il y en a une qui, à la fois, assume le rôle de centre

discursif en fonction duquel les autres visions du monde s'articulent, qui confère un sens à l'existence et anticipe un type de sagesse comme forme d'accomplissement d'un tel sens (ibid., 429-430). D'après la logique d'une telle logique, tout indique qu'il revient à l'action d'être le noyau catégoriel de notre époque, ce qui implique que le sens des autres discours catégoriaux dépend de la façon dont ils s'y rapportent. Cette situation signifie, en outre, que notre temps devrait correspondre à la fin de l'histoire, idéalisée par la philosophie, de par la coïncidence du sens et de la sagesse, de la pensée de la satisfaction conçue et du sentiment de la satisfaction vécue, de la confluence de la diversité des modes philosophiques de rendre l'existence raisonnable, tous partiels pour la visée dialectique de l'action, dans l'unité d'une coexistence agissante. Si l'on suit un tel point de vue, la compréhension de notre temps doit passer nécessairement par une appréhension adéquate des enjeux qui définissent la spécificité de l'action et la distinguent des quinze autres catégories concrètes proposées par Weil.

Surdéterminée par la conscience des limites des autres catégories – dont le sens lui est accessible par un effet mixte d'appropriation systématique assurée par la pensée totalisante de l'absolu et de mise à distance radicale rendue possible par la violence du refus des valeurs de la médiation discursive au nom du pouvoir immédiat de l'œuvre ou des contraintes insurmontables de la finitude –, « que veut l'action ? La satisfaction de l'homme révolté, c'est-à-dire la réalisation d'un monde tel que la révolte n'y soit pas seulement déraisonnable […], mais qu'elle devienne impossible… » (Weil 2000, 397). On comprend alors que cette fin doit correspondre à un début : crépuscule de l'histoire dominée par la violence ; aube de l'histoire en tant que liberté effective. Cependant, malgré beaucoup d'indéniables progressions, non seulement cette action met du temps à s'accomplir, mais notre époque se présente chaque fois plus marquée par une violence incontrôlée et incontrôlable. Comment comprendre une telle circonstance ? L'hypothèse que nous prétendons défendre est que l'action présuppose pour aboutir un ensemble de conditions, une espèce de programme, qui la rendent particulièrement vulnérable, s'agissant soit du juste discernement de ses fins, soit de

l'intervention d'autres discours catégoriaux avec leurs conceptions du monde alternatives. Pour ce faire, nous revenons au texte de la *Logique de la philosophie*, en proposant une interprétation qui cherche à mettre en évidence la façon dont le lien logique entre attitude et catégorie, commun à l'ensemble des discours catégoriaux, mais seulement visible pour le logicien, détermine le processus de l'effectuation du monde visée par l'action et pour l'action et font de celle-ci, plus que toute autre, une attitude qui se veut catégorie autant qu'une catégorie qui se veut attitude.

Deux circonstances déterminent, au niveau structurel, la complexité de cette catégorie/attitude, l'une qui vient de sa position dans l'ensemble de la *Logique de la philosophie* et correspond au point de vue du philosophe, cherchant à appréhender sa cohérence, et l'autre qui résulte de son compromis intime avec la praxis, en vertu duquel est convoqué la perspective du politique. Dans cette dualité se donne à voir la consistance profondément dialectique de l'action, à la fois « discours agent » et « action raisonnable », ainsi que la tension entre philosophie et politique, qui la traverse et oblige à une pondération constante de raisons issues des deux champs.

Étant la dernière des catégories concrètes selon la séquence logique, l'action présuppose que la violence et le discours « soient allés à leur forme extrême » (Weil 2000, 410), soit en tant qu'attitudes (totalitarisme, terrorismes, esclavagismes divers, individualismes extrêmes, etc.), soit en tant que catégories (défense du discours ou du silence, dans leur forme absolue, comme seule satisfaction possible pour l'homme) : « c'est ainsi que se rencontrent dans l'action, comme dans leur aboutissement, toutes les catégories de la réflexion avec celles de l'Absolu et de la révolte absolue » (ibid., 413). Ce qui s'avère décisif dans ce caractère récapitulatif qui, selon Paul Ricoeur, serait à la base du vrai intérêt de Weil pour l'action (Ricoeur 1997, 415), c'est que, s'il correspond, d'une certaine façon, à une subsomption dialectique de type hégélien, une fois que, dans l'action, il donne lieu à une sorte de résolution des indéterminations relatives de toutes les autres catégories/attitudes, cette *Aufhebung* assume la forme, non d'une recollection des diverses figures catégorielles précédentes

ou d'une résolution supérieure, du point de vue de la raison, mais d'une exigence nouvelle : « le contentement dans la liberté » (Weil 2000, 419).

Cela signifie, dès lors, que le projet de l'action doit être accepté librement par tout individu en fonction de la liberté même qui est visée et non en vertu d'une croyance, bien ou mal fondée, en un fondement métaphysique, qu'elle se rapporte au divin, au cours de l'histoire ou à une matrice aprioristique de rationalité. La catégorie/attitude de l'action se différencie donc de toutes les autres, à ce sujet, par la façon dont elle pose l'exigence de sens. C'est qu'il n'est pas assez qu'elle ait un sens, ni en soi ni pour soi, mais il est indispensable qu'elle fasse sens pour les hommes, pas seulement pour ceux qui conçoivent leur recherche de satisfaction en termes de raison, mais aussi pour tous ceux qui devront, tôt ou tard, la reconnaitre comme celle qui est prête à « révéler l'insuffisance du monde […], parce que ce monde est un monde du besoin et de la violence », et qui « n'ouvre pas une voie au contentement *dans* le discours, mais seulement *par* le discours » (ibid., 426), laissant ainsi la place pour le sentiment et l'inventivité de parcours concrets et complémentaires. Comme le résume Patrice Canivez, « Le problème de l'action, c'est la transformation du monde social et politique, de telle manière que l'individu puisse y chercher librement la satisfaction. Non pas seulement le minimum de satisfaction matérielle sans lequel il n'y a pas de vie décente, mais la satisfaction d'une existence qui fasse sens pour lui » (Canivez 1999, 75).

C'est en outre ce rapport particulier au sens qui permet de contrecarrer la difficulté que Ricoeur énonçait du point de vue d'une pensée de la finitude quand il se demandait : « Agir sur la réalité en sa totalité n'est-il-pas un projet que le passage par le Fini a démantelé par avance ? ». (Ricoeur 1997, 416) La réalité en sa totalité n'est pas à prendre au sens ontologique d'un étant dont l'objectivité s'opposerait à la subjectivité de l'être agissant, mais d'une interaction transformatrice dont l'enjeu est l'universalisation des rapports sensés, objectifs et subjectifs. Dans les termes de Canivez : « L'action est la réalisation de l'universel. Elle est la réalisation d'un monde où l'universel du discours serait accessible à tout homme qui

pense, mais aussi d'un monde où l'universalité des êtres humains pourrait réellement accéder à la pensée autonome, donnant eux-mêmes sens et orientation à leur existence » (Canivez 2013, 18).

En conséquence, ce qui, dans les autres discours, apparait comme une compréhension achevée, idéalisée et résolutive des attitudes respectives, acquiert ici la figure d'une rationalité ouverte au devenir et à l'avenir de la réalité, projection d'un contentement effectif, non seulement énoncé, dont l'inachèvement n'est pas le signe d'un manque de scientificité philosophique, au sens hégélien, mais de la compréhension que le discours doit se rendre concret démocratiquement dans la situation, c'est-à-dire, qu'il doit servir à la satisfaction des attentes légitimes des hommes, ici et maintenant, et non pas à les convertir en un simple sujet d'un absolu pensé, d'une œuvre mythique ou du monde marchant de la condition. Cette ouverture, pourtant, n'est pas indéterminée, une fois qu'elle se trouve orientée systématiquement par une finalité immanente, quoiqu'indépendante de fins prédéfinies ou d'une fermeture transcendante. Comme l'affirme Weil, « l'homme ne s'assigne pas de but plus élevé que sa liberté dans la réalité de sa vie, qu'une vie en vue d'une réalité libre, en vue de l'unité entre discours cohérent et réalité cohérente, qu'une action consciente et raisonnable, libre et non-arbitraire, en vue d'un avenir qui soit présence dans la liberté du sentiment » (Weil 2000, 413).

La finalité de l'action est donc l'action finalisée, c'est-à-dire la liberté effective de l'homme, dans un monde qui soit structuré en fonction d'un principe formel de sens, non seulement pour permettre l'idée d'une vie raisonnable, mais aussi pour rendre possible la pluralité de coexistences sensées, proposées par les autres catégories/attitudes. Dans les termes de l'auteur : « il ne s'agit pas de trouver un but *dans* la réalité, mais de trouver un but *à* la réalité » (ibid., 397). C'est la raison profonde pour laquelle la catégorie de l'action mène directement à la découverte de la catégorie formelle du sens. Par conséquent, la structure constitutive de l'action est celle d'une substantialité formelle, basée sur des procédures pratiques et discursives de type argumentatif, vouées à instaurer et à

justifier la reconduction de la sagesse, la vie jugée bonne, à la dimension processuelle du sens, c'est-à-dire d'une vie en tant qu'infinie « reconquête de la spontanéité » (ibid., 424) du langage, dans et par le discours.

Ainsi, au contraire des autres catégories concrètes pour lesquelles la philosophie demeure toujours un chemin en direction d'une sagesse, où elle se transcende, comme en un autre de soi (objet, moralité, Dieu, vérité, etc.), l'action propose la satisfaction en une existence façonnée selon l'exercice du philosopher, c'est-à-dire, une sagesse purement formelle : « Proposé comme *résultat* à l'homme *raisonnable*, le sens pensé *formellement* par l'homme *concret* : le terme de la sagesse prend ainsi une signification par rapport à laquelle les significations concrètes sous les autres catégories se révèlent comme des reprises, avec le caractère précis et spécial qu'avaient les reprises du *sens* » (ibid., 437). L'action est la dernière catégorie/attitude de la et pour la philosophie, parce qu'en elle la pratique de la philosophie devient sa propre sagesse – ce qu'elle comprend sous les deux catégories suivantes : sens et sagesse – de sorte que la philosophie est animée par une sorte de désir de soi. La sagesse qu'elle soumet à la considération de l'humanité est celle de la liberté assurée par le philosopher, celle donc qui advient de la coïncidence entre la recherche du/des sens et la présence du sens dans cette même recherche.

La tension entre la philosophie et la politique, qui constitue, comme nous l'avons indiqué, l'action, assume, ainsi, une expression plus claire, bien qu'avec une nuance potentiellement tragique. C'est qu'il faut bien une philosophie politique et une politique philosophique pour achever ce qui est prévu par l'action, dans la mesure où il appartient à la politique de réaliser un monde organisé de telle façon qu'il rende non seulement possible la liberté de chercher le sens, mais aussi qu'il instaure cette liberté comme le type de la sagesse. D'une telle proposition ne sont donc pas exclues les autres conceptions raisonnables de la sagesse, à l'inverse de ce qui se passe avec les autres catégories/attitudes. Ce qui advient, c'est leur passage de centres discursifs au statut de reprises, c'est-à-dire de formes de discursivité génératrices d'énonciations saturées de sens et de sagesse, irréductibles entre elles, à des

énonciations compossibles, parce que déjà, en elles-mêmes, dépassées, même si elles continuent à valoir pour les individus qui ne peuvent comprendre la nouveauté de l'action que dans les termes de ces perspectives antérieures (Weil 2000, 82). Encore, elles sont maintenant subordonnées à l'unité formelle du sens, cherché en tant que tel, et seulement en un second moment attribué, éventuellement, à une de ces visions concrètes du monde. Par conséquent, les catégories/attitudes incluses dans l'action finissent encadrées par ce type de rationalité, fortement procédurale, qui les comprend toutes, dans la mesure où elle y trouve toujours un prétexte, simultanément positif et négatif, pour l'exigence d'action : « il faut donc s'attendre à ce que la nouvelle attitude cherche à unir le *discours cohérent* avec la *condition* dans une *œuvre* satisfaisante pour l'*être fini*, dans le risque de sa finitude […]. Le problème pour elle est de développer un discours qui soit cohérent sans se fermer et qui promette de rendre cohérente la réalité, définie par la *condition* en ce qui concerne la situation, par la *révolte* en ce qui regarde l'individu » (ibid., 396).

La plus grande difficulté concernant l'action, comme conséquence de ce qui précède, est de faire valoir, face aux autres possibilités catégorielles, le sens en tant que « *schéma*, pour employer le terme kantien » (ibid., 430) du monde, c'est-à-dire non seulement de la compréhension du monde ou de la logique d'une telle compréhension, mais aussi de l'organisation historique de la coexistence sociale et politique même. À l'action revient la tâche de rendre la réalité sociale et politique sensée, non par l'imposition d'un sens matériel unique, une certaine conception du monde et un monde structuré en fonction d'une telle conception, mais par le fait de l'ordonner, précisément, comme « un *non-monde* du sens et de la présence » ibid., 426), en lui ôtant la violence qui l'apparente à une seconde nature, notamment en vertu du jeu des intérêts en conflit, et en lui substituant le paradoxe de « l'intérêt dans la réalisation d'un monde sans intérêt » (ibid.).

La procédure prévue par les autres catégories/attitudes pour affronter la violence et la réduire revenait à lui opposer la violence d'une alternative résolutive. L'action, au contraire, reconnait ce qu'il y a de profondément violent dans cette façon

de procéder, notamment pour les individus qui sont mis devant un binôme, entre la violence de la réalité à laquelle ils appartiennent et la violence de la réalité qui leur est présentée comme idéale, sans la clé du procès rationnel de son appropriation. Ce que l'action comprend donc c'est que « à la raison séparée de la vie s'oppose la vie refusant la raison » (ibid., 396), ce qui implique que la seule solution effective consiste dans l'incorporation d'une logique de rationalité dans le train de l'existence humaine. Son mode propre de faire face à la violence n'est pas, alors, à l'envers de ce que sa désignation suggère, agonistique. Il ne se présente pas non plus fondé sur la pratique institutrice d'une utopie de la non-violence, mais consiste dans la construction d'un monde dans lequel la violence, en tant que telle, cesse d'avoir un sens. Comme l'explicite Canivez : « Il ne s'agit donc pas de faire le bonheur des peuples, car une telle entreprise anéantit la liberté. En ce sens, l'action n'est pas positive : elle ne consiste pas à réaliser un modèle plus ou moins utopique de société. On reviendrait alors au totalitarisme, à l'œuvre qui façonne le monde en fonction d'une image ou d'un mythe. L'action est au contraire purement négative… » (Canivez 1999, 75).

Or cette déraison de la violence, cette inutilité du conflit permanent, à côté de l'effort de l'invention d'un univers d'interactions fondées sur la négociation des sens, doivent être reconnus par les individus, soit en ce qui concerne le champ de leurs existences particulières, soit en ce qui concerne l'organisation de leur vie en commun, parce que ce sont eux qui parlent, qui discutent, qui agissent. Ce que l'action oppose à la violence dominante « n'est donc pas un autre monde ni une autre contradiction particulière, mais la contradiction des sentiments particuliers » (ibid.).

En d'autres mots, l'action prétend amener les individus à identifier le sens comme la forme de la satisfaction, la seule susceptible d'harmoniser les différentes positions en lice, de telle façon qu'ils en viennent à faire face aux contradictions, internes et externes raisonnablement, et à le faire avec la même spontanéité du sentiment. Le sens au quotidien, donc, dont l'interaction argumentative est le symbole manifeste dans la politique, en s'offrant comme procédé collectif pour

l'établissement de principes et de modes consensuels de penser. Ce que l'action préconise c'est, ni plus ni moins, qu'une rationalité alternative, processuelle, plastique, inventive, qui correspond à celle que Weil jugeait avalisée par Kant dans sa troisième *Critique* : « La judiciaire assume ainsi une nouvelle tâche. Elle cesse d'être *déterminante* et se fait *réfléchissante.* […] elle veut comprendre les *faits sensés*, non seulement les faits dénués de sens mais organisés par la science, non seulement, au niveau de la raison pratique, un sens toujours postulé et éternellement séparé des faits (…) ; à présent, le sens est un fait, les faits ont un sens, voilà la position fondamentale de la dernière *Critique* » (Weil 2002, 64-65).

La rationalité qui lui appartient en propre n'est pas déterminante, une fois que l'action n'a pas une science indépendante de celle de la condition, soit en ce qui concerne la nature environnante, soit en ce qui concerne la nature de la société, ce qui se révèle para sa « théorie matérialiste et dialectique » (Weil 2000, 407). Cependant, de par la nécessité de transformer la façon même de penser des hommes, l'action doit non seulement connaitre très bien cette réalité, celle du travail, mais surtout comprendre parfaitement les rapports des individus à une telle mondovision, de façon à modifier le monde du travail de l'intérieur. Par conséquent, l'homme de l'action n'adopte pas la critique de la conception scientifique et technique qui alimente la catégorie/attitude du fini, la menant à opposer à l'inauthenticité de la condition l'authenticité d'un projet qui doit être construit à la marge de la condition, mais prétend orienter, non nier, cette condition vers le plan du sens, de telle façon que « le monde soit pour l'homme et non l'homme pour le monde » (ibid., 400). Pour un tel dessein, on l'aura compris, il ne faut pas une autre science, mais une philosophie différente, au contraire de ce que prétendent la plupart des théories contemporaines.

De même, la rationalité visée par l'action n'est pas normative, ni au sens d'une adéquation à des principes formels de justice, indépendants de la facticité, ni au sens d'un compromis avec une version de la vie bonne, laquelle, comme nous l'avons indiqué, doit être cherchée par le moyen de la reprise des autres catégories/attitudes. Cela ne veut pas dire

que l'action puisse se passer d'une philosophie morale. Tout au contraire, celle-ci lui est essentielle, mais, comme le montre le caractère plutôt conventionnel de la *Philosophie morale* écrite par Weil, au long de laquelle se suivent les reprises des éthiques et des morales consacrées, ce qui s'y avère décisif est la façon dont elle conduit l'individu, subjectivement, à la logique de la philosophie, c'est-à-dire à une forme de penser et de vivre où la réflexivité soit la norme. Il ne s'agit donc pas de mener à bien le jeu entre l'exigence de fondement et le procès de son application, mais d'appliquer le *schéma* de l'inventivité, cette potentialité poétique de se compromettre avec les processus tenus pour raisonnables.

C'est la recherche de réalisation de ce type de rationalité réfléchissante, intersubjective, visant le consensus sur les arguments reconnus comme valables par les parties, non en fonction de leur vérité ou de leur adéquation à la norme, mais parce qu'ils se montrent sensés, dans le domaine de la politique, qui constitue ainsi l'identité du projet de l'action. Par contre, cette violence intermédiaire menée par le politique pour installer les conditions minimales pour l'avènement du vrai enjeu de l'action, du fait qu'il a compris que « pour être universelle, elle (l'action) doit être pensée universellement et elle doit être entreprise universellement » (Weil 2000, 402), ne peut valoir qu'en tant que moyen. Il faut rappeler aussi à ce propos que c'est ce caractère transitoire, purement stratégique, en direction à ce que l'on appellerait volontiers la démocratie du sens qui permet de distinguer la violence admissible de l'action de la violence gratuite et, donc, inacceptable de l'œuvre.[1]

Dans la mesure où l'action ne se satisfait pas de la simple énonciation d'un modèle, mais vise son effectuation historique, elle se trouve compromise aussi avec la transformation du modèle social et politique, de façon à résoudre, pour le bénéfice de tous, l'opposition dominante dans la sphère politique, entre seigneurs et esclaves, où dans la version contemporaine entre masses et individus historiques, en réduisant l'écart entre « la satisfaction atteinte » et « la satisfaction à atteindre » (ibid., 415).

De façon significative, cette figure dialectique de la reconnaissance, que Weil fait émerger au sein de la catégorie de

la discussion, réapparait ici, ce qui suggère une lecture foncièrement politique de cette même catégorie, selon laquelle ce n'est qu'à partir de l'intentionnalité qui préside à la catégorie/attitude de l'action que le concept de la reconnaissance peut être dûment pensé et devenir effectif. C'est que, comprise dans le domaine de cette catégorie/attitude, elle perd la caractéristique ancienne d'une lutte héroïque entre deux opposants, médiée par un troisième terme abstrait (un juge), ou cette exigence résolutive du marxisme, non moins héroïque et agonistique, d'une inversion totale du système social et politique, pour assumer le caractère moderne d'un programme de gouvernement qui doit être mené au sein de l'Etat, par le moyen de successives médiations, avec lesquelles on cherche la conciliation croissante des intérêts et des expectatives légitimes. Comme l'explicite l'auteur, « la force de l'homme de l'action est de voir cela : il ne s'agit pas pour lui d'abandonner le discours, les discours des hommes qui, maîtres partiels, étaient partiellement satisfaits. Il ne s'agit pas de renoncer à ce qu'ils ont créé, à ce qu'ils ont forcé les autres de créer ; il s'agit, au contraire, de parfaire ce qu'ils ont entrepris et n'ont pas su, n'ont pas pu mener à bonne fin, à sa fin naturelle dans le contentement de tous » (Weil 2000, 399).

Cela n'empêche pas que, pour instaurer ces conditions transitoires, l'action ne doive assumer un caractère révolutionnaire historique, qui vient compléter la révolution philosophique, préconisée au plan de la rationalité. Mais une telle révolution doit être comprise comme un processus en accord avec le sens de l'action. Car pour paradoxal que cela puisse paraitre, et nonobstant l'utilisation d'une terminologie aux accents manifestement marxistes, mise en évidence par tous les interprètes, la révolution qui est en cause n'est pas celle du prolétariat, bien qu'elle vise de même l'accès des masses au biens matériels et culturels, mais celle de ce que nous avons appelé la démocratisation du sens, c'est-à-dire du type de satisfaction détenue par les hommes raisonnables, grâce à la façon dont ils pratiquent leurs discours.

Certainement parce qu'il anticipe cette facile reconduction de l'intention révolutionnaire, qui est constitutive de la dynamique de la catégorie/attitude pure, à son idéation au

sein du marxisme, laquelle, bien sûr, ne peut qu'être une reprise d'autres catégories, Weil introduit dans une des rares notes un éclaircissement définitif, beaucoup cité, mais pas toujours suivi : « le terme de révolution n'indique pas ici seulement la révolution « populaire ». Il désigne la mainmise de la « théorie » sur la « réalité » et couvre ainsi aussi bien la « révolution » platonicienne des philosophes […] que celle des fonctionnaires de la Philosophie du Droit hégélienne […] que, enfin, la révolution de Marx… » (Weil 2000, 401-402). C'est ce qui découle, d'ailleurs, de la caractérisation même du processus révolutionnaire : « elle est révolution, mais révolution entreprise par et pour les hommes raisonnables contre la domination des hommes dénués de raison » (ibid.), révolution au nom de la philosophie qui, pour s'être réfléchie, a accédé au sens des sens, dont l'homme d'action de l'action, pas seulement le philosophe, « est, sur le plan de l'histoire, l'héritier » (ibid., 404).

Le révolutionnaire contemporain assume plus que tout autre les conséquences d'un tel héritage qui est doublement établi. D'une part, il l'est par la lecture de l'histoire en ce qui concerne les effets accablants de l'affrontement entre l'attitude de l'absolu, indifférente aux singularités des individus au nom de la cohérence du discours vrai, et l'attitude de l'œuvre, qui canalise la révolte des individus pour imposer une entreprise totalitaire au sein de laquelle ceux-ci vivent un niveau d'aliénation jamais vécu. D'autre part, il l'est par l'analyse des virtualités de l'organisation moderne du travail, qui soulage l'homme du poids de la lutte exclusive pour la survivance. Ce révolutionnaire « agit, parce que l'action est objectivement possible, historiquement nécessaire si l'homme veut être homme » (ibid.). Ce qui le dirige est donc un dessein anthropologique, ce qui ne doit pas nous surprendre si l'on se souvient que l'action ne vise pas l'imposition d'une autre version mondaine, mais la formation d'un type de rationalité dont la pratique doit aboutir à une effective humanisation. Mais, s'il en est ainsi, il faut bien conclure que la révolution la plus profonde n'est pas celle de la construction d'un monde où la nécessité ne persiste pas comme un obstacle à l'humanisation, ce qu'il revient d'assurer à l'organisation socio-économique de la condition, qui pour cette raison sera toujours condition,

nécessaire mais jamais suffisante, ni celle de la gestion des dommages collatéraux de ce monde mercantiliste, matérialiste, mécaniciste et utilitariste, cherchée dans des reprises de catégories dépassées, mais celle qui permet d'arriver à ce que chaque individu veuille participer activement dans le processus révolutionnaire pour devenir cet homme qui veut être homme.

En d'autres termes, l'action demande que chaque individu non seulement veuille ce qu'elle propose, mais qu'il sache qu'il le veut, et que, parce qu'il le sait, il s'engage dans son accomplissement. Ici aussi, l'homme doit participer dans la révolution, parce qu'il reconnait son sens et parce qu'il reconnait dans ce sens le sens qu'il veut suivre. Or, cette condition nécessaire présuppose un ample et constant débat entre les intervenants, avec une finalité nettement apologétique et pédagogique, d'autant plus exigeant que la politique s'exerce dans un monde qui s'interprète lui-même en tant que crise permanente, dans lequel il lui faut prendre en compte des groupes massifiés.

La révolution effective n'est donc ni matérielle, ni sociale, ni institutionnelle. Toutes ces formes de révolution sont nécessaires pour la réalité historique et mondaine de l'action, mais la révolution doit être éducative et redoubler les autres par la recherche du sens de l'agir, comme Weil l'affirme dans sa *Philosophie politique*. Education pour le sens et pour le sens du sens, dont l'absence met en risque les succès atteints dans les autres domaines et favorise les mouvements de violence collective et organisée, lesquels, sous couvert de reprises d'autres catégories, menacent l'universalité de l'action par la brutalité arbitraire de positions particulières. De même, l'incapacité de leur trouver un sens permet que les individus misent sur ces zones profondes de la violence individuelle, la révolte, le désespoir et l'ennui, toutes expressions d'une vie sans signification, celles auxquelles le dessein de l'action est le plus vulnérable, parce que ce sont celles, comme on l'a vu, que l'action cherche à résoudre. Education constante et persistante, en fonction du caractère processuel de la rationalité dont elle dépend. Education omniprésente, qui doit être menée de façon systématique et intentionnelle, dans tous les *fora* de la sphère politique, pas seulement dans les institutions scolaires.

En somme, tant que l'action n'est pas universelle et continue d'être une possibilité, non une réalité, pour la plupart des individus (reste, bien sûr, à savoir si l'action dans son effectuation historique peut être quelque chose d'autre qu'un processus infini), il y a lieu à un travail indispensable, non seulement d'entrainement et de consolidation de la procédure argumentative, en termes d'un standard de rationalité, mais aussi de ce qui fait de l'action la catégorie/attitude la plus intéressante de toutes, et, donc, celle qui doit être préférée par rapport aux autres possibilités. Il y ainsi une dimension de propagande qui fait partie de ce processus éducatif élargi, laquelle, étant une des conditions qui rendent possible l'adhésion au programme de l'action, est inévitable, notamment quand ce que l'action vient proposer est, comme on l'a vu, structurant, processuel, négatif, neutre, pour permettre l'effectivité de cette valeur anthropologiquement suprême, la liberté, mais qui, dans la réalité quotidienne concrète, peut facilement perdre son attrait.

Or, cette dépendance impérieuse d'un pli d'éducabilité met en évidence ce que Francis Guibal justement appelle « une rationalité fragile » (Guibal 2011, 34), prise dans la logique des conditions concrètes et de la liberté, obligée à faire face aux manifestations nostalgiques d'une rationalité considérée forte, dans la mesure où elle est fondée sur une ontologie substantive, et à faire valoir, à l'inverse, le sens d'une indécision pour rendre viable une décision libre, d'un non-intérêt pour rendre possible une pluralité d'intérêts, d'une non-position axiologiquement déterminée pour soutenir la tolérance de perspectives diverses, d'un non-monde pour construire un monde alternatif, au sein duquel tous puissent cohabiter librement.

Ceci signifie que l'homme d'action doit être constamment en train de parler de l'action aux autres hommes, non dans les termes du discours pur, celui en lequel l'attitude s'énonce dans sa cohérence, mais dans des termes qui puissent être compris par eux. Comme le formule de façon lapidaire Gilbert Kirscher, « la nécessité stratégique de la traduction est inscrite dans ce discours même » (Kirscher 1989, 345). Traduction qui suppose un double mouvement : version du discours cohérent dans un discours susceptible de s'approcher de la compréhension des

autres ; rétroversion des points de vue hétérogènes à la cohérence de la catégorie/attitude de l'action. Si « le résultat est la démonstration de la nécessité de la révolution – si l'homme veut être libre – démonstration non pas philosophique, mais scientifique » (Weil 2000, 405), la tâche qui caractérise le vrai politicien se présente de grande difficulté, une fois qu'il ne s'agit pas de produire une énonciation purement démagogique, par laquelle on ne ferait pas justice à l'homme que l'on veut impliquer – bien qu'il doive y avoir un trait de démagogie –, ni une simple exposition rhétorique des vertus de l'action, ni une banale recommandation de l'importance de celle-ci pour l'existence individuelle. En vérité, plutôt que de répondre aux expectatives mondaines du public, ce discours doit générer chez celui-ci l'adhésion à l'action, ce qui revient à considérer que l'homme d'action, au lieu de se limiter à reconnaitre le *statu quo*, a comme mission de provoquer une transformation de cette position de départ.

Or, de cette nécessité de traduction découle une des plus grandes fragilités de la rationalité spécifique de l'action, une fragilité, selon nous, susceptible de détourner complètement son sens, à savoir, le recours obligatoire aux reprises, comme Guibal l'a aussi remarqué (Guibal 2011, 177). C'est qu'en l'absence d'une version substantive propre pour parler sur soi d'une façon compréhensible, le politicien dépend des discours des autres catégories, qu'il est obligé de reprendre constamment, non parce qu'il croit en eux, mais parce qu'il est conscient que c'est avec eux que les autres hommes constituent leurs mondovisions : « ces reprises sont donc *utiles* » (Weil 2000, 414), et c'est en tant que telles qu'il en use. Par conséquent, il doit discourir sur l'action dans les termes de la condition ou de l'œuvre, quand il se réfère à son rapport au travail ou à sa dimension de projet, dans les termes de Dieu, de la conscience ou de l'absolu, quand il prétend galvaniser, moraliser ou faire appel à un sacrifice majeur, etc. Dans la mesure où il ne peut pas faire abstraction de ces *reprises de justification* pour s'adresser aux autres hommes et mener l'activité politique, « les reprises ne sont pas accidentelles, mais *techniquement* nécessaires » (ibid., 405).

La discussion politique est le propre du politicien, le dialogue est l'activité du philosophe et, plus généralement, des hommes de culture, de tous ceux qui s'occupent des « humanités ». Mais pour devenir homme d'action au sens de la catégorie de l'action, l'homme politique doit réduire l'écart entre discussion et dialogue, accepter de soumettre la discussion à l'influence du dialogue. Pour s'assurer que « le discours transforme la réalité en la saisissant, saisit la réalité en la transformant », il est donc tenu de mener l'essentiel de la discussion – processus qui lui revient en propre et qui, en fonction de « la coexistence et l'opposition de multiples monologues » (Weil 1982a, 14), constitue « une caractéristique de notre temps » (ibid., 7) – en tant que dialogue, en intégrant dans sa pratique l'argumentation sur les conditions, les principes, les valeurs qui forment le programme spécifique de l'action. « En quoi consiste ce dialogue ? […] Ce sera la tentative toujours renouvelée de comprendre les oppositions agissantes qui déchirent et en le déchirant animent le monde » (Weil 1982b, 293). C'est donc qu'il doit non seulement devenir éducateur, au lieu de simple démagogue, mais aussi, s'approcher de la figure de l'homme de culture, dans la mesure où appartient précisément à ce dernier la capacité de « considérer cette discussion comme un dialogue » (ibid., 294), pour pouvoir passer de l'exercice négatif consistant à « éviter le conflit violent » (ibid., 286) à « la voie de la pensée qui crée la politique dans le monde qui se prétend raisonnable et qui veut donc l'être » (ibid., 295), c'est-à-dire le dialogue lui-même. Il s'agit bien là d'un des enjeux majeurs de la catégorie/attitude de l'action, mais qui risque de buter sur la différence de visées entre les deux – particulière et intéréssée pour le politicien, universelle et civilisatrice pour l'homme de culture –, que Weil ne laisse pas de repérer et dont nous avons l'expérience successive. Quoi qu'il en soit de la portée d'une telle opposition, il faut reconnaitre que seule la réduction de l'écart entre ces deux façons de concevoir la politique par un exercice argumentatif élargi, où règne la loi de la reprise, manifestant « la volonté de faire de la discussion un dialogue » (ibid., 294) permet d'établir la différence entre le mépris mystificateur du sens typique de l'œuvre et le compromis avec la recherche du

sens qui, même sous les formes qui paraissent s'en dévier, fait de l'action « la philosophie en œuvre » (Kirscher 1989, 332).

Il se peut que se produise une espèce de perte de contrôle sur les effets de cette utilisation technique et stratégique de l'argumentation par le moyen de reprises, ce qui ne doit pas vraiment surprendre, une fois que ces reprises sont déjà en circulation dans les discours des autres. Comme Weil l'explique, « les reprises ont justement ceci de dangereux que, dans la forme qu'elles imposent à la catégorie-attitude, les deux se séparent et que l'action ne *se pense* plus, mais *est pensée* comme libre attitude au sens vague de ce terme, quelque chose dans le genre des intérêts concrets de l'interprétation » (Weil 2000, 414). Un tel recours constant à des reprises de justification tend, par conséquent, à favoriser les interprétations individuelles de la catégorie/attitude de l'action à partir d'autres catégories/attitudes, sinon même à les renforcer en son nom, au lieu de reconduire progressivement ces lectures impures au vrai sens de l'action et, à la limite, ouvre la grande porte au retour de la révolte, du désespoir et de l'ennui, avec leur violence propre, du fait de ne pas être capable d'imposer sa différence par rapport aux autres catégories/attitudes, très particulièrement qu'elle n'arrive pas à se différencier nettement des reprises de la condition.

Le danger consiste donc dans la possibilité qu'au lieu de subsumer les diverses alternatives catégoriales dans un programme d'action, le monde qui devrait être ainsi formé finisse par se voir complètement colonisé par une espèce de mixage aléatoire de reprises de reprises. A ce risque de perte d'identité programmatique se joint le poids des *reprises d'appréciation*. C'est que, comme Weil le montre à propos de la catégorie/attitude de l'œuvre, les reprises se divisent entre celles qui servent pour valider et celles qui servent pour juger de la valeur de ce qui a fait l'objet de la justification (ibid., 366). Or, la nécessité technique des reprises n'a pas comme seule implication que l'action soit comprise et éventuellement validée dans les termes des conceptions reprises, mais suppose aussi qu'elle soit appréciée à partir de telles reprises, donc selon les critères et les valeurs qui sont pertinents dans et pour chacune de ces visions du monde, ce qui revient, comme Patrice Canivez

l'a signalé, à ce que « dans la plupart des cas, cette compréhension et ce jugement sont faussés, précisément du fait que l'attitude est comprise – c'est-à-dire, reprise – dans le cadre d'un discours qui n'est pas le sien » (Canivez 2013, 20).

Il ne sera pas ainsi improbable qu'en l'absence d'une réflexion profonde sur l'éducabilité et une progressive intégration des citoyens dans le jeu de l'argumentation, l'utilisation stratégique des reprises, bien qu'ayant en vue la réduction de la violence, incluant celle de la nouveauté d'une catégorie/attitude, ne finisse par produire une violence accrue. Il n'est pas impossible qu'ayant en vue l'universalité, elle n'incite à la survivance du régime des particularités ; que voulant honorer la promesse de la politique, elle ne finisse par la rendre peu intéressante, sinon même sans fondement pratique ; que visant la défense de la liberté, elle serve de justification à des formes nouvelles de servitude ; qu'ayant en vue la récupération de l'inventivité, elle ne finisse en une consécration des traditionalismes ; qu'ayant pour but une existence orientée par le sens, elle ne constitue un prétexte pour renforcer les foyers toujours disponibles d'obscurantisme. S'il n'y a pas lieu de contester la thèse de Weil selon laquelle « les reprises sont la réalité vivante de l'homme dans le monde » (Weil 2000, 427), il y a lieu, pourtant, de réfléchir, notamment pour bien comprendre le rapport de notre temps à l'action, sur ce qui appartient en propre à l'action et ce qui forme des effets disruptifs issus de reprises indues, parce qu'il y a reprises et reprises, et non moins important, des façons et des façons de reprendre. Finalement, si l'on veut échapper aux pièges d'une foi inconditionnelle en la résistance absolue de la raison, soutenue par un providencialisme non moins candide, qui nous a mené plus d'une fois aux extrêmes de l'œuvre, il ne sera pas inutile d'avoir à l'esprit ces mots d'Eric Weil : « les hommes furent et sont philosophes, et seront philosophes, aussi longtemps qu'ils posent la question du sens de leur vie et de leur monde. Ils oublient la question – mieux : ils cessent de philosopher – lorsqu'ils cessent de posséder le sens ou lorsqu'ils en désespèrent » (Weil 1982b, 22).

NOTES

[1] La proximité avec la théorie de l'agir communicationnel, proposée par Jürgen Habermas, est trop évidente pour ne pas être mentionnée ici, notamment pour mettre en évidence le caractère compréhensif de la catégorisation mise en place par Eric Weil. De son côté, Eric Weil, ne pouvant anticiper une telle analogie, la *Logique de la Philosophie* ayant été publiée en 1950, établit un parallèle entre l'action et la discussion, la catégorie sous laquelle il est légitime de soupçonner que Habermas reprend celle de l'action, pointant dans les deux un même trait de formalité qui fait que « la logique de la philosophie n'épuise pas plus sa matière que la logique de la discussion ne fait la sienne » (Weil 2000, 427), ce qui indique, en même temps, qu'une des reprises naturelles de l'action est celle de la discussion, étant les deux des modes privilégiés d'aller à la rencontre de ce modelé philosophique contemporain désigné globalement par l'expression de tournant linguistique: « ce qui caractérise notre tradition, c'est qu'elle ne s'est pas satisfaite d'écarter la violence de la vie commune par une violence supérieure, celle d'un maître ou d'un groupe, mais qu'elle a voulu obtenir ce résultat par la voie d'un accord entre les adversaires, et non grâce à une décision imposée d'en haut par une force simplement plus grande que celle des parties en conflit » (Weil 1999, 83). Cette même approximation manifeste, cependant, une divergence cruciale, en ce qui concerne les termes de l'accord discursif visé, ce qui met en évidence l'originalité de l'action par rapport à la discussion : tandis que dans la logique de la discussion, suivant le principe « D », c'est l'accord de tous les concernés qui valide la norme (Habermas, *Erläuterungen zur Diskursethik*), dans l'action c'est la logique du sens qui rend possible la production et la justification de la norme. Bien que formelle, l'action suit donc une espèce de programme qui exprime un compromis avec la mise en histoire du sens, un pari sur un monde plus sensé, qui contraste avec l'idée d'un monde où « seul ce qui peut être dit sans contradiction et tout ce qui peut être dit ainsi est vrai » (Weil 2000, 133), comme celui de la catégorie de la discussion.

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Contrapuntal Lines: Nostalgia in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the modalities of nostalgia in a techno-saturated world. Nostalgia is a protean concept that maintains a strong relationship with technology. The latter can mediate, alleviate or trigger nostalgic feelings and discourses orientated not only towards the past, but also towards the present and the future. In this respect, this paper will investigate how nostalgia was used as a narrative tool by Kurt Vonnegut in his *Player Piano* at several important levels of the plot and how it becomes a character that acts obscurely in some key moments. Firstly, I will analyse the modalities through which nostalgia develops a subtle relationship with technology and progress. Secondly, I will examine how the occurrences of player piano work in the novel as clues that foreshadow the on-coming intrusion of this feeling in the current mood of the personages. Thirdly, I will discuss the nostalgia for humanity in the framework offered by postmodernism. The crisis of metanarratives does not drive nostalgia towards a simple past, but it steers it towards a set of *petite histoires* that blurs the temporal orientation of nostalgia.

Keywords: nostalgia, player piano, technology, postmodernism, simulacra, hybridity, postmodern humanism, Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*

Introduction

Nostalgia has become "an obsession of both mass culture and high art" (Hutcheon and Valdés 1998, 18), a versatile concept that "frustrates psychologists, sociologists, literary theorists and philosophers, even computer scientists." (Boym 2001, xvii) It maintains a strong relationship with technology; the latter can mediate, alleviate, trigger or collect nostalgic feelings and discourses orientated not only towards the past,

but also towards the present and the future. The literature represents another valuable archive of nostalgic approaches; even if not all of its works are documentaries, the ways in which this feeling is described in various fictions are relevant when we search for its deep understanding. Kurt Vonnegut's first novel *Player Piano*, published in 1952, represents a perfect illustration of blending the themes of technical progress, metaphysical inquiries, and nostalgia. With a non-homogeneous critical evaluation that ranges from a "condescending dismissal" to an "enthusiastic praise as an outstanding and original masterpiece" (Freese 2002, 158), with a constantly changing classification as utopia or dystopia, modernist or postmodernist work, *Player Piano* is revered as a milestone of the universal literature.

In this article, I will analyse how nostalgia was used as a narrative tool by Kurt Vonnegut in his *Player Piano* at several important levels of the plot and how it becomes a character that acts obscurely in some key moments. Firstly, I will investigate the modalities in which nostalgia develops a subtle relationship with technology and progress. Secondly, I will examine how the occurrences of player piano work in the novel as clues that foreshadow the on-coming intrusion of this feeling in the current mood of the personages. Thirdly, I will analyse the nostalgia for humanity within the postmodernist framework. The crisis of metanarratives does not drive nostalgia towards a simple past, but it steers it towards a set of *petite histoires* that blurs the temporal orientation of nostalgia.

1. Technology and nostalgia: the extension of a beautiful friendship

The discourses about technology are highly polarized: on the one hand, technology has been interpreted as a factor of progress, of individual life enhancement and societal development. In this paradigm, we can find both moderate views and utopias. On the other hand, technology has been seen as an artificial element that turned the tide, reducing the human power in favour of machines and tools. According to this view, technology is the ominous factor that overbalanced the natural way of things and generated dystopias. Anyhow, the

technological dimension of human condition is hard to be avoided (Ferré 1995), being a consequence of the "homo faber" structure that we inherit. As Martin Heidegger (2010, 100) put it, "everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it." Moreover, the techno-sphere put pressure in order to answer deep interrogations about humanity, community, power and the meaning of life.

As Svetlana Boym pointed out in her seminal book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), every new technology affects "the relationship between distance and intimacy that is at the core of nostalgic sentiment" (2001, 346). Moreover, nostalgia is profoundly dependent on mnemonic devices because we remember more often the mediated experiences (Davis 1979). In a fundamental way, the connection between these two concepts is that both "are about mediation" (Boym 2001, 346); they mediate among temporal axis, spatial locations, individual and group representations. For instance, media constantly redefine the past and select the events that may become landmarks of public memory. A latent danger for the mediated nostalgic content is the ideological bias brought by selection, organisation and presentation. Following Foucault, we have to support the claim that "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers" (1981, 52). In this context, "the collapse of memory" (Hoskins 2004, 110) indicates the capacity of media to recreate a past that is presented as doubtless. Technological mediated experiences can also become *prosthetic* because "our perception of the past is merely an experience of the technical substrate." (Barnet 2003) This primacy of technologies in the processes of creating and reproducing memories can be balanced by the perspectives that take into consideration "the items' agency, the way they interact with the mind." (van Dijk 2007, 36)

A technologically supersaturated epoch constitutes the perfect frame for the nostalgic feelings and discourses about older forms of life, less technologically dependent and maybe more authentic. As Debord (1995) emphasised, technology produces isolation and alienation. Thus, the desire to overcome

them, the yearning for the past and the search for meaning become a natural way of reaction in times of change. The everyday techno-sphere shapes the practices of remembering, archiving and oblivion; it remains a nostalgic trigger and also a contributing factor to nostalgia. If technology is associated with speed, the nostalgia induces deceleration, the slowing down of the rhythm through reflection and contemplation. The progress exacerbates nostalgic feelings and in the eras of historical upheavals "nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defence mechanism." (Boym 2001, xiv) In the same vein, we can notice that "our obsessions with memory function as a reaction formation against the accelerating technical processes that are transforming our *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) in quite distinct ways." (Huyssen 1995, 7) Thus, the technologizing of life is accompanied with a kernel of nostalgia for times less dependent on technology or even for its obsolescent forms. But all the above prove that nostalgia is not just a retrospective force, but also a prospective one. Nostalgia can be "quite beneficial" (Wilson 2005, 7), and it has been "an important but rarely acknowledged aspect of the radical imagination" (Bonnett 2010, 1). Imbuing the past with meaning in order to change the present by thinking about the future seems to be the one of the fruitful axes of nostalgia. Thus, nostalgia has a progressive and sometimes a radical potential.

The development of cybernetics repositioned these issues in the centre of discussion; the comparison between machines and human beings became critical, especially whitin a deterministic perspective about technology. Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* is the exemplification of "the tyranny of cybernetics" (Babaee, Yahya, and Sivagurunathan 2014), where machines controlled everything in the society, replacing human labour. Cybernetics represents a controlling system that automatized everything, rendering the meaning of the traditional life pointless. As Paul Proteus, the protagonist of the novel, stated (directly referring to Norbert Wiener), there are three main revolutions which shape the society: the first revolution "devaluated muscle work, then the second one devalued routine mental works" (Vonnegut 2006, 14), while in the third one machines will devaluate human thinking

(Vonnegut 2006, 15). When almost all the work and planning is done by computers and machines, the situation becomes an *aporia*: on the one hand, as Paul Proteus thought in the beginning of the novel, "things really were better than ever. For once, after the great bloodbath of the war, the world really was cleared of unnatural terrors – mass starvation, mass torture, mass murder." (Vonnegut 2006, 6) On the other hand, the human being becomes obsolete while machines get newer and better; humans are reduced to useless bodies. Thus, *Player Piano* depicts the fulfilment of utopia and dystopia in the same time; the society touches a high level of efficiency and prosperity that the previous generation only dreamed of, while people are increasingly disappointed, belittled in terms of their dignity and meaningless. As Vanderbilt pointed out, *Player Piano* is "astonishing for the richness of utopian and dystopian matter in this first major outing of the writer who would soon own the best utopian imagination in American literature since World War Two." (1983, 139-140) Moreover, Vonnegut throws out a warning in the beginning of the book that purports to be "not a book about what is, but a book about what could be". The novel describes a totalitarian society economically and technically coordinated upon the principles of efficiency and quality. Besides the frequent connections with Huxley or Orwell, Mathew Gannon (2013) linked *Player Piano* with Marx's political and sociological theories, but

> whereas Marx saw history culminating in the concentration of technology for the benefit of the masses (wherein the coming revolution would use those technologies to liberate humanity), Vonnegut rejects the onslaught of history and cries for a halt to progress itself. Humanity's liberation will not come through pure technological means but instead through a critical reformulation of its relationship to technology on ontological and epistemological grounds. Machines are slaves, one character notes, and "anybody that competes with slaves becomes a slave. (Gannon 2013)

Even if the idea of revolution flourishes throughout the novel, Vonnegut has a different outlook on history than Marx. Anyhow, in *Player Piano* the history itself is conceived as an automatized mechanism, predetermined by the objectives of industrialism and not by the choices of people. Babaee, Yahya, and Sivagurunathan (2014) read the novel as a vivid critique of

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the consumer capitalist society of 1950s America, dominated by computers and advertising industry. For cybernetics, the advertising communication is "an observing industry that controls the environment." (Babaee, Yahya, and Sivagurunathan 2014, 197)

In this totalitarian system, people manifest constantly their nostalgia for the past and their anxiety for the future. Mechanical progress induces new rules in everyday life (leisure), as well in education (the supremacy of the intelligence quotient) or work. The theme of children that do not pass the tests and remain unemployed is recurrent and takes one step further towards the paroxysm of the actual system. Many characters depict – in exquisitely written parts – the old times and also the traditional jobs that humans had before. The farmer Haycox, for instance, is a humorous personage that shows a very healthy mind when he caricaturizes the men of the moment, which were recipients of mandatory PhD degrees. His unaltered relationship with nature, animals and physical work portrays him as an outdated prototype of man, on the verge of extinction. Also, the train conductor that "runs out of examples of man's superiority over machines" (Vonnegut 2006, 253) bewails another kind of job that disappeared in an age bereft of its aura. Moreover, Bud Calhoun's case adds tragedy to this melting pot of uselessness of the human condition: the brilliant engineer was fired because he invented a machine that can work better than himself. This situation illustrates that in competition with technology, humans will lose every time, even if the ideas had been generated by the people in the first place.

A very emotional moment of the novel happens when Paul Proteus remembers the recording of the movements of a machinist, done for the goal of creating a fractional horsepower motor. This tape was "the essence of Rudy as far as his machine was concerned" (Vonnegut 2006, 10), "the essence distilled from the small, polite man with the big hands and black fingernails; from the man who thought the world could be saved if everyone read a verse from the Bible every night" (Vonnegut 2006, 11). The copying of Rudy's actions in order to transform them in a programme for a machine that will replace the human being is a perfect token of Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and

simulation. The simulacra become the truth, and its origin remains unknown (only Paul Proteus recalled the act of copying the human gesture, and its human origins, while all the other people had considered the machine as a new thing, an invention), thus "it is not a question of imitation, or duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes." (Baudrillard 1994, 2).

The protagonist of the novel is a restless nostalgic and his actions are ingrained deeply in this feeling. At the beginning of the novel, Paul visits the Building 58's north, "the original machine shop set up by Edison in 1886" (Vonnegut 2006, 7), "the oldest building in the plant" (Vonnegut 2006, 7) that he saved from demolition for his own pleasure. His visits here have a therapeutic existential role – Paul comes here every time he feels depressed. He wants to check the past in order to reshape the future. In this double movement we recognize a few fundamental characteristics of nostalgia. On the one hand, the triggers of nostalgia are, in generally, negative feelings, loneliness being the most reported one. All the same, nostalgia might be considered today a positive feeling, "a fundamental human strength. It is part of the fabric of everyday life and serves at least four key psychological functions: it generates positive affect, elevates self-esteem, fosters social connectedness, and alleviates existential threat. By so doing, nostalgia can help one navigate successfully the vicissitudes of daily life." (Sedikides et al. 2008, 307) On the other hand, the nostalgia is "not only directed toward the past, but also the future" (Wilson 2015, 478), highlighting the complex nexus of time and space that it supposes. The recursive and also the prospective features of nostalgia are visible in Paul's case, which visited Building 58 as "a vote of confidence from the past (…) where the past admitted how humble and shoddy it has been, where one could look from the old to the new and see that mankind really had come a long way. Paul needed that reassurance from time to time." (Vonnegut 2006, 6)

The presence of a photo with the shop as it had been in the past on Paul's office or the fact that he preserved his old car (with his old jacket in its trunk) in spite of his social position in Ilium represent other eloquent nostalgic markers.

A nostalgic pillar of the novel is represented by the protagonist's desire to buy a farm, an incomprehensible situation for Doctor Pond, the Ilium Real Estate manager, who tries desperately to offer him another house, according to Paul's status. For Doctor Pond, "the way a man lives can destroy or increase the stature of his job – can increase or decrease the stability and prestige of the entire system." (Vonnegut 2006, 151) While the farm wanted by Paul Proteus was an "authentic microcosm of the past" (Vonnegut 2006, 153), a "completely isolated backwater, cut off from the boiling rapids of history, society, and the economy. Timeless." (Vonnegut 2006, 151), without electricity and, completely hilarious, with no key, but with an ancient latchstring, the prototype of a decent house was one who holds "electronic door openers, thermostatically controlled windows, radar range, electrostatic dust precipitators, ultrasonic clothes washer built in, forty-inch television screens" (Vonnegut 2006, 149). The conflicts between past and present, progress and authenticity, nature and civilisation are all stressed in this comparison between the old farm and the new super-technologized houses. Paul wished to put an end to his relationship with society and to deal "only with Earth as God had given it to man." (Vonnegut 2006, 137) The nostalgia for primitive and fundamental forces is observed also in his reading preferences, populated with heroes that live in harmony with the nature, depending on physical virtues, such as sailors, woodsmen or cattle breeders. The nostalgic effects prove to be extremely powerful and they have been extended in the direction of the way of living (simple, authentic, natural versus mechanized, artificial, urban). The ideas of progress and adaptation are strongly criticized and they are perceived as aggressive for the inner structure of the human being. As Paul Proteus summarized it, "it's just a hell of time to be alive, is all-just this goddamn messy business of people having to get used to new ideas. And people just don't, that's all." (Vonnegut 2006, 37) The revolution develops itself as a

normal reaction in this context; for Paul Proteus, the first step was a detachment from all previous things, and entertaining the idea of his future resignation. This separation from the oppressive society gave him a Shakespearian perspective about the world seen as a stage (Vonnegut 2006, 137). The escape from the totalitarian and deterministic technocratic society was found in a set of practices and reformulations of life perspectives such as societal and professional disengagement, secret plans or rebellion. The basis for the latter lays in the obstinate search of the meaning of life and of the human being.

2. Player piano as a symbol of nostalgia and a contrapuntal narrative factor

Player Piano is a novel where music is intertwined at different levels of the story, and a Pavlov-like device meant to awaken the reader to the presence of meaningful material. From the very beginning, Paul Proteus appears in the posture of listening to the music of the old Building 58 – the music of the past when the new, the change, the progress were just ideas. He has imagined a suite composed by "wild and Latino music, hectic rhythms, fading in and out of phase, kaleidoscopic sound" (Vonnegut 2006, 11). This kind of music synthetises in another way the relationships with technology: the enthusiasm of innovation, its diffusion patterns, the acceleration brought in society, the change of rhythm in human ties, and its permanent movement that shapes itself and all the things around. The music, as much as the technology, transforms radically its environment, the mentality and the moods of people. As music diffuses intrusively and sweeps everything into its net, likewise the technology (according to the deterministic standpoint) encapsulates the same power of change driven by the technical innovations. The instrumentalism is also mentioned in an interesting approach about knowledge and its use. Thus, scientists are exonerated by every responsibility of their findings or innovations – as Lasher affirmed, they "simply add to knowledge. It isn't knowledge that's making trouble, but the uses it's put to." (Vonnegut 2006, 92) Knowledge seems unstoppable, and every new achievement is a victory, but

managers and engineers are held accountable for its use, orientation and dissemination.

The music accompanies differently the lives of people in terms of their social status. Thus, the triple division in managers, engineers, civil servants and professional people that live in northwest, the regular people, which live in Homestead and the machines, located in northeast, implies a dissimilar background music. The music of Homestead is more upbeat – the fanfare is echoing on the streets – but in the pubs the music becomes an underground way of obtaining money (placing bets and guessing the soundless tunes played at TV). The week that the most important men spent on Meadows is full of ardent, enthusiastic and group motivational music. Also, a Song Book is a relevant obligatory piece for everybody present, in order to develop an authentic team spirit and a steady corporate identity (in this point, Vonnegut's experience as a former employee at General Electric proves helpful). Also, while people from Ilium use phonographs, people from Homestead use player pianos – an interesting dialectical auctorial choice that will be discussed below.

Moreover, we have to point out an interesting aspect of the structure of the novel: from 35 chapters of the book, 24 chapters are focusing on the life of the protagonist and 8 chapters introduce an external point of view, portraying America through the eyes of the Shah of Bratpuhr. His curiosity reveals the differences in terms of religion, culture, civilization, mentality and way of living between Americans and his people. These chapters are priceless questionings of the well-established norms of a developed society, proposing a fresh perspective, ideologically free, nonbiased. In the narrative logic seen as a whole, this perspective plays a meaningful role that stresses the structure of the novel conceived in musical terms. Thus, these chapters create "an effective contrapuntal narrative as in music. These two narrative lines reach the same scene of the unsuccessful revolution at the end of the novel, where we are strongly stimulated to think about our possible future." (Magome 2004, 376) The lines of novel seem at a first glance to move separately and the polyphony is not successfully realised till the end, still harmonizing in the subtext the profound

doubts of the protagonist with the Shah's perplexities or the critiques of the Ghost Shirt Society. The "melodic" narratives lines communicate with each other and the counterpoint is fully achieved.

The player piano constitutes a powerful symbol of the entire book, because it does not represent a simple object that problematizes only the mechanical reproduction of sound, but such as Jacques Attali, Friedrich Kittler or Theodor Adorno pointed out, there is a profound interconnectedness among music, technology, and power (Suisman 2010, 14). Playing an instrument or listening to a certain musical genre are cultural practices that indicate more than the act itself: they talk eloquently about the social and professional status. Moreover, the way in which an instrument was assimilated in everyday life moments and routines speaks about the adaptability of certain lifestyles and also about their underlying ethics and politics. Also, the modalities in which the history of music throws into sharp relief an instrument or explains its evolution can represent an ideological manner of presentation that shapes the entire perspective on this phenomenon. As Suisman emphasized, if we keep in mind only the rise of the phonograph and the passing of the player piano, we will misunderstand the sound developments of the early twentieth century, obfuscating the complexity of the changes involved. In 1900, "many more people saw the player-piano as a revolutionary cultural force and the phonograph as a mere trifle than the other way around." (Suisman 2010, 13-14) Their evolution was closely linked, belonging to the same historical moment as competitors and raising similar cultural interrogations. Rather than a linear development of the economy of sound recording, "a dialectical progression" is more adequate to explain "the objectification of time" based in the phonograph and "the rationalization of knowledge", based in the player piano. Moreover, the player piano let us the possibility to recognize "not just the epochal rupture wrought by the advent of sound recording but also its connection to a longer more evolutionary history of music and capitalism." (Suisman 2010, 14) The player piano has influenced not only the American home life, but also the literature, and in this context Kurt Vonnegut and Philip K.

Dick are often mentioned for their "unusual obsession with the image of player pianos as an effective musico-cybernetic symbol." (Magome 2004, 370) The player piano becomes an extremely fruitful and deep symbol because it expresses the idea of hybridity that we find in society, technology or everyday life. In Vonnegut's novel, the player piano is the symbol of a melange "between man and machine, between art and technology, between visual and auditory, and between original and copy." (Magome 2004, 370) These binary items compose themselves into an equivocal manner that leaves room for interpretations and for the insertion of nostalgia. Seen as a domestic instrument, the player piano represents the fascination for an automatic tool that replaces the human effort. The elimination of the practicing the piano (which gets rid of both hard work and pleasure) opens the era of *copying* and *reproduction*. Live concerts are replaced with recorded ones that even changed the original performances by adding or correcting notes; this distortion of the original and its positioning as standard illustrates one more time Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and simulation. This takes matters even further, and even the fundamental opposition original – copy is, in this particular case, shattered. The decreasing of quality and of the importance of artistic values are also emphasised in the novel, when these topics enter the discussion between Paul and Anita: "You've got something the tests and machines will never be able to measure: you're artistic. That's one of the tragedies of our times, that no machine has ever been built that can recognize that quality, appreciate it, foster it, sympathize with it." (Vonnegut 2006, 178)

In *Player Piano*, this instrument does not evoke only the *trace* of its predecessors, but also alludes to the future and the present of the computers. Having a privileged position (a *hybris* of past and future) on the technological scale and history, the player piano becomes a kind of tocsin about the technologic metamorphoses and their meanings. Being at the interface between old and new, the player piano demonstrates ostensive value and it functions as a strong significant in the entire novel, being a voice for the past, present as well as for the future of humankind.

Also, its evocation points to the disequilibrium of the binary elements that constitute the hybrid – the machine, the technology or the copy putting the man, the art or the original into the shade. When Paul crossed the river, symbolically violating the social split between the elite and the rest of the people, and then entered a saloon, "his back was against an old player piano" (Vonnegut 2006, 25). The contact with this instrument metaphorically conveys the idea of getting in touch with a complex social, moral and temporal crossbreeding. Moreover, when the music is dissonant, the player piano becomes a symptom of an aggravating situation: "he folded his arms and leaned against the keyboard of the player piano. In the silence of the saloon, a faint discord came from the piano, hummed to nothingness." (Vonnegut 2006, 30) Right after that, Paul Proteus has experiences that finally crack his confidence in the righteousness of the system. All the occurrences of the player piano are triggers of metaphysical interrogations, worsening the quandaries of the protagonist. Anyhow, the economic relationships are also outspreading towards the human seen as ghost, since you have to put a nickel into the player piano in order to see the moves of the keyboard and to imagine the pianist that performed them in the past. The player piano is conceived only as an object, deprived from other traits in the particular scene when Lasher "picked up a hard-boiled egg at the bar, crackled its shell by rolling it along the keyboard of the player piano, and walked out into the evening." (Vonnegut 2006, 96)

In another well-known scene, the player piano equates the human being (the former pianist) with a ghost, pointing out the disappearance of the human, its transformation into a shadow in a powerful techno-sphere: "Makes you feel kind of creepy, don't it, Doctor, watching them keys go up and down? You can almost see a ghost sitting there playing his heart out." (Vonnegut 2006, 32). The invisible master of the piano seems to be hidden inside, a situation that is similar to the ancient times when people felt they had been left alone by a God that has gone. Moreover, Magome thinks that Vonnegut, as Philip K. Dick, "relate the ghost to God or something religious" (2004, 373). As we will see in the next section, God, like a human

being, functions as a metanarrative in a time when only the micro-narratives may be plausible; as a consequence, the metanarratives complicate the logic of things and create rifts in the system, rifts that prove sufficient for the insertion of nostalgia. The nostalgic perspective derives from the comparative view that the binary composition of the hybrid allows. A relevant scene is that when the ghost was "embodied" by Finnerty, which "sat at the player piano, savagely improving on the brassy, dissonant antique." (Vonnegut 2006, 105) We observe that the dissonance is again the keyword of the fragment, a false music that indicates the lack of congruence among the elements. Moreover, when a human plays the piano, in a way restoring the old state of affairs, the music isn't any better, but on the contrary it is perceived as "hellish music" (Vonnegut 2006, 105). The disequilibrium is too deep to be solved with a return to the earlier stage and the end of the novel reaffirms it by the lack of solutions that speaks volumes about the absence of the overall perspective.

3. Nostalgia for humanity: "would you ask EPICAC what people are for?"

The postmodern framework may be successfully applied to *Player Piano*, which represents also a work in which Vonnegut deconstructed the myths of the American culture and raised profound philosophical questions about human beings, technology, community and the future of humanity. Vonnegut is "a postmodern Mark Twain" (Boon 2001, x), who combines humour, irony, nihilism, deconstruction of essentialism and ethics in a subtle way, indeed. As Morse stated, the belief "in the humanness of human beings" (2004, 24) is a constant in all of Vonnegut's novels. His work genuinely provokes reflections upon human metaphysical angst, especially when it is linked with the role of technology in the contemporary society. Davis (2001, 151) enumerates some of the directions considered essential for Vonnegut in the opinion of several critics: "essential humanism", "affirmative humanism", "dreamily humanist nihilism". But

> "while much has been written about Vonnegut's place in postmodern literature, as well as his position as a sardonic moralist for several

> decades of fans, these two visions of one of this century's most important writers remain unwed. Because Vonnegut joins postmodern metafictional techniques with what upon first glance appears to be a modernist humanism, he remains an enigma and an anomaly in contemporary literature – a writer who bridges two disparate worlds, demonstrating the viability of a postmodern humanism. (Davis 2001, 150)

The presence of modern beliefs acts as a presupposition that reinforces Vonnegut's characters and the plot, creating layers of meaning. Also, the nostalgia appears fruitfully at the crossroad between modern and postmodern paths, offering clues about their discontinuity and differences. That's why Davis thinks that despite the similarities with the perspectives portrayed by Orwell or Huxley, Vonnegut actually differs from them in quite significant fashion. Vonnegut is to be found much closer to postmodernism, and I think it would not be a mistake to claim that *Player Piano* may be depicted as a form of Lyotard's incredulity towards grand narratives. Nevertheless, *Player Piano*'s themes are postmodern in nature, but its form remains modernist. For Lyotard, the metanarratives have a legitimating function, and Vonnegut does not cease to question the validity of the structures and myths of the American culture. If we remember the examples of metanarratives offered by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982-1985*, we can easily observe that they are called into question in the novel: "the progressive emancipation of reason and freedom, the progressive or catastrophic emancipation of labour (source of alienated value in capitalism), the enrichment of all humanity through the progress of capitalist technoscience." (Lyotard 1997, 17) The emancipation of people from the tyranny of work is negatively felt by *Player Piano*'s personages that declared themselves as useless. The actual work was eliminated, but instead of celebrating a free life of leisure, people are unhappy, meaningless and depressive. The body itself became an obsolete accessory that is scantily used. The mechanization of work was conceived as a rescuer force, because when they worked, "people stuck in one place all day, just using their senses, then a reflex, suing their senses, then a reflex, and not really thinking at all." (Vonnegut 2006, 14) In

fact, the things stand exactly opposite and the dialogue between Paul and Lasher is emblematic for this issue:

> "– If they were so fond of the old system, how come they were so cantankerous about their jobs when they had them? said Paul.
> – Oh, this business we've got now – it's been going on for a long time now, not just since the last war. Maybe the actual jobs weren't being taken from the people, but the sense of participation, the sense of importance was." (Vonnegut 2006, 91)

The progress obtained by cybernetics has been transformed in a kind of totalitarian, deterministic force that eluded the humans from the entire equation. The progress is labelled as a myth, properly presented for masses through the means of advertising and other communication facilities. There is a dark side of the progress and those three revolutionary phases outline a descending perspective for the human kind: the devaluation of muscle work, then the decay of routine mental work, followed by the decline of human thinking. The machine-dominated society determines alienation and unhappiness: "machines, organization and the pursuit of efficiency have robbed the American people of liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (Vonnegut 2006, 314). In this context, the definition of the human being is profoundly questioned, as well as the subsequent role in the world. As Shah from *Player Piano* asked, "before we take this first step, please, would you ask EPICAC what people are for?" (Vonnegut 2006, 320). EPICAC, the big computer or the "brain" is laudatory presented as "the greatest individual in history, that the wisest man that had ever lived was to EPICAC XIV as a worm was to that wisest man" (Vonnegut 2006, 120), but also as a "false god" (Vonnegut 2006, 123). The decline of human being is obvious, and the external perspective brought forward by Shah stressed this poor condition. Shah thought that the Americans were "slaves", depicting the image of the marginalization of human kind.

All the same, the perspective about technology and human beings is deeply ambivalent, emphasising its postmodern indeterminacy. The end of the novel describes the rebellion conducted by The Ghost Shirt Society and the chaos that freedom can produce. The rebels cannot decide which machine should be destroyed and which should be preserved,

while some personages already thought how to recreate some of them. In this point nostalgia is again powerful, because of its paradoxical structure as progress and return, departure and comeback (Olivier 2011, 135). The myth of the human being as the wisest inhabitant of Terra is also deconstructed; Paul Proteus looks with sympathy but also with scepticism at his fellows that, after the rebellion, are "eager to recreate the same old nightmare" (Vonnegut 2006, 295) that they struggled with before. The conjunction of nostalgia and irony is another trait of postmodernism that Vonnegut used in this novel. As Hutcheon pointed out, irony is not a simple way of defending against the nostalgic waves, but it represents rather "the way in which nostalgia is made palatable today: invoked but, at the same time, undercut, put into perspective, seen for exactly what it is – a comment on the present as much as on the past" (Hutcheon, Valdés 1998, 23). This combination among nostalgia (for a certain past, a desired present, and an alternate future), black humour, irony, scepticism represents a strategy that Vonnegut used in order to deconstruct our certainties and to indicate the complex network that supports our understanding of things. Thus, an interpretation of *Player Piano* only in the terms of longing for a simpler past is just a partial look inside more complex content. Moreover, introducing the instability of interpretation, Vonnegut put into question the validity of our understanding about the order of things. Thus,

> it is humanity's desire for assurance that Vonnegut points to as the cause for grand narratives, but his understanding does not soften his scathing attacks. Long before Derrida and the theoretical project of deconstruction reached its peak in English departments in American universities, Vonnegut subverted the structures of his culture, as he showed the absence of any real center behind the truth espoused in worker manuals and newspapers, in the speeches of CEOs and ministers. (Davis 2006, 42)

The gay postmodern relativism and also a bit of carnivalization are decrypted in the end of the novel; in the same time, a typical postmodern affirmation of impurity came to light: humans, as the entire society, are hybrid forms that perform hybrid actions. Everything seems to be contaminated and no truth cannot be experienced in an ingenuous way, from which we can notice that the deconstruction of essentialism is a

prolific method at work in the novel. But the constructivism or other philosophical perspective do not absolve us from the creation of narratives. Thus, Lyotard's insights about the circulation of narrations have found a formulation in *Player Piano*, because the decline of metanarratives "does not stop countless other stories (minor and not so minor) from continuing to weave the fabric of everyday life." (Lyotard 1997, 19) Vonnegut is concerned with the effects of believing in grand narratives and the end of his novel concentrates this worry. Rather than raising a toast to a great future, Paul Proteus realizes that everything is a construct and cuts the toast shortly. Consequently, no utopia was developed and no narrative was upgraded to the status of constitutive and legitimizing metanarrative. The revolutionary road was then seen just as another narrative, equally fallible as any other. Briefly, *Player Piano* "offers no grand narrative to replace those that have been deconstructed; there is only the awareness that truth remains no more than a construct, a most unusual idea to be found in a popular novel in 1952." (Davis 2006, 44-45)

Moreover, the deep nostalgia in *Player Piano* is that for humanity, illustrating the existence of a moral dimension into a decentralized world. Its protagonist asserted: "the main business of humanity is to do a good job of being human beings, not to serve as appendages to machines, institutions, and systems." (Vonnegut 2006, 273) The ethical nature of Vonnegut's postmodernism represents his own signature and – ultimately – a new form of *aporia*: to give a response to a postmodern reality avoiding the binary oppositions system and, finally, to introduce hope in this hybrid and pointillist world. In this vein, Vonnegut is considered a postmodern humanist and his postmodern ethic represents a key perspective for the understanding of his work. As Davis emphasised, Vonnegut is "more concerned with our response to existence than with the philosophical nature of that existence" (2001, 151). This pragmatist insertion does not give a final answer, but orientates the story to the urge of thinking about it.

In the same time, the mixture between modern and postmodern traits in this novel creates another subtle kind of nostalgia: *the nostalgia for impossible*, very well described in

the end of the novel. As Lyotard affirmed, "the postmodern would be that which in the modern invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible." (Lyotard 1997, 15) The localised truths, the indeterminacy of the *petite histoires* make impossible a unitary vision about the meaning and the role of the human being.

4. Final remarks

The multi-layered analysis applied to *Player Piano* stressed a plethora of modalities in which nostalgia works inside the novel, connecting temporal, spatial and paradigmatic ideas and fragments. The people that live in over-technologized societies interrelate nostalgically with diverse events or with the interpretation of their lives. In the same time, as the history of technology shows us, diverse old forms of technologies are recalled into the subsequent discourse of a new one, indicating their inner convergence. The paradoxical structure of nostalgia as progress and return makes possible its connection with the technologic development. The depiction of nostalgic moments correlated with the cybernetic advance at the level of jobs, leisure, and life style pointed out the nostalgia as a defence mechanism, as well as a prospective force.

The player piano represents a symbolic hybrid between man and machine, original and copy, art and technology, and the moments in which it appears in the story became significant clues for the proximity of nostalgia, disequilibrium and dissonance. The musicality of the novel and its contrapuntal structure are relevant elements in order to capture its subtleties and its inner forces that construct its polyphony.

The last investigation put nostalgia in the complex postmodern framework. Thus, *Player Piano* re-traces Lyotard's incredulity in metanarratives, emphasizing Vonnegut's "postmodern humanism". The indeterminacy and the absence of a unitary perspective is accentuated through the final act of denying a legitimizing grand narrative for the future. Thus, the nostalgia for impossible infiltrates in the deep texture of the novel. In the same time, the nostalgia for humanity and

authenticity come to light as another example of the struggle between Vonnegut's modernist and postmodernist views. Through this great variety of meanings and correlations, the nostalgia has an important role in the fabric of ideas and interrogations raised by *Player Piano.*).

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Overcoming the Disunity of Understanding

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Abstract

I argue that embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding interact through schematic structure. I demonstrate that common conceptions of these two kinds of understanding, such as developed by Wheeler (2005, 2008) and Dreyfus (2007a, b, 2013), entail a separation between them that gives rise to significant problems. Notably, it becomes unclear how they could interact; a problem that has been pointed out by Dreyfus (2007a, b, 2013) and McDowell (2007) in particular. I propose a Kantian strategy to close the gap between them. I argue that embodied and conceptual-representational understanding are governed by schemata. Since they are governed by schemata, they can interact through a structure that they have in common. Finally, I spell out two different ways to conceive of the schematic interaction between them—a close, grounding relationship and a looser relationship that allows for a minimal interaction, but preserves the autonomy of both forms of understanding.

Keywords: Embodied Understanding, Conceptual-Representational Understanding, Embodied Cognition, Kant, Heidegger, Schemata

1. Introduction

Proponents of Embodied Cognition as well as contemporary Phenomenologists usually separate between embodied understanding on the one hand and conceptual-representational understanding on the other hand (Wheeler 2005; Dreyfus 2007a, b, 2013; Chemero 2009; Hutto and Myin 2013). Whereas embodied understanding is supposed to

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constitute what we can call a practically-engaged mode of dealing with the world, conceptual-representational understanding is supposed to constitute what we can call a theoretically-detached mode of thinking (§2).[1]

The separation between these kinds of understanding is strict. This is apparent from how embodied and conceptual-representational understanding are characterized. Whereas embodied understanding is supposed to be governed by embodied and sensorimotor abilities, conceptual-representational understanding is linguistic or symbolic. Embodied understanding is context-sensitive, action-oriented and pragmatic; conceptual-representational understanding is general, abstract and disembodied. Accordingly, it seems as if the separation renders these kinds of understanding as *autonomous* and *structurally unrelated* to each other (§2.1).

I argue in §2.2 that we receive a segmented conception of the mind, in which two autonomous kinds of understanding pull the embodied agent into different directions, if we cannot account for the relationship between these two kinds of understanding. Given such a segmented conception of the mind, it is unclear how conceptual thought can relate to embodied understanding, as is the case when we report an action or make a judgment about a perceived situation (Dreyfus 2007a, b; McDowell 2007). Similarly, if conceptual-representational understanding is not structurally connected to embodied understanding, which is the ground of concernful interactions with the world, it is mysterious how conceptual-representational understanding exhibits practical meaning and significance (Heidegger 1962; Dreyfus 1991). Even though the problem of a segmented mind has been addressed by Dreyfus (2007a, b) and McDowell (1994, 2007), we are left without a sufficient account to overcome it. Dreyfus (2007a) admits that he has no explanation of the relationship between these two kinds of understanding (§2.1), and McDowell's (1994, 2007) account is unacceptably intellectualist (§3.1).

In §3 I propose the following positive solution to overcome the separation. Like McDowell, I draw on Kant to do so. Yet, unlike McDowell, I refer to Kant's thoughts on spatiotemporal schemata. For Kant, the basic structure of

experience is that of spatiality and temporality. Kant connects conceptual thought with experience, by arguing that concepts are governed by schemata that determine the possible spatial and temporal forms that objects of experience can have. For instance, the schema of the concept of dog determines all possible forms that dogs can have in space and time and thereby allows the concept to be about the experience of things in space and time. Conceptual thought and experience are able to interact, since both exhibit a common structure: spatiality and temporality (§3.1).

I argue in §3.2 that spatiotemporal schemata govern both—embodied and conceptual-representational understanding. Schemata can be conceived of as ontologically and cognitively modest. They are ontologically modest, because most objects of the understanding can be minimally characterized by their spatial and temporal properties. They are cognitively modest, because understanding has to be minimally responsive to the spatial and temporal structure of the world surrounding us; i.e. the spatiotemporal world that contains objects and situations about which embodied and conceptual-representational understanding are.

If both kinds of understanding exhibit at a basic level spatiotemporally schematic structure, this schematic ground allows for a structural connection between both of them. In §4 I describe two ways to conceive of this structural connection. We can conceive of it, first, as a grounding relationship, where embodied understanding grounds conceptual-representational understanding (§4.1). Or we can conceive of it, second, as a looser relationship, where schemata allow for "cross-talk" between the two kinds of understanding, yet where the autonomy of each is preserved to a certain degree (§4.2).

2. The separation between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding

In contemporary philosophy, a distinction is frequently made between two kinds of understanding—embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding. These two kinds of understanding are supposed to roughly correspond to two ways of engaging with the world that we can

call 'practically-engaged' and 'theoretically-detached'. In the following I discuss how these distinctions are drawn, what motivates them and which problems they entail.

Let us first focus on the phenomenologically inspired work of Michael Wheeler (2005, 2008) and Hubert Dreyfus (2007a, 2007b, 2013). Both differentiate between different modes of engagement based on phenomenological analyses that are inspired by Martin Heidegger's (1962) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (2012) work. The first mode of engagement that Dreyfus and Wheeler identify is reflective of our experience of most of our interactions with the world. They call it in accord with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty 'readiness-to-hand' or 'smooth coping' respectively. It is characterized by environmentally immersed, non-reflective and contextual action.

This mode of engagement exhibits no experienced distinction between subject and object and is structured by the body. As Wheeler states:

> (…) smooth coping in the domain of the ready-to-hand has a non-representational phenomenology. Smooth coping involves a form of awareness in which there are no subjects and no objects, only the experience of the ongoing task (e.g. typing). (Wheeler 2008, 338)

For instance, if I hammer a nail, I am engaging in a skillful activity in which my awareness of myself is lost in the activity. I am often not only not aware of myself in these engagements, I am also not aware of operating on determinate objects with *decontextualized* properties. To the contrary, I focus on the activity that is directed towards the end result of my action and the work that is to be achieved. As Heidegger states:

> That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves [die Werkzeuge selbst]. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work—that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. (Heidegger 1962, 99)

In this mode of engagement, readiness-to-hand, things show up to me only as things-for-the-sake-of-the-work that I seek to achieve. In our case, hammer and nail show up *contextually* as things with which I, for instance, hang up a picture.

Dreyfus and Wheeler distinguish this mode of engagement, from deliberative, reflective, decontextualized and

detached modes of engagement. We are involved in these detached modes of engagement, for instance, when we encounter practical problems, reason or do science. Both authors identify these modes of engagement with what Heidegger (1962) called 'un-readiness-to-hand' and 'presence-at-hand'. In the former, we are disturbed in our smooth coping and search for solutions to the problems that caused the disturbance. In the latter, we take an observer stance towards the world and conceive of it in terms of objects with *decontextualized* properties.

In both of these cases, a 'cognitive distance' is introduced between subject and object which is not present in skillful coping (Wheeler 2008, 383). This introduction of an experiential distinction between object and subject seems to entail for Dreyfus and Wheeler that we conceive of objects in detached modes of engagement in a literally 'objective' way. As Wheeler states:

> When revealed as present-at-hand (e.g. by detached theoretical reflection) an entity will be experienced in terms of properties that are action-neutral, specifiable without essential reference to the representing agent, and context-independent. Moreover, according to Heidegger, this group of properties will also characterize the *contents of the agent's related representational states.* (Wheeler 2008, 339, emphasis added)

Wheeler and Dreyfus argue that readiness-to-hand is governed by embodied understanding and that un-readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand are governed by (action-oriented or classical) representations (Wheeler) or linguistic concepts (Dreyfus), which exhibit the characteristics of 'conceptual content, mindedness, and rationality' (Dreyfus 2013, 29). The assumption here is that embodied understanding enables engaged-practical modes of engagement with the world and that conceptual-representational understanding enables theoretical-detached modes of engagement with the world, in particular, decontextualized, body-neutral conceptual content.

We find similar claims about different modes of engagement and corresponding differences in the underlying kinds of understanding in other embodied conceptions of understanding. For instance, various authors argue for the

existence of something like a pre-conceptual background that characterizes most of our engagements with the world. This background is conceived of as a holistic and contextual background structure that allows us to act and interact with our living world. This pre-conceptual background is then contrasted with explicit concept use (Dreyfus 2007a, 2007b; Wheeler 2008; Hutto 2012; Dreyfus and Taylor 2015).

Another similar separation is made in Radical Embodied Cognitive Science and closely related versions of Enactivism (Chemero 2009; Kiverstein and Rietveld 2015). One central concept of this project is 'affordance' which is defined by Chemero (2009) as a relation between agents and environments and, in accord with J.J. Gibson, as the embodied, pragmatic meaning of objects. In this sense, affordances grant an understanding of objects for engaged-practical purposes. The explanatory scope of affordances is yet unclear for Chemero (2009). In particular, he deems it an open question to what extent Radical Embodied Cognitive Science will be able to explain, what he calls in accord with Clark and Toribio (1994), 'representation hungry tasks'.

As we have seen above, many authors differentiate between different ways of relating to the world. On the one hand, we have a practical-engaged mode that pertains to action and perception. This practical-engaged mode is contextual, holistic, value-laden, body-centric and is governed by embodied understanding (Dreyfus 2007b; Wheeler 2008). On the other hand is a theoretical-detached mode, which is thought to include engaging in decontextualized, general propositional thought (Hurley 1998), distinctly cognitive intentionality (Kelly 2002), doing science, theorizing and using language (Wheeler 2005; Chemero 2009), engaging with the world in a detached, observational fashion (Dreyfus 2007b), deliberative, reflective rationality (Dreyfus 2013), judging, believing or planning (Hutto and Myin 2013), or participating in the space of reasons (Dreyfus and Taylor 2015). This detached-theoretical mode is supposedly governed by conceptual-representational understanding.

2.1. The separation is strict

Now we need to ask how strict the separation between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding is. Is

there continuity between the different kinds of understanding or are they radically separate from each other? The answers to this question differ. For instance, Hutto and Myin (2013) see no connection between the embodied abilities that generate action and perception, and contentful conceptual-representational understanding. Contrary to that, Dreyfus in particular has stressed the continuity between the two kinds of understanding. As Dreyfus claims:

> Intelligence is founded on and presupposes the more basic way of coping we share with animals. (Dreyfus 2007b, 250)

Another expression of Dreyfus's commitment to the continuity between both kinds of understanding is the following.

> Absorbed bodily coping, its motor intentional content, and the world's interconnected solicitations to act provide the background on the basis of which it becomes possible for the mind with its conceptual content to think about and act upon a categorially unified world. (Dreyfus 2007a, 360–361)

Importantly, Dreyfus deems conceptual-representational understanding constitutively dependent upon embodied understanding.

Similar remarks have been made recently from a Neo-Pragmatist perspective by Gallagher:

> Pragmatists and neo-pragmatists would treat the intentionality of propositional attitudes as derived from a more original form of embodied intentionality, what phenomenologists like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty call "motor intentionality." (Gallagher 2014, 121)

Further, in particular proponents of Embodied Cognition support the claim that cognition, action, and perception are integrated with each other (Thompson and Stapleton 2009) or that they are non-separable, interaction-dominant components of one dynamic system (Chemero 2014). If that is the case, i.e. if cognition, action, and perception are integrated and inseparable from each other, it should be entailed that both kinds of understanding are also integrated with each other and inseparable from each other, which again entails a strong form of continuity.

And not surprisingly, a standard response by proponents of Embodied Cognition to the question about the relationship

between these kinds of understanding is that they are '*somehow*' connected and continuous with each other. But there is no concrete philosophical explanation of what the relationship between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding actually is.[2]

We can see this at the example of Dreyfus's (2007a) account. As we have seen above, Dreyfus claims, with recourse to Heidegger and in particular Merleau-Ponty, that motor intentionality and other embodied abilities enable conceptual-representational understanding. Yet, Dreyfus does not provide an explanation of the relationship between the two kinds of understanding. He merely claims that they are connected with each other, without providing an analysis of how our theoretical-detached engagements with the world characteristically exhibit signs of motor intentionality or embodiment.

To the contrary, Dreyfus (2007a, 364) claims that we experience 'context-free, self-sufficient substances with detachable properties' when we engage with the world as theoretically-detached, which he (Dreyfus 2007a, 364) identifies with 'McDowell's world of facts, features and data'. However, it is not clear what it means that decontextualized, self-sufficient substances exhibit signs of embodiment or motor intentionality.

Further, Dreyfus states in another passage that 'motor intentional content' cannot in any '"form"' be '"suitable to constitute the contents of conceptual capacities"' (Dreyfus 2007a, 360), which seems to contradict the claims Dreyfus makes about how embodied understanding, in particular motor intentionality, is the basis of conceptual-representational understanding.[3] And to further heighten the confusion, Dreyfus concludes that neither he nor Heidegger nor Merleau-Ponty would have been able to provide an account of the relationship between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding: 'It seems that (…) the phenomenologists can't account for what makes it possible for us to step back and observe [the world]' (Dreyfus 2007a, 364, my brackets). Concretely, Dreyfus admits that he cannot account for the relationship between conceptual-representational understanding and embodied understanding.

2.2.Problems with the separation

The lack of an account that explains the relationship between two kinds of understanding is deeply concerning. What is in particular concerning is that the two kinds of understanding, according to how they are standardly described, seem structurally disparate—so disparate even that they are seemingly autonomous from each other. If that were the case, it is deeply mysterious how they could interact.

Yet, it is obvious that they do interact. For instance, as McDowell (2007) has repeatedly pointed out, we need to account for how our embodied experience can be the object of verbal reports and how it can inform conceptual judgments. And as Alva Noë (2004, 2012) has pointed out, our embodied understanding itself exhibits such cognitive complexity that it requires a close relationship to conceptual-representational understanding.

Further, if these kinds of understanding were separate and autonomous from each other, then it would be puzzling how human thinking and action are so synchronized in everyday behavior. If the two kinds of understanding were separately operating in an embodied agent, it would seem as if she would have to be torn in different directions, by autonomously operating kinds of understanding.

Even more, if embodied understanding is that what generates meaning and significance for an agent, as at least Phenomenologists and Phenomenologically-inspired philosophers argue (Heidegger 1962; Merleau-Ponty 2012; Thompson 2007; Ratcliffe 2008; Noë 2012), then we need to address the question how conceptual-representational understanding itself receives meaning, in particular if we do not want to accept classic Intellectualist conceptions of a disembodied intellect.[4] Accordingly, we need to account for the relationship between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding.

In what follows I seek to account for this relationship with the following strategy. First, I suggest that spatiotemporal schemata can function as the ground for an interaction between

these kinds of understanding. Second, I describe different ways to conceive of the relationship between the kinds of understanding, given that they are connected through schematic structure.

3. Bridging the separation with schematic structure

In the following I suggest that schemata are the means by which embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding interact. A schema, as I will argue, is an ontologically and cognitively minimal structure that preserves a certain degree of autonomy for both kinds of understanding, yet, allows for their close interaction. The following considerations draw heavily on Immanuel Kant's conception of schemata, developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I will introduce the conception of a schema based on his work and show how we can make the basic idea work in different ways, without having to accept the wider ramifications of Kant's epistemological and ontological project. In order to do so, I spell out two different ways in which schemata can connect embodied and conceptual-representational understanding.

3.1. Kantian schemata

Schemata are a central, though often overlooked aspect of Kantian philosophy (Sherover 1971; Heidegger 1990; Carman 1999; Hanna 2005; van Mazijk 2016). They are the structures that explain, for Kant, how experience and conceptual thought are synthesized. In the following I will discuss schemata in the context of Kant's considerations on the synthesis of experience and conceptual thought.

As is well known, Kant insisted that concepts and experience have to interact in order to make sense of either of them. Yet it is less well known that Kant is not satisfied with claiming that concepts and experience interact or that they are synthesized. Kant is concerned with the *conditions that make it possible* that concepts and experience can interact; i.e. Kant does not merely describe the necessity of the interaction between them, but he seeks to explain it further. This means that Kant is concerned with the structure that is the ground for

the interaction between concepts and experience, and accordingly with the conditions that make it possible that concepts are *about* objects of experience.

Kant argues that there has to be a common structural ground, a 'homogenous' 'third thing', that has to be definitive of concepts and experience so that they can interact.

> Now it is clear that there must *be a third thing*, which must stand in *homogeneity* [in Gleichartigkeit stehen] with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and *makes possible* the application of the former to the latter. (Kant 1998, A138 / B177, emphasis and translation in original)

Kant's point is that concepts and experience have to exhibit a structural commonality, so that they can interact; or differently put, so that each can non-arbitrarily match with each other. Kant identifies this matching structure, the 'third thing', with schemata.

According to Kant, schemata can perform their function as the common ground of both experience and concepts by being 'a priori time-determinations' (Kant 1998, A145 / B184). Whether Kant then actually conceives of them merely as 'a priori time-determinations', i.e. as exhibiting temporal structure, is doubtful. It seems as if schemata not only exhibit temporal structure, but also spatial structure, as we can see from his discussion of the concept of substance.

> The schema of substance is the persistence of the real in time, i.e., the representation of the real as a substratum of empirical time-determination in general, which therefore endures while everything else changes. (Kant 1998, A144 / B183)

What allows for the concept of substance and the experience of a substance to interact is that both—or rather schemata in the case of concepts—have spatial and temporal structure in common. For instance, the experience of a substance is that of an entity that is a spatially stable thing that does not change in time. The schema of a substance directs the concept of substance to a substance, since it exhibits spatial and temporal structure based on which it determines an experience of x as a substance if x has spatially stable structure that does not change in time. The matching consists in the overlap of the same spatial and temporal structure of the

experience and the schema—in the case of substance: spatially stable form that does not change in time.

The same considerations apply to empirical concepts too—not only to the concepts of substance, cause, reality, and so forth—Kant's pure concepts of the understanding. The concept of dog is governed by a schema that determines all possible spatiotemporal forms that dogs can exhibit.

> The concept of a dog signifies a rule in accordance with which my imagination can specify the shape of a four-footed animal in general, without being restricted to any single particular shape that experience offers me or any possible image that I can exhibit *in concreto*. (Kant 1998, B181, 182 / A 142)

At the same time, all the possible ways in which one can experience dogs exhibit a particular spatiotemporal form, i.e. dog-form. Accordingly, my concept of dog is about dogs, and can only be about dogs in the first place, because it is connected through the schema of dog to dogs in the world, since both exhibit matching spatiotemporal form—the particular instantiation of the dog schemata$_{s1-t1}$-particular dog with dog form$_{s1-t1}$. For instance, the declarative sentence, 'there is a dog on the mat', is about a dog in the world because it is governed by schemata that determine the spatiotemporal forms according to which dogs can appear on mats and it can match an actual appearance of a dog on a mat in space and time.

Importantly, what is required for experience and conceptual thought to interact is that both are at the basic level characterized by spatial and temporal attributes. Experience is basically characterized by the invariant structures spatiality and temporality; in Kant's case, the pure forms of intuition space and time. Concepts are basically characterized by the invariant structures spatiality and temporality; in Kant's case, through spatiotemporal schemata. Since both experience and conceptual thought exhibit *the same basic structure*, spatiality and temporality, they can interact and be synthesized.

Kant is quite clear about what is entailed for conceptual understanding if we accept that it is governed by schemata. Concepts cannot constitute an arbitrary, autonomous kind of understanding, but schemata determine the scope, application and meaning of concepts.

> Thus the schemata of the concepts of pure understanding are the *true and sole conditions* for providing them with a *relation to objects [Beziehung auf Objekte]*, thus with *significance [Bedeutung]* (…). (Kant 1998, A145-146 / B185, emphasis and translation in original)

This is the case, since not only the aboutness relationship between conceptual thought and objects is determined by schemata, but also because that what concepts can mean is completely determined by the possible ways in which an object can appear to me in space and time.

As we can see from this, Kant's own approach is quite different from John McDowell's Kant-inspired account (McDowell 1994, 2007), according to which concepts reach into experience, without further mediation by schemata; where neither conceptual thought is constrained by schemata, nor experience is primarily characterized by spatiality and temporality.

McDowell breaks with Kant in that he does not provide an analysis of the relationship between experience and conceptual thought by means of a mediating structure, i.e. schemata. Rather, he claims that our experience is readily available for conceptual understanding without providing an account of the mediating structure that could make experience available for conceptual understanding; i.e. without an explanation of the conditions that make it possible that experience and conceptual thought can interact. As McDowell claims:

> We can equip ourselves with new conceptual capacities, in that sense, by isolating and focusing on—*annexing bits of language to*—other aspects of the categorially unified content of the experience, aspects that were hitherto not within the scope of our capacities for *explicit thought*. (McDowell 2007, 347, emphasis added)

For McDowell, conceptual thought is simply linguistic and it can reach into experience qua its linguistic structure, which presupposes that the structure of experience exhibits linguistic structure too.

Yet, as I have shown above, at least for Kant, what provides experience with "categorically unified content" or the Kantian equivalent thereof, is that experience is structured by the pure forms of intuition space and time, i.e. that experience

is itself structured into objects that have a particular spatiotemporal form that differentiates them from other objects and makes them available to be the object about which a schema, and thereby a concept, can be.

Since McDowell does not account for such a mediating structure, he not only fails to provide an analysis of the conditions that make the application of concepts to experience possible. He also renders the relationship between experience as well as embodied understanding and conceptual thought intellectualist, since he argues that experience and embodied understanding exhibit conceptual structure.

3.2. Schemata as a bridging structure

Importantly, we do not have to accept the particular ontological ramifications of Kantian philosophy in order to see in schemata an attractive option for the explanation of at least a minimal interaction between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding. In the following I will spell out why schemata can be considered to be an ontologically and cognitively non-demanding structure. Then I will show, that, given the ontologically and cognitively non-demanding structure of schemata, we can conceive of embodied understanding as minimally characterized by schematic structure, which gives us the ground for an interaction between the kinds of understanding. Finally, I will spell out different ways of how we can conceive of the schematic relationship between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding—ranging from the strong Kantian (and Phenomenological) project, to a minimalist interaction between both kinds of understanding that explains how we can, for instance, make verbal reports about the objects of embodied understanding.

Many readers might be skeptical about accepting a Kantian conception of schemata, because they might worry that such a strategy commits them to an acceptance of wider aspects of the Kantian project that they might find not desirable. Yet, we do not have to accept other aspects of Kant's system to adopt his conception of schemata; for instance, his claim that space and time are pure forms of intuition or that there are pure

concepts of the understanding, i.e. basic categories such as substance or causality.

Indeed, the idea of a schema is ontologically modest, since it is formulated about primitive, invariant spatiotemporal properties of objects that characterize these objects in a minimal and essential fashion. There is nothing ontologically obscure about claiming that the objects of our thoughts, such as dogs, have a particular spatiotemporal form and have it essentially. There is further nothing cognitively obscure or demanding about the claim that understanding has to be responsive to the temporal and spatial aspects of the world; for instance, by exhibiting temporal structure itself. Quite to the opposite, it seems difficult to make sense of the responsiveness to a spatial world in temporal change without such a conception of schemata—for instance, based on an explanation formulated over disembodied, symbolic representations.

Since there is neither anything cognitively nor ontologically demanding about schemata, we can conceive of embodied understanding as schematic too—which is obviously a necessary condition for the interaction of the kinds of understanding through schemata.

I do not purport that I can present an exhaustive argument for the claim that embodied understanding is governed by schematic structure. I merely want to show here that it is a plausible option to conceive of embodied understanding as itself spatiotemporally schematic.

If I bring my embodied understanding to bear on an action, for instance, the action of making coffee, I need to have a practical understanding of the behaviors and objects involved in the action. This embodied understanding is itself characterized by an *aboutness* relation, as in particular Merleau-Ponty (2012) has argued, that is neither cognitive nor merely causal, i.e. a motor intentional aboutness relationship (Carman 1999; Kelly 2002).

This intentional relationship is characterized by an interaction of motor abilities (e.g. embodied abilities) of an agent and spatiotemporal objects. As is well known, Merleau-Ponty conceives of the spatiotemporal nature of objects as determined though a body schematic relationship. As Merleau-

Ponty (2012, 103) states, "each figure appears perspectively against the double horizon of external space and bodily space." Independent of how we conceive of this (body) schematic structure exactly, whether it is determined through embodiment (Merleau-Ponty) or without embodiment (Kant), it is essentially of a spatiotemporal nature, as the following example illustrates.

Take for instance the action of coffee making—a simple, cognitively non-demanding action governed by embodied understanding. In order to make coffee, I need to understand, non-deliberatively and non-thematically, among many other things, what a coffee machine does and I need to understand how to behave towards it, i.e. I have to understand non-conceptually which buttons I have to press, where I have to insert the coffee, when I have to stop inserting it and so forth.

This means, my understanding of which action I have to perform is relative to my understanding of which objects are involved in the action (coffee machine, coffee ground, kitchen cabinet, etc.). And my understanding has to be about these objects—in order to identify a coffee machine as a coffee machine, i.e. as something that in this situation produces coffee for me. What allows for the application of my embodied understanding to objects is schematic structure.

The most basic, invariant features of a coffee machine are its spatiotemporal properties. I do not have to be aware of them as such, yet they nevertheless allow me to see a particular physical configuration in space and time as a coffee machine. My understanding of the coffee machine itself is not primarily spatiotemporal. It is about what I can do with the coffee machine and how it can fulfill my concerns. But a spatiotemporal schema allows me to pick out an otherwise insignificant object out of space and time as a thing of which I have a particular concern-fulfilling and action-oriented understanding.

Similarly, the structure of my behavior is guided by a spatiotemporal schema in relation to objects. As Stanley and Krakauer (2013) and Stanley and Williamson (2016) have pointed out, action is governed by an understanding of initiation conditions. This means, I need to understand, in

relation to an environmental situation, when I have to initiate or change my course of behavior in order to produce a result I have concern for. For instance, if I open the lid of my coffee machine I need to understand when to start pouring ground coffee into the filter of the machine and when to stop.

Krakauer, Stanley and Williamson argue that this understanding of initiation conditions is housed in mental representations that correspond to facts. Yet, we can equally conceive of this understanding as governed by spatiotemporal schemata. The schema cannot only specify which objects are involved in an action, but it has further an intimate connection to temporality itself, which is necessary to determine stop and initiation conditions of an action.

Now that we see that we can conceive of embodied understanding as spatiotemporally schematic too, we can analyze the possible relationships that can hold between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding, based on their schematic structure.

4. Different interactions: ways to connect both kinds of understanding

In the following I discuss two different ways we can conceive of the schematic relationship between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding. First, a tight relationship, that grounds conceptual-representational understanding in embodied understanding through schemata. Second, a loose relationship, that grants autonomy to both kinds of understanding, yet, lets them interact at various levels through schemata. I cannot spell out the specifics of such a relationship in this paper. Rather, I merely describe which kinds of relationship can in principle follow from the structural connection between the two kinds of understanding that is grounded in schematic structure. The details of such a relationship will have to await further, more detailed deliberations.

4.1. Grounding conceptual-representational understanding in embodied understanding

We can conceive of the relationship between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding, as Kant conceived of the relationship between experience and conceptual thought. In that case, embodied understanding, as that which contributes to our structure of experience or is at least closely connected to it (O'Regan and Noë 2001; Noë 2004; Thompson 2007), is that which governs conceptual-representational understanding insofar as it bestows meaning and significance to it. Accordingly, we can conceive of the relationship between the two kinds of understanding as a grounding relationship.

Conceiving of the relationship as a close one could be interesting for any author that follows Heidegger (1962) in arguing that the meaning of thought or linguistic expressions requires a grounding in our practical understanding of the world, that itself is grounded in concern or sensorimotor skill.

For instance, my concept of a coffee machine receives significance through the significance that coffee machines have for me based on the ways I can relate to them based on my embodied understanding of them. This grounding relation allows then that concepts have pragmatic meaning.

4.2. Preserving autonomy through minimal interaction

If we want to grant conceptual-representational understanding a high degree of autonomy and argue for a marked difference between the modes of engagement realized by embodied and conceptual-representational understanding respectively (Wheeler 2005; Dreyfus 2007a), we can obviously also conceive of the relationship between both kinds of understanding in a weaker form; yet still schematically mediated.

If both, embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding are exhibiting schematic structure, both kinds of understanding can be elicited or exerted in the same situation. If I make coffee, my

spatiotemporally schematic understanding of the situation not only allows me to bring my embodied understanding to bear on the situation, but through a similar or the same schema, my concept of, say, "coffee machine" can be elicited too. This allows then to make verbal reports about the situation at hand and it allows to form conceptual judgments such as "I am making coffee"—an action that is otherwise governed by embodied understanding.[5]

5. Conclusion

I have argued that spatiotemporal schemata are the condition that make it possible that embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding can interact. I have shown that the separation that is made between both kinds of understanding by contemporary Phenomenologists (Dreyfus 2007a, b) and proponents of Embodied Cognition (Wheeler 2005, 2008; Chemero 2009) renders the interaction between them puzzling. Concretely, I have argued, in accord with McDowell (1994, 2007), Dreyfus (2007a) and Noë (2004, 2012), that the separation between these kinds of understanding cannot account for how we can produce reports about our actions that are governed by embodied understanding, or how we can make judgments about them. Further, I have argued that the separation can further not account for the seeming interaction between both kinds of understanding in everyday action and, at least from a phenomenological point of view, for how conceptual-representational understanding receives meaning and significance through embodied understanding. These problems make it necessary to account for the interaction between both kinds of understanding.

I have then argued that spatiotemporal schemata are well-suited to account for this interaction. I have advanced a conception of schemata that is based on Kant's own conception of schemata. I have argued that schemata are basic, ontologically and cognitively modest structures that relate to spatial and temporal properties of objects. I then suggested that schemata underlie both, embodied as well as conceptual-representational understanding. If that is the case, both,

embodied and conceptual-representational understanding have the same basic structure in common that allows for their interaction.

Finally, I have spelled out two different ways in which the two kinds of understanding could interact through schemata. I have described a close interaction relationship, in which conceptual-representational understanding is grounded in embodied understanding—an idea valuable for Phenomenologists and philosophers who conceive of embodied understanding as the primary locus of meaning and significance. I have further depicted another way to conceive of the relationship as a looser one in which both kinds of understanding minimally interact—so that we are able to make reports about our actions or to transform our thoughts into actions—yet, where embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding are in many ways autonomous from each other and preserve their unique properties and functions.

NOTES

[1]The exception to the rule is Alva Noë (2004, 2012) who has rejected the separation as intellectualist.

[2]Accounts by McDowell (1994, 2007) and Noë (2004, 2012) are the exceptions to this explanatory shortcoming. I discuss McDowell briefly in § 3.1. A discussion of Noë unfortunately goes beyond the scope of this paper.

[3]Dreyfus understandably has to make this claim, given his own theoretical presuppositions, to thwart John McDowell's (1994, 2007) claim that experience exhibits conceptuality. However, Dreyfus's claim entails unfortunately a contradiction to his own claims about the continuity between embodied and conceptual-representational understanding. 'To focus on the motor intentional content, then, is not to make some implicit conceptual content explicit—that's the myth—but rather to transform the motor intentional content into conceptual content, thereby making it available for rational analysis but no longer capable of directly motivating action' (Dreyfus 2007a, 360). Worse, Dreyfus's statement, cited in the main text, clearly cuts off embodied understanding from conceptual-representational understanding.

[4]Importantly, Heidegger, who inspires Dreyfus and Wheeler to sharply separate between both kinds of understanding, does not make the same separation for two reasons. First, Heidegger does not differentiate between embodied understanding and conceptual-representational understanding, or rather, between readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand, the way Dreyfus and Wheeler do. Heidegger nowhere claims that we are experiencing 'context-

free, self-sufficient substances with detachable properties—McDowell's world of facts, features, and data' when we engage with the world as present-at-hand, as Dreyfus (2007a, 364) suggests. Rather, he makes clear that presence-at-hand is grounded in readiness-to-hand. As he states, "readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically" (Heidegger 1962, 101). Further, "when we merely stare at something (presence-at-hand), our just-having-it-before-us lies before us as a failure to understand it any more. This grasping which is free of the "as", is a privation of the kind of seeing in which one merely understands (readiness-to-hand). It (presence-at-hand) is not more primordial than that kind of seeing (readiness-to-hand), but is derived from it" (Heidegger 1962, 190, brackets added). And Heidegger makes elsewhere plainly clear that presence-at-hand is this deprived form of merely looking at things. The clearest expression of this might be, 'theoretical behavior is just looking, without circumspection' (Heidegger 1962, 99, emphasis added). This means, presence-at-hand is a 'deficient mode of concern' (Heidegger 1962, 103)—in which something that was formerly ready-to-hand is only just present ('*Nur-noch-vorhandensein eines Zuhandenen*') (Heidegger 2006, 73). Here we can also see the second reason, why Heidegger would reject Dreyfus's and Wheeler's separation between both kinds of understanding. For Heidegger, the difference between readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand is not a division between conceptuality or representational thought on the one hand and sensorimotor or embodied understanding on the other hand. Heidegger nowhere claims that conceptual or representational understanding governs presence-at-hand. As we have seen above, Heidegger uses perceptual and agential vocabulary to describe how we encounter the world as present-at-hand. This makes further sense, if we consider the role of language in Heidegger's care structure in the form of discourse. The care structure, Heidegger's most basic ontological structure after temporality (Heidegger 1962, 329), is co-constituted by understanding, state-of-mind (affect), falling, and discourse (Heidegger 1962, 384-385). Understanding is characterized by its disclosing ability, which presents an object or a situation, together with affect, as mattering to an agent by showing up for which purpose something can be used (Heidegger 1962, 182). Discourse, which is the condition for speaking a language, is not conceived of as detached theoretical linguistic thinking, but as an existential structure that contributes to the structure of understanding and allows for its articulation (Heidegger 1962, 203-204). Discourse, as part of the care structure, is characteristic of both, readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand. Yet, in both cases it is a co-constitutive part of the care structure, but never a self-standing intellectualist device for judgment and representation, as both Dreyfus and Wheeler suggest.

[5]To explain the relationship between both kinds of understanding in terms of schemata has further explanatory advantages, even if we should only accept a loose relationship. For instance, if conceptual thought is governed by spatiotemporal schemata, we might be able to account for the grounding of demonstratives and the identification of spatiotemporal objects in perceptual judgments. Both these properties of thought relate to spatial and temporal

properties of objects and schemata are structures that explain how we can relate to objects in space and time.

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The Discourse of Resistance in Huguenot Political Thought: The Role of the Estates General

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Abstract

The political philosophy of the late Middle Ages had often approached the problem of tyranny, even attempting to provide possible solutions, but it was the sixteenth-century Reformation which turned this matter into the key issue of a new political model. France, in particular, experienced fierce disputes over this question, as the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) saw the proliferation, to an unprecedented degree, which no one would have thought possible before, of theories of resistance against monarchical "tyranny". At first, more timid, then, after the massacre of Huguenots on the night of Saint-Bartholomew (23-24 August 1572), with a much greater force, the Huguenots abandoned their previous position of unconditional obedience to the Crown: deceived in their expectations that compliance would earn them a degree of tolerance and protection, and confronted with a monarchy which, after Saint-Bartholomew, seemed to have embarked on a decidedly anti-Huguenot policy, the French Protestants turned instead to what they saw as the traditional legal limitations of the royal power in order to seek a solution from their predicament. A monarchy where the king's will was firmly "bridled" by institutional constraints and the right of the subjects to oppose unlawful policies was given legal sanction seemed the best way to guarantee the safety of the Huguenots and justify their rebellion against the Crown. This paper argues that, during the first half of the Wars of Religion, from 1562 until 1576-1577, the Estates General of France played a significant role in the Huguenots' theory of resistance, who advocated its convocation as a way to solve the realm's troubles and argued in print for its right to take an active part in deciding the policy of the kingdom, as an alternative locus of sovereignty which could even overrule the king.

Keywords: Huguenot political thought, Monarchomachs, Estates General, Wars of Religion, tyranny, discourse of resistance

The political philosophy of the late Middle Ages emphasized the limitations of the royal power: divine law, natural law and the particular legal traditions of each realm combined to restrain its exercise. Disdain for (and fear of) tyranny was a constant feature of medieval political thought, which generally rejected the arbitrariness implied by principles such as *princeps legibus solutus* ("the prince is not bound by laws"). The political thought of that era did not imagine a clear constitutional mechanism to enforce the laws against a (tyrannical) king, but there was great emphasis placed on the moral duty of the monarch to obey the laws and the oaths usually taken at his coronation. That was also the case in France, whose medieval monarchy was very different from the absolutist Bourbon government or even the more authoritarian (but not yet absolutist) regime of sixteenth-century Valois kings, Francis I (1515-1547) or Henry II (1547-1559). Naturally, it faced the same logistical constraints which all pre-modern states did, where technological and administrative limitations prevented them from exerting a very tight control over the territories they ruled: its military and administrative apparatus was simply not developed enough for the monarchy to be able to impose its will on its lands without the cooperation of the local power factors. In addition, the territorial base of the early Capetian monarchy, even after the significant enlargement of the royal domain which occurred under Philip II (1180-1223), was quite weak and the particularism and the sense of independence of various provinces remained high. But, even if not for this inherent constraints existing in any medieval society, the nature of the French state made for what Claude de Seyssel would later refer to as a "bridled" monarchy, even as the kings of France started to exert a stronger grip on their unruly and semi-independent vassals.

1. The Pre-Huguenot Tradition of the Estates General

Concomitant with the strengthening of the monarchy, the fourteenth century saw the advent of some institutions which later French political thought would associate with the notion of constitutional doctrines imposing a kind of limitations

on the unrestricted use of royal power, institutions such as the Estates General or the Parlement of Paris. Yet, their original role and the way they were perceived within the French polity at their inception were wholly different than what was envisioned for them during the sixteenth century. In fact, the fourteenth and fifteenth-century kings of France never saw the Estates or the Parlement as potential rivals or checks on their power. On the contrary, they saw them as a way to strengthen royal power against what were considered at the time the greatest dangers for the king's authority: the papal pretentions (until Boniface VIII), the king's overmighty vassals or the English claims to the throne of France. The first assemblies of the Estates, which the institution draws its origins from, were called in 1302 and 1308, by Philip IV, in order to draw popular support and build a consensus in favour of his controversial policies: the rejection of Boniface VIII's claims and the arrest of the Templars. After this, the Estates had not been particularly active and were not required to deal with such serious matters too soon, but the kings of France still saw them as a useful tool in order to extract financial concessions from their subjects, especially during Charles VII (1422-1461). According to medieval tradition, the king was supposed to live off his royal domain, but such revenues were no longer enough by the fourteenth and the fifteenth century: by getting the consent of the Estates, the king hoped to gain an easier acceptance for a fiscal policy which ran contrary to the standard medieval custom. In the words of John Russell Major, "it may seem strange that kings encouraged and developed assemblies of the Estates, but since neither the medieval nor the Renaissance monarchs had ever heard of representative government, they could have foreseen no reason to fear or destroy representative assemblies." (Major 1960, 16) In fact, the Estates itself did not realize in the beginning its potential to develop into a source of authority separated and even above the king, as shown by the fact that, even when summoned, it was not always willing to assemble and many members were reluctant to attend due to the expenses and even dangers involved in the long trips.

Yet, by mid-fifteenth century, the situation was starting to change and some of the king's advisors were starting to look

at the Estates in a different light. The fiscal obstructionism of the Estates, albeit born out of convenience rather than a true desire to challenge the authority of the monarchy, certainly irritated the kings themselves and many from their entourage, which would explain many of the more harsh opinions about the institution quoted by P.S. Lewis (Lewis 1971, 298). Yet, despite John Salmon's claim that members of the royal council saw the Estates as a dangerous body, there was little basis for such an assessment based on the realities of most of the fifteenth century: the opinion seems paradoxical in light of the fact that Charles VII found it difficult to convoke the Estates in 1420s, and in 1468 the deputies requested Louis XI not to summon them again (Salmon 1979, 63). It is far more likely that the statements referred to by P.S. Lewis and John Salmon reflect the frustration with the Estates' inability to accede to the king's wishes, rather than actual apprehension, because how could a body whose members were often reluctant to get themselves involved in the governing of the kingdom be perceived as a threat? Both Lewis and Salmon pointed to a statement from Philip de Commines, which referred to assertions made by unidentified persons "that it was a diminution of the king's prerogative, and no less than treason against him to talk of assembling the Estates." (Scoble 1877, 386) That was the most severe assessment of the Estates quoted by both Lewis and Salmon, but it belonged to a very specific context, the Estates General of Tours from 1484 and its aftermath, and it would be exaggerated to draw from it a conclusion for the whole fifteenth century. The respective assembly was the first instance when the Estates tried to mount (albeit unsuccessfully) a constitutional challenge to the monarchy and claim for itself a role different than a mere communication channel between the king and his subjects. In the words of Nicole Hochner, "France in 1483 faced what might be designated a 'post-traumatic' dispute over the consequences of the Spider King's controversial policies, characterized by an urgent need to define the limits of power and the procedures of legitimization of the French monarchy", a debate which was at first a political competition between the new and the old elite, and only later developed into a philosophical and ideological

controversy between conflicting perceptions of justice and authority (Hochner 2010, 151). The mood of the French society in 1484 was faithfully revealed by Philip de Commines, who complained that Louis XI had arbitrarily overtaxed his subjects and that Charles VII had begun the wrongful practice of imposing the *taille* without the consent of the Estates (Salmon 1979, 60). But if such complaints about excessive taxation and innovative governmental practices contrary to custom were nothing unusual, the opinion expressed by one of the delegates, Philippe Pot, that kings were created by the people and that the Estates had the right to appoint the government during a royal minority[1], certainly was: it represented the first in a long series of pronouncements about the rights of the Estates General to exert a degree of authority and control over the monarchy, a series which would end only in 1614, after the trauma of the Wars of Religion, with the Estates' total capitulation to the Bourbon monarchy.

Even though the Estates of 1484 failed to achieve any result, the opinion that the respective institution could serve as a check against arbitrary rule started to develop more and more. It also found an adequate model in the conciliarist theories of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which held that a general council of the Church surpassed the pope in authority and could even depose him in case of heresy or schism. Conciliarists such as John Mair and Jacques Almain maintained in the first half of the sixteenth century that the ruler was merely the delegate of the sovereign community and could be deposed: the former placed the power to depose in the Estates as the representative of the people, while Almain held that the whole community dethroned a tyrant king (Salmon 2002, 139). Another assembly of the Estates General would not be called again until 1560[2], but the idea persisted: one could say that the kings themselves contributed to its endurance, by appealing to "assemblies of notables" to support their policies, as Louis XII did in 1506 and Francis I in 1527, when they sought to renege on previous unfavourable agreements with the Habsburgs. Yet, one fundamental weakness of the Estates General was the fact that it was not a permanent part of the government, but only an extraordinary institution, summoned

only in specific circumstances, at the king's pleasure. This was recognized by many political theorists from the sixteenth century and some, in the search for an institutional "bridle" on the royal power, regarded the Parlement of Paris as the permanent representative of the Estates General: this way, according to William Farr Church, the Parlement would have possessed an authority drawn from popular rights rather than from the Crown, therefore being placed outside the royal government in the narrow sense and wielding a power of judicial control from a position beyond the confines of the governmental organization (Church 1969, 137-139). The attempt to join the two institution to create a constitutional framework who would limit the royal power was bound for failure, though: the Estates presumed to speak for the whole France, while the Parlement did not, its powers being restricted only to the central and northern part of the kingdom; and the Parlement proved to be too much of a partisan institution to play the role of constitutional check on the monarchy in the context of the Wars of Religion. In fact, it was the Estates which became the focus of the constitutional efforts, of both warring factions during the conflict, to reform and restrain the monarchy. This might be surprising in light of its shortcomings, but the symbol which it represented was more potent than the powers it possessed or was capable of assuming. The place occupied by the Estates General in the sixteenth-century French political mindset was best summed up by Mark Greengrass: "It was a powerful idea. Its rarity merely contributed to further the fiction that its convocation was a beacon of counsel and a balm to every ill in society. The benefit ascribed to the Estates General was that it embodied the *corps mystique* of the kingdom, the sum total of the offices that constituted its organic whole. The fiction of the health-giving effects of holding the Estates General was as compelling for royal servants as anyone else in public life in sixteenth-century France. The 'bien commun' accorded the Estates was centrally located in important myths about royal counsel, civilized rule, and the dangers of tyranny." (Greengrass 2007, 66-67)

2. The First Huguenot Theories of Resistance and the Estates General

When the Estates General was summoned again in 1560, after 76 years since its last assembly, this event signalled not only the revival of the institution, but also the reiteration, with much greater force, of the previous constitutionalist theories, but which, in the context of the civil wars, were to gain greater revolutionary connotations. The advent of the Reformation brought to the forefront a problem which medieval theorists have often tried to provide a satisfactory answer to, that of a tyrannical government. Originally, the main Protestant figures, above all, Luther and Calvin, insisted upon the obedience owed to all earthly rulers, even unjust ones, because, in their interpretation, all power came from God. In time, though, Luther and especially Calvin came to accept the idea of a right of resistance for the defence of the faith, if specific conditions were met[3]. Basically, in their view, the resistance to a legitimate ruler who became a tyrant also had to be legitimate, in accordance to the laws and customs of that realm: therefore, the right of resistance was reserved for the magistrates of a polity, an idea which came to define all Protestant theories of resistance. Calvin even referred specifically to the three Estates in all kingdoms, which, when assembled, had the duty to resist the tyrant, by virtue of their office; on the other hand, such a right was completely denied to private persons (Mousnier 2008, 90-93). In France, having been subjected to bouts of persecution since the early days of the Reformation, which only intensified during the reign of Henry II (1547-1559), an uncompromising Catholic, the Protestants started to consider various possibilities of fighting back. The death of Henry II in a tourney accident was considered by them as a divine punishment and a sign of God's favour for their cause; and it certainly helped, because it weakened the monarchy exactly at a time when it seemed determined to embark on a sustained campaign of persecution. The new regime of Francis II, dominated by his Guise in-laws, was certainly pro-Catholic and anti-Protestant, but it was simply not powerful enough to carry out Henry II's intentions against a Protestant community which had become much stronger over

the last decade and gained the adherence of a significant part of the French nobility. The fact that Francis II was only 15 years old made it easier for the Protestants to advance theories which would have granted them the means to wrest the government from the hands of their enemies, without this looking like a revolutionary attempt to alter the place of the monarchy in the French polity. In this regard, the tradition of the Estates General and the precedent from 1484 provided them with a useful model, because the most important claim made for that assembly was the pretension to appoint the royal council during the king's minority. Thus, immediately after the death of Henry II, Protestant ministers and publicists argued that kings were subjected to the oversight of a regency council established by the Estates General and the princes of the blood until they reached their majority at age 25 – an argument accepted by Calvin himself, who urged the first prince of the blood, Antoine de Bourbon, to assert his rights in this regard, believing him to be favourably inclined towards the Reformed cause (Holt 2002, 150-151)[4]. Yet, what characterized the Protestant political thought of that period was the careful balance between a formal respect for the monarchy and the need to resist the bouts of persecution: the Protestants were careful to emphasize that their actions were directed not against the king himself, but against his "evil counsellors": that was what happened in the aftermath of the failed Amboise conspiracy – when a group of Huguenots attempted to kidnap Francis II in order to remove him from under the influence of the Guise family – and it was a theme often reiterated by Huguenot propaganda – until the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. But, even though a minority at this point, there were also more radical voices who were starting to envision the possibility of resistance against the king himself, a role which could have been attributed to the Estates General, as it was the case with Theodore Beza in his 1560 edition of the *Confession of Christian Faith* (Jouanna 2009, 378).

The Huguenots would get their first chance to try to put their theories into practice when the Estates General was convoked to assemble at Orléans, at the end of 1560 (and reassembled at Pontoise next year, after the unexpected death of Francis II). During the interval between the two assemblies,

the Huguenots advanced the first of the radical propositions to reform the French monarchy and make the Estates into some kind of overseer of the king: not only that it was claimed for the Estates the right to pick the members of the royal council who were to exercise the governmental power as long as the king was minor (something which, technically speaking, did not represent a direct attack on the king's powers per se and for which there was precedent), but it was also asked that "no offensive war be started or fresh taxes be raised without the consent of the Estates" (Heller 1986, 245-246), which would have seriously curtailed the king's prerogatives. True, French political tradition of the last 250 years admitted that the consent of the subjects to taxation was advisable and kings often called (and haggled with) both the Estates General and the many provincial Estates and assemblies for this exact purpose, but this same tradition did not equip the Estates with a formal and officially recognized veto power over this matter. As for the right to decide issues of war and peace, this had been exclusively the prerogative of the monarch. But one of the biggest obstacles to the Estates gaining a more assertive role in the government of the kingdom was the irregularity of its assemblies: this was recognized by the supporters of the Estates in 1560-1561, who tried to address the issue, by demanding regular meetings every five or ten years (Jouanna 2009, 371). Unlike the next two Estates General from 1576 and 1588, the assembly at Pontoise was quite favourable to many of the objectives of the French Protestants, whose influence made itself felt in the attacks on the clergy and demands for the confiscation of their revenues to pay the kingdom's debts, combined with proposal for granting of religious liberty to Huguenots while awaiting the results of a national council, for an end to persecution and to ecclesiastical jurisdiction (Heller 1986, 246). The fact that such requests were made in the Estates General suggests that the Huguenots were, at that time, quite hopeful for royal support, trying to court the king's approval by speaking in favour of the new regime of Charles IX and Catherine de Medici: the Estates provided an excellent forum for the flattery of the king, such as that expressed by Jacques de Silly, who praised the wisdom of the new monarch

and the policy of conciliation (Roberts 2007, 101). But, despite their continuous advocating in favour of the Estates, this was the closest the Huguenots came to make use of this institution in order to find redress for their grievances, as the future assemblies were to prove themselves bitter disappointments in this regard. For all the influence the Huguenots were able to exert on the Estates General from 1561, there were already signs, even at that time, that the institution could prove (and it would be) a tool in the hands of the Catholic radicals: for many Catholics, France and the Catholic Church were inseparable, the Huguenots were nothing but intruders and troublemakers in the realm, and the *cahier* of the first estate for the assembly at Orléans included clear threats against the Protestants (Yardeni 1971, 104).

Not long after the Estates General of 1561, the Huguenots found himself in open rebellion against the Crown, as the religious tensions exploded into open warfare in the spring of 1562. The next decade saw a succession of undecided wars and badly implemented peace treaties and, again, the Huguenot political ideology tried to argue that their actions were not directed against the king, but against different factions at Court. During the first war, this narrative was helped by the ambiguous attitude of the Crown, which left most of the fighting to Catholic hardliners such as the duke of Guise and the constable of Montmorency, but the Huguenots tried to maintain this facade even after the Crown took a more active part in the conflict, after 1567. At the start of the second war, in 1567, the Huguenot propaganda kept repeating the same old tropes as before, arguing that ancient custom had been corrupted by foreign counsellors, and the commitments undertaken by the government in favour of the Protestant community had not been respected; historical precedent was also invoked, such as in a pamphlet entitled *Memoirs of the Circumstances of the War Called the Public Weal Related to the State of the Present War*, where the author recalled that, a century before, the princes had taken arms and compelled the king Louis XI to call the Estates General and lower the *taille* (Salmon 1979, 168-169). Yet, as many historians have remarked, the voices still maintaining their loyalty to the

Crown, formal as it was, were not unanimous: a tract called *The Civil and Military Defence of the Innocents of the Church of Christ*, which appeared in Lyon in 1563, maintained the right of popular armed resistance after the Biblical model of the Maccabees and, because of its unorthodox argument, was promptly disowned by the Huguenots (Salmon 1979, 181). Other tracts, such as *The Discourse by Dialogue on the Edict Revoking the Peace*, put forward what one could consider proto-constitutional principles, by declaring the king limited by the right of the Estates General to consent to taxation and to modify the law, by the right of the Parlements, deputizing for the Estates when not in session, to disallow legislation contrary to precedent and fundamental law, and by an obligation to respect the advice of the council, while mentioning a reciprocal contract between the king and his subjects which made obedience conditional upon good government (Salmon 1979, 181). The idea of the contract, which was also to appear in the main monarchomach works from the 1570s, was starting to make its way into French political thought: another tract, written around 1568-1569 and entitled *Question politique: s'il est licite aux subjects de capituler avec leur prince*, imagined an initial contract between the people and the prince, during the election of the latter, which implied reciprocal obligations and gave a conditional character to the obedience of the subjects, contract which left traces in the French tradition such as the coronation oath and the charters of urban and provincial privileges (Jouanna 2009, 453-454).

3. The Monarchomachs and the Estates General in the Aftermath of the Massacre of Saint-Bartholomew

If various Huguenot theories of resistance had already started to emerge during the first phase of the civil wars, they flourished only after the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, when the breach between the French Protestants and the Valois monarchy seemed impossible to bridge anymore. Some of the most important Huguenot treatises of political thought were published in this context and, unlike the ones which preceded them, they were no longer repudiated by the Huguenot party.

As Howell Lloyd pointed out, Huguenot thinking was based on historical tradition and broad principles of natural law: the former was employed to show that kings were originally elected by the people, while the latter were used to argue that "men would not voluntarily have surrendered their natural liberties except upon conditions" and, in the circumstances of the 1570s, Huguenot theorists took significant steps towards formulating an idea of inviolable sovereignty that implied the existence of the secular state as an entity distinct from ruler and people (Lloyd 1983, 155). Myriam Yardeni convincingly demonstrated that, during the sixteenth century and particularly during the Wars of Religion, despite the frequent consorting with foreign powers, France witnessed the development of a vibrant national conscience. This national conscience became a significant argument in favour of the pre-eminence of the Estates General, not just because of the historical tradition (which was mostly fictional) as envisioned by someone like François Hotman, but also because it was claimed that the Estates General was a better defender of France than monarchs who, for various reasons, had consented in the past to disadvantageous treaties (Yardeni 1971, 155-156). The exaltation of the Estates General in the writings of the Huguenots often came at the expense of the Parlements. Of course, the Parlements were not without their defenders, like the historian Ettienne Pasquier, who argued that they were the successor of the original assembly of the kingdom and the legality of the royal acts depended on them, but that was an opinion which the majority of the Huguenots, undoubtedly wary of the Parlements' obstructionism to the policy of toleration, never shared.

The most important Huguenot works of political thought written during the 1570s belonged to the so-called "monarchomach triumvirs", to borrow the expression of Ralph Giesey: François Hotman's *Francogallia* and Theodore Beza's *Right of Magistrates*, both published almost at the same time, in 1573 and 1574, and the anonymous *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, whose likely author is thought to be Philippe Duplessis-Mornay[5], published some years after Saint-Bartholomew, in 1579. The term "monarchomachs" was coined several decades later by the royalist writer William Barclay and

it is usually understood to refer to the Protestant partisans of resistance against (tyrannical) monarchy, even though many radical Catholics, especially the propagandists of the French Catholic League, went even farther than the Protestants by advocating the assassination of kings turned tyrants, something which the Huguenots did not support. In fact, what characterizes the monarchomachs' treatises is their constitutionalist bend – and in this they differ also from their medieval predecessors, who, while often concerned by the dangers of tyranny and trying to design all kind of remedies, never developed an articulate theory of legitimate and lawful resistance. As it was often remarked in historiography, the power to resist a tyrant was vested in specific political institutions, with already-defined functions in the state, not in the community as a whole or, even less, in individual members of said community (Soman 1974, 28).

Out of all three monarchomachs, François Hotman, in his *Francogallia*, was the most fervent adept of the Estates General. Hotman sought the origins of this institution in an imaginary Gallic and Germanic tradition, which held that these people possessed a "diet and a general assembly of all people", having the right to elect kings and also depose them for tyranny and other misdeeds[6]. This was the quintessential attribute of the Estates General in the vision of the monarchomachs, but Hotman went significantly farther than that: for him, this ancient (and imagined) "general assembly" met on a regular basis each year and would deliberate "on all the great affairs of the kingdom." (Hotman 1574, 99) Hotman's argument was based mostly on a fictional French historical tradition, but, for him, the benefits of an institution like the Estates General were so obvious, that its existence was inscribed in the "*jus gentium*, and those kings which, by evil practices, oppress this holy and sacred liberty must not be regarded as kings, but as tyrants, like those who violate the most holy right existing between men and who break all the ties of human society." (Hotman 1574, 106-107) Hotman's version of the Estates General became an early modern form of popular sovereignty, as he argued that the right of the people to give their consent to the passing of new laws, without which they were not bound to obey, was

enshrined in the French custom from the time of Charlemagne (Hotman 1574, 122). Hotman made an even bolder assertion when he claimed that the *locus* of the royal majesty was not the person of the king, but the "solemn assembly of the Estates", thus denying any physical identification between the king's person and the king's office (Hotman 1574, 151-152). Consequently, the Estates General enjoyed far broader powers than just the right to act as a restraint on the royal will, nor did it remain merely an extraordinary forum for the reformation of the kingdom: it represented an active element in the governance of the realm, which basically infringed upon what would have been considered the royal prerogative, as it was supposed to decide "the election and deposition of kings; then, of peace and war, of public law, of offices, governorships and administration of public things, of assigning a part of the domain to the male heir of the deceased king and providing a dowry for his daughters (...). Finally, of all matters which we call right now affairs of state, because it is not lawful to decide on issues concerning the state of public thing, except in the assembly of the Estates". (Hotman 1574, 114) Ralph Giesey argued that the role of the Estates General in *Francogallia* had been exaggerated because Hotman wanted "to discover some regular way to restrain the royal power, a task which the Estates General in the last centuries before his time had never pretended to perform." (Giesey 1970, 43) But this assertion represents an erroneous interpretation of Hotman's argument: the fact that, historically speaking, the Estates had never been what the monarchomachs wanted it to be is completely irrelevant in this case, because *Francogallia* argued that it *did* actually play such a role. The argument might be historically incorrect, but that did not change Hotman's state of mind: Hotman himself accepted that the Estates General allegedly had lost its ancient powers during the century before the Wars of Religion, but what he intended to prove by his fictional examples was that the (imaginary) Estates provided a better governance and, therefore, it could and should recover its old authority. The Estates General as an agent of resistance against a despotic king was an ideal – but so was the entire Huguenot constitutional theory.

If Hotman's emphasis on the Estates General is quite clear, Beza gave it a less prominent place, as he constructed a theory of constitutionalist resistance based on principles from natural and Roman law, Biblical and Roman tradition, while resorting less to examples and precedents from French history, even though the latter are not lacking entirely. For Beza, monarchies were established by the consent of the people, but that consent was not absolute and permanent regarding of the circumstances – on the contrary, it could be withdrawn when it manifestly contradicted honesty and equity (Bèze 1970, 14). Beza's monarchy was founded upon an original compact between the would-be king and his subjects: the original *lex regia* was a conditional transfer of power and, when kings manifestly violated these conditions, "those who have the power to give them their authority, also possess the power to deprive them of it." (Bèze 1970, 24) In Beza's political model, there were two possible agents of resistance, undoubtedly because, for all the fascination that many Huguenots had with the Estates General, Beza understood that the Estates might sometimes prove inadequate for the purpose of opposing a tyrannical king: a fundamental role was entrusted to the magistrates of the kingdom, who possessed the right to resist flagrant oppression within their legal and territorial jurisdiction (Bèze 1970, 18-23). Unlike an assembly like the Estates, the magistrates had the advantage of being permanently in existence and not having to be summoned by the king: therefore, they could act for the protection of the subjects and the realm any time tyrannical actions were carried out. But, as agents of resistance, they also displayed a significant flaw, which Beza was aware of: a magistrate could not remove a tyrant from his throne and, thus, his authority was inadequate, in the long term, to deal with the case of an inveterate tyrant. Consequently, there was a caveat in Beza's scheme: the inferior magistrates were supposed to resist flagrant tyranny until the Estates or "whoever possessed legislative power in the Empire or the kingdom" could find a more permanent solution (Bèze 1970, 20-21).

The opinion of Ralph Giesey that the Estates played no significant role in Beza's theory of resistance can be subjected to criticism: his case rests on the presupposition that the

Estates General was ineffectual in practice, because it had only a potential existence, its sovereignty was a fiction of the law in normal times, for the king did not normally share its exalted status with anyone and it may not have been able to assemble even in the direst cases of manifest tyranny (Giesey 1970, 44). In fact, the role of the Estates and that of the magistrates were complementary: just as the Estates might not have been able to provide an urgent remedy to a crisis, so the power of the inferior magistrates was not the answer to a tyrant who could not be dissuaded. Without a body like the Estates, Beza's theory of resistance would have been trapped in an unsolvable contradiction, because if the magistrates were to make use of their constitutional right of resistance against an unrepentant tyrant, that would have meant to mire the kingdom into a permanent civil war: in other words, reach a situation where, according to most political writers, Beza included, "the remedy would have been worse than the disease" and, therefore, it would have been better to abstain from opposing the tyrant, thus nullifying in practice the value of the magistrates' right of resistance. Giesey's assertion that the sovereignty of the Estates was a fiction of the law and the king did not share sovereignty with anyone represents a mistaken premise for drawing the conclusion that the Estates played little role in the monarchomachs' theory of resistance: their entire scheme was a direct attack against the monarchy and, thus, the attitude of the monarchy was not a relevant hurdle. The Estates' sovereignty was to be imposed on the (likely unwilling) king and this was what the proponents of the Estates sought to do in practice – and the Estates from 1588 came quite close to achieving this goal. What made the Huguenots lose interest in the institution was the fact that the Estates General was used by their enemies, the Catholic League, as a tool to dominate the king and force him into a war against the Protestants – not the alleged inefficiency of the assembly.

The Estates General may not have been an effective counterweight to the monarchy at the time, but that represented, in the opinion of their proponents, the result of the corruption of the original French constitution and something which the monarchomachs sought to fix. Just like Hotman, but

much more briefly, Beza also made reference to a more exalted position which the Estates enjoyed in the past, by claiming that the Gallic kings from before the Roman conquest were subject to some kind of popular assemblies and the first French kings were also elected by the Estates, which had the right of deposition as well (Bèze 1970, 39-41). Another similarity between Hotman and Beza is that both of them envision a broader role for the Estates than merely restraining or deposing a tyrannical king: in Beza's opinion, the Estates had the authority to appoint and depose the principal officers of the Crown – or at least supervise the king's appointments –, impose taxes, deal with the main affairs of government in times of peace or war and, if the king was a minor, to decide on a regency (Bèze 1970, 41-42). Beza acknowledged that the Estates no longer exercised such kind of powers, due to the machinations of kings such as Louis XI, who turned the French monarchy into a tyranny (Bèze 1970, 42). But such alterations represented a grave breach of faith from the king, since he was held by his coronation oath to preserve the privileges and ancient customs of France. More so, depriving the Estates General of its lawful authority was, according to Beza, contrary to the fundamental laws of the realm and the good of the kingdom required the restoration of the rights of the Estates. The fact that, in Beza's scheme, the lesser magistrates could not permanently function alone as a bulwark against tyranny could not be stated more clearly when the author pointed out that the Estates should intervene with its power, when and where lesser magistrates could not exceed the limits of their authority (Bèze 1970, 47). If the magistrates' task was to oppose flagrant tyranny, only the Estates could punish the tyrannical king: this represented for Beza a fundamental and permanent right of the Estates, which could not be lost by prescription of time (Bèze 1970, 50). And, if the king tried to prevent the assembling of the Estates General, it was the duty of the inferior magistrates to join together and press for its convocation (Bèze 1970, 53).

Julian Franklin argued that the constitutionalist bend of the monarchomachs and their insistence on lawful procedures "simply intended to prevent the excesses of democracy and to

protect the Huguenots from the charge of general subversion of the social order", but they were not understood as a serious bar to resistance in the existing circumstances (Franklin 1973, 46). The restraint displayed in this regard by the Huguenot writers was certainly wise, as it was clearly proved during the last phase of the Wars of Religion, when the excessive radicalism of the Catholic League alienated most of the French society and led to the collapse of their cause. And the moderation of the Huguenots served them well immediately after 1572, when they made common cause with Catholic potentates such as the king's own brother, François d'Alençon, and the governor of Languedoc, Henry of Damville-Montmorency. The two were the most prominent personalities among a Catholic faction which emerged in 1573-1574, known as "les malcontents", and which seemed to share many of the Huguenots' goals. Their proclaimed purpose was the defence of the "public good", which they considered threatened by the evolution of the monarchy, and, in order to achieve it, it was essential to restore the effectiveness of the institutions charged with stopping the slide towards tyranny: the Council and the Estates General, which had to assemble on a regular basis (Jouanna 2007, 269). There was, though, a significant difference between the political thought of the "malcontents" and that of the Huguenots: the former advocated more of a mixed monarchy rather than the full sovereignty of the Estates General supported by the Protestants, envisioning the government of the realm as shared, in a collaborative relationship, between the Estates, the Council and the king (Jouanna 2009, 504-505).

One of the demands of both the Huguenots and the "malcontents" was, again, the convocation of the Estates General, and the political struggle was accompanied once more by ideological arguments, such as those expressed in *Réveille-matin des François*, another tract in favour of resistance. The *Réveille-matin* proclaimed Hotman's book to be explicit proof of the rightful sovereignty of the Estates, which could not be nullified by prescription, and it was upon them that the election and authority of a king depended (Salmon 2002, 126). And the *Réveille-matin* was not the only such work published at that exact moment: another was Pierre Fabre's pamphlet *Response à*

Ia question à savoir s'il est loisible au peuple et à la noblesse de résister par armes, which reiterated Hotman's idealization of the ancient French constitution and placed its hopes in balancing the royal power with the authority of the Estates (Yardeni 1971, 149-153). The confrontation between the monarchy and the alliance of Huguenots and moderate Catholics reached its peak after September 1575, when the Duke d'Alençon managed to escape from the confinement Henry III was keeping him under and joined the rebel faction. Alençon issued a proclamation which called for a general religious peace until a church council could settle the religious differences, and for the convocation of the Estates General in order to establish law and order in the kingdom (Holt 1986, 52). The king was forced to yield in face of this powerful coalition of Huguenots and moderate Catholics and granted the former, by the Edict of Beaulieu, what basically amounted to the greatest degree of religious toleration up to that date. The only thing left was the ratification of the edict in the Estates General, as the Huguenots had envisioned in order to bypass the opposition of the Parlements – but that was to prove the Edict's undoing.

Despite their apparent fascination with the Estates General and the conviction that the institution could prove to be an instrument for the reform of the kingdom, limiting royal power and ensuring the rights of the subjects, in particular the Protestants, the Huguenot theory had serious weaknesses, some which were correctly inferred by the monarchomachs themselves. In the opinion of Arlette Jouanna, the lack of precision on such essential issues, such as the periodicity of the Estates, reveals a secret reluctance to rely too much on the Estates, because, for them, the ideal of a sovereign bound by precise regulations was the outcome of a tragic deterioration of the traditional political order (Jouanna 2007, 263). But for the Huguenots, the idea of the Estates General as an agent of resistance proved to be a failure for much more concrete reasons: basically, the radical Catholics appropriated the respective theory for their own purpose and turned it against the Huguenots themselves. As previously mentioned, in the spring of 1576, the Huguenots had managed to extract from the weakened monarchy, with the support of moderate Catholics,

the greatest concessions to date, by the Edict of Beaulieu – and they had done so without having to rely on an Estates General. In fact, it was precisely the Estates the reason why that peace was short-lived and the Edict of Beaulieu cancelled: while the Huguenots had repeatedly asked for the convocation of the Estates in order to find a solution to the civil wars and establish a policy of toleration throughout France, the assembly gathered at Blois at the end of 1576 was overwhelmingly dominated by Catholics, many of them hardliners. The latter's preponderance ensured that there was unanimous pressure for action to permit only the exercise of Catholicism in the kingdom, even though there was significant dissension about the best ways to achieve this end, as a new war against the Huguenots would have required significant financial resources, which a deeply indebted Crown did not possess (Carroll 1998, 168). Basically, in the words of Arlette Jouanna, this represented "the destruction of the hopes held by the Huguenots and the moderate Catholics", as they had to consider, with such clear evidence right in front of them, that the Estates General could also be hijacked by the partisans of religious intransigence and it could also be subject to manipulations even more dangerous than those a king was exposed to from the alleged evil advisers (Jouanna 2007, 296). This certainly seemed to be the case in 1576, when the Protestants, despite still being a significant minority in France, had practically no representation in the Estates General held at Blois, something which they blamed on Catholic pressure or manipulation.

The events at Blois from 1576-1577 proved to be a decisive blow to the notion of the Estates General as a constitutional mechanism of restraining and controlling the monarchy – at least as far as the Huguenots were concerned. This was clearly visible in the last of the main Monarchomach treatises of the 1570s, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, published in 1579. In this case, Giesey's contention that the Estates played little role as an actual agent of resistance has significantly more merit. *Vindiciae* accepted the extravagant historical role which Hotman had attributed to the Estates, claiming it had met annually and "sometime later at least as often as necessity required", that it "issued decrees in public about matters

concerning the commonwealth", that its authority "was always so great that whatever was decreed in it would be considered sacrosanct, whether making peace or waging war, whether bestowing the regency of the kingdom on someone or ordering a tax" and could even depose kings or entire dynasties (Brutus, p. 86). But, besides this deferential nod to the alleged glorious past of the Estates, the anonymous author had very little to say about the Estates' role in the actual resistance against a tyrant, except for a few brief remarks based on examples from French history about the institution having possessed legislative power (Brutus 2003, 103) and the right to give or deny consent to extraordinary taxes (Brutus 2003, 118). A tyrant might "dread the assembly of the Estates", as the author asserted, but *Vindiciae*'s lack of concern about its specific role is conspicuous: the officers of the Crown retained their role as the main agents of resistance which they were granted by the preceding monarchomachs, but the Estates General was ignored to a significant extent. Even its role as the ultimate repository of the sovereignty, which Hotman and Beza insisted so much upon, was rather brushed off. By declaring that a tyrant was "guilty of high treason against the kingdom or the Empire" and "a rebel" deserving of punishment according to the law, *Vindiciae* only reiterated the axiom already proposed by the previous monarchomachs: but the superior who was supposed to deliver the punishment was – and here the anonymous author quotes the opinion of Bartolus –, the people "or those who represent it – the electors, palatines, patricians, the assembly of the Estates, and the rest" (Brutus 2003, 156). The right to depose the king was the ultimate manifestation of the supreme sovereignty in the works of Hotman and Beza, and it was granted exclusively to the Estates – but that was no longer the case in *Vindiciae*.

4. Conclusions

The demise of Huguenots' hopes in the Estates General did not mean the end of the attempts to make the institution an instrument for controlling and overseeing the monarchy. While the Huguenots' enthusiasm for the Estates was cooling down and they were starting once again to pin their hopes on the

monarchy imposing a favourable compromise, the radical Catholics started to see the Estates as a bastion of resistance against a king which they regarded as weak on heresy. In 1576, while the Estates called for the cancelling of the Edict of Beaulieu and the restoration of religious uniformity, it also proposed that twelve members of each Estate should join with twenty-four royal councillors to constitute a council of sixty, with the authority to legislate as mandated by the Estates, and whose laws and ordinances could have been revoked only by another assembly of the Estates General (Lloyd 1983, 138). Even more radical demands were advanced during the Estates of 1588, also held at Blois, at a moment when the relationship between the Catholic League and Henry III was reaching its lowest point. But what further compromised the idea of the Estates General as a sovereign assembly was its association with the popular violence and the radicalism of the Catholic League, which, after the death of Henry III in 1589, was willing to endanger the national identity of France in order to avoid recognizing Henry of Navarre as king. In addition, certain factions of the League, the Parisian group known as the *Seize* chief among them, were attacking the social structure of France, shifting their criticism from the unworthy king towards an aristocracy which they regarded as incapable or unwilling to defend the Catholic faith – an attitude which undoubtedly determined many moderates to abandon the cause of the League. The Huguenot monarchomachs likely suspected the danger – hence their focus on constitutional methods of resistance and their rejection of popular violence, which allowed them to make common cause with the moderate Catholic faction of the *malcontents*, equally attracted by the possibility of a constitutionally-restrained monarchy. While many such Catholics would have undoubtedly preferred that the Huguenots returned to the Catholic fold and that France achieved once again religious unity, they came to the conclusion that the forceful repression of the Protestants was impossible, at least not without causing irreparable damage to the French polity: thus, for them, political issues came to have precedence over religious considerations. Alfred Soman argued that, in France, at least, the constitutional movement centering on the

Estates General came to be compromised, first by its association with the Huguenots and, later and even more fatally, by its association with the ultra-Catholic, apparently anti-national, and certainly revolutionary movement of the Ligue (Soman 1974, 11).

Despite their completely different goals, there was a certain similarity between the rhetoric of the Huguenots and that of the Catholic League, a similarity which was remarked by their royalist adversaries: certainly, their arguments were not identical, but, as far as the Estates General was concerned, both sides came to regard them as an excellent tool to counter royal policies during the periods when they were at odds with the monarchy. Penny Roberts referred to this situation as an "unexpected point of agreement" between the Huguenots and the League (Roberts 2007, 121); but what is more unexpected, from the perspective of the historian, is the mystique which surrounded the Estates General, despite the fact that, historically, it had never been a *locus* of authority alternative to the monarchy and, as the reality of the civil wars proved it, the institution was ill-prepared for such a role. Had the demands put forward at Blois in 1576 and 1588 been successful, it may well have ushered in a constitutionalist regime in France perhaps similar to that which would emerge in England during the next century. But the unfortunate domination of the Estates of 1588 by the rebellious Catholic League and the attempt of the same League in 1593 to use the Estates in order to bar the accession of Henry IV and proclaim a rival king discredited the institution: both Huguenots and Catholics, with the exception of a few fanatics, abandoned such theories in favour of the new absolutism, seeing a strong monarchy as the best guarantee against the disorders of the civil war.

NOTES

[1] The speech of Philippe Pot is quoted in full in Major 1960, 87-89. Pot's argument, emerging in the context of a power struggle for the control of the government during the minority of Charles VIII, rested on the notion that the throne of France was a dignity, and not a hereditary possession and "it did not pass to the nearest relative in the way in which a patrimony passes to its

natural guardians". There were conflicting opinions within the Estates themselves whether the rule of the kingdom during the king's minority should fall automatically on the princes of the blood or it should devolve to the assembly, who was then to decide the composition of the royal council – and Pot sided firmly with the second opinion. Due to the divisions within the Estates and their inability to make common cause, the attempt to impose the Estates as a deciding factor on the French political stage failed, but, according to Arlette Jouanna, the debates over the matter still had a practical effect, as the councils of Charles VIII and Louis XII included members of all the superior layers of the society and, therefore, were "representative" of the active forces of the country (Jouanna 2009, 144).

[2] Some other assemblies from the interval between 1484 and 1560 had been considered as having been *de facto* Estates General. In his book *Representative Institutions in Renaissance France,* John Russell Major made such a case for an assembly summoned by Henry II on 15 December 1557, after the defeat of Saint-Quentin, assembly which met in Paris at the beginning of the next year: Major's opinion is based on the fact that it was considered an "assembly of the Estates" by its contemporaries and representatives of all three Estates were present (Major 1960, 144-147). Yet, its status remains questionable in historiography, because the procedures involved in its convocation were irregular: for instance, the king asked the towns to send their mayors instead of elected deputies, as it would have happened during a regular Estates General, and members of the first orders were generally individually summoned, not elected; in fact, in a subsequent work, John Russell Major no longer referred to it as an "Estates General", but instead as a "central assembly" (Major 1980, 56).

[3] The theoretical argument used by Calvin in order to justify the seeming contradiction between the duty to obey an authority which was instituted by God and a right to oppose the same authority when it became unjust was based on the notion that all authority was entrusted by God with a mission; but this mission could be betrayed and that was what occurred in case of tyranny (Jouanna 2009, 308-309).

[4] From their inception, the Huguenot arguments had their detractors: one such was Jean du Tillet, who regarded the demand for a regency under the princes of the blood and a meeting of the Estates General as "rebellious", because, in his opinion, the Estates was merely a consultative institution, not a sovereign one (Kelley 1970, 224-225). Tillet's claim was going to become the central tenet of the royalist theorists, who continued the push towards absolutism initiated during Francis I and Henry II and denied the Estates any power to control or censor the king and his policies. Right from the beginning of the Estates General of Orléans, while the deputies were preparing to put forward claims which would have made the institution another locus of sovereignty in competition or even superior to the monarchy, the Chancellor Michel de l'Hôpital stated what was the standard position of the Crown and of the royalist theorists, namely that the Estates had only an advisory role (Franklin 1973, 21).

[5] The question of *Vindiciae*'s authorship had not been definitively settled yet; while Philippe Duplessis-Mornay seems the likely author, there is still a level

of doubt, sufficient to make certain scholars, like George Garnett in his modern edition of *Vindiciae*, hesitate about the matter.

[6] For an elaborate analysis of Hotman's reliance on historical fiction to construct an argument for a limited monarchy and in favour the Estates General as an institution possessing of sovereignty, see Sălăvăstru (2017, 27-42).

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The challenge of bad infinity: A restatement of Hegel's critique of mathematics

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Abstract

Hegel's critique of mathematics cannot be reduced to mathematics alone. At least this is the stake of the present paper: to argue that a comprehensive understanding of the matter cannot be confined strictly to the philosophy of science. Indeed, Hegel's philosophy of mathematics pervades his entire ontology and, within the system, his political philosophy. Starting with Hegel's logic, the article advances towards the fact that Hegel did not reject mathematics in itself, nor he denied the incalculable merits of exact sciences made possible by applied mathematics. What he considered risky regarding mathematics was its revindication of the explanation of movement to the disadvantage of philosophy. Hence, the possibility of a technocratic world incapable of seeing and going beyond itself.

Keywords: quantity, quality, becoming, mechanism, true infinity

Introduction

One of the most underrated and less understood Hegelian philosophical stances is that relating to mathematics. Bertrand Russell, for example, in convinced that 'errors incorporated (…) in what Hegel has to say about mathematics, die hard' (Russell 1920, 107; see also Russell 2010, 290). For Russell, Hegel was nothing more than an obscure and pretentious philosopher that has gravely misjudged the intellectual and civilizational possibilities of modern mathematics without truly comprehending it; instead, Hegel would have done nothing more than to dogmatically force mathematics into his totalizing ontological system without ever ascribing a proper place for it. While the latter may contain a grain of truth, to a certain

extent (Fleischhacker in Petry 1993, 223-224), the former is definitely erroneous.

Hegel's highly abstract and dense prose made his ideas in various epistemological fields difficult to understand, and continue to do so today. However, as Terry Pinkard points out, he was not at all a dilettante with reference to the mathematics of his age (Pinkard 1981, 459-461). Furthermore, 'Hegel had a working knowledge of contemporary mathematical material; he practiced differential and integral calculus and for a time actually taught it. Moreover, he was clearly aware of the questions that had arisen in mathematical practice itself and of their underlying theoretical implications' (Lacroix 2000, 298). Not only that; Hegel also mastered ancient Greek mathematics and geometry and advanced important parallels between modern and Greek mathematics (Moretto in Petry 1993, 164-165). After his death, when his public library was publicly auctioned in 1832, many important works of mathematics, physics, chemistry and optics were found. However, Hegel's own works lead to the conclusion that he had consulted many more books on these topics in order to be able to conceive his philosophy of nature and his philosophy of mathematics (Mense in Petry 1993, 669-710; Bronger in Petry 1993, 711-720).

This paper presents Hegel's critique of mathematics in close connection to his logic. It starts by analyzing Hegel's notions of quantity, quantum and mechanism as exterior abstractions of being that entail the risk of permanent non-dialectical repetition and thus of bad infinity, which in turn is the undesirable premise of bad reality. The second section of the article stresses the importance of notions like quality, consciousness and purpose, and how they relate to the concept of true infinity. Although quality appears, In Hegel's philosophy, prior to quantity, which is just an undetermined abstraction of it, their separation is just a moment on the speculative path of reconciliation: quantity arising from the initial quality of being is, in its isolated exteriority and self-sufficiency, nothing more than blind necessity. Without a proper rational liberty to guide it and make it socially meaningful, quantity cannot ground and construe itself exclusively from itself, thus being bound to err. As a prominent

quantitative science, mathematics cannot extract its basic principles only from itself: it needs an otherness in order to understand itself as part of the greater allness (Lacroix 2000, 312; Fleischhacker in Petry 1993, 212-215).

Next, the third section is centered strictly on Hegel's approach to mathematics, which he rejects not integrally, but only when it tries to replace philosophy and offer its own, separate understanding of movement. But mathematics, as any quantitative science, cannot perceive movement in its dialectical complexity. Therefore, there is an almost unavoidable risk that mathematics, left uncheck by an adequate qualitative purpose, will resort to treat movement as a pure repetition of identical ones (Posch 2004, 7-9). Consequently, bad infinity will take over true infinity and the world as a phenomenological progression of spirit will be compromised.

Finally, the conclusions section summarizes the whole discussion: mathematics without philosophy is quantity without quality, intellect without reason, necessity without liberty. However, beyond the arguments advanced by the above quoted authors, which are confined, in general, to the philosophy of science, my article implies that Hegel's critique of mathematics is more than scientific: in certain respects, it is intrinsically political.

Quantity, quantum and mechanism: the challenge of bad infinity

Hegel's *Science of Logic* starts from a basic assumption: it is impossible to ground philosophy as being's understanding of itself from a certain principle. Whatever that might be, it is false. Philosophy is first of all movement, dynamics, not a static reality. Therefore, all these principles (substance, water, one, idea, monad etc.) are nothing more than moments of a larger and superior process, the process of becoming (Hegel 2010; Hegel 2015). But this process becomes aware of itself by understanding its limitations and mediations inside the web of existence. It follows that the simple thought represents the first form of consciousness; in this way, quantity as pure

unconscious agglomeration of numbers, of single identities non-differentiated in themselves – gives birth, from itself, to quality (Hegel 1986a, 6-9). In itself, as series that made the repetition of numbered manifolds possible, quantity already contained quality as potentiality (Lacroix 2000, 305).

But quantity is not so easily overcome. Even if for Hegel matter is only an abstraction (Hegel 1978) that thinking treats dialectically (Hegel 2006) and therefore molds it in various ways and, through universalization, places material reality to the coordinates of spirit (Hegel 2014) – quantity's utmost importance should not be overlooked. After all, quality is nothing more than the dialectization of different quantities; quality is therefore immanent to quantity and represents the possibility of the latter to acknowledge and make adequate use of the differences that arise from itself (Lacroix 2000, 304; see also Hegel 1971, 2014).

As the realm of the numerical, quantity is therefore primary perceivable trough simple identities indifferent to one another: numbers. Up to this point, this is a truism; however, Hegel's philosophy of numbers as incomplete thoughts and 'enigmas' is not tantamount to his understanding of quantity. True thinking is direct connection with the universal. But number thinking does not signal the universal; a thought number relates only to itself and its material determination and is strikingly indifferent towards difference. Hegel gives us the example of three, which is a simple addition of three by one, each of the ones being irresponsive towards the other ones. In other words, one is just 'discontinuity', the 'pure negative' (Hegel 1970; see also Hegel 2010, 148; Hegel 2015; Hegel 1984, 165-166).

Numbers produce quantity. Even if the seeds of quality are planted inside it as series of identicals waiting to be made aware of their limitations, this prospective quality is just a possibility, although at a certain point possibility becomes necessity (Hegel 2010). Due to the fact that numbers are indifferent towards one another and towards existence in general, their lack of continuity and procesuality signals the lack of determination in quantity. Better said, quantity is indeterminate in the absence of quality which can make it

aware of this prerequisite of movement. And, for Hegel, the essential problem of philosophy is the always imperfect reconciliation between being and thought (Hegel 1995a); because thinking is dialectics conceived as exteriority about to return to itself from itself, existence in itself is movement. It follows that insufficiently thought existence is quantity, motionless manifolds unaware and totally indifferent with reference to their reciprocal determinations. Quantity thus in itself contradicts the inherent dynamics of existence.

As for quantum, Hegel defines it as something superior to quantity. The reason is that quantum accommodates the series that place numbers in certain continuities, even if numbers still remain unaware of these relations between them. Quantum is thus quantity that repeats itself without the real possibility of transgressing itself: the quality it comprises is therefore insufficient to propel it to sublate into its otherness, true infinity. Quantum is nothing more than bad infinity, an incompatibility which is not to be confounded with dialectical contradictions.

> Number is quantum only as negative *one*, as a determinate aggregate of the *ones* it comprehends within itself; but in these, number does not have a limit either, for as *ones* they are likewise unity, a connection of numerical *ones*. Hence, in that it connects a determinate aggregate – whereby alone it is quantum – number posits itself in fact only as an indeterminate aggregate; for the connected *ones* are indeed a unity that is equal to itself, or not limited; in this way as well [they are] as something limited, equal to what it is not limited. Quantum posits itself as equal to what it excludes from itself, and so in truth it does not exclude it. Insofar as quantum is considered as self-subsisting being from which an other is excluded, to this extent it has (…) positive unity or non-limitation, non-excludedness. Going on beyond the limit *ad infinitum* and dividing inwardly *in infinitum* is one and the same for each, so that the limit and determinacy posited in it is no limit, no determinacy; in quantum the absolute contradiction or infinity is posited (Hegel 1986a, 17; emphasis in original; see also Hegel 2015).

The sensible, phenomenological world is for Hegel the finite world, the world of intellects, of individuals that cannot think beyond their daily pragmatism and perceive contradictions as being absolute, not transitory (Hegel 1988;

Hegel 1977a) – and the world of quantities. Infinity is not the 'beyond' of this world, is not something metaphysical, in other words; infinity is nothing more than the capacity of the finite to differentiate within itself and to move itself in an open, progressive direction (Hegel 2010). Infinity is therefore a concept (Lacroix 2000, 303; Pinkard 1981, 461-464) and the qualitative that allows quantum to go beyond itself while preserving itself as speculative unity between quantity and quality. This is the true infinity. Bad infinity, on the other hand, is just the mechanical repetition of identical ones inside quantum as isolated and self-sufficient entity: the appearance of dialectics, the appearance of progress, the appearance of movement. Hence, bad infinity paves the way for bad reality.

Next, mechanism is a kind of dynamized, phenomenological quantum that possesses no intelligibility in itself, but becomes aware of itself only insofar that is infused with purpose (Hegel 2010). The impossibility of finding its reason in itself can drive mechanism into a relentless repetition of empty identicals that can eventually turn the world into a mechanical abstraction that impedes qualitative change and ultimately political progress.

Quality, consciousness and purpose: the dialectical comeback of true infinity

As previously discussed, quality is a dimension of quantity, not something that lies outside it. However, quality is superior to quantity through its capacity to understand limitations. The potential quality nurtured in its incipiency as differentiation arising from series of numbers that accrue the quantitative is therefore consciousness that became aware of the phenomenological mechanism as negativity awaiting to be superseded into its constitutive other: liberty, spirit, true infinity (Hegel 1986a, 9-12). In itself, mechanism pertains to nature alone (Hegel 1979, 119). But Hegel's philosophy of nature understands this realm of absolute necessity as the otherness of the Idea that is about to be negated in order to be made part of the self-creating spirit (Hegel 2014).

Unlike quantity, which is immune to the mediation, the determinacy of things brought together by the conjunctural shapes of existence – quality is practically born out of mediation (Hegel 2010). This allows it to grasp the absolute as totality of mediations in movement and to understand the wholeness articulated by purpose as the supreme ontological truth (Hegel 1977b).

> In the limit the nothingness of reality and negation is posited, along as their being apart from this nothingness; *in this way quality itself is realized in the limit*; for the limit so expresses the concept of quality as the being *per se* of the determinacies, each on its own account, are posited as indifferent to each other, as subsisting apart from each other. At the same time each, in accordance with its content, express not determinacy in general (as it does in the concept), but rather determinacy as determine, as reality and negation; in other words, with respect to each [each expresses] what would be only in the antithesis or in connection with the other; this connection with the other (being taken back into itself and because as relation it is only external to it [is] now itself posited with respect to it; the one, itself the nothingness of the qualities, the other, their being (Hegel 1986a, 6-7; emphasis in original).

Limit produces consciousness, and consciousness produces purpose. Without purpose, the whole phenomenological mechanism would be inconceivable. Purpose is the concept of mechanism, just as reason is the concept of reality. A combination between existence and essence, the latter amounting to simple reflection of being in itself as idealization, reality is, as we recall, in perpetual movement. As the concept of reality, a potentiality immanent to reality itself that compels it, both in the present and at a historical scale, to better itself according to the forms the spirit possesses and will embrace for different context and generations – reason is the promise of a humanity that would eventually overcome alienation by gradually converting, through meaningful and dignified work, the hostile exteriority of the world, appropriating it as a known and incorporated interiority (Hegel 2010). Nobody knows how this ontological process will unfold; moreover, it is irrelevant and even dangerous to assert predictions in that direction. Hegel himself disregarded these excessive attempts of prospectivity, of trying to map the future

at any cost (d'Hondt 1993) by arguing that every philosophy belongs entirely to its own epoch, serving, conscious or not, the interests of that epoch (Hegel 1995b).

As pair of opposites that exist only through each other, quality and quantity are eventually reconciled in the concept of measure, which is both limit and number. And, being the first moment of being, quality excludes quantity as something different from itself. Measure helps overcome this contradiction by bringing back the previously excluded quantity into the understood and assumed wholeness of being. Mature quality has grown aware of immanent appurtenance to quantity, while negated quantity is posited, on its turn, to a superior level (Hegel 2010; see also Fleischhacker in Petry 1993, 219-220). Measure has thus become the promise of true, dialectical infinity, in a process in which quantity is gradually conveyed into necessity and quality into liberty.

Beyond the surface of things: mathematics as pure abstraction with only phenomenological implications?

Taking into account Hegel's logic and his philosophical approach on quantity and quality, his critique of mathematics becomes less ambiguous. The main point of the philosopher's stance against mathematics can be summed up in this way: mathematical truths are aware only of themselves, while philosophical truths are aware both of themselves and mathematical truths. And of many other truths, coming down to the final truth, the whole. So, mathematical truths are isolated truths and this turns them, into the long term, into errors. Mathematical truths do not grasp the essence, but only the existence of things. And pure existence is, like we have seen, only the negative (Hegel 1977b).

Furthermore, it follows that philosophical knowledge is the consciousness of becoming as totality, as the sum of being, things and their according concepts. But mathematical knowledge, due to its specific object of study, quantity, does not understand movement in this dynamic complexity. It only understands the movement of the thing in itself, which

amounts to bad infinity and its counterpart, bad reality (Hegel 1977b).

Still, Hegel insists that mathematics, within certain limits, is a perfectly valid and useful form of knowledge. However, due to the fact that its intrinsic purpose is extension, mathematics remains anchored in the realm of the quantitative, the bad infinity, because extension is not a real concept, only an iterative process of empty identicals, of numbers. In respect to truths like space and unity, mathematics is, according to Hegel, a valuable science. But reality as movement consists not only of space, but of time as well, and of history as the phenomenological keeper of time. The dialectical process of becoming is nothing more than space being sublated into time (Hegel 2014; Hegel 1986b). Unlike Kant's concepts of space and time, which are reducible to subjective intuition and therefore to intellect (Kant 2008), Hegel understands space and time in a speculative manner which overcomes and also maintains personal experiences while conveying them to the universal.

Notwithstanding, mathematics continues to reduce time to space and unity and to annul real, dialectical movement by confining it to the sterile movement of unities numbered or about to be numbered. Consequently, a form of bad equality arises, one that does not take into account the hierarchical differences existing in reality (phenomenology and spirit, intellect and reason, quantity and quality, necessity and liberty) (Hegel 1977b; see also Posch 2004, 10).

Next, "Applied mathematics orients pure mathematics towards the quantitative relations of nature, which it extracts from experience" (Hegel 1986b, 145). Thus, pure mathematics supersedes itself into empirical sciences like physics and/or mechanics. But, for Hegel, "nothing (…) can be demonstrated from experience" (1984, 257). Just like mathematics, experience cannot ground itself in itself, but only outside itself (Fleischhacker in Petry, 213). It follows that empiricism in general, all positive sciences are, because of their incompleteness, incapable of offering an adequate understanding of reality:

> the completion of a science demands not only that intuition and image be combined with the logical [dimension] and taken up into the purely ideal [realm]; the separate (though genuine) science must also be divested of its singularity (…), and its principle must be recognized in its higher context and necessity and thereby itself be completely freed. Only by this means is it possible to recognize the limits of the science, and without this principle, the science must remain ignorant of its limits, because it would otherwise have to stand above itself and recognize in the absolute form the nature of its principle in its determinacy; for from this knowledge (…), it would directly obtain the knowledge and certainty of the extent to which its various determinacies were equal (Hegel 2004, 103).

Moreover, Hegel does not treat empiricism only as a scientific problem, but also as a historical and ultimately as a political problem. For him, exacerbated empiricism signaled a sort of "blind attachment to historical tradition inconsistent with rational judgment". This may seem counterintuitive since, today, empiricism is associated to critical and scientific openness; for Hegel, however, it meant the exact opposite (Hegel 1984, 138). Starting from this, it is important to keep in mind that, two and three centuries ago, mathematics, physics and philosophy possessed relatively different meanings than they do today, both for Hegel and for Isaac Newton, the father of modern physics. Hegel eagerly pointed out what he considered to be the major flaws and shortcomings of his science, in a language that has puzzled and exact scientists ever since (Fleischhacker in Petry, 218-219).

Finally, empiricism's problems are also philosophical, not only scientific and political. As Fleischhacker rightfully observes,

> In Hegel's view the basic mistake of modern epistemology is that the so-called finite form of knowledge, in which the object is understood as being ultimately determined in itself and therefore distinct from the object as it is known, is taken as the paradigm of knowledge as such. He points out that this has led to Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself, in which the distinction between the object as determined in itself and the object as known, has become an abstract negation. The notion of the thing-in-itself is self-contradictory, for at one and the same time it is both an abstraction without content and the most concrete kind of reality (Fleischhacker in Petry 1993, 215).

Not only that it leads to the Kantian epistemological trap of the thing in itself, thus undermining the capacity of reason to truly infuse and orient reality in an emancipatory way – but empiricism is also bound to incorporate formal and a priori Kantian notions like numbers or space in order to demonstrate what it has set out to demonstrate. But, as Hegel warned us before, a science cannot proceed exclusively from abstract notions in order to validate a certain kind of experience; by doing so, the whole scientific structure is placed on a fragile and self-eroding scaffolding (Hegel 1970; Hegel 2003, 60-62).

Coming back to Newton, Hegel's basic reproach regarding his physics is that he converts mathematical abstractions into "physical actualities" (Lacroix 2000, 323). It is important to understand that Hegel is not against applied mathematics and physics *per se* (Hegel 1986a, 14), but only to the extent they aim, consciously or rather not, to confiscate the concept of movement from philosophy and to present it in pure mechanical, repetitive terms.

> Hegel, far from opposing the application of mathematics – more specifically: of analysis – to mechanics, did have a certain idea of this application. This idea can be characterized as follows: experimental physics should examine the motions (and other changes of state) of bodies under certain idealized conditions. Incidentally, Hegel does not stress the aspect of idealization very much, he rather stresses the necessity of making experiments without doing too much violence to nature (...). Now the motions thus examined by experimental physics should *not be explained* by any comprehensive theory; least of all should *forces* be introduced into the scientific description as explanatory principles, such that different phenomena would be derived from one basic set of concepts (e.g. space – time – mass – force or e.g. space – time – mass – energy). The latter task should be reserved to philosophy, since there is – according to Hegel – nothing between "the empirical" on the one hand and "philosophical theory" on the other hand. If it is not reserved to philosophy, and more specifically to a dialectical system of philosophy, some sort of a mechanistic worldview will inevitably result (Posch 2004, 9).

As previously noted, Hegel stressed out without any ambivalence the superiority of philosophy in respect to exact sciences, and in particular to mathematics, mainly for this

specific reason: the plenary understanding of movement belongs to philosophy alone and cannot be encroached on by exact sciences. Is it possible for Hegel's assumption to be more meaningful for the world we live in today than for the world he was contemporary with?

Before reaching the conclusion section, it is important to mention once again that Hegel does not reject mathematics and the exact sciences uncritically, but only to the extent they can and are willing to substitute themselves for philosophy. Undoubtedly, Hegel did not disdain the applications of mathematics and physics in the technical advancement of modernity and the colossal improvement of everyone's life in this ongoing process; on the contrary, he welcomed them as a new stage in the advancement of world spirit. Furthermore, Hegel would have probably been enthusiastic about submarines, airplanes, man's exploration of cosmic space, computers, internet and so on. All of these would have been impossible in the absence of applied mathematics, physics and mechanics, and all of them are now part of humanity's collective treasure. What he did not welcome and intuited, to a certain point, was, as Thomas Posch presented in the quote above, the danger of a self-sufficient technological world in which philosophy is reduced to a less and less relevant form of guilty consciousness. Could that be the world we live in today, the world of neoliberal technocracy and free market fundamentalism? Could it be, as stated in the introduction section, that Hegel's critique of mathematics is ultimately political?

Conclusion: mechanical necessity subsumed to teleological liberty, despite the contemporary mechanization of the world

For Hegel, every aspect of reality is fungible in historical and eventually political terms. This happens because spirit is not a mystic, extra-mundane notion, but communities and societies understanding themselves in ever more integrative ways, both in themselves as to one another. Dialectical becoming rests on the expansion of political consciousness: only well-organized

states can nurture the progression of spirit, and can do so only if they are authentically backed by their citizens.

It follows that teleological purpose, the rational dynamic of history that drives the phenomenological mechanism in its own pace, without having to hurry (Hegel 1995b) – depends on a philosophy that has political underpinnings. If in Hegel's times and today as well states can be considered, despite their enormous shortcomings, crimes and errors – "God's walk through history" (Hegel 2003, 275-281), no one can say precisely if this will still be the case in the future centuries. After all, Hegel often told his students that "the world spirit might take forms never contemplated in the system" (Hegel 1984, 53, 99, 337, 540).

We have seen how Hegel questioned mathematical truths, considering them unable to overcome their quantitative condition and depending on exterior references for their grounding. Starting from here, we can place Posch's finding of a "mechanistic worldview" (Posch 2004, 9) arising from philosophy being pushed gradually aside in favor of mathematics and physics with reference to the interpretation of movement – in a new perspective.

Hegel made it rather clear, as a gymnasium director in Heidelberg, that classical studies were underrepresented in relation with other disciplines, among which arithmetic, algebra, geometry and physiography (consisting in cosmography, natural history and physics) were held into high esteem (Hegel 1961, 330). Moreover, "It has been said that activity of mind can be trained on any material, but best of all by external, useful, and visible objects which are supposed to be most appropriate to the age of youth or childhood, since they pertain to the compass and manner of mental development peculiar to this age" (Hegel 1961, 325). Hegel was therefore subtlely implying that classical studies, Greek culture, history and mythology, followed by Latin language, were more appropriate disciplines to be taught to children than exact sciences. This is not to say that exact sciences should have been omitted altogether from the curricula; they simply needed to be placed on a secondary position with reference to classical studies because classical studies are one of the most important

elements the state has at its disposal for fostering future citizens with a proper political conscience. After all, "the highest form of ethical (political, m.n.) life" lies "in the life of a well-ordered state" (Hegel 2009, 23; see also Hegel 2003, 196).

Proper educated citizens are able to distinguish between quantities and qualities and to grasp the dangers of the "mechanization" of a world in which philosophy is no longer important. One could add that this process of mechanization started in the 18th century, decades before Hegel was born. Liberal "governmentalization", as Michel Foucault calls it, coupled with the rise of biopolitics (Foucault 2010; Foucault 2009; Foucault 2003) and modern statistics as a form of the modern power/knowledge discourse – signaled from the beginning a relentless need of modern states to streamline the administration of their populations and territories trough the newest quantitative techniques available (Scott 1998). Moving on to the 20th century, Herbert Marcuse denounced the automatization of Western consumerist societies and the powerful contradictions it creates, along with a sentiment of permanent frustration and anger (Marcuse 2007). Finally, Martin Heidegger criticized the self-destruction of the modern man that tries to produce itself through technics and therefore is irremediably bound to fail (Heidegger 2013).

Furthermore, liberal and neoliberal governmentality, in which the political dimension existent in classical liberalism is quantified by being subsumed to economics, a science understood by neoliberals as being mathematically precise, not in political terms that risk configuring possible alternatives to the existent hegemonic discourse – depends on the ideology of the free market, an ideology which neoliberalism transforms into pure fundamentalism. And when, consequently, politics becomes an annex of the free market, the mechanization of the world is finally complete. As James Scott pertinently observes, "A market necessarily reduces quality to quantity via the price mechanism and promotes standardization; in markets, money talks, not people. Today, global capitalism is perhaps the most powerful force for homogenization, whereas the state may in some instances be the defender of local difference and variety" (Scott 1998, 8). By imposing market quantification as the only

solution to the problems confronting modern societies, neoliberal capitalism has taken away politics from citizens and converted it into the presumably exact science of economics. However, as any quantity is nothing more than a former quality that has been reified (Hegel 2010), so too the market was, at the beginning, a superior form of emancipation in comparison to the so called divine monarchies and the whole feudal system.

But this "scientification" of politics as a means controlling and finally eliminating any real political debate is not new. Marxists have brilliantly exposed it from the middle of the 19th century. Many decades after, communist regimes ended up by creating their own forms of political "scientification" (like scientific Marxism and so on), which turned out to be even more oppressive than the original model. Communist technocrats were inspired by liberal technocrats, just as neoliberal technocrats are inspired, although indirectly, by communist technocrats. Communist technocrats were able to maintain long enough authoritarian political systems that repressed both market and democracy; neoliberal technocrats seemed to be inspired by their capacities and it is very possible that they aim to create new forms of political authoritarianism that are better in protecting market interests than the drifting liberal democracies of nowadays.

What would have Hegel said about this? While he would have certainly not agreed with Foucault's analyses of the state as mechanism of institutionalized oppression and neither with Heidegger's general skepticism towards modernity – he would nevertheless question the implicit influences of mathematics and physics upon contemporary neoliberal capitalism. It is worth mentioning that Hegel himself criticized the free market and the poverty it so constantly produces, looking towards the state in order to contain and diminish it as much as possible (Hegel 2003, 264-268; see also Buchwalter 2015).

Even if he constantly wars about the dangers of revolution, equated in his political philosophy with a rapture between particularity and reason, the universal (Hegel 2004, 269-270; Hegel 1984, 669-670), – when states have utmost failed to accomplish their fundamental mission of protecting and expanding civil liberties, Hegel ultimately concedes citizens

the right to revolt (Hegel 2011). In the last instance, philosophy cannot exist and prosper in the absence of political liberty (Hegel 1995b).

But what kind of philosophical and political liberties are possible in a mechanized world, a world which objectified man pretending to have set him free from the web of religious propaganda? What kind of liberties are possible in a world that converts qualities into quantities in order to function according to its own internal logic? What kind of liberties are possible in a world where mechanism has apparently triumphed over purpose, and necessity upon dialectical freedom? Be that as it is, Hegel's historical optimism is impossible to overcome. People are feeling more and more alienated with respect to this particular *status-quo*; the new generations are not satisfied with the answers given by older generations. They have to come up with their own (Hegel 1995a). Here lies the promise of a future non-mechanized world, a world in which technics will return to being an instrument of man and not, as Marx would have said, its false consciousness or better yet, in Hegelian terms, its impossible consciousness. A world in which mathematics would once again accept the guidance and superiority of philosophy.

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Possibility and Radical Understanding

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Abstract

In this text, I connect the concept of existence worked out by Heidegger with the concepts of radical understanding. Under this concept I mean the idea that existence is the *radical* (that is, minimal, unavoidable) content of every understanding. The fact that according to Heidegger existence *is* understanding is then explained through their common structure: existence is possibility as well as understanding is directed prominently to possibility. But, as it is shown through wider references to ancient as well as to some contemporary discussions, possibility introduces in the structure of existence a certain incommensurability: that is why existence can never be reduced to a positive, actual reality, but is always "something more" than actuality.

Keywords: understanding, existence, possibility, hermeneutics, incommensurability

1. Understanding, Existence, Possibility

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger characterizes the understanding as a form of knowledge that is addressed to possibilities: "Why does understanding always penetrates into possibilities according to all the essential dimensions of what can be disclosed to it?" (Heidegger 2010, 136). According to Heidegger, this peculiarity of the understanding – which never remains at what is immediately given, but always goes beyond this immediacy – testifies its constitutive link with existence: the answer to the previous question is in fact that "the understanding in itself has the existential structure which we call *project*" (Heidegger 2010, 136). If understanding grasps

possibilities, this is due to the fact that existence, as the root of understanding itself, *is* in its turn possibility.

In this essay, I will try to justify this very fundamental theorem of Heideggerian existential analysis from two points of view: the former is properly hermeneutical, since it concerns the process itself of understanding, its *nuclear* content, in the phenomenon of what I call "radical understanding"; the latter is more ontological, and concerns the *radical* structure of the existence, as it anyway emerges still in the phenomenon of radical understanding. The goal of this analysis is to uphold the central role that possibility has in Heidegger's ontology as a common *root*, I would say, of both existence and understanding. In my theoretical approach to this question this claim is a further confirmation of the idea, which I developed in a more detailed way in other writings[1], that the dynamical ontology of philosophical hermeneutics is a far consequence of Plato's revision of the Parmenidean ontology, as a result of the discussion about the discovery of the incommensurable magnitudes in the Ancient Greece.[2]

2. Non-Understandability and Existence

We start with a purely hermeneutical problem. In the tradition of hermeneutics it has been always stressed that the starting point of every hermeneutical phenomenon is a certain negative experience: an experience of misunderstanding or, furthermore, of non-understanding. Hermeneutics practice begins indeed in presence of *loci obscuri*, which prevent or obstruct the understanding, and require an interpretative work, through which we try to restore, reconstruct or better understand the meaning of a speech or of a text. In these cases, we are anyway provided with a semantic horizon – other sentences of the text – which furnishes a guiding line of the requested interpretation.
But let's imagine a more radical situation, in which absolutely nothing is understandable and no meaning accessible. We can imagine, for instance, to be in face of a product of an alien intelligence, whose language, culture, writing, is for us completely unknown.[3] So far as it can appear like science fiction, such a situation is in reality more terrestrial than we

think. It is, indeed, what normally happens when we deal with vanished civilizations, that is, with signs that attest to something, although nobody knows exactly what. This situation would therefore be far more difficult than the situation of the ethnologist who, in Quine's famous example, meets with a native, with whose civilization nobody ever had any contact before (Quine 1960; Quine 1969). It would be more difficult because she could not interact with her interlocutor in order to find in his behavior the confirmation or the non-confirmation of her suppositions; she could not rely, consequently, on any 'stimulus meaning' in order to reconstruct the native's language.

Hieroglyphics – a writing for a long time completely unknown and object of many speculations – was deciphered only after the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, that is when *other* well-known *writings* have taken the place of the native interlocutor. In our radical example, however, we are dealing with a writing for which there is, and presumably can be, no translation. Nonetheless, even undeciphered, hieroglyphs were for us legitimately a writing, just like other writings, not deciphered yet, as for instance the Olmec or the Rongorongo: in them, we do not simply see sensible data (blobs of colors, scratches, incisions), but rather symbols, however meaningless. We can then conclude that a non-understandable writing is eventually understood at least as *writing*: this is the central idea of what I call 'radical understanding.' This expression recalls evidently Quine's 'radical translation' and Davidson's 'radical interpretation' (Davidson 2001), with which it has in common the same attempt to go to the roots, so to say, of translation, interpretation or understanding. It denotes a radical situation of understanding or an extreme case of indecipherability, in which a necessary presupposition of every understanding emerges. By fact, what we implicitly understand in this case is the condition of possibility of the writing, that is its relation, not to objects or to a world, but to a 'subject,' to an intelligence that produced it. Writing tells us in this case nothing about objects or a world, but only shows itself as a product of an intelligence. The feature of a non-understandable writing, then, is the fact that it can operate a sort of *epoché*,

reducing this way its message to a pure formal content, we can eventually say, to its transcendental form, to its condition of possibility. By showing itself as the product of an intelligence, writing shows that somewhere an intelligence *exists* or *has existed*. What an alien or a vanished culture still communicate to us (and this is the deepest experience of the historian), what they give us to understand through their remnants or their incomprehensible writings, then, is the fact that *someone is or were there*. This is the minimal or radical content of every understanding.

3. Text and Ontology

Twentieth-century hermeneutics has brought to light this minimal or radical content of understanding, following a path where the methodological question about the possibility of understanding becomes, for internal and transcendental reasons, the question about the ontological conditions of the possibility of sense. The Heideggerian interest in the *formal* conditions of understanding is similar to Kant's investigation about knowledge: but whereas Kant asks about the conditions of possibility of knowledge, Heidegger asks about the conditions of possibility of sense. The main question of *Being and Time*, "which is the sense of Being in general?", implies, indeed, the question "which is the condition of possibility of sense in general?". And whereas Kant finds the requested condition of possibility of knowledge in the transcendental subject, Heidegger finds the condition of possibility of sense in the *Dasein*, as that being in which the possibility of understanding, that is, of sense lies. This structure allows speaking of *Being and Time* as a 'critique of the hermeneutical reason,' inasmuch it pursue a project formally similar to that of the Kantian First *Critique*.

Methodologically, the way Heidegger operates in this project shows another difference in comparison to Kant: it is in fact more similar to the Husserlian phenomenological method, or to the Cartesian method of doubt. Indeed, it implies an *epoché* (phenomenologically represented by anxiety – Heidegger 2010, § 40) of every meaning, the goal of which is to let emerge

(in a literal meaning of the word 'e-vidence'), what still remains understandable, when nothing else is understandable, that is, when every determinate meaning disappears. It is therefore possible to establish an analogy between the existential analysis and the several grades of the text's decipherability: the passage from inauthentic to authentic existence can be read as a passage from the semantic (radical interpretation) or syntactic (radical translation) level to the ontological one (radical understanding).

By understanding a text, it is a question at a first level, of understanding *what* the text says, i.e. of making its meanings explicit; this level corresponds to the inauthentic existence, in which, as Heidegger says, *Dasein* is by the world, by the objects as 'meanings' of its intentional behaviors. Interpretation still moves in this case in an *obvious* and *everyday* understanding of the text, supported by a shared background of common sense. Interpretation in this case aims as much as possible at the optimization of the agreement between the interlocutors, or between the text and the reader, involving their whole respective linguistic system (their common syntax and semantic), their beliefs and the presupposed ontology (a task pursued by Quine's radical translation and Davidson's radical interpretation).

The phenomenon of anxiety opens, according to Heidegger, another form of understanding, in which all the semantic and syntactic assurances of the world disappear, and every meaning is suspended or bracketed. "Nothing of that which is at hand and objectively present within the world, functions as what *Angst* is anxious about. The totality of relevance discovered within the world of things at hand and objectively present is completely without importance. It collapses. The world has the character of complete insignificance. In *Angst* we do not encounter this or that thing which, as threatening, could be relevant" (Heidegger 2010, 174). At the level of the text, this corresponds to the experience of a total indecipherability, which lets a text appear as such, as something *potentially* understandable. What 'remains' in this case is the very condition of the possibility of sense, that is the existence. We can therefore say that *understanding*, in its

minimal, *radical*, degree, consists of understanding an existence. Even in the most complete senselessness – the case of an indecipherable text, of an unknown language, even the case of the rambling speech such as the speech of the delirium or of the madness – a *minimum* of understanding is nonetheless always involved, given the fact that we are dealing with a writing or a speech that refers to an existence. I define this level *ontological* or *of radical understanding*: at the bottom of every semantic and every syntax – and thus of every possibility of sense – there is the existence. It emphasizes the fact that in every understanding there is an ineradicable moment, an understood – the existence – that cannot *not* be understood by an intelligent being (it must be able to accompany every understanding[4]).

We can consider Heidegger's ontological turn in the history of hermeneutics as a recognition that the formal condition of the possibility of understanding is at the same time the minimum, radical content of every understanding, or, in other words, as nothing but the explication of the deep sense of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* and of the Kantian transcendental deduction. According to Heidegger, Descartes, in its 'radical' beginning" of giving philosophy "a new and secure foundation", left undermined "the manner of being of the *res cogitans,* more precisely, the *meaning of being of the 'sum"* (Heidegger 2010, 21). 'Radical understanding' lets emerge this meaning of the *sum*, which cannot anymore be conceived as a substance, as a *res*, but as something instable and contingent.

Notwithstanding some formal analogies in the method, as we suggested in the previous paragraph, this operation pushes hermeneutics beyond every phenomenology: in fact, if phenomenology begins with an *epoché* of the existence, in order to retain only the essences, hermeneutics infringes systematically this phenomenological closure. Its very 'object' is not the essence, the *eidos*, resulting from an *epoché* of existence, but just the existence. The hermeneutical approach to the ontological problem of the sense of Being appears like the 'negative' of the phenomenological approach to knowledge: it is not a matter of extracting the essences, in their giveness or actuality, from our experience, but of letting emerge the

existence in its facticity, which, for Heidegger, means its possibility; or, better, *as* possibility.

The radical understanding does not rest at perception, for which a non-understandable writing appears merely as a material thing, as a stone, a paper, a set of colors; in the radical understanding, we are instead pushed beyond the phenomenon to its condition of possibility, that is to an existence. From a phenomenological point of view, existence is the actuality of the phenomenon in perception; for hermeneutics, existence is given – that is: understood – as possibility. If existence were the mere presence of the object to perception, there would be no possibility to infer the existence of a *Dasein* as a condition of possibility of writing. That is: there would be no writing at all, but only perception; no meanings, but only sensible data; no world, but only facts, no time or history, but only presence. The most general approach to existence, then, is not perception, but understanding, and just because understanding has the capability to transcend the mere presence and to grasp the existence in its possibility; even more: *as* possibility, as something that is, but that can also disappear, that can not-be. I call then "radical understanding" the understanding of an existence as condition of possibility of the sense in general, when the sense itself disappears and even the existence is understood as a mere possibility, as that condition, which is no longer there. The result of this understanding is the comprehension of existence in a dynamic, that is, temporal way.

4. The Homeomorphism between Understanding and Existence

By considering the phenomenon not as full presence but as a trace, not as a speech but as a writing – in other words: as always undermined by a difference, by a reference to something other, to an absence[5] –, hermeneutics entails then a completely different understanding of existence. As object of perception, existence would be a mere presence, an actuality, a simple fact; as object of understanding, existence implies on the contrary a reference to an absence, to a 'lack', or, to see it from another point of view, to something 'more' than the mere presence or

facticity. It is in this sense that *Dasein*, according to Heidegger, is "constantly 'more' than it actually is" (Heidegger 2010, 136). This 'more' – which from the point of view of the mere presence, of what is 'ready-to-hand', appears as a lack – constitutes it as possibility. *Dasein* is always "ahead of itself," it cannot quiet in any final actuality. "As projecting, understanding is the mode of being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities" (Heidegger 2010, 136).

Understanding and existence have then the same structure. Indeed, understanding involves a relation to something absent, which is not immediately given, be it the object or, as it is particularly clear in the radical understanding, the subject (an existence). Likewise, existence is structurally incomplete, it is always more than its facticity, 'ahead of itself'. We could then say that topologically understanding and existence are homeomorphic and that their homeomorphism lies in their common structure, that of the possibility.

We can first highlight the homeomorphism between understanding and existence following some considerations developed in two books, which deal with this subject: *Unquiet Understanding* (2006) by Nicholas Davey, and *The Life of Understanding* (2012) by James Risser.

Nicholas Davey emphasizes instability as the essential feature of understanding: "Understanding is inherently unstable," (Davey 2006, 184) that is, intrinsically dynamic; it is a continuous transformative process that cannot conclude in a static form. As such, it has truly neither initial nor conclusive moment, but 'lives' in the 'in-betweeness' that characterizes every process really alive and dynamic. This also means that understanding can never reach any wholeness and completeness. It strives neither to the one nor to the other, since both would mark its end: "If the life of understanding depends upon continuous movement, then unlike reason, understanding does not seek wholeness or completeness. […] For understanding to aspire to wholeness and completeness, would be for understanding to seek its end" (Davey 2006, 184)[6]. Nicholas Davey finds the reason of this incompleteness of understanding in what he calls the 'principle of

incommensurability': "The deployment of hermeneutical excess within speculative reasoning establishes a principle of incommensurability which explains why the movement of understanding is both never ending and self-perpetuating" (Davey 2006, 14). This principle, in which Davey summarizes the logic of hermeneutics, can formally be expressed this way: "$x = x+$" (Davey 2006, 5-6 and 15). It means that this logic involves an excess, an irreducible unequivalence, a differential, which can be found both in the product and in the source. It justifies therefore both a "creative optimism," since it means that there is always something new to do and to say, and an "interpretative modesty," since every creation or interpretation does not exhaust the potentiality of the subject-matter (Davey 2006, 14). Another different interpretation can always arise.

This logic tries to grasp the continuous process of transformation of understanding, a process that eventually mirrors the intimate logic of life. The link between understanding and life, which in this context is equivalent to existence, is clear in many expressions, which cover the whole text of Nicholas Davey: "living movement of understanding," "vitality of understanding," or, as in the just quoted claim, "life of understanding." This last expression coincides with the title of James Risser's book, signalizing the consonance between these theoretical proposals.

Risser concentrates on the bound between understanding and life, an image of which he finds in Plato's metaphor of weaving given in the *Statesman*: understanding is "intimately tied to what is being comprehended – a comprehending woven together with life" (Risser 2012, 60-61). To exemplify this weaving, Plato makes use of the 'paradigm of the paradigms,' that of the grammar: the elements (*stoicheia*) of the language join to form words and sentences, giving rise to the discourse, which is something alive, in movement. The weaving, then, must not be understood, as Risser explains, as a mere 'collection,' that is as a juxtaposition of elements, which remain extraneous to each other. It is rather a generative and transformative process, a 'fabric of life' by virtue of that dialectic logic which composes 'identity and difference': "Here the art of weaving pertains not simply to the art of combining

and separating words, but to the language formation as such, to what occurs as the generative function of language that mirrors the 'becoming of being'" (Risser 2012, 65-66).

Risser remarks rightly that the 'becoming of being' has to be understood in the light of that incremental process, which Gadamer denotes with the expression 'increase in being' (*Zuwachs an Sein*), and which for Plato is the third way limit and unlimit compose themselves in the so called 'third' or 'mixed genus' (*Phil.* 27b). Life growths on itself, it becomes constantly more than it was, it explicates this way its potentiality. The analogy with the language can eventually clarify this important point: what is generated by the composition of the elements in the discourse is something 'more' in the sense that it involves the passage to another level of Being, to another dimension. The new, so generated reality implies a transformation, a new configuration. Appropriately, the increase is to be understood in the sense of the Hegelian concept of 'concreteness,' with which has without doubt also an etymological link. As the word 'concrete,' indeed, the word 'increase' refers to the Latin word '*crescere,*' 'to grow,' a typical phenomenon of life, which transforms itself by growing *on* and *in* itself, by generating synthetically a new reality, something more and different from the previous one.

5. The Principle of Asymmetry

The incremental difference is not simply quantitative nor simply qualitative. It is not simply quantitative, since it is not the mere addition of a homogeneous reality to the previous one, as in the serial enumeration of similar entities: it is not, in brief, a plurality. But it is neither a mere qualitative difference, since it does not involve the permanence of a substance, of which only the accidental determinations vary, as in the case of Descartes' piece of wax, which remains 'the same' even if it is liquefied and changes completely its exterior aspect. The incremental difference is first of all a *modal* difference, in the sense that it involves also a dimensional transformation, from not-being to being, from the possible to the actual. Since it is

always also a possibility, *Dasein* is, as we have already said, "constantly 'more' than it actually is" (Heidegger 2010, 136).

James Risser grasps this aspect (the idea, namely, that here a modal difference is at stake), when he understands the meaning of the weaving on the basis of a generative force that objectifies itself in the language: "To be more precise, what is peculiar to the weaving of discourse in which two dissimilar things are brought together is a combining involving a force or power (*dynamis*) that binds the elements, as in the spinning that interlaces the warp and woof" (Risser 2012, 67). This force, Risser adds, is the force of intelligibility, that is of understanding.

This clarification allows us to see the generative – that is radical – moment of the language (and, correspondently, of life or existence) in the *dynamis*. Indeed, life itself is possibility, *dynamis*. What makes understanding the adequate cognitive form of life and existence, then, is the fact that it is far both from the static nature of the intellect and from the tendency to wholeness and completeness of the speculative reason, as they are conceived for instance by Hegel. Understanding is, on the contrary, at the same time dynamical (like the dialectic reason, *Vernunft*, which intertwines identity and difference) and inevitably incomplete (like the intellect, *Verstand*). This is a peculiarity of the hermeneutical *logos*, which makes it similar to the Aristotelian practical reason, that is to that form of rationality that is finite but, at the same time, always open to new possibilities. This new way to conceive rationality – at the same time dynamical, creative, and vital – is in my opinion the very challenge that philosophical hermeneutics, and with it all the human sciences, throw down to the contemporary world.

We can at this point reconsider the formula Nicholas Davey used to summarize the logic of understanding as a very logic of life or of the existence. It does not mean, first of all, a chronological non-equivalence, as that between the possible (x) and its actualization ($x+$), or, on the contrary, between interpretation, as actualization of understanding (x), and the still inexhaustible possibility of the text ($x+$). It must be understood, in my opinion, just as an immanent relation, a movement of auto-transcendence (similar to what Dorthe

Jørgensen denotes with the expression 'immanent transcendence') (see Jørgensen 2011 and 2015). This formula says that *inside* (=) the life (*x*) an ongoing process of auto-increase (*x+*) is achieved[7]: understanding is the increase that leads life to be 'more than itself,' as well as this movement is possible just because life is constantly 'more than its actualizations.' This formula, which Davey calls 'principle of incommensurability,' but which we could likewise call 'principle of asymmetry,' expresses then the very structure of existence, which cannot be conceived neither as pure possibility nor as pure actuality: '*x* = *x+*' says the internal asymmetry of life, the differential trait that makes it at the same time actual and possible, that is, mobile.

We must remember at this point – making maybe a little clearer what I suggested at the beginning of this text, speaking about the link between the dynamical ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the Platonic discussions on the incommensurable magnitudes – that *asymmetron* was an alternative word, beside *alogon*, that Greeks used to designate the incommensurable magnitudes: it is certainly more appropriate, since it means literally 'non-commensurable' and not 'non-rational': using it can then be recommended in order to emphasize that this logic is not a logic of commensurability, what does not mean that it is 'irrational.' The word 'irrational' is a remnant of the Pytagorean conception of *logos* (a *ratio* between integer numbers), which the incommensurable magnitudes have just refuted. The acceptance of these magnitudes in the realm of the *logos* involved the elaboration of a new ontology, an ontology in which the *dynamis* – and consequently all the modal aspect of reality – plays finally a fundamental role (Perillé 2002).

The deep sense of 'radical understanding' lies in conclusion in this constitutive dynamism, both of the hermeneutical reason and of the existence. Contrary to the Hegelian reason, however, understanding does not tend to any wholeness and definitive completeness: because of its intrinsic dynamism, it cannot but remain incomplete and not total. Incompleteness and non-wholeness mean, not so much that there is *something* else *outside* this reality, but that it has

always still to be something other, it has still the *possibility* to transform itself. The expression 'radical understanding' summarizes then several aspects, which can be recapped this way:

a) a transcendental aspect: radical understanding is a limit and a methodological situation, which lets the condition of possibility of every understanding emerge;

b) an ontological aspect: this formal condition of possibility coincides with its ontological condition, that is with existence;

c) a modal aspect: as condition of possibility of every understanding, existence appears itself as a possibility and not as an actuality. Even necessary for every understanding, it appears as inevitably contingent, as what disappears and can always disappear. The undecipherable text is the eminent trace of the disappeared existence. This point prevents radical understanding from being confused with some ontological proof: the necessary 'material condition' of understanding is not a necessary, but a possible being. The metaphysical tradition conceived of existence as a positive presence in the intuition or perception. Philosophical hermeneutics, on the contrary, conceives of existence as something mobile, which therefore requires a new more appropriate form of rationality, represented by understanding: a non-positive rationality, able to transcend the datum towards the non-datum, to see in every actuality a past or a new possibility, to intertwine identity and difference, reproducing this way in the discourse the 'fabric of life'.

NOTES

[1] For further explanations I can address the reader to some of my recent writings, such as: Chiurazzi 2013, 2015a and 2015b.

[2] This thesis comes from the fact that the incommensurable magnitudes were called in the Ancient Greek mathematics *dynameis*, since they were 'potentially' rationalizable if raised to the square, as it is attested in a famous passage of Plato's *Theaetetus* (*Theaet.* 148b). On this meaning see Vitrac 2008.

[3] I sum up some ideas exposed in an already published article: Chiurazzi 2009.

[4] A reformulation of the famous *incipit* of §16 in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1965).

[5] I refer here clearly to Derrida 1973. Husserl comes to this conception of the phenomenon in his *Lectures on the passive synthesis*, but it concerns only the object of perception as *transcendent*, that is, as existent before, then, every *epoché*. When the object is completely *immanent* to perception, no difference is possible, and the phenomenological existence coincides completely with the essence: *esse est percipi*.

[6] Davey highlights this feature of Gadamer's conception of understanding in comparison to Dilthey: "Where Dilthey laments the inconclusiveness of understanding, Gadamer celebrates it" (Davey 2006, 1).

[7] There are many reasons to compare this claim to McDowell's claim regarding the relation between the second and the first nature: the second nature is not something separate, as in the 'rampant platonism', but an internal increase of the first nature (see McDowell 1994). We are then 'naturally cultural'. The similarities of this claim with Gadamer's philosophy do not require to be stressed: it is McDowell himself who recognizes this link in the Lecture VI of *Mind and World*.

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The Nature of Intersubjectivity in Buber, Husserl and Waldenfels: An Encounter, an Intentional Constitution, or a Happening?

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Abstract

This text involves the concept of intersubjectivity in Buber, Husserl, and Waldenfels. For these authors, *the other* has an important place in the constitution of ourselves. Buber presents an innateness of the *You*, whereby it fosters in us a longing for relation, bringing the *directness of love*, which implies acts of responsibility toward *the other*. Husserl affirms that the transcendental subjectivity is a transcendental intersubjectivity implicit in the intentional constitution of the *Ego*. Waldenfels precludes an idea of the innateness and of the implication in order to explore the event of *what happens between us* in its integrity. Therefore, Waldenfels conceives the opening of the personality as a latent process. The event of *what happens* can divert the course of our determination, bringing new possibilities to the personality itself. Now, the meaning is shared, and not endowed by the *transcendental Ego* (Husserl) as the only thing responsible for meaning. We share meaning because we originally have the experience of the other, of the world, and of ourselves. In Waldenfels, we respond to the others' and the world's demands, which occur as original events, instead of responding to them as innate demands, coming from us.

Keywords: event, response, personality, other, experience

1. The emergence of the I-You and the emergence of the I-It

At the beginning of Buber's book *I and Thou*, he uses the term *attitude relationship* (Buber 1970, 53) as a mode of living in the world. In addition, he indicates that there are two ways of interacting in the world through the basic words *I-It* and *I-*

You. The attitude toward each will establish what kind of relationship (Buber 1970, 58) we will have toward them. The *I* is twofold in relation to the world, representing two sorts of attitudes. Buber becomes conscious of the role that language plays in forming our lives. These basic words are, in fact, word pairs rather than single words. In calling these words basic, Buber proposes that their very utterance establishes a means of existence. When labeling someone or something as *It*, we become a certain kind of I, and exist in a certain, conscious way; when labeling someone as *You*, we become different sort of I, and exist in a different way. It is perceived here that language and attitude play an important role side by side. Both are expressed in the context of our lives. According to Buber, being and saying *I* are one in the same, even though although the life of human beings does not merely exist in the sphere of goal-directed verbs, nor of activities that have something for their object (Buber 1970, 54). For Buber, whoever says *You* does not have the idea of anything for his/her object (Buber 1970, 55).

The basic word pair *I-It* represents the world of experience and that of *I-You*, the world of relation. Buber brings to light the example of a tree. When we look at a tree, we can classify it in a table thereby transforming it into an *I-It* relation, but when we contemplate or think about the tree, we find it unnecessary to objectify it. In contemplating the tree, we establish a relationship with it, not a one-sided relation, but a reciprocal one (Buber 1970, 58). In the reciprocal relation, what is excluded in the strict sense of experience can now seize us and be included in the very process of relation. Contrary to the *I-It* experience, in the *I-You* relation, we now see movement as the grace of life. In context of the *I-It* experience, we stop the movement so that the tree can be seen in a classification table, whereas in the reciprocal *You* relation, we continue the eternal movement as grace.

The *You* as a firmament (Buber 1970, 59) characterized by Buber, when we say the basic word *I-You*, is not limited by experience, but by involving a reciprocal relation that goes beyond our knowledge. Differing from experience, the relation is actual. The relation towards the world demands from us a creative power in front of the form that appears (Buber 1970,

60). Such creativeness actualizes the form that confronts us rather than arrests it. Thus, the experience stops the process of actual life because of its objectification. However, the relation keeps the process constant due to its actualization. The actualization is not a clarification to our knowledge, but at the time we actualized it, we uncovered it. As Buber writes: "Such work is creation, inventing is finding" (Buber 1970, 61). In the mode of actualization, we rediscover a creative process, whereby an inventive course brings with it a finding course of possibilities.

The relation between *You* and us propitiates an encounter by *grace* (Buber 1970, 62). In this encounter our whole being is at once passive and active. Therefore, nothing conceptual, imaginable, or knowable can intervene between the *I* and *You*, because our relation to *You* is unmediated. This necessity means that the encounter is actual. For Buber, the meaning would only be an obstacle for the encounter. As Buber says: "Only where all means have disintegrated encounters occur" (Buber 1970, 63). As it is an encounter by *grace* nothing is necessarily presupposed in order for it to happen. As a result, there is an immediacy of relationship.

Under these circumstances, Buber draws the conclusion that only as the *You* becomes present, does presence come into being. As the encounter between us is unmediated, it also corresponds to the idea of an unmediated present. In the *I-It* experience we are surrounded by a multitude of contents which has only a past, no present, in other words, it loses its actuality. Buber writes: "Presence is not what is evanescent and passes but what confronts us, waiting and enduring" (Buber 1970, 64). The state of being exists only insofar as presentness, encounter, and relation exist. The actuality of the present drives us not into what is presupposed but, instead toward what confronts us. What confronts us breaks down our presuppositions. According to Buber, this confrontation conducts us into the threshold (Buber 1970, 65) whereby, for an actual human being, the real boundary also runs across the world of ideas. Normally, we misunderstand the essential act that establishes *directness* as a feeling. Nevertheless, feelings accompany the metaphysical and metapsychical fact of love, but they do not constitute it

(Buber 1970, 65). To illustrate this, Buber brings the example of Jesus' feeling toward those He healed and toward His disciples. The feeling is different, but the love is one. For Buber, love is a worldly force (*Liebe ist ein welthaftes Wirken*) (Buber 1970, 66) in order to produce responsibility in relation to a *You*. Through love, the exclusiveness comes constantly into inclusiveness so that one can act, help, heal, educate, raise, redeem what once was excluded, but which now has the possibility to take part in the directness of love. The directness of love means that the love is unmediated, producing acts of responsibility in relation to a *You*.

The encounter starts with the relation, but will eventually be transformed into a thing. Every *You* in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into *thinghood* (Buber 1970, 69) continuously. When we love someone, we see that person as wholly unique, and without any qualities. The person is purely present, in the sense that he/she is there without presupposition. Even in love, though, the *You* must inevitably fade periodically into an It. As soon as we see our as giving qualities as beautiful, kind, and so on, the beloved has ceased to be a *You*. This does not mean that love cannot endure, but only that it constantly oscillates between I-You and I-It. Despite the fact of such oscillation, the relation of love is performed with our whole being. On the contrary, hatred by its very nature, cannot be directed toward a whole being. We cannot hate a whole person, only a part of a person. Relation, instead, by its very definition, can only be directed toward a whole being. Buber concludes that love is relation and, for that reason, reciprocal in the sense of its passive and active nature.

Once we live the original encounter, the original relational character of the appearance remains effective for a long time (Buber 1970, 71). The original encounter brings with it the possibility of love, which produces acts of responsibility due to the whole being involved in the relation. The context of the encounter propitiates the directness of love.

Buber brings the idea of *readiness* (Buber 1970, 78), characterized by the relational being, as a form that reaches out to be filled so that the being carries with it the *innate You*. Such an *innate You* is realized in the *You* we encounter. The *You*

aims at reciprocity and tenderness. Nevertheless, in the *I-You* relation, straight after, we can also witness the detachment of the *I* in relation to the *You*. It happens because inevitably we will try to conceptualize the very encounter, objectifying its spatial-temporal structure. From now on, the *I* starts to form itself and reaches its subjectivity.

It is possible to see the dynamism when the event of relation runs its course. The *You* will become an *It*, and the individual *It* can become a *You* (Buber 1970, 84) by entering into the event of relation. This twofold character represents the condition wherein we live.

2. The emergence of the *You-world* and the emergence of the *It-world*

When Buber expresses both (two) ways of responding to *You*, he draws the possibility of a response made with the uniqueness of the Spirit. Buber says: "Man lives in the spirit when he is able to respond to his *You*" (Buber 1970, 89). Nevertheless, all the responses in the sense of explanations, denominations, clarifications, and so on, bind the *You* into the *It-world*.

The *It-world* is clearly discernible in history. It is the civilization that has lost its relational character, and is no longer able to live in the spirit. The *It-world* is the world of experience, that is to say, a civilization that only considers the functional aspect of things. However, for Buber, the *It-world* can be changed by an act that is not arbitrary, in other words, an attitude of encounter, an attitude through a *You*, whereby we respond with our life. The language and the response not clarified and explained become life (Buber 1970, 92).

The *It-world* has the strong capacity to alienate us, making us slaves (Buber 1970, 107) to its causality laws. We feel like a cog caught in the inexorable machine of various causal systems (Buber 1970, 103) such as biological, social, historical, cultural, and psychological. These laws might blind us in order to make us believe that there is no truth beyond them. Authors who belong to the period of the *Frankfurt School*, between the years 1933-1960, will be influenced by the

alienation idea from Buber[1]. For Buber, the redemptive (Buber 1970, 96) power of the *You* carries with it a responding spirit (Buber 1970, 99) that is able to incorporate human life back again in communal life. That is a saving process brought by the response of the living spirit. Such redemption fosters the possibility to return to relation itself, and as long as we enter into the relation, we are free and thus creative.

When our freedom is guaranteed we do not feel oppressed by causality (Buber 1970, 101). Despite the oscillation between *You* and *It*, we are able to go beyond the causality laws, and see the threshold. As Buber writes: "There, on the threshold, the response, the spirit is kindled in him again and again; here, in the unholy and indigent land the spark has to prove itself" (Buber 1970, 102). Based on the attitude toward relation, now we are able to bring freedom to our fate. Freedom and fate embrace each other to form and to give meaning. This meaning is a response from the living spirit without any objectification; instead it generates freedom and creativity.

Under these circumstances, we can move ourselves either through experience or through relation. The existence is permeated by these twofold *Is*. The *I* of the *I-It* appears as an *Ego*, detaching from other *Egos*. The *I* of the basic word *I-You* appears as a person, entering into relation to other persons. The *I-It* becomes conscious of itself as a subject and the *I-You* becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity. The person becomes conscious of him/herself as participating in being, as being-with (Buber 1970, 113) and the *Ego* is conscious of his/her being-that-way. The *I-You* is conscious of the *I-It* so that it can apprehend simultaneously its connectivity and its detachment. Notwithstanding, we live in a twofold I, some men are so person-oriented that one may call them persons, while others are so ego-oriented that one may call them *Egos* (Buber 1970, 114-115). It is important to note that Buber is trying to avoid solipsism. Despite the fact of the alienation of the *I-It* concerning relation, it cannot avoid to live among others. Considering that, the *I-It* is an *egotical* being (Buber 1970, 112). The *Ego* lives as detached, making use of experience, appropriating things and persons.

3. The nature of the encounter in our actions

For Buber, through the intersections of relationships, we are driven to the *Eternal You* (Buber 1970, 123). It happens because the innate *You* is actualized each time without ever being perfected due to the fact that it can become an It. The *Eternal You* in accordance with its nature cannot become an It. It is Eternal and remains as a mystery that fulfills everything. We cannot encounter God without encountering other beings. Through our relationship with God, every other encounter enflames an unconditional necessity within us.

In an absolute encounter, God fills the universe in a similar way that the other person does in an interpersonal encounter. But, the way that God fills the universe is different: when we enter into a relationship with God we are also entering into a relationship with everything else in the world, because encountering God involves encountering everything belonging to God, that is, the world. In absolute relation, we do not ignore the rest of the world, but relate to it through relating to God. In the relation to God, unconditional exclusiveness and unconditional inclusiveness are one (Buber 1970, 126-127). That means that the I-It experience that promotes the *It-world* will be reviewed, and the world, the things, and others will be enlightened by the power of the relation. Such exclusiveness will be included because everything will have the perspective of the very encounter. Exclusiveness without condition is an unconditional inclusiveness. As Buber writes: "One does not find God if one remains in the world; one does not find God if one leaves the world" (Buber 1970, 127). This encounter is exclusive because we are related to the *You* as if it were all that mattered for us, and see the rest of the universe through its light. It is inclusive because it is not just the divine being but also His entire universe with whom we are relating in this way.

Buber drives our attention to some misunderstandings about the nature of the encounter with the Eternal You. First of all, it is not a feeling of dependency. One's encounter with God is accompanied by such feelings, but is not itself that feeling. Any feeling exists only in the *I*, and encounter exists between

the *You* and the *I*. Buber reminds us that the very nature of the encounter is relational, which means a kind of actualized dialog, not a one-sided one. We do not lose the *I* and the *You* in the relation, we recreate them. In other words, the encounter comes as a creative power. What is more, the encounter is not a sort of immersion whereby the I-hood is drawn by God itself. Such a unification doctrine causes a deactualization and a depersonalization of our subjectivity. For Max Scheler, our personality is constituted by the love of God for us (Scheler 1973, 390). Thus, against a pure passivity in our relation to God, forming the base of a concrete person in Scheler (Junglos 2013, 366), Buber maintains instead, that our relation to God is not deterministic, but creative.

The confrontation fetches exclusion into inclusion, but without eliminating the antinomy between both, whereby the universe is comprehended (Buber 1970, 148). Thus, the encounter brings with the possibility that is able to embrace also the boundaries wherein we live. In this sense the Buber's project involves an unconditional inclusiveness. Such inclusiveness moves towards the stranger that confronts us. Actions of responsibility come forth from the very nature of this encounter. Such actions go beyond duties and obligations, because what we received is not a content but a presence as strength (Buber 1970, 158). This presence comes into action through three ways. First, the whole abundance of actual reciprocity of being admitted in such connectivity is actualized as meaning in our lives. Second, we have a guarantee of the inexpressible meaning; nothing can henceforth be meaningless. Third, it is not the meaning of another life, but that of this our life, our world. For Buber, the nature of the encounter is a mystery that can be received but not experienced (Buber 1970, 159). We know it as salvation and not as solution. Despite the fact that we cannot explain what happens, the truth is that something happens and comes as renovation into our lives.

Is the encounter not also an experience? As we have seen, for Buber, experience belongs only to the *I-It* relation. Nevertheless, in order to have an attitude towards another, how can I perform it without experience? Buber himself speaks of the inevitability of transforming the *You* into an It.

Moreover, he says that this very antinomy between the relationship of *You* and It reveals the very situation wherein we live. Under these circumstances, we draw the conclusion that a contradiction is performed in Buber's work in relation to the term experience. Into our view, our longing for relation, which characterized a respondent spirit, would have a static meaning without the presupposed of experience itself.

The challenge now is: How could we conceive experience without falling into an objectivism, which is peculiar to it? Through Husserl, we intend to find, in the dynamism of experience, a possibility of an open flux, which implies a process of constitution that not authorizes us to build incontestable generalities.

4. Between doubt and evidence: consequences for a fundament of science

After the doubt's process realized by Descartes, he came to the conclusion that no matter how fully we are deceived, we cannot be deceived about the fact of our thinking. For deceived thinking is but a deficient mode of thinking generally. Thus, even though we can have false perceptions of things, or we can have doubts if we are awake or living a dream, notwithstanding, we are sure about our thinking itself. As Husserl points it out, it is from here that Descartes initiates his modern turn (*Wendung*) (Husserl 1973, §1, 46). The Cartesian turn to the subject from naïve objectivism inaugurates a new kind of philosophy with a specific task of building a fundament for the entire science. The aim of the *Meditations* is a complete reforming of philosophy into a science grounded on an absolute foundation (Husserl 1973, §1, 43). For that, Descartes develops from a pure inwardness an outwardness objectivity (Husserl 1973, §1, 45). Such objectivity would standardize a ground for all sciences.

So far, Husserl raises a question: It is possible a science that is absolutely grounded? Husserl answers that we should not take for granted any already established norms (Husserl 1973, §3, 49). But now, if Husserl wants to look for a fundament for all science, which kind of fundament is he looking for? First,

he says, we must not presuppose even its possibility. According to Husserl, we cannot fashion, by a process of abstraction, the idea of a fundament for all science. Moreover, we must neither make nor go on accepting any judgment as scientific that we have not derived from *evidence*, from *experiences* (Husserl 1973, §5, 54), wherein we are living in the present where the things appear to me by themselves. By now, we draw the conclusion that the fundament that Husserl is looking for is based on evidence, and evidence, for Husserl, is experience. In experience, we are faced with a constancy of possibilities that have their own evidence. Thus, it is necessary to examine its range and make evident to ourselves how far that evidence, how far its perfection, the actual giving of the affairs themselves, extends. Basically, we need to go toward the evidence, but not in the sense of establishing general abstractions for it, instead, to demonstrate its actuality.

Descartes and Husserl start at different directions. Descartes starts with the doubt to arrive at absolute evidence. Husserl starts with the evidence in the sense of a continuous actualization of it. To put in other words, the doubt for Descartes is a problem that must be extinguished, for Husserl, instead, the doubt is in the very process of the actualization of evidence itself. Due to the actuality of the world, we cannot force an objective judgment on it. The world claims its own being (*Seinsanspruch*) (Husserl 1973, §8, 58), but not the world as a static block, but the *lived-surrounding-world* (*Lebensumwelt*), a phenomenon of being (*Seinsphänomen*) (Husserl 1973, §8, 59), which I live along with. The evidence of the world comes to us as a field of presence (*Gegenwartsfelde*), so that we can perceive it as it appears to us.

From now on, Husserl introduces his method called *epoché* or phenomenological reduction. This method consists in a universal depriving of acceptance (Husserl 1973, §8, 60) of what is taking for granted objectively and subjectively. Proceeding in this way, Husserl emerges a living *Ego*, a *pure Ego* in its transcendental sense with the pure stream of our *cogitationes* (Husserl 1973, §8, 61). In this sense, the evidence comes from givenness itself through the *lived-surrounding-world*. This means that neither our pure objective abstraction,

nor the world as a static block bring with them pure evidence, instead, consciousness and world live in their very stream of living (experience = evidence). Therefore, the world is neither a piece of our *Ego*, nor our *Ego* is a piece of the world (Husserl 1973, §11, 65). The reduction to the transcendental subjectivity means a living subjectivity.

As the e*poché* lays dawn an infinity realm of being of new kind (Husserl 1973, §12, 66) we can suppose that there is also an *a priori* science, which confines itself to the realm of pure possibility. The concrete *Ego* (Husserl 1973, §12, 67) is not a solipsistic *Ego*, but an *Ego* that exists with its individual content made up of subjective process, abilities and dispositions, in other words, the *Ego* is given and not a kind of objective thought which is able to determinate the world. Without doubt, the sense of the transcendental reduction *implies* (Husserl 1973, §13, 69) that, at the beginning, this science can posit nothing, but the *Ego* and what is included in the *Ego* himself, with a horizon of undetermined/determinability. The modes of consciousness have a *noetic* and a *noematic* structure *(*Husserl 1973, §15, 74). We can understand them just by a transcendental reflection performed by a transcendental reduction. In the process of reduction, we abstain ourselves from a natural attitude that takes for granted what is meant, to wit, an attitude of positing thing in an objective abstract sense. That is the *noematic* side of our consciousness. Instead, the *noetic* side recognizes the infinite spatial-temporal flux of the consciousness/world. Therefore, the transcendental reflection causes a splitting of the *Ego* (*Ich Spaltung*) (Husserl 1973, §15, 73) in relation with the *noetic* and *noematic* mode of being. Thus, the *Ego* is concrete when it is implicated with the appearing world (Husserl 1973, §16, 76) lived by the *noematic* and *noetic* structure of consciousness.

5. Actualization of the Ego and horizons implications

If we take a look at a die, it leaves open a great variety of things pertaining to the unseen faces; yet it is already construed in advance as a die, in particular as colored, rough,

and the like. According to Husserl, each of these determinations always leaves further particulars open. This leaving open (*Offenlassen*) (Husserl 1973, §19, 83), prior to further determinations, is a moment included in the given consciousness itself; it is precisely what makes up the horizon. In the process of constitution, the *Ego* experiences a determinate/indeterminate structure (noetic/noematic). In this sense, the object itself, like the die, will never be completely grasped. Despite of it, we have a predelineation of the die. Nevertheless, this predelineation is never present to actual consciousness as a finished datum, it becomes clarified only through explication of the given horizon and the new horizons continuously awakened. The stream of consciousness brings with it the implication of a non-graspable actuality wherein constantly new possibilities can arise.

As Husserl points it, the intentional consciousness *implies* its horizon (the living world in its broad sense), the stream of the own consciousness (noetic/noematic), and a meaning more (*Mehrmeinung*) (Husserl 1973, §20, 84). Through our process of intentional constitution, the *meaning more* is done when we describe, characterize, and delineate the appearance of the object. This *meaning more* creates unity in all consciousness and which, noetically and noematically, constitutes unity of objective sense and avoids the chaos of the flux of intentional synthesis. The impossibility of the objective thought in the strict sense comes as a possibility to apprehend the reality in its essentiality, in other words, the reality as a flux; as it is essentially. Although, the unity of consciousness is important as an essential moment of the process itself.

The *Ego* creates ideal types in order to build a unity of consciousness. Such ideal types come into being due to the immanent conception of time, to wit, our determination of past, present, and future. Now, through the process of *epoché*, we develop a transcendental phenomenology which shows the *meaning more*. Each type brought out, by these clues, is to be asked about its noetic-noematic structure, (Husserl 1973, §21, 87) is to be systematically explicated and established in respect of those modes of intentional flux that pertain to it. The ideal types are essential to build an infinite regulative ideal (Husserl

1973, §22, 90), avoiding a chaos in the process of constitution. The transcendental reduction will enable its infinity process which precludes its inexorability and inflexibility.

In spite of a constant process of reduction, abiding convictions can remain as it is obvious. Such volitions, acceptances, believe and so on, develop a particularization of the *Ego* itself, which Husserl calls personal character (Husserl 1973, §32, 101). Nevertheless, the attitude of openness, to the possibilities brought by the *epoché*, lived by our immanent consciousness of time, forming its ideal types (noematic) together with its implicit flux, develop also our personal character. Thus, our personal character is constituted by our very attitude toward the process itself; may be an attitude of openness, or a natural attitude. So, every *Ego* has his own particular constitution (Husserl 1973, §41, 117), forming a concrete *Ego*. The *concrete Ego* includes also the whole of actual and potential conscious life; it includes all constitutional problems without exception.

Husserl has shown the implication represented by a transcendental subjectivity in relation to the stream of conscience (*the immanent consciousness of time*), the genesis process between passive and active constitutions (*passive synthesis*), the constituted and the constituting dynamism of consciousness (*noetic/noematic*), and the horizontality of the world itself with its constancy and claims (*the original world*). Such implications are involved in a transcendental subjectivity by its intentionality. In this way, the intentionality embraces the intentionality of the world (objects) and the intentionality of consciousness in which a unity is performed constantly. But, going further, what about the other *Egos*? They are like us, no more or less special than us. Thus, in the process of reduction (*epoché*), how cannot we forget the others and, inevitable, fall in a transcendental solipsism? How the other is implicated in the transcendental subjectivity? Husserl draws the conclusions that transcendental subjectivity is transcendental intersubjectivity. Let us see it in detail.

6. Transcendental subjectivity as a transcendental intersubjectivity against solipsism

There is a *thereness-for-me (für-mich-da)* of others, and, accordingly, as the theme of a transcendental theory of experiencing someone else, a transcendental theory of so-called *empathy* (Husserl 1975, §43, 124). This theory contributes to the founding of a transcendental theory of the objective world due to a *thereness-for-everyone (Für-jedermann-da)*. Husserl mentions the spiritual objects (books, tools, works of any kind, and so forth), which are elaborated by a cultural community, being there for everyone, whereby everyone belonging to the corresponding cultural community.

In experience, we experience something that is not us, like the world, the objects and other in its mode of givenness. Notwithstanding, such modes of givenness are implicated in our concrete *Ego* (Husserl 1973, §48, 136). In spite of the transcendental *Ego* being the endower of meaning, it is not arrested in a transcendental solipsism. The *static analysis* (thematised, the constituted) is confronted with the flux genesis of the world, the other, and of our consciousness (the thematising, the constituting). Under these circumstances, the solipsistic *Ego* is split in its concreteness by the very temporal flux. This means that the other, the world, and the objects are included/implicated in the sphere of our ownness. Now, the surrounding world is just constituted/constituting together with others. Thus, a transcendental subjectivity can be only conceived as transcendental intersubjetivity, in other words, the objects, the others, the world, and even ourselves are only understood intersubjectively.

What is excluded from our *Ego* (Husserl 1973, §49, 137), to wit, what is not our *Ego*, is included, implicated transcendentally. Despite the fact that we have our own originality as *Egos*, such *Egos* live in a kind of *harmony* (Husserl 1973, §49, 138) with the world due to the fact that there is a *thereness* for everyone in it. Thus, the noetic/noematic constitution process carries with it the sense of harmony and transformation. We, as original *Egos*, live in a community of

Egos harmonically. The process of experiencing the other, lacks the access in relation to its originality which is peculiar of each one. The disclosure of the other will just be possible through *appresentation* (Husserl 1973, §50, 139), whereby my relation with other reveals its openness. This appresentation will go beyond the manifestation of the physical body, done as an object, but as a lived body which motivated us differently, in a deep and more challenged way, bringing a diversity of new possibility to our concrete *Ego*.

The *alter Ego* is presented as accessible of what is not originally accessible (Husserl 1973, §53, 144). Here, Husserl is trying to avoid any identification between us and the other, instead, he tries to reveal a kind of *association*, analogy which motivates the sphere of our ownness. This motivation is done due to the appresentation of the other, whereby it is seen as accessible, because it is in front of me, already there to be analysed, but at same time, it is inaccessible, because of his/her own originality. The other cannot be seen as a duplicate of us, but, we can objectively conceive that we can do what the other *Ego* can, and, also, we can be at the place of the other if we want. In Husserl's words, our *Ego* is constituted as *Here* (in relation to our psychophysical body) and the other as *There* (in relation to his/her psychophysical body). Thus, we are able to transfer every *There* into a *Here* (Husserl 1973, §53, 146), but we are not able to uncover its originality, its temporal flux structure. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that, in spite of our objectification characteristic, we are not able to grasp the temporal flux. This means that an original presence will be always ungraspable, although, by perception, it is lived by our transcendental subjectivity.

What is primordially incompatible, in simultaneous coexistence, becomes compatible: because our primordial *Ego* constitutes the *Ego* who is other for us by an appresentative apperception, which, according to its intrinsic nature, never demands and never is open to fulfilment by presentation (Husserl 1973, §54, 147). It is impossible a transcendental solipsism, because of two basic factors: the surrounding world and the other. The surrounding-world, due to the fact that it is already there in advance, sustaining our cogitations, the other,

by breaking our pretention of objectifications. The accessibility/inaccessibility of the other allows a challenge for the openness of our consciousness. The world is given to us and to everyone only as a cultural world, and as having the sense: accessible to everyone (Husserl 1973, § 58, 160). Such world for everyone has an ontological, *a priori* structure, which is natural, psychophysical, social and cultural (Husserl 1975, §59, 164).

Despite the fact that the transcendental subjectivity endows meaning, such meaning is constituted in a *togetherness of monads* (community of *Egos*) in relation to a common world. For Husserl, it is *inconceivable* (Husserl 1973, § 60, 167-168) to create a second world, instead, even our fantasies are related to the original world, whereby all senses are based. Therefore, the psychology cannot lose its implication with the world, and with the other, because it would be closed into a solipsistic noematic objectivity. Husserl draws the conclusion that phenomenological explication does nothing but explicate the sense that this world has for us all, prior to any philosophizing.

7. What does Buber not want to lose that Husserl does lose?

The answer to this question starts with the *immediacy of relation* in Buber. We are not saying that Husserl does not have the sense of immediacy between what confronts us in experience. In Husserl, the originality of the other, the world, and the *Ego* fetches givenness, which comes before any objectification whatsoever. Notwithstanding, Buber conceives to this immediacy of relation an innate character. In this sense, we have a kind of longing for relation which inhabits us inwardly. Consequently, for Buber, we have a *respondent spirit* due to the fact of our encounter with the *You*. As the *You* conveys us the *directness of love*, it also follows that it produces acts of responsibility towards others. Buber does not want to lose the very nature of the encounter itself that is inexplicable in its content, but is effective in its nature.

Buber is aware of the antinomies in dealing with relationships, specially, about the inevitability of transforming

the *You* into an It. In Husserl, we can also find an ambiguity between the noetic/noematic process of constitution. For both authors, such paradox becomes actualized in the present, as a constant flux of the process itself. The difference is on the conception of intersubjective relationship. For Husserl, the other is implicated, as alter Ego, in our own process of constitution. In contrast with Husserl, for Buber, the *You* is already in us, it is innate and it is developed by my response toward it. For both philosophers, our attitude toward the other will demonstrate the open or close development of our reflection, and the character of our relationship. Thus, for Buber, the other is not implicated, but is intrinsic in us and will appear accordingly of an attitude of treating the other as a *You* or as a It. Under these circumstances, Buber is not concerned with intentionality, because the *Ego* is not the only responsible for endowing meaning, but the meaning comes through an actualization of the present in a respondent way based on the encounter itself.

In Buber, we have a *what happens* in the encounter which give us a creative power against all objectivity. Such creativity conveys freedom to our fate in order to have a relationship based on saying the word You. In saying *You*, our language becomes action toward other through a creative process, whereby the creativity is understood as effective power that emerges the *directness of love* as an actualization and potentialization, transforming the It-world in a You-world. As Husserl works on the process of constitution, we miss a practical ethical orientation, because it lacks such a respondent character which fosters acts of responsibility. We are able to say that, for Husserl, actualization works, basically, on the process of constitution, while for Buber, the actualization has also an ethical meaning, when we actualized the content of the encounter itself, giving meaning to our fate.

To maximize the word *You*, Buber brings the idea of the Eternal *You*, whereby we do not have antinomies like we have in our relation to one another, because the Eternal *You* cannot be transformed into a It. This Eternal *You* propitiates a longing for such relation that we can have in contemplation (prayer) which has the potentialization to give a divine meaning for

everything, including a divine meaning in our relationship to one another. Thus, our encounter to one another is based on our encounter with the Eternal You. For Husserl, our conception of God cannot change the process of constitution itself, in other words, even God would not escape from the noetic/noematic structure.

We draw the conclusion that in Buber there is a way to escape from experience through the nature of the encounter, while, from Husserl, there is not such possibility, because everything that affects us pass through experience.

8. What does Waldenfels not want to lose?

Waldenfels does not want to lose the integrity of the event itself. The event that happens to us is responsive, opening new possibilities due to its characteristic of pushing us to the threshold zones. The responsive event is not something that starts in our consciousness and it is controlled by it, but comes as a possibility to the consciousness. That means that a gap emerges from the established order that can even change the established order just because it is full of possibilities. *To whom* something happens is not a matter of choice, but my attitude toward *what happens* makes all the difference in my relation to the other. Waldenfels keeps the concept of a respondent spirit from Buber, but not the presupposed innate idea of it. Therefore, Waldenfels preserves the originality of the flux in the world, in consciousness and in other consciousness. There is a presupposed meaning (tradition, *thereness* for everyone, a cultural world, and so on), but not determinative in the sense of innateness nature or an intentional constitution. Different from Husserl, Waldenfels will maintain the meaning as closed/opened, in other words, the meaning is not just a possession, instead, it is a share. The endower of meaning, as a last word of the subject, does not contemplate the integrality of the event itself, where something happens. As Waldenfels says:

> Throughout this happening something becomes visible, audible, sensible, in such a way that it comes to our mind, strikes us, attracts or repels us an withdraws from our knowing and willing, without

been ascribed to a subject who would function as the author or bearer of acts and actions. (Waldenfels 2007, 45)

At the moment of *what happens* (*Widerfahrnis*) (Waldenfels 2007, 48), Waldenfels explores an intermediary realm (*Zwischenreich*) to try to understand how something happens between us that can neither be reached by summarizing, nor by unifying perspectives, but intermediary events (*Zwischenereignisse*) that always come from *elsewhere*, making it impossible for us to determine the position of a first or last event. We can call the *what happens* the possible/impossible event, or simply the responsive event. Waldenfels puts it in these words: "[…] as a lived impossibility, im-possible measured on the possibilities which are available for me, for you and for us altogether (Waldenfels 2007, 49)". This deviation, caused by the event itself, raises a responsive movement toward us, bringing all the possible/impossible experiences that happen between us. The nature of the event that happens between us can make all the difference in our relationships, and also in our concrete *Ego*. Our objectifications can be put down, and push our pre-conceptions to the threshold, where new possibilities can emerge. When different people (different ideas, projects, believes, social classes, and so forth) come together, it is not because they have a universal ideal of unity innately, or one of them resolves, intentionally, to come closer, but it happened because the threshold zones that once divided them, now come as a possibility of mutual sharing.

The responsive event makes a *split* (Waldenfels 2007, 75-81) in the self. We are affected (pathos), stimulated, surprised, violated in our static *Ego*. The response appears whether we want or not, just because it depends neither on our knowing, nor on our willing, but depends on our body that comports the event of *what happens* as a whole. The event of *what happens between us* is marked in a responsive way deal to its indetermination, incapability of imprisonment, that just happens to our body to whom our consciousness belongs and to whom it finds its concealment, its hideout. The event doesn't make only a split in the self, it makes a *double* (Waldenfels 2007, 81-85) in the self, characterized by the *alter ego* to whom we will be constituted. Therefore, in the event of *what happens*

between us, we perceive ourselves from *elsewhere,* so that the first and last word don't belong to us, because even our constitution isn't ours.

We see ourselves through the others' eyes, and this means that we are interlaced with others. The event does not belong to our consciousness, but to our body, for the body is always there before everything, and what affects, affects first of all the body – the *zero point*. The incorporeity implies that the own and the alien are entangled. Waldenfels says: "There are no ready-made individuals; rather there is only a process of individualization which presupposes certain anonymity and typically of our bodily self. What we feel, perceive, do or say is interwoven with what others feel, perceive, do or say." (Waldenfels 2007, 84) We are not the owner of our own house, the responsive movement bears to im-possible (possible/impossible) experience that makes profound scars in what we truly are. As Buber does not have the concept of a body, as an essential character of experience, he could conceive an encounter outside experience. Therefore, for Husserl and Waldenfels, the experience is inseparable from the lived body, and we are orientated toward it.

We draw the conclusion, that, in Waldenfels, the meaning is shared in the very process of constitution itself, instead of just being implicated; and that, in Waldenfels, we respond to others and the world demands, which comes as an original event, instead of responding to an innate demand in us. For Waldenfels, like Buber, what once was excluded, now can be included, because we are confronted with the thresholds zones, whereby our pretentions are broken to give space to new possibilities; this is in the very center of what Waldenfels does not want to lose from the contribution of Buber's thought. For Waldenfels, like Husserl, the flux of time prevents any attempt of objectification whatsoever, and according to Waldenfels, like Buber and Husserl, the time expresses itself in the actualization of present, raising potentialization to the constitution of personality, tracing meaning, which is done intersubjectively, being it implicated in Husserl, shared in Waldenfels, and divinely giving in Buber.

NOTES

[1] Much of the work of the *Frankfurt School* was just a trying of clarification of the intricacies that the reason used to dominate and exploit the man himself and the nature. See Wiggerhaus, Rolf. *The Frankfurt School: its history, theories, and political significance*. Trans. by Micheal Robertson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994, pp. 597-609.

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Book Reviews

Un ouvrage philosophique marquant pour la constitution de la modernité dans l'Est de l'Europe

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Démètre Cantemir, *L'Image infigurable de la Science Sacro-Sainte*, Paris, Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2016, 748 pages.

Keywords: Démètre Cantemir, image, time, symbol, truth

L'ouvrage a été publié sous la direction de Vlad Alexandrescu, édition critique de Dan Sluşanschi et Liviu Stroia, traduction, introduction, glossaire, notes, index et bibliographie de Vlad Alexandrescu. C'est une édition bilingue, latin-français, parue dans la collection *Sources Classiques*, dirigée par Philippe Sellier et Dominique Descotes. Dans sa forme originaire, le traité a été rédigé en latin, à Constantinople, en 1700, sous le titre *Sacro-Sanctae Scientiae Indepingibilis Imago*. Il a bénéficie déjà d'une traduction en italien (Dimitrie Cantemir, *L'immagine irraffigurabile della Scienza Sacro-Santa*, a cura di Vlad Alexandrescu, traduzione di Igor Agostini e Vlad Alexandrescu, Introduzione e note di Vlad Alexandrescu, edizione critica del testo latino di Dan Sluşanschi e Liviu Stroia, Le Monnier Università, 2012). L'ouvrage présente non seulement un projet important de métaphysique et de philosophie chrétienne, mais aussi une manière tout à part de communication culturelle entre les milieux intellectuels de l'Europe de l'Est (en particulier des Pays Roumains, de Grèce et de Constantinople) et ceux de l'Occident. En définitive, il démontre clairement que la modernité européenne revêtait plusieurs formes et qu'elle avait

marqué en profondeur, avec des différences considérables, l'espace historique où Cantemir avait vécu.

Disons maintenant quelques mots à propos de l'auteur. Démètre Cantemir (1675-1723) est connu en Occident surtout grâce à son ouvrage *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de l'Empire Ottoman*, ouvrage posthume, paru en 1743, à Paris. Fils du Prince régnant Constantin Cantemir (1688-1691), il a étudié à Iassy et à Constantinople (entre 1688 et 1710, sauf quelques interruptions). Il a eu comme professeurs des grands érudits de l'époque et il est entré en contact avec un grand nombre de savants et de théologiens, de diplômés et d'hommes politiques d'Europe. En tant que Prince régnant de la Moldavie (1710-1711), il a essayé de libérer le pays de la suzeraineté ottomane et de conclure une alliance profitable avec la Russie de Pierre le Grand. Malheureusement, le combat de Stănileşti (1711) finit par la victoire des armées turques, et ainsi Cantemir perd-il le trône de la Moldavie et se voit obligé de se réfugier en Russie pour tout le reste de sa vie. En tant que savant et lettré, il s'est fait remarquer dans les domaines de la philosophie (métaphysique, morale, logique, anthropologie et philosophie de l'histoire), théologie, histoire des religions, notions sur des confessions religieuses, histoire locale et continentale, littérature, géographie et monographie culturelle, linguistique, ethnographie et études orientales, théorie de la musique. Parmi ses œuvres, on compte: *Divanul, sau Gâlceava înţeleptului cu lumea, sau Giudeţul sufletului cu trupul* („Le Divan ou la querelle du Sage avec le Monde, ou le jugement de l'Âme avec le Corps" 1698), *Compendiolum universae logices institutiones* (1700), *Sacro-Sanctae Scientiae Indepingibilis Imago* (1700), *Istoria ieroglifică* („L'Histoire hiéroglyphique", 1703-1705), *Monarchiarum physica examinatio* (1714), *Incrementa atque decrementa aulae othomanicae* (1714-1716), *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1715), *Historia Moldo-Vlachica* (1717-1723), *Vita Constantini Cantemyrii, cognomeno senis, Moldaviae Principis* (1716-1718), *Loca obscura in catechisi quae ab anonimo authore slaveno idiomate edita Pervoe ucenie otrokom intitulata est* (1721), *Systema de religione et statu Imperii turcici*, 1722). En 1714, Démètre Cantemir devient membre de la *Societas Scientiarum Brandenburgica*, la future Académie de Berlin. Il

entretient des relations épistolaires avec Leibniz et d'autres savants de l'époque, et son œuvre scientifique a des échos dans l'esprit de grands érudits, étant bien appréciée, selon la remarque d'Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, par Voltaire, Montesquieu, Gibbon, Winckelmann, Burke et certains des encyclopédistes, Byron, Chateaubriand, Hugo et autres.

L'ouvrage en question, *L'Image infigurable de la Science Sacro-Sainte*, constitue un projet vraiment téméraire, d'une envergure tout remarquable même à cette époque-là, significatif du point de vue théologique, métaphysique, anthropologique et éthique. Le contenu est vaste : après une lettre à l'érudit Jérémie Cacavelas et une invocation adressée à Dieu le Père, viennent les six livres : I. *Principes sacrées de la Théologo-physique. Préfiguration de la Science sacrée*; II. *La Création sacrée de l'Univers*; III. *Le cours de la Création. C'est-á-dire l'Ouvrage de la Nature*; IV. *Du Temps. Où il est question du Mouvement, du Lieu, de la Durée et de l'Éternité*; V. *De la Vie. Où il est question de la forme quadruple des choses*; VI. *Explication de l'apparence de la Science Sacrée. Où l'on montre la conservation des choses et le fonctionnement de l'âme libre.* Selon sa propre affirmation, face à ces véritables mystères, il se voit lui-même tel un peintre d'une audace extrême, qui cherche à figurer une image infigurable comme telle (*indepingibilis imago*). Des polémiques importantes du XVIIe siècle y sont reprises, concernant le sens originaire de la vérité, la relation entre la connaissance contemplative (réalisée par *intellectus*) et la connaissance discursive (empirique et démonstrative), le sens littéral et celui spirituel dans la connaissance, la providence et l'ordre qui est au monde, la condition humaine, la liberté et les limites de la volonté humaine. Cantemir assume ouvertement la doctrine chrétienne orthodoxe, dont il cherche parfois la confirmation dans la savante culture de la nouvelle époque. Il manifeste à la fois une constante ouverture vers la tradition occidentale (autant ancienne, stoïcienne et néoplatonicienne, que moderne, scientifique, théosophique et philosophique). Il cultive le modèle chrétien de rationalité du monde, en invoquant toujours la pensée symbolique et apophatique propre à la tradition patristique orientale et se montre critique envers le néo-

aristotélisme et la scholastique tardive, ainsi qu'envers ces approches-là qui, comme celle de l'École de Padoue, ne sont fondées que sur l'évidence empirique et démonstrative de la vérité. Quant à lui, il s'appuie surtout sur ces recherches-là scientifiques et philosophiques qui lui apparaissent comme étant en concordance avec la doctrine chrétienne (par exemple, celles de Jean Baptiste van Helmont). Cela nous dit que la modernité culturelle se constitue-t-elle aussi autrement que par la voie impliquant le phénomène de la sécularisation radicale; pour certains milieux historiques de l'Est de l'Europe au moins, elle n'exclut pas la référence positive à la tradition testamentaire et à la patristique orientale.

Cantemir commence par parler de la vérité révélée, unitaire, simple et la même, et à la fois du rapport entre la connaissance contemplative – à sens directeur – et celle discursive (empirique ou logique). Il expose ensuite, sur le fil du texte testamentaire, l'histoire sacrée de la Création et le devenir des créatures, la chute et le salut de l'homme, la condition historique et eschatologique de celui-ci. Finalement, il s'occupe de questions de nature métaphysique et éthique, en parlant de mouvement, lieu, temps et éternité, de vie universelle et de vie particulière, de la „forme quadruple des choses", de providence et d'ordre, de la libre volonté de l'individu, de la possibilité du bien et du mal, de fortune et destinée, hasard et arrangement des choses existantes. Certaines idées et intuitions qu'il développe méritent toute l'attention de l'homme contemporain. Par exemple, dans le premier livre, où il traite de la possibilité et du sens de la connaissance, les termes les plus fréquents de la discussion – impuissance et maladie, blessure et diagnostic, métamorphose de soi et guérison – nous disent que la science cherchée a avant tout un sens existentiel. Elle n'est pas seulement une recherche empirique et logique, un simple effort humain ; celui qui la réduit à cet effort renferme la vérité entre les limites de la raison humaine. Il est pareil au peintre qui, tout en désirant faire le portrait de la vérité sacrée, ne fait qu'un simple autoportrait ; son regard ne s'arrête que sur ce qui est visible et calculable, ce qui peut être représenté par les sens et la logique. Cantemir cherche à comprendre les phénomènes de la nature

non seulement par eux-mêmes ou par leurs relations réciproques, mais dans l'économie plus complexe de la création. Plus que des phénomènes naturels, ils sont à la fois des mystères („toute création est mystère en vertu du principe surnaturel et on les représente toujours comme des mystères dans l'ordre de leur conservation"; p. 61). D'autant plus, l'homme, par sa nature, représente un grand mystère („comme annoncé avant tous les autres, postérieur à la création de tout, il les précède quand même par la noblesse de sa condition"). Cantemir se met des questions qu'une part des philosophes et scientifiques modernes ne se posent plus : comment reconnaître les œuvres divines lorsqu'on parle des œuvres de la nature? Comment conjuguer le naturel et le surnaturel et comment avoir l'évidence de quelque chose de mystérieux dans le monde du créé ? Il y des concepts (nature, monde, homme, raison, vérité, connaissance, science, évidence) qui peuvent ainsi se révéler un sens plus vaste que celui délimité dans l'attitude analytique-expérimentale. Dans le troisième livre, lorsqu'il parle de la façon humaine d'être, Cantemir expose trois définitions de l'homme, théologique, philosophique et scientifique (naturaliste), en essayant de voir dans quelle mesure chacune d'entre elles est justifiée. En créant l'homme à son image, Dieu l'a défini déjà d'emblée. Mais, on le sait, les penseurs grecs anciens allaient concevoir une définition philosophique de l'homme : l'homme est un être raisonnable (ou, dans une autre variante : l'homme est un être raisonnable et mortel). Il existe aussi, toutefois, une „définition physique" de l'homme, qui ne le considère que comme un simple être vivant, bien que plus adapté que les autres, possesseur de sens et d'une intelligence plus évolués de certains points de vue. C'est une définition qui, chose pas surprenante, gagne de plus en plus de terrain dans la pensée moderne. Dans le quatrième livre, Cantemir constate qu'une discussion philosophique à propos du temps implique sans faute trois termes : éternité (originaire et créatrice), temps universel (comme miroir de l'éternité) et mode temporel fini (sous forme de succession, intervalle, alternance, moment etc.). On n'arrive pas à comprendre le temps sans avoir saisi au préalable l'éternité, on ne saurait pas décrire la durée particulière des choses sans connaître déjà le caractère

universel du temps. Il faut reconnaître d'abord quelque chose de créateur, de paradigmatique, donc l'éternité même (*aeternitas*), pour pouvoir ensuite parler de „siècle" (*saeculum*) et d'„âge", „âge du monde", époque, génération, et finalement de durée temporelle, succession ou alternance. Et cela est valable pour la vie aussi : il faut considérer d'abord la vie universelle (en fait, la source divine de la vie elle-même ; cf. *Jean* 14, 6), pour pouvoir ensuite parler de la vie humaine, d'une certaine vie particulière et de la manière dont celle-ci se déroule.

On peut observer quelques aspects spécifiques au discours philosophique moderne. Mais, chez Cantemir, ils sont différents par rapport à ceux qu'on retrouve d'habitude dans les œuvres de Galilée, de Descartes ou de Leibniz. Par exemple, Cantemir traite, dans le premier livre, de questions de nature gnoséologique et épistémologique (la possibilité de connaître, le sens de la vérité et son évidence, les chances de l'homme d'accéder à la vérité comme telle, des méthodes de connaître). Mais il considère qu'afin de comprendre des pareilles questions il convient d'invoquer avant tout la vérité révélée : il mentionne l'événement biblique de la création de l'homme et celui de la chute, pour comprendre le passage d'une connaissance paradisiaque, purement contemplative, à une connaissance „temporelle", discursive. Cette dernière peut trouver sa place et sa justification dans la mesure où elle s'ouvre vers la connaissance contemplative et en unité participative avec celle-ci. Certes, on pourrait reconnaître dans la thématique de l'ouvrage de Cantemir la structure quadruple de la métaphysique moderne (avec ses expressions consacrées: psychologie rationnelle, cosmologie rationnelle, théologie rationnelle et ontologie). Mais des différences significatives sont immédiatement visibles : la psychologie est plutôt une noologie (du gr. *nous*, en latin *intellectus*, qui exprime la faculté supérieure de contemplation) ; la cosmologie est reconstruite selon le modèle de la cosmogonie testamentaire et suivant de près les ouvrages patristiques à l'intention d'un Hexaemeron ; la théologie invoquée premièrement est celle révélée, mystique, car il n'est que rarement question de la théologie naturelle ou de celle rationnelle ; l'ontologie ne représente pas une connaissance indépendante, parce que l'„être" signifie soit la

nature d'un créé, soit un nom divin, incompréhensible ou ineffable en tant que tel – et pas du tout une entité neutre ou commune. Une marque discursive moderne, c'est l'explicitation même, fréquente, des trois niveaux du langage où la discussion se situe : le langage biblique (avec sa reprise et son entendement patristique), le langage philosophique (de souche grecque, parfois considéré comme mythique) et le langage scientifique, tel que l'auteur le retrouve dans certains ouvrages de son époque. Cantemir ne manque pas de préciser, toujours, ce que correspond, du langage philosophique ou du langage moderne, scientifique, au langage biblique, notamment dans le deuxième livre (*La Création sacrée de l'Univers*) et dans le troisième (*Le cours de la Création. C'est-á-dire l'Ouvrage de la Nature*). L'intention de fond est d'affirmer, à toute occasion, l'unité originaire de la vérité et l'unité de la connaissance humaine, dans le contexte où il observe qu'au nouvel âge cette unité devient soit vulnérable, soit ignorée. En effet, Cantemir a considéré que, dans ces nouveaux temps, l'unité entre la connaissance théologique, la connaissance philosophique et la connaissance scientifique représente un impératif plus important que d'autres, car son importance est, finalement, d'ordre moral et existentiel.

Il convient de souligner l'effort et l'adresse des auteurs de cette édition critique (Vlad Alexandrescu, Dan Slușanschi et Liviu Stroia) ainsi que des éditeurs parisiens. L'ouvrage est accompagné d'une excellente étude introductive signée par Vlad Alexandrescu, un chercheur déjà connu pour ses études exigeantes et de grande actualité sur la modernité européenne. Ample et érudite, l'étude introductive offre un grand nombre de références culturelles et historiques, ainsi qu'une vaste perspective sur la conception philosophique de Cantemir. Elle s'ouvre par une série de mentions relatives à la vie et à l'œuvre du philosophe, pour présenter ensuite la découverte par séquences du manuscrit (pp. 12-23), la composition de celui-ci, les dates d'identification et sa chronologie (pp. 23-46), le milieu intellectuel dans lequel Cantemir se forme, écrit et communique (pp. 46-51), l'intervalle de rédaction de cette œuvre (pp. 51-64), le destin herméneutique du texte, avec la

lecture et les interprétations qui lui ont faites Grigore Tocilescu, Nicolae Iorga, Ilie Minea, Richard Wahle, Nicolae Bagdasar, Pompiliu Constantinescu, P. P. Panaitescu, Lucian Blaga, Dan Bădărău, I. D. Lăudat, Petru Vaida, Virgil Cândea et autres (pp. 51-72), les sources intellectuelles et spirituelles de Cantemir (73-80). On expose ensuite la structure de l'ouvrage et l'on analyse attentivement chaque chapitre séparément (pp. 80-123). Vlad Alexandrescu souligne, par exemple, des analogies avec – et des différences par rapport à – les *Méditations* cartésiennes, l'importance de certaines considérations de nature méthodologique et épistémologique, le fond biblique et patristique de l'ensemble de la discussion, l'invocation récurrente des œuvres de Denys l'Aréopagite, la forte et constante polémique avec les traditions aristotélique et scholastique, des références à la littérature stoïcienne et néoplatonicienne, la fréquente revendication de passages de Van Helmont, la référence critique à certaines tendances philosophiques, théologiques et scientifiques modernes.

Concluons par souligner à nouveau le caractère remarquable de cette édition bilingue de l'ouvrage de jeunesse de Démètre Cantemir, *Sacro-Sanctae Scientiae Indepingibilis Imago*. Elle apparaît, de plus, dans une excellente forme éditoriale ; c'est un beau livre, attractif, semblable à une œuvre d'art et, sans doute, utile à ceux qui, de nos jours, essaient de mieux comprendre la manière complexe et diverse dont la modernité historique et culturelle européenne s'est constituée.

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Malebranche ou la présence immédiate de l'Être

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Alexandra Roux, *L'ontologie de Malebranche*, Paris : Hermann, 2015

Ce livre d'Alexandra Roux, spécialiste de Schelling, vient combler un manque dans les études malebranchistes, à savoir la réception de l'oratorien chez les philosophes idéalistes allemands.

Prenant comme heureux prétexte et comme occasion un texte tardif de F.W. Schelling intitulé *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie* (soutenu à Berlin entre 1847 et 1852) et inclus dans l'ouvrage *Enleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie* où l'oratorien est mentionné comme une étape majeure du développement de la philosophie comme science rationnelle pure, Alexandra Roux s'intéresse non seulement à l'analyse que fait Schelling de Malebranche, mais aussi à l'évaluation que celle-ci recèle.

En effet, l'enjeu du livre gravite autour de la question suivante : quelle place occupe Malebranche dans le destin de l'ontologie classique (p. 14) ? S'il s'agit d'un « pas en avant » (*ein Schritt*) et d'un « virage » (*ein Wendepunkt*), comme le soutient Schelling lui-même, il faudrait en discerner toutes les conséquences en revenant non seulement au texte de Schelling (qui mobilise, dans une attitude également élogieuse et critique, pas moins de quatre œuvres majeures de l'oratorien), mais surtout aux écrits de Malebranche et à son rapport avec la scolastique (surtout saint Thomas d'Aquin) ou avec ses

contemporains (Spinoza et Arnauld), afin d'en mesurer le bien-fondé ou l'inexactitude de l'analyse schellingienne.

L'hommage que Schelling rend au Père Malebranche pour avoir soutenu que *Dieu est l'Être* permet donc à Alexandra Roux d'évaluer dans son livre :

- la « preuve ontologique » de Malebranche et sa nouveauté par rapport à Descartes ;

- la thèse d'un Malebranche « univociste », contre laquelle de puissantes objections sont proposées ;

- le délicat problème de l'*identité* entre Dieu et l'Être et d'une position *au-delà* de l'Être que le Dieu malebranchiste occuperait ;

- enfin, le concept de *participation* malebranchiste (par rapport à celle thomiste) et, partant, ses conséquences sur celui de *création*.

Ce sont les centres de gravité de ce livre qui compte presque 300 pages, dont un prologue (qui amorce la problématique malebranchiste du rapport entre Dieu et l'Être et des « interrogations franchement théologiques » (p. 9) qui émergent de la *vision en Dieu*), un épilogue (consacré à la solution métaphysique par laquelle Schelling refuse d'assimiler, comme l'avait fait Malebranche, la Sagesse et le Verbe) et, déployées entre ces deux jalons, deux grandes parties (la première : *De l'Être à l'Être par excellence* ; la deuxième : *Dieu et la création*) dont chacune comporte trois chapitres. Il s'agit donc d'un ouvrage structurellement très équilibré, où les problèmes suscités par les propos schellingiens sont examinés tant par le retour attentif aux écrits de l'oratorien, que par une confrontation de ceux-ci avec les positions d'autres auteurs classiques (Aristote, saint Thomas, Descartes, Arnauld, Spinoza) ou avec les interprétations modernes (E. Gilson, John F. Wippel, J.-C. Bardout, Desmond Connell).

Il faut souligner que l'arrière-plan herméneutique du livre est ouvertement tiré au clair par Alexandra Roux elle-même : « saisir à chaque fois l'intention qui préside au formules, rapports, mises en rapport du philosophes français, mais sans présupposer quelque impensé de l'œuvre » (p. 17). Peu ou pas du tout séduite par le modèle d'analyse pratiquée par des exégètes et philosophes modernes comme F. Alquié, J.-L. Marion ou J.-C. Bardout qui se sont penchés sur l'œuvre de Malebranche dans le but « … moins de savoir ce qu'il

[Malebranche] enseigne expressément, et parfois sans cohérence, *que de découvrir où mènent ces principes* » (Alquié 1974, 428) et manifestant plutôt une affinité de pensée avec des exégètes comme Gouhier et Gueroult qui ont su découvrir des « tendances » ou des « structures » de la pensée malebranchiste, Alexandra Roux livre son analyse sans parti pris herméneutique, préférant plutôt faire confiance à l'intention déclarée de l'auteur examiné qu'à la spéculation sur les conséquences des thèses que celui-ci profère. On ne peut que saluer cette décision, parce qu'elle permet de mieux saisir la nouveauté de certaines positions malebranchistes. Peser les décisions sensibles de Nicolas Malebranche à la lumière d'un auteur comme Schelling qui mélange, dans ses propos, louange et critique, approbation et prise de distance, puis revenir à la théologie classique afin de mesurer les nouveautés de la pensée de l'oratorien et, en même temps, prendre aussi en compte les analyses des exégètes plus soucieux de repérer « une avenue vers l'univocité » chez Malebranche (p. 123), cela ne peut se faire que si l'on cherche une position neutre, qui évalue un auteur en prenant appui uniquement sur ce qu'il écrit de sa propre main. Toutefois, à un autre niveau, on peut se demander si certaines thèses « sensibles » du système occasionaliste possèdent uniquement le rôle que le Père de l'Oratoire leur prêtait et si, en dépit des « intentions précises du philosophe français dans l'usage récurrent » (p. 17), des conséquences *inattendues* n'en découlent avec nécessité, obligeant Malebranche à assumer des positions de plus en plus audacieuses, qui ne peuvent s'excepter à une évaluation théologique.

Mais cela excède le propos d'Alexandra Roux et relève d'un autre type d'analyse, qui n'est pas du tout agréée par l'auteur. Evaluer le rôle de l'oratorien dans l'histoire de l'ontologie et surtout « faire le point sur l'ontologisme de Malebranche afin d'en limiter sensiblement le sens » (p. 154) oblige à une démarche moins « spéculative » (dans le sens péjoratif du terme), dont Alexandra Roux s'acquitte avec succès.

La première partie du livre traite la question de l'Être sous trois aspects : l'Être en tant que nom divin chez Malebranche (on a droit aussi à une comparaison avec la signification de ce nom divin chez saint Thomas d'Aquin), l'Être

en tant que genre suprême et l'Être comme « évidence » ou comme « présence » de Dieu.

De cette première partie, deux aspects décisifs méritent d'être signalés :

Le premier concerne le sillage résolument augustinien dans lequel Malebranche, interprétant *Exode* III, 14, se place dans cette « tradition de lecture où c'est l'ontologie qui se donne libre cours et fait l'économie de l'ipséité divine » (p. 29). C'est grâce à cette décision augustinienne que, dans les *Entretiens sur la métaphysique et la religion*, Malebranche posera la parfaite équivalence entre la définition de Dieu comme Être et le nom par lequel Il s'est défini lui-même en parlant à Moïse. Or, il nous semble que les discussions approfondies engagées par Alexandra Roux avec d'autres exégètes contemporains concernant un Malebranche univociste ou non (pages 128 à 142) ne devraient pas faire économie de cet aspect crucial qui, pour l'oratorien lui-même, joue le rôle de suprême argument théologique en faveur du choix de l'Être comme le nom divin par excellence. La question de l'univocité de l'*être* (avec minuscule) ne devrait pas, à notre avis, être analysée en dehors de la discussion sur l'univocité de l'*Être* (majuscule), tenu par les hommes pour le nom divin par excellence parce qu'il fut originairement assumé par Dieu lui-même. Suffit-il de constater l'ancrage de Malebranche dans cette tradition de facture augustinienne qui, par dans la traduction « Je suis Celui qui *est* » a « perdu de vue le dynamisme du verbe hébreu au profit de la connotation statique de l'Être gréco-latin » (p. 29) pour soutenir que l'*Être* peut adéquatement signifier, en même temps, « la parole biblique et son répondant strictement conceptuel » (p. 33) ? En d'autres termes : l'*Être* comme nom divin utilisé par la philosophie peut-il invoquer à bon droit la légitimité biblique d'une prétendue auto-dénomination divine ? Ou, dans les termes de Malebranche lui-même, peut-on « mesurer par elle [l'idée de l'Être] la Divinité qui se présente sans cesse à nous ? » (*Entretiens sur la métaphysique et la religion*, II, § 7).

On aurait donc apprécié (mais cela reste une option herméneutique à titre personnel) une jonction entre les réflexions solidement argumentées sur la nouveauté de la preuve ontologique chez Malebranche (pages 42 à 64) et les deux brefs et percutants sous-chapitres *Comment l'Être nous*

affecte et *Indétermination et positivité* (pages 148 à 152) où les phrases « l'essence de Dieu est d'Être non un esprit mais l'Être, *c'est en tant qu'Être que Dieu est son propre archétype* » (p. 151, nous soulignons) et « dire que Dieu est l'Être, c'est l'appeler par *son* nom » (p. 151, l'auteur souligne) réclameraient ne fût-ce qu'une brève évaluation théologique, afin de déterminer si la preuve ontologique malebranchiste fonctionnerait sans cette identité assumée mais non moins questionnable entre Dieu et l'Être.

Le deuxième aspect est le rapprochement entre la notion de l'Être et celle d'infini. C'est donc contre l'interprétation de J.-C. Bardout, qui parle d'un « affaiblissement du sens de l'infini », qu'Alexandra Roux avance la thèse d'une équivalence entre *l'infini* et *l'Être tout court* ou *l'Être en général* (p. 136). Grâce à l'égalité entre l'infini et l'Être, la « vision en Dieu » peut jouer son rôle central dans le système occasionaliste et la distinction (attaquée par Arnauld) entre « voir Dieu en lui-même » et « voir les créatures en Dieu » peut être défendue. L'idée d'infini, la seule qui peut « contenir » Dieu (n'étant autre chose que Dieu) interdit, selon Alexandra Roux, de parler d'une « représentation » de Dieu dans le sens habituel du terme, car Dieu n'a pas une idée différente de lui-même qui puisse le représenter. Par conséquent, la certitude de « voir l'infini » (ou, selon Malebranche : « voir Dieu en lui-même ») joue un rôle décisif dans le cadre de la preuve dite « de simple vue » puisque la visibilité *immédiate* et *directe* de l'infini viendrait affirmer la preuve ontologique, et non pas affaiblir le sens de l'infini.

Dans la deuxième partie du livre, l'enjeu majeur est de déterminer si Dieu, tout étant l'Être, n'est *que* l'Être ou bien s'il est *au-delà* de l'Être. L'opinion (argumentée) de l'auteur, qui lit attentivement le § 5 du texte schellingien *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie,* est que « l'on doit à Malebranche d'avoir au moins pensé, au moins envisagé, c'est que Dieu étant l'Être, il ne s'y réduit pas » (p. 157) et que « si l'on veut donc que Dieu existe assurément pour la philosophie, il convient de ne pas confondre Dieu avec l'Être, il convient de penser que Dieu est *plus que* l'Être » (p. 158, l'auteur souligne). Le Dieu malebranchiste, tout en étant l'Être participable, est aussi celui qui n'a *aucun rapport* avec ses créatures, étant l'infini, comme on peut le lire dans le *Traité de la nature et de la grâce* et dans

son dernier ouvrage, les *Réflexions sur la promotion physique.* Ainsi peut-on défendre la fameuse et controversée distinction entre « vision *en* Dieu » et « vision *de* Dieu » (les pages 162 à 165), dont Malebranche trouve les antécédents doctrinaux chez saint Thomas (p. 165) et qui l'autorise à « maintenir un écart entre Dieu et le monde, ou entre son essence et son imitation » (p. 173). Or, bien loin d'être « stérile », comme le soutient Schelling, cette distinction permet de plaider en faveur d'une certaine forme d'*apophatisme malebranchiste.* Alexandra Roux n'utilise jamais dans le livre le terme « apophatisme », mais elle n'est pas loin de soutenir, avec de riches arguments, cette thèse radicale, lorsqu'elle parle d'un « Dieu incompréhensible » (voir les denses pages de 189 à 222), s'opposant ouvertement à l'analyse classique de Desmond Connell (*The vision in God. Malebranche's Scholastic Sources*, 1967). A notre avis, ces pages constituent le point fort de la deuxième partie du livre et elles peuvent être résumées par la phrase suivante : « *Dieu ne se laisse pas réduire à ce qu'il voit et nous fait voir en lui* » (p. 204, phrase soulignée par Alexandra Roux elle-même, qui reconnaît aussitôt qu'il s'agit d'une « réponse qui, manifestement, ne convainc pas tout le monde et encore aujourd'hui »). S'il est vrai que, selon Connell, la thèse de la vision en Dieu s'appuie sur le modèle suarézien du « savoir angélique » (p. 208) ou bien s'apparente à un « angélisme épistémologique » (p. 214) il n'est pas moins vrai, selon Alexandra Roux, que « l'essence inaccessible de la Divinité est maintenue à distance de sa propre existence au sens où elle *déborde* notre intuition de l'Être » (p. 215, l'auteur souligne). Il y aurait donc chez Malebranche, deux « trames » dont l'une est plus « ontologique » et l'autre « d'inspiration plutôt théologique » qui font de sorte que, dans la vision en Dieu, la *présence* de Dieu n'épuise pas l'*Être* de Dieu, mais « rend compte d'une présence qui est celle d'un Sujet dont l'essence se dérobe aux lumières qu'il dispense » (p. 215).

Le dernier chapitre et l'Épilogue gravitent autour du problème de la création qui resterait, selon Schelling, inexpliquée dans les œuvres du Père Malebranche. Est-il vrai que chez ce dernier, le passage de l'omni-puissance divine à la réalité ne suscite aucun intérêt philosophique particulier, comme l'affirme Schelling ? C'est le moment, pour Alexandra Roux, de revenir une dernière fois à l'œuvre de Thomas d'Aquin

et de mesurer l'écart creusé par la théorie malebranchiste de la participation des créatures non pas à la *puissance*, mais à la *sagesse* de Dieu, c'est-à-dire au Verbe, qui joue le rôle de « essence de Dieu, en tant qu'elle est *participable* par les créatures » (p. 233, l'auteur souligne). Tout en reconnaissant le bien-fondé du reproche schellingien (p. 234), Alexandra Roux cherche avec acribie dans les textes malebranchistes les rares indices d'une possible réponse que Malebranche suggèrerait (les pages 240 à 252).

Le livre est clos par l'Epilogue où il est question de la réponse proprement schellingienne à la question de la création et par l'apparition d'un terme concurrent du *Verbe* malebranchiste, à savoir la *Sophia* schellingienne, véritable instance qui, tout en suscitant le passage de l'omni-puissance à la réalité, entretient un rapport étrange, voire hérétique (du point de vue théologique) avec le Dieu trinitaire, Alexandra Roux signalant non seulement l'articulation entre Sagesse éternelle et Logos créateur, mais aussi la « tendance sabellienne » de Schelling (p. 275), ceci étant le prix payé pour expliquer le *Fiat* créateur.

L'ontologie de Malebranche est un livre voué à avoir une place sûre dans la bibliographie malebranchiste. Ecrit avec l'intention de toujours chercher l'évaluation la plus équilibrée, qui rende justice aux intentions l'oratorien, il est d'autant plus méritoire qu'il fait preuve de modération même lorsque Alexandra Roux marque ouvertement sa rupture avec certains courants plus connus de l'exégèse malebranchiste contemporaine.

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A Mystical Anthropology: Introduction into the thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae

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Sandu Frunză, *O Antropologie mistică. Introducere în gândirea părintelui Stăniloae* [*A Mystical Anthropology. Introduction into the thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*], 2nd edition. Bucureşti: Editura Eikon, 2016.

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Known and appreciated both in the Theological and Philosophical space for his research, Professor Sandu Frunză from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences from "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca, has become a specialist in the thinking thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, one of the most important Orthodox Theologians from the entire world (through works like: *Experienţa religioasă în gîndirea lui Dumitru Stăniloae. O etică relaţională* [*The religious experience in the thinking thought of Dumitru Stăniloae. A relational ethics*], Cluj-Napoca: Dacia Press, 2001; "Profilul dinamic al comunicării în ontologia creştină a Părintelui Stăniloae ["The dynamic profile of communication in the Christian ontology of Father Stăniloae"], in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Trăirea lui Dumnezeu în Ortodoxie* [*The experience of God in Orthodoxy*], Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1993: 11-30; "Pentru o antologie a iubirii" ["For an anthology of love"], in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iubirea creştină* [*Christian love*], Galaţi: Porto Franco Press, 1993, 159-174; "Realitate şi simbol" ["Reality and symbol"], in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ascetica şi Mistica Ortodoxă* (*The Orthodox Ascetical Theology and*

Mystique), Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 1993: 348-357, and *O antropologie mistică. Introducere în gândirea Părintelui Stăniloae* [*A Mystical Anthropology. Introduction into the thinking thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*], Craiova: Omniscop, Press, 1996). The last of these writings was reprinted, in a new and improved edition, by Eikon Publishing House from Bucharest, in 2016. Its re-publication is the subject of the present review.

Written in an attractive way, the book creates a bridge for the dialogue between Christian spirituality and philosophical investigation. Equipped with the competence of the latter, but also well-documented with respect to the former, the author brings into attention not only the biography and the personality of the Theologian Dumitru Stăniloae or his works through the specific investigation of a certain Theological issue, which is common among other researchers. Instead, he tries to highlight and analyse subjects that have things in common with philosophy.

Segmented in five chapters, the book is accompanied by a foreword belonging to the author (pp. 7-12), a few words written by Professor Aurel Codoban for the 1st edition (pp. 13-16) and an index of terms and names (pp. 171-176). The introductory and motivational part contains, besides the evocation of the Great Theologian, a few words about the author's contribution to the valorisation of his works and some thoughts about his demarche and its importance. Sandu Frunză shows that by studying Stăniloae's works, he became interested in relational ethics (p. 11), and classifies his teachings as a "permanent authentic challenge to find yourself in the world" (p. 11).

Subsequently, professor Codoban appreciates the author's contribution to the understanding of Father Stăniloae's ideas in a hermeneutic way, meaning that the "lecture is seen as an interpretation" (p. 14), and underlines the personal accent that Sandu Frunză brings to the investigation of the Theologian's works.

Structured, as we have already said, in five thematic unites, the book looks into the issue of communion (pp. 23-52), seen by the Romanian priest as a fundamental component of

Orthodox Theology, the issue of persons and their Theological and Ontological implications (pp. 53-66), and that of communication between people, based on the virtue of love (pp. 67-94). The author also investigates in depth the anthropological aspects highlighted by Dumitru Stăniloae in his researches (pp. 95-114), after which he concludes by inter-correlating all the mentioned subjects, in an interesting essay about the way of understanding value from a Christian perspective (pp. 115-160).

Useful both for specialised and unspecialised readers, the research contains, in the first chapter, a unit with dogmatic explanations (pp. 23-31). There, the author emphasises the meaning of terms like *person, love, communication* and s. o. as seen by Dumitru Stăniloae and insists on the link that exists between these "keywords" of Eastern Theology. Speaking about the link between love and communication in the Holy Trinity, he shows that:

> "The highest expression of communication is considered love, which, paradoxically, enables the union of the selves, without leading to their identification. The work of each person of the Trinity in the World is understood as a call to love between people and God. Love is not perceived only as simple gift and as a way of implementing mutual acceptance, but as a deeper ontological act. The triadic formula proposed by Orthodoxy is the matrix that we try to build on, within the mystery of interpersonal love" (p. 27).

The discussion is resumed and deepened in the chapter dedicated to the triadic structure of the person (pp. 54-59): starting from the idea that man was created in the image of God, Sandu Frunză resumes the main aspects of anthropology seen in the thinking thought of Father Stăniloae, as a call to reflect the Trinitarian relationship in man's life. This creates the context for him to speak about the Ontological break caused by sin (pp. 59-60), but also about the need for inner purification, attained in Christ and in the Resurrection (pp. 61-65). Linking "the word" as an instrument of communication and the instrumentalization of language, through the original sin and the work of Christ, he shows, starting from the ideas of Father Stăniloae, that:

"Jesus Christ comes to re-establish the unifying function of communication, both at the level of interpersonal relationships and at the level of the profound meaning of the world. According to the Romanian Theologian, before His incarnation, Jesus Christ, as the source of human words, communicates them in a non-sonorous way, through prophetic voices, while after His incarnation He uses sonorous words. In each of these cases, He mysteriously lives in these words, as the ultimate unifying power" (p. 64).

Likewise, the author presents the important aspects emphasised by Father Stăniloae in his writings about the link between love and creation, the restoration of love, Christ as the archetype of perfect love (pp. 79-80), the liturgical dimension of love (pp. 83-86), its mystical dimension (pp. 87-94), anthropology and s. o.

Through his work, Sandu Frunză is not only bringing in front of the reader a new and personal interpretation of the Theological and Philosophical thinking thought of the Romanian writer Dumitru Stăniloae, but he is also making an interesting contribution to the understanding of the Theologian's manner of thinking, in a way that brings together philosophical hermeneutics and theological instruments of research. This is the reason why the re-publication of his work is an important editorial event that must not only be emphasised and welcomed, but also understood to its full extent.

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