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Special issue devoted to the topic “The dialogue between analytic and continental philosophy”

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CONTINENTAL AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Contemporary philosophy has been broadly conceived as divided into two camps, analytic and continental. These two camps often ignore each other, sometimes criticize each other, and most rarely discuss matters with each other in a friendly and constructive spirit. There are various reasons for this situation. Some of the reasons are historical, having to do with the unfortunate developments between the two World Wars that stopped the dialogue and communication between various philosophical schools in Germany and Central Europe. The gap went on widening, and now we have to deal with it.

However, there are exceptions.

On the topical side, there is already a fledgling tradition of dialogue in various areas. For instance:

- ✓ In philosophy of mind and philosophy of psychology there is work being done in mediating between Husserlian phenomenological approach on the one hand and the approaches of cognitive science and analytic philosophy of mind on the other. Shaun Gallagher is one of the exemplary authors doing such a crossing-boundary scholarly work.

- ✓ In philosophy of science there is a beginning of a dialogue between a more hermeneutically oriented approach and the traditional philosophy of science. An exemplary work is the 206 volume of Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science devoted to “Hermeneutics and Science”
- ✓ In political philosophy there are authors who combine the tradition of German idealism with inspiration from Rawls and Scanlon

The philosophical situation in the Balkans has always been characterized by day to day contacts and collaboration between philosophers belonging to different schools and orientations. We see this as an opportunity for our journal: why not extend this spirit of tolerance and collaboration, and offer a space for dialogue between the two still antagonistic camps?

All papers in the present issue are devoted to the discussion of the above problems.

From the Editorial board

THE CONTINENTAL-ANALYTIC RIFT: A GUIDE FOR TRAVELLERS AND BRIDGE-BUILDERS

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Abstract:

The paper explores the rift between continental and analytic style of doing philosophy, looking at the following main philosophical thesis that arguably characterize the continental turn, from Hegel to post-structuralists: first, the anthropological and historical is deeply ontological (Hegel, Heidegger). Second, the central element of human mind is a-rational, it is either will, desire or affect (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche). Third, the basic reality of the world is akin to this a-rational element of human mind (Nietzsche). Fourth, the cognitive style, the language-style and the method of studying a given domain of philosopher investigates should follow the language-style and the manner of domain itself. In particular, for a-rational domains, the cognitive style and the linguistic expression should minimize the use of traditional rationalist methods of enquiry and presentation in favor of more literary ones. Fifth, philosophy has reached its end, so that philosophers should abandon the traditional philosophical reflection in favor of participating in more concrete theoretical and political practices (Marx, post-structuralist "Theory"). Any future building of continental-analytic bridges has to take into account the complexity of the rift, and the impact of the five theses on the contemporary continental thought.

Key words: continental, analytic, a-rational, end of philosophy, literary style in philosophy.

I. Introduction

At least since the middle of the last century, if not for longer, philosophy has been split into two camps: analytic and continental.¹ They differ in style of thought, in topical preferences, in the manner of presentation and in other features. Twenty years ago, for example, they also differed in the preferred languages: the first was done mostly in English, the

second predominantly in German and French. Now English has won, so at least this contrast has disappeared. The heroes on the one side of the rift are post-Kantian German Idealists, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, then phenomenologists and hermeneuticists, and finally post-structuralist French thinkers plus authors like Sloterdijk and Agamben. On the other side are thinkers like Frege, Wittgenstein, Russell, members of Vienna Circle, then Ryle, Austin, Strawson, Quine, Kripke, Rawls and Putnam.

Let me characterize briefly the two traditions, placing them within the polarity of scientific and humanistic culture. Two out of three founding fathers of analytic philosophy, Frege and Russell, saw it as clearly aligned with the scientific culture, and the third, Wittgenstein, offered a more balanced vision. All of them were both fashioning and using new mathematical-logical tools in order to ground mathematics, the queen of sciences, and Russell, together with the early Vienna Circle set out to deal with exciting new issues raised by revolutionary physics. The early positivist allergy to substantive or normative ethics, lack of interest in aesthetics, political philosophy and philosophy of history, and dismissal of "natural" language in favor of a non-natural one, grew out of this fascination with logic and scientific style. During the sixties things started changing for the better. With Rawls, normative ethics and political philosophy gained a firm footing within analytic philosophy, some time later analytic aesthetics got slowly on its way, while philosophers of language turned collectively to the idea the natural language is at least an equally interesting object of study and instrument of analysis as the formal language. The ground was laid for linking the scientific and humanistic cultures instead of ignoring one of them or even sneering at it. However, the firm commitment of analytic philosophy to the argumen-

¹ Thanks go to Stephen Mulhall, David Davies, Majda Trobok, Ana Smokrović, Nenad Smokrović and Snježana Prijić.

tative discipline, to some kind of truth-goal, to a problem-solving approach to philosophy (instead of a historical and hermeneutic one), naturalistic tendencies that insist on science-like styles of explanation, and its readiness often to extol science as paradigm of cognition and of rationality, still tie it firmly to the scientific culture.

Continental tradition was firmly associated with history, arts and humanities as well as religion throughout the nineteenth century, and it has kept these liaisons until the present time. In phenomenology, the appeal to "lived" experience, or in hermeneutics appeal to artistic and religious experience stand in stark contrast with more abstract analytic argumentation from commonly acceptable, plausible premises with the explicit aid of logic formal and/or informal.² Analytic tradition has often pursued the aim of systematic, unified explanation of fundamental metaphysical or cognitive phenomena, of broadly causal types. Continental tradition despises causality: Husserl explicitly demands setting aside ("bracketing") causal explanation, and the mainstream continental philosophers work with non-causal paradigms: understanding is the typical, but not the only alternative. This is linked with strong constructivism and anti-realism. Many naturalistically oriented analytic philosophers insist further on embedding particular causal explanations into a broader framework of commonsense and science, while their mainstream continental colleagues are skeptical of science: some seeing it "merely" as problematic in some aspects, but many treating it as a direct enemy of philosophical understanding.

The present characterizations are pretty much agreed upon in the literature. Let me quote a paragraph from B. Leiter on the analytic-continental contrast:

"Continental" philosophy (...) demarcates a group of French and German philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries. The geographical label is misleading: Carnap, Frege, and Wittgenstein were all products of the European Continent, but are *not* "Continental" philosophers.

² The common acceptability of premises and their commonsense status, have, in contrast, seemed to some authors in continental tradition as signs of their banality and ultimate falsity (Hegel), or as symptoms of bad unanimity derived from manipulation and repression (Marx and the whole genealogical tradition stemming from Nietzsche). Implausibility is often seen as braveness, daring and provocation, sign of deeper truth, or at least a shock therapy.

The foundational figure of this tradition is Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Gadamer, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, and Foucault. Continental philosophy is distinguished by its style (more literary, less analytical, sometimes just obscure), its concerns (more interested in actual political and cultural issues and, loosely speaking, the human situation and its "meaning"), and some of its substantive commitments (more self-conscious about the relation of philosophy to its historical situation)." (From his "Analytic" and "Continental" Philosophy', at his web-page)

Some people deny the split, at least verbally. I have heard North-American colleagues saying that there is no analytic and continental philosophy, only the good and the bad one. But then, when you ask about the good contemporary items, their belonging shows itself: good philosophers are Kripke, Putnam, Davidson, and the like. No mention of Gadamer or Foucault. The split has had practical consequences: students are confused by it, a unitary rating of professional journals is practically impossible, competition often takes weird forms (the analytic "clan" against the continental one and vice versa), and so on. So, one is hopeful about cooperation.

And indeed, cooperation is there and it goes on; the present issue of the Balkan journal is a testimony to it. Some great names on the both sides have contributed to the cooperation. For example, the work of Paul Ricoeur since the late seventies has been a constant dialogue with analytic colleagues, in the book on metaphor (Ricoeur, 1978) with Max Black, in the book on narrative (Ricoeur, 1984) with Danto, in *"The Course of Recognition"* (2005) with B. Williams and with Rawls in the book on justice (2000). Rawls dialogued with Habermas. Brandom's *"The Tales of the Mighty Dead"* (2002) have initiated a round of analytic-continental conversations. On the very recent scene, a typical successful work is exemplified by Shaun Gallagher's and Daniel Schmicking's anthology from 2010, *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, and the cognate work of authors like Dan Zahavi. We shall not talk about practical philosophy here, so let me just mention that in this area there are also attempts at bridging, linking the theory of bio-politics to analytic bioethics, the work of continental feminists to Rawlsian feminists (like Suzan Okin and Jean

Hampton), and some joint efforts by cosmopolitan philosophers on both sides of the analytic-continental rift. Finally, let me mention interesting analytic readings of the great continentals, e.g. Robert Stern's reading of Hegel in his recent *Hegelian metaphysics* (2009). But all this is far from any kind of unification. So the issue of describing and understanding the rift becomes central and urgent, and this will be our main topic in the sequel.

We want to see where the rift is at its widest and deepest, and where it is relatively shallow, and thus easy to cross or to bridge. In our view the main problem is the following: the rifting has taken place in several dimensions, not in a single one. We want to point out these dimensions and the directions of rift. So, the next, main part of the paper is divided into several sections, encompassing one about the common ancestry, and the rest dedicated each to one dimension and direction of rifting. The first section briefly presents the common origin, namely predominantly realist early modern empiricism and rationalism, and passes to Kant's anti-realism or idealism. Next, we observe the crucial move by which the actual history, including political history is presented as ontological(-metaphysical) history of the very being of the world, for the first time in Hegel's work. The third section discusses the particular shape that the topic of will, desire, sexuality, and affect have taken in continental tradition, starting from the mid-nineteenth century, and the change in the style of philosophical thinking and writing that this change has produced. Thus, the transformed, more literary style is one of the deepest dimensions of the rift. The fourth section glosses on the development that goes from Husserl to post-structuralism. The concluding short part discusses twin dangers deriving from the idea of "the end of philosophy". Namely, the dangers of abandoning philosophy either in the direction of doing science (biology and cognitive science) in the analytic tradition, and doing activist political criticism, the "Theory", in the continental one. We end with a few remarks on bridging the gap.

Our sketch is, of course brief, all too brief. We want to present the big picture but then all the interesting details disappear. Each of our claims can be contradicted with some counter-examples: we do not claim that they are exceptionless, rather, that they represent the typical and central phenomena in the field. Alternative tectonic reconstructions are possible, as they are in geology, but we have no space to discuss them here. So, we owe apologies to our more

continental colleagues and to the readers; we hope to do fuller justice to the complexities of the issues in some future papers.

II. Philosophical plate tectonics: some main directions of the continental-analytic rifting

1. Before the split

Let us briefly start with a reminder about early modern philosophy. It was predominantly realist, with some exceptions however, like Berkeley for instance. The two main currents, empiricists and rationalists shared a lot of assumptions. Above all, that the object of philosophical study is a fundamentally stable, changeless structure concerning our relation to the outside world, and the ground common to us and to presumed objects of our knowledge. The self (ego), the world of things (the Cartesian *res extensa*), and the fundamental reality that is supporting both (often god, sometimes another unitary item like Spinozist substance, or matter of the early materialists and naturalists), are there, to be discovered by diligent cognizers. Most early modern philosophers are worried about human ignorance. The standard account turns our ideas (percepts, thoughts, concepts) into ambiguous explanations: in the good case, ideas are the source of knowledge, in the bad, they account for our illusions. This "veil" that potentially separates us from reality is the source of untruth. The quartet of the human mind, external objects, fundamental reality and the veil-of-ideas—is seen as the ontologically stable framework. Some philosophers famously reject one of the components (for instance, Berkeley the second, Reid the fourth), some, like Hume, doubt that human mind can reach its objects and reality, and so on, but the framework is more or less there, largely unquestioned.

Contemporary analytic realism is the heir of this approach. Many of its defenders are broadly physicalists, offering physical reality as the fundamental item underlying, and indeed constituting, both our minds and the external objects. Most of them are representationalists, for whom representations play the same role that ideas played for their early modern ancestors.³ I will not restate the line of development that has led to the contemporary analytic philosophical preferences. Instead, I very briefly pass to the first slight earthquake that announced the rifting. It happened at the end of the XVIII century when

³ The best recent exposition of the framework is Jackson's (1998) "From Metaphysics to Ethics".

Kant's anti – realism was born that introduced into philosophy an important element that will develop into all-out idealism, and will mark the continental more than the analytic tradition.

A fashionable contemporary interpretative tradition, authors like G. Prauss and H. Allison on the one side, and P. Guyer on the other, tries to disconnect Kant from later idealism.⁴ Unfortunately, the historical influence of Kant, in which we are now interested, stemmed from a different reading of his work, which is now often called the two-worlds interpretation.⁵ It concentrates upon many passages in Kant where he claims that "external things, namely matter, are in all their configurations and alterations nothing but mere appearances, that is, representations in us, of the reality of which we are immediately conscious (A 371–2)" and where he speaks of appearance as "mere representations which, in the manner in which they are represented, as extended beings or as series of alterations, have no independent existence outside our thoughts." He contrasts this thesis with that of the "realist, in the transcendental meaning of the term" who "treats these modifications of our sensibility as self-subsistent things, that is, treats mere representations as things in themselves" (A 490–1; B 518–9).⁶

The revolutionary innovation, the Copernican turn, changed the internal structure of the early mod-

ern framework into the quartet encompassing human mind, external objects, fundamental reality, and the (veil-of-ideas). The fundamental reality of the world and of our mind retreats into thing-in-itself. The external objects go to the appearance, and we get the trio: subject—appearance—thing-in-itself. Note that the structure is again stable, unchanging and a-historical. Further, the epistemic apparatus that produces the appearance is unitary: all rational sentient beings have it.

Kantian anti-realism will give rise to German Idealism. It is the grand-parent of many formations crucial to the later history of continental philosophy, above all to constructivism. In more recent times, Kantian inspired anti-realism has given up the original Kantian assumption that the constructive epistemic apparatus is unitary, and have replaced it with the idea of plurality of paradigms, frameworks, discursive formations or epistemes.

Kantianism is not foreign to analytic philosophers, it has inspired thinkers as diverse as Carnap and Strawson, but the analytic tradition has been less stressing its idealistic components, that have played crucial historical role in the birth of continental philosophy.

2. From history and politics to ontology

Processes like rifting start with small movements, and it is notoriously difficult to locate their exact beginning. In modern philosophy, the most plausible place for the beginning of serious rifting is Hegel's philosophy and his reinterpretation of the traditional, both Kantian and pre-Kantian basic schemes. Hegel is aware of the basic tripartite ontological structure of basic matters dividing them those pertaining to subjectivity, those to object or external reality (and the foundation), and the third, intermediate layer, tied to the subjectivity – the phenomena, or the veil-of-perception, or something similar, that threatens to alienate our minds from reality. But his interest is different. It is not only that the deep reality is somehow spiritual; this has already been proposed by Fichte. The new idea is that the basic structure itself is historical. History is the medium of fundamental ontology. Subject (mind) and the external world do not stand in a basically static, structural relation; their relations change with history. And history is at the same time cultural, political and spiritual. *The deep ontology of the world changes with historical events*; to mention the event favored by Kojève, one of the most successful interpreters and popularizers of Hegel in the 20th century, the

⁴ To illustrate, let me mention that in his pioneering work Gerold Prauss (1974) offers the example of considering an object as a paperweight in contrast to considering it as a stone; two ways of looking at it stressing its different aspects, without promoting these aspects into separate objects. It one could take this contrast of aspects as the paradigm of viewing transcendental idealism and understand the contrast between appearances and things in themselves along these lines, Prauss suggested, one would hopefully end with a non-idealist reading of Kant.

⁵ Personally, I side with Guyer and the older "patchwork hypothesis", and think that Kant was an inconsistent genius, inconsistent perhaps because of his ingenious creativity. There are elements in his work that support both readings.

⁶ In the note to fourth Paralogism Kant famously writes:

We must give full credence to this paradoxical but correct proposition, that there is nothing in space save what is represented in it. For space is itself nothing but representation, and whatever is in it must therefore be contained in the representation. Nothing whatsoever is in space, save insofar as it is actually represented in it. It is a proposition which must indeed sound strange, that a thing can exist only in the representation of it, but in this case the objection falls, in as much as the things with which we are concerned are not things themselves, but appearances only, that is, representations. (A 375n)

success of Napoleon changes, so to speak, the very ontological structure of the world. Of course, such events are not contingent, they are part of the deep history of Spirit, and its journey to itself.

BASIS	ALIENATED FORM	SUBJECT
G E I S T,	ALIENATION OBJEC- TIFICATION , Anderssein	MY SUB- JECTIVE BEING
HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL		

Let me encapsulate this revolutionary, rifting idea as a principle linking the anthropological, historical and the deeply ontological, as Anthropohistorico ontological (AHO) principle:

- (AHO) : The anthropological and historical is deeply ontological.

With the acceptance of this principle history is seen as permeating ontology; in some version the former replaces the later. It is important to not how dramatic the move of accepting the AHO principle and taking it as fundamental in one's philosophy. The move is unthinkable for early modern philosophers; but even the Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment authors, from Condorcet and Voltaire to Rousseau and Burke, who were obsessed by history, both political and cultural, didn't dream of it. Equally important, once the move is made, these earlier authors can be reinterpreted and integrated into the new picture. The most naïve version would be to integrate the story of linear progress, the Whig history, into the deep ontology of Spirit and world; nobody to my knowledge did this. A more exciting move has been to harness Rousseau-style ideas about history as alienation from the original, natural state, and his dreams about the quasi-return to it, the rebuilding of the natural within the culture, properly at its very end and fulfillment. (see Mulhall 2005).

An extremely important corollary of the AHO concerns philosophy itself. The history of philosophy is a particularly important part or aspect ("moment") of the history of the fundamental reality, the Spirit itself. When the Presocratics present being as something material, the Spirit itself is thereby taking a material form, when Hegel presents it as spiritual, being itself returns to its own nature. This corollary plays a crucial role in legitimizing the history of

philosophy as part and parcel of philosophy itself, in a sense never dreamt of by analytic colleagues. It returns triumphantly in Heidegger, and marks almost the whole of German history of philosophy in the 20th century.⁷ The same taboo status that the AHO principle would have had for the early moderns is implicitly assigned to it in the analytic tradition. Analytic authors that have not been officially professionally interested in history and politics, from Frege, through Carnap, Reichenbach and Ryle, to Quine, Davidson and Kripke leave no place for AHO in their work. But, more symptomatically, authors that have been deeply interested by the domain of the political, like Russell, Natorp, Rawls, G.A. Cohen and Scanlon, have probably never dreamt of proposing their political views as theories about the deepest nature of the cosmos and reality as a whole.

In contrast, the AHO principle has been one of the central tenets in the continental tradition. Of course, the alleged deeply ontological status of mankind's historical adventures been variously interpreted by various key thinkers.⁸ On one reading, faithful to Hegel, these matters constitute what is, in the literal, objective sense. On the other, in a somewhat more Kantian reading, they construct our, human reality, which is then proclaimed to be the only one worthy of philosophical study. On the third reading, famously proposed by Heidegger, human history just is the history of Being (Seinsgeschichte), and at the very least it reveals Being in a particularly intimate, non objectivist way. Heidegger speaks about the happening of truth as essential for the history of Being: truth sets itself into a work of art, or it occurs through "the act that founds a political state", then in the act of sacrifice, and finally in the thinker's questioning ("The origin of the work of art", in J. M. Thompson (ed.) 1999, p. 401.) So the painting of a picture, say of Mona Lisa, or founding of a state (I will abstain from giving examples), belong to essential events in the history of Being and truth. It is no wonder that the continental tradition is very interested in the issues concerning the meaning of life, since the meaning of human life is, by AHO, directly ontological. Western Marxism has also been

⁷ It seems that the return of this topos is not a direct result of Heidegger's engagement with Hegel's philosophy; see the papers in Tom Rockmore's 2000.

⁸ Enmity to AHO is common to all analytic philosopher, acceptance of AHO common to most, but not all continentals; Husserl and his immediate followers being a good example (Thanks Nenad Smokrović for insisting).

very much in favor of AHO, combining the first and the third reading, and buliding them into their view of alienation and revolution. The principle has dominated continental tradition for over two centuries. Its most recent avatar is Alan Badiou's ontology of events: the ontologically central events are, of course, political revolutions (e.g. Badiou, 2009). The principle has dominated continental tradition for two centuries. It shows its teeth even when implied only implicitly. For instance, Foucault's early works make reference to some sort of objective, Sein-like factor of history, that shapes history and forms of our discourse and episteme. When he later turns to issues of power, he claims that subject is produced and fashioned by power. Here, suddenly, the link with his earlier interest appears: "subject" is a deep ontological category, and of course, deep ontology is historical and sensitive to power-struggle, i.e. politicized. The history of being is transformed into history of power, without thereby being betrayed.

On the continental side some phenomenologists stayed clear of the AHO, Husserl in most of its work, as well as most of his immediate disciples, and some later followers like Merleau-Ponty and to some extent even Sartre. It is no surprise that their work is much more congenial to analytic philosophers interested in bridging gaps.⁹

Note at the end that in spite of the dramatic nature of AHO, the original Hegelian platform shares some important and relevant principles with his predecessors and with the analytic tradition. One such central item is the importance of reason: reason and rationality are paramount. Although Hegel's understanding of reason (both as *Verstand* and *Vernunft*) is very specific, the very program of a rational structuring of philosophical effort provides a bridge.

⁹ Within AHO, normativity and ethics are often re-interpreted- With Hegel a new paradigm for traditional ethical issues arises: the basic form of Being, or Spirit is, so to speak, as it ought to be, so by becoming what one really is and thereby conforming to the basic form, one fulfills the request of *Sittlichkeit* (e.g. authenticity and the like). Therefore, there is no autonomous morality (and Kant and utilitarians are inadequate in many respects). The fiction of the autonomous morality is part of the alienated, or inauthentic stage of the development of Being or Spirit. (There are exceptions on the continental side, like Levinas, Ricoeur and Agamben.) There is also a hope that Greeks would have agreed. For many post-Hegelian thinkers, from Nietzsche through Heidegger to some post-structuralist it is crucial that the true and the kalon go together in ancient culture and philosophy. B Williams has argued for a similar view in a more analytic context.

This bridge snapped with another development, to which we now turn.

3. *Manifesting the a-rational*

"Continental philosophy is distinguished by its style (more literary, less analytical, sometimes just obscure)", writes Leiter in the text we quoted at the beginning, and I agree, as many colleagues would. The style is not just the style of writing, it is a matter of the way of thinking. Where does its specificity come from? I have a hypothesis on this that has not, to the best of my knowledge, been set out elsewhere. In order to present it, I now pass to the second rifting process, which, as I shall try to show, encompasses two distinct and equally important components. The first component is the (re-)discovery of the a-rational, or even irrational, as a central topic for philosophy. Will, desire and affect, with specifications like will to power, sexuality, and the like, play a central role in the continental tradition. They did play a role before its advent, but in a more tame fashion. Humean desire is a relatively homely matter, and the human passions in Pascal, La Rochefoucault and other French Enlightenment authors lack a cosmic dimension, which they receive only within the continental tradition. They receive it thanks to anti-realism and the AHO: if human mind creates reality, and the mind is a-rational (guided by drives) or even irrational (the drives act *contrary* to reason), then a-rational or irrational forces create reality. If the human and historical are directly ontological, then the fierce passions ruling our heart and our political conflicts rule the very Being itself, or are just identical to it. The world is the will, as Schopenhauer proclaimed, it is an artifact of the will-to-power, as Nietzsche claimed. Let me encapsulate the two ideas and give them names:

(A-RAT-mind): The central element of human mind is a-rational, it is either will, desire or affect.

(A-RAT-world): The basic reality of the world is akin to the a-rational element of human mind.

With late Schelling A-RAT-mind and A-RAT-world enter the late German Idealism. The central element of human mind is a drive; more importantly, a basic element of reality (including, in the first place God) is a-rational. No analytic philosopher has ever come close to endorsing the second kind of statement, the A-RAT-world. This is a lot in terms of rifting, but it is far from being the end of the story.

One can understand the emergence of the second component if one compares the early irrationalists, like Schopenhauer or his less known French counterpart Maine de Biran, with later-day ones like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. The early authors argue for the primacy of the will, in the rational framework of their opponents, the first against Kant, the second against French naturalistic philosophers-scientists (*les Ideologues*). Their style fits the rational style of their opponents; no change is introduced.

Things drastically change in the middle of the nineteenth century. With Kierkegaard the affect enters the scene of post-Hegelian thinking. Kierkegaard has indeed been taken as the thinker of the passion, as opposed to reason, and has influenced the later development precisely in this direction. The passionate is at least *prima facie* contrasted with the rational.¹⁰ The passion of Abraham, his Knight of faith, transcends rational understanding „...I can understand the tragic hero but cannot understand Abraham, though in a certain crazy sense I admire him more than all other men.” (*Fear and Trembling*, Wilder Publishing, 2008, p. 41). Both Vilhelm in *Either-Or* and Abraham in *Fear and Trembling* challenge Kantian and Hegelian moral rationality. Vilhelm by insisting of a kind of absolute choice of oneself, Abraham by his action that is to be condemned within a normal rational framework.¹¹

Kierkegaard’s a-rationalism brings with itself a revolutionary change of style. The first books manifesting it is his “*Either-or*”, published in 1843. Famously, three viewpoints are presented there, hedonistic, moral and religious, none of them too rationalistic (although the second one can be related to Kant). But the additional and sensational news is the style, of thinking and of writing. The hedonistic viewpoint is presented through the dairy of the seducer, the moral one through advice of the elder moralist, Vilhelm, writing very much like Seneca: it is the sincerity of the writer that counts as much as the cogency of the standpoint itself. The moralist speaks in a tone of advisory LITERATURE. The final redemption, the religious viewpoint, is presented through a sermon of a pastor from Jutland.

¹⁰ Some authors argue it is not the final contrast in Kierkegaard, e.g. Norman Lillegard (2002).

¹¹ My colleague Majda Trobok asked at this juncture: is it consistent rationally to explain A’s action and to claim that it is to be condemned within rational framework, and see oneself as going against the rational? Well, Kierkegaard does not himself see his own account of Abraham’s decisions a belonging to rational explanation.

“Either-Or” is the grand monument of domain-adapted style of thinking and writing, as MacIntyre has pointed out (in *After Virtue*, p. 38; see also Bojan Blagojevic’s paper in this issue). No philosophical comments from external, neutral standpoint: the editor character, Victor Eremita, limits himself to factual, archivist information. The characters write in the manner inspired by the domain and topic: the aesthetic attitude is embodied in the seducer’s diary, rather than being coldly dissected. Much more importantly, the two more “serious” standpoints are not presented in an argumentative manner at all. The brilliant stylistic exercise anticipates a fundamental turn. The idea is, in the form of a slogan: If you write about passion, write passionately.¹²

Either-Or stands at the beginning of a revolution in philosophical style that has profoundly marked continental philosophy and is responsible for its present profile. It suggests that if you write about a Don Juan, you should do a diary of seduction, if you write about morals you should be moralizing, and if about religion, then preaching. Michael Weston in his book on Kierkegaard and modern continental philosophy (1994) notes the following:

Post-metaphysical thought in Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida shows certain central characteristics which have their parallels in Kierkegaard: a ‘style’ of writing at variance with that of the metaphysical tradition which has its rationale in the ‘situatedness’ of the thought whose intention is, not the representation of ‘the truth’, but an ‘intervention’ into that situation. (1994, p.136)¹³

He lists “Nietzsche’s use of aphorisms, stories, poems, the fictional character of Zarathustra, Heidegger’s ‘etymologies’ and ‘poetic’ thinking, Derrida’s ‘double-reading’ (Ibid.)¹⁴ Of course, the turn to non-argumentative style (or at least to the style less ar-

¹² My colleague, Nenad Smokrovic objected that Kierkegaard writes in a non-philosophical style. But this is precisely the point, since he is a philosopher and is regarded as one.

¹³ Weston goes on to propose different explanations for the literary character of style for each author, without looking for a common ground of the similarity.

¹⁴ In his judgment these are “are strategies of writing demanded by the essentially ‘situated’ character of their thought. “(p.136). But mere “situatedness” explains little; why would one use etymologies merely because one is situated? If the answer is that the use of etymologies is dictated by our situatedness in time, then why not use General theory of relativity, give our situatedness in space-time?

gumentative than the style of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz and Hume) has been prepared by predecessors. By his enormous authority Kant made the idea that philosophy may and should be very difficult to read and understand compelling to the academic audience of the next generation; it is the depth that counts and not the shallow formal logic (in Kant, it was probably a psychological accident: his creativity was so strong that he had hard time writing down the new—and ingenious—thoughts that were occurring to him, and at the same time he wanted to press them in the preordained systematic framework; on the other hand he had fears about being accused of atheism; a convoluted style would cater for keeping the readership small and professional). German idealism continues the line: for *it* commonsense is irrelevant (Hegel) and formal logic is alienated and plainly wrong, so, traditional logical tools (from definition to nicely sequenced arguments, with premises and conclusions detailed in full) is out of question.¹⁵ In German idealism, especially in the work of Hegel, holism adds to it: one understand and evaluates parts only by somehow grasping the whole. In Hegel's aftermath, such holism combined with anti-commonsense and anti-scientific attitude, favoring depth over understanding, and religious and poetic influence, the grasping of the whole becomes less and less transparent; this projects on the parts as well. But now, if commonsense is irrelevant, where do you start? Natural science is seen as alienated, so scientific style is not welcome. One alternative is provided by links to religion and mysticism (German romantics, Schelling), another by poetry. (Holism here becomes less relevant). Since Kierkegaard the a-rationalist program becomes methodologically demanding: philosophy should *manifest* the will, desire, the unconscious, i.e. the irrational, and not only think and talk about it. Political activism also helps: if you write about politics, write manifestos! And Nietzsche contributes to the trend by switching to a more literary style: aphorism, play with words, etc.. acting against the traditional (early modern) argumentative style.

Rorty offers a story about the turn to a literary style (he does not mention a-rationalism), but he does it with enthusiasm. The passage is worth quoting in full:

The transition from a philosophical to a literary culture began shortly after Kant, about the time that Hegel warned us that philosophy paints its

gray on gray only when a form of life has grown old. That remark helped the generation of Kierkegaard and Marx realize that philosophy was never going to fill the redemptive role that Hegel himself had claimed for it. Hegel's supremely ambitious claims for philosophy were counter-productive. His System was no sooner published than it began to be read as a *reductio ad absurdum* of a certain form of intellectual life.

Since Hegel's time, the intellectuals have been losing faith in philosophy. This amounts to losing faith in the idea that redemption can come in the form of true beliefs. In the literary culture which has been emerging during the last two hundred years, the question "Is it true?" has yielded to the question "What's new?" (1997a, p.91–2)

Let me come back to the idea that the philosophical style should come closer to the literary style, that one should write passionately about the central passionate elements of both the human mind and life. This advice has been subsequently generalized, not necessarily under the direct influence of Kierkegaard. With Nietzsche, the idea becomes an implicit norm. If you write about poetry, write poetically, if you care for the future of mankind, write as prophets did. If you care about the a-rational, banish rationality from your style. The advice nicely combines with A-RAT-mind and A-RAT-world: the writer and the prospective reader are passionate beings, since all humans are; and the passionate style plays at the deepest cords of their hearts. But, and this is philosophically central, the deep cords of the heart are in unison with the deepest chords of reality: the passionate, aphoristic, literary style is at the same time deeply philosophical, since it manifests the deepest reality of the world.¹⁶ "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" is the central work at this stage.¹⁷

¹⁶ A recent work on Nietzsche by Rogério Miranda de Almeida, (2006) carries the consequences to the extreme. Nietzsche should be read as a paradoxical writer, says the Preface:

Our proposal here is, rather, to focus on paradox, or the paradoxes that Nietzsche expresses through his writing, and thus through the great diversity of perspectives and rereadings operative in the domains of art, science, religion, morality, philosophy, and culture in general. (p. ix)

It is wrong, de Almeida claims, to try to clean Nietzsche's text from contradictions:

To be sure, the traditional commentators on Nietzsche are unanimous in admitting that his oeuvre contains

¹⁵ Thanks go to Urška Mavrič for insisting on this point.

Let me jump to contemporary philosophy and briefly further illustrate the working of the same thought through the issue of conceptualizing, conceptual understanding and theory-building in matters of art.¹⁸

In a recent paper the Canadian philosopher Jean Grondin interpreting Gadamer claims “that it is not possible to grasp conceptually the play of art. What we can do is to play along, to participate and to take part in the play” (27). Let me call it Impossibility thesis. “When we hear music, we instinctively start singing and dancing.” (Ibid.), continues Grondin. If the thesis were taken seriously, as it merits to be taken, it would entail that there is no way to write about the play of art in a distanced, non-playful and non-artistic way, in the manner that is usual for the analytic approaches to art. If one writes about the play of art one should write playfully and artistically, one should “participate and (...) take part in

“contradictions” and ambiguities. But these contradictions invoke, as often as not, “apparent contradictions” in the sense that they would be—unknown to Nietzsche himself—a logical thread carrying these texts to a coherent and continuous whole. (Ibid.)

Being contradictory and literally paradoxical is the main virtue of Nietzsche, and it is linked to his understanding of poetry and fiction:

As a matter of fact, the principal themes of the Nietzschean oeuvre that we develop—that is, the will to power, the relation of forces, nihilism, and the eternal return—are extremely problematic and subject to diverse interpretations. And this is the case because Nietzsche himself continually reiterates, rereads, and creates new perspectives on the art of poetry, fiction, invention, interpretation, and construction. But the art of construction presupposes the force of destruction and imposes a new meaning. This is why a thought that moves in and from one relation of forces, and that is itself force, can only be expressed through the writing of paradox, that is, through the constant play of inclusions, exclusions, ruptures, renewals, and reevaluations. (p.x)

But how does one discuss Nietzsche once it is agreed that the meanings are subject to “constant play” of renewals and reevaluations? Every proposal can be turned into its contrary by the “constant play”, so that the danger lurks that Nietzsche turns out as saying nothing by saying too much. This might be the price of wanting to write a-rationally about the non-rational.

¹⁷ For a contrasting analytic reading of Nietzsche see Leiter’s enjoyable paper (2004) on how to recover Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud for analytic philosophy: present them as would-be naturalists, looking for explanation rather than for a “deconstruction” or “subversion” in a post-modernist vein. Of course, Leiter is allergic to Zarathustra.

¹⁸ thanks go to Darjana Nastić and her supervisor, David Weberman; I found the example in Darjana’s MA thesis.

the play”. The Impossibility thesis, very much in line with SMC, fits nicely with Gadamer’s fundamental thesis, according to which is it the play itself, in this case the play of the work of art, that guides our involvement, rather than our subjectivity playing the leading role. If we extend this fundamental thesis to the meta-level of theorizing about art, we get the view that it is the playful nature of the work itself that should guide the way of theorizing about it (although Gadamer himself does not write in playful fashion, and is very much in love with arguments). Moreover, if successful, the work of art changes us, and the change must re-appear in the manner in which we think of it; the manner must bear a stamp of the experienced work itself. And this change is then normally thought of pervading our understanding and our manner of thinking. This is not how many serious philosophers of art, from Kant to Levinson, have proceeded. They have sought precisely conceptual understanding, and their writing is not playful at all. On the other hand, the Impossibility thesis seems to capture nicely a lot of practice in contemporary continental philosophical writing about art and literature, and also shows its bite in the non-philosophical theoretical writings (literary theory, art theory), in which theoretician’s often, write in a literary fashion, re-enacting, so to speak, the works of art they are talking about.

A similar idea is perhaps lurking in Lacan’s dictum, “There is no metalanguage!” In other words, there is no neutral, rationally controlled, dispassionate point of view from which we can think, speak and write about the non-rational domains (it is not the only reading of the dictum, but it is hopefully a plausible one).¹⁹ For Lacan’s favorite area, the unconscious, the morals are clear: write in the style of the discourse on and around psychoanalyst’s sofa, use play of words, formation of words inspired by

¹⁹ The usual reading of the dictum (from the Seminar of November 1966, and repeated for instance, in the preface to the pocket edition of *Écrits*, and often in *Autres Écrits*, Seuil, 2001, e.g. at p. 18) stresses that there is not Archimedean point outside of a given discourse, from which one could talk about that discourse. This reading does suggest what we call SMC below: if you want to talk about some discourse Δ (of passion, of politics, of religious exaltation), your own talk will not be “outside” Δ , or, less metaphorically, will have characteristics of Δ . The Compendium of Lacanian term (p. 202) appeals to the following alleged comment that Lacan gives himself: ‘Any statement of authority has no other guarantee than its very enunciation, and it is pointless for it to seek it in another signifier, which could not appear outside this locus [of the signifier] in any way’ (*Écrits*, p. 310).

free associations, slip of tongue and similar sources, rather than in the dry, quasi-scientific original Freudian style. As far as Lacan himself is concerned, it is interesting to follow the changes from his argumentative and scholarly early writing (early pieces in *Ecrits* and early seminars) to a more and more literary, convoluted and non-argumentative style of the later work. Shoshana Felman I think rightly speaks of Lacan's "poetic" rejection of concept(s) and knowledge (where in her writing "poetic" implies inclusion of *madness into the very style of writing*. (2003, p.136)

In short, what started in 1843 as an experiment in style, has ended in the early 20th century as a transformation of central philosophical disciplines. Of course, I am not claiming that most of continental philosophy just became literature, this would be a caricature. A Non-argumentative style is not always used in an exclusive way, but the pressure often results in a discourse that is a bit poetic-metaphor, a bit aphoristic, a bit playing with words (from etymologies to lacanesque coincidences) Typical continental style (and here, we are aware of the dangers of one-sided generalization) has come closer to literary style than philosophy has been in the hands of Descartes, Spinoza and Locke. Most continental philosophers still argue with the reader and with their predecessors and opponents, but arguments tend to be less explicit, to be often immersed in a medium of non-argumentative style, ranging from poetic flights to political invective. For instance, the appeals to authority of the great philosophers or thinkers in general of the past (ranging from Presocratics, through Plato, Saint Paul, Marquis de Sade, to Heidegger) are rarely presented as such, but are masked as invocations of great truths with almost mystical appeal, with no rational explanation of why we should trust, say, Heraclitus rather than Chrysipus, or Saint Paul rather than Celsus.

I want now to make a further step and look for the common element in the ideas so far illustrated in the domains of writing about passion, religion, art, play and unconscious. It seems that the basic line is that the style should follow the domain. In particular, since a-rational domains are philosophically central, the style of philosophy should come closer to the reality of the a-rational. The proposal seems to me to be far-reaching, if it is correct, as I hope it is; so I want to give it a name, unfortunately not a nice sounding one. Here is the idea generalized and put in a nutshell. Let me call it Stylistic-Methodological Constraint, SMC for short:

(SMC): The cognitive style, the language-style and the method of studying a domain D should follow the language-style and the manner of D itself. In particular, for a-rational domains, the cognitive style and the linguistic expression should minimize the use of (or perhaps completely eschew) traditional rationalist methods of enquiry and presentation.

The main consequence of SMC is that if D is non-cognitive, a-rational, irrational (e.g. the unconscious, will-for-power, desire, poetic language...), then the discourse about D inherits its characteristics, at least as much as it is possible within a professional philosophical discourse.

The crucial role of SMC lies in explaining the non-argumentative, poetic and sometimes logic-unfriendly style of a lot of mainstream continental writing. Analytic colleagues get nervous about it, and the malicious among them see it a symptom of craziness. SMC presents it as a principled choice, far from craziness. Since poetry and literature in general has been traditionally the medium of passion and affectivity, SMC will naturally favor a turn to literally culture away from the scientific one. Of course, once the SMC has become a norm, it will tend to recruit authors with literary talent, and the circle (virtuous or vicious, depending on the taste) will form itself.

Consider now how SMC interacts with A-RAT-mind, A-RAT-world and AHO. By the a-rationalist assumption A-RAT-mind a-rational or irrational domains— the unconscious, will-for-power, desire—are anthropologically central. Logocentrism is bad, it is the treason of the deepest human reality. But then, by AHO the a-rational is also ontologically central, and we get A-RAT-world. So, the unconscious, will-for-power, and/or desire should play a central role within ontology as well. But now, since they are non-rational they demands non-rational presentation, by SMC. Therefore, a central ontological domain has to be presented in a non-rational, non-argumentative way. The whole of philosophical discourse—and most importantly, ontology and epistemology—itsself should be passionate, poetic, aphoristic, in short, non-argumentative, at least to some extent. This moves into the very heart of philosophy since non rational domains are central since Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Marx and Freud. Marxism has been since its beginnings oscillating between its Hegelian origin and the idea of scientific understanding of social reality and the "scientific socialism" as the alterntive to mere utopia: early Marx vs.

Das Kapital, Korsch and Bloch vs. dialectical-cum-historical materialism, Heideggerian Marxism vs. Althusser. And the style has been following the characterization of the domain: objective historical development vs. suffering in alienation and appeal to the forces of revolutionary subjectivity and authenticity. On the more popular side, feminism has contributed to a political denigration of the rational as phallogocentric and patriarchal; not all feminists claim this, but those that claim have attracted most attention. (Again, I apologize for brevity and generalizations, but I need to paint a big picture on a small canvas. In the next section I mention the great continentals who did not succumb to SMC).

How about rational domains, I was asked by my colleague Kati Farkas? In the more radical branches of continental thought, they are disposed with in the following way: the rational is in fact seemingly rational. Logic is just expression of the will to power. Formal logic is part of the alienated, technological world, more recently of the male dominated world: logo-centrism goes with phallogocentrism. Of course, not all contemporary continentals follow this lead. But many, and the most vociferous ones do.

Thanks to SMC, continental philosophy has been vastly more successful in catering to the immediate and pressing concerns of arts and humanities than its analytic rival. Its readiness to tolerate, if not to encourage essayistic style, in particular a mixture of literary and philosophical manner of writing, its constant reference to matters cultural and artistic, its willingness to give up the truth-directedness, the goal of clarity and elimination of ambiguity in the interest of other goals (artistic finesse, political militancy or provocation and the like) has made it much more acceptable to the departments of English, cultural studies or film theory.

4 From phenomenology to the post-heideggerian scene

Back to the more rationalistic continental thinkers. With the principles LISTED, often merely implicit but powerfully at work, we have most elements of the rifting before ourselves. However, the final split did not occur at the end of 19th century, when all the elements were already present. The a-rationalist thinkers were marginal in the academic community, thought strongly present in the culture, so their influence took half a century to produce dramatic results. It needed a detour through Husserl's phenomenology, to conquer mainstream philosophy, with Martin Heidegger as the main crea-

tive force, who gave the continental philosophy its definitive face.

Husserl is one of the most interesting figures of the whole story. In the half a century of his creative work he travelled the road from traditional, realistic, logic-focused and science-friendly view through various versions of anti-realism, to the distinctly continental "life-world" synthesis of his late years. Along the way he formed the young Heidegger. With all these contributions he decisively contributed to the genesis of the main profile of continental philosophy of the 20th century. I will not deal with his work here, except for noting a few points.

First, his trajectory recapitulates the main stages of the continental rifting. Only in the late work the moves are made that are reminiscent of AHO, namely the introduction of the world of everyday experience with a historical component into the very heart of philosophy. The rest will be done by Heidegger. Husserl's mathematical background, his keen interest in logic and his positive attitude to classical logic (in contrast to, say its Hegelian counterparts) keeps him in the tradition of the founding fathers of modern philosophy, and has kept him close to at least some fundamental ideas of Frege (and thus to the analytic strand). He managed, however, since *Logical investigations* to combine this interest with an interest in experience of thinking or thinking-as-experience (rather foreign to Frege), to combine it with anti-realism in *Ideas* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, and finally, and most provocatively, with investigations into pre-predicative experience.²⁰

Note the central importance of Husserl's idealist turn (*Ideas, Cartesian Meditations*), and the placing of the whole issue of the causal structure of the external world "in parenthesis". The phenomenal world, thus identified, is for him still governed by a deeply logical structure. The investigations of pre-predicative experience open the door to ascribing two further, already introduced crucial features to this experience and its *Lebenswelt*, historicity and "a-rationality", in the sense of the domination of non-cognitive factors (e.g. *Lebenswelt* being structured in terms of our non-cognitive concerns, "caring", or our drives). Pre-predicative experience could have a historical structure, moving from one typical shape to another, in historical time. And, secondly, the basic motive forces in the pre-

²⁰ Thanks go to Masha Trofimova, whose doctorate dissertation on Husserl, defended at CEU, inspired these comments.

predicative experience might be basically a-rational, if not downright irrational. Husserl accepts none of the two possibilities. As for the first, he is clearly interested in basic structures of pre-predicative experience that don't seem to be historically conditioned. However, his investigations of the temporal structure of consciousness can be used as a spring-board, extending the relevant temporality to the framework of human history as a whole. As for the second, one can illustrate his loyalty to the tradition by pointing to his view about pre-predicative bases of cognition: it is the interest in finding how things are, even in coming to know about them. It is not a pragmatic interest, let alone emotional or passion-based interest. However, it is easy to feel or at least to understand the temptation to accept the two features. Acceptance of the second alone, but in a realist framework, is exemplified by Scheler, in a less realist or downright anti-realist framework by existentialists. Heidegger accepts both, within otherwise dramatically modified understanding of the framework designated by Husserl as *Lebenswelt*. In *Sein und Zeit* he clearly accepts the second (with notions like care, *Angst* and their kin), in later works the first as well. The road from realism to AHO has thus been travelled through.

Second, phenomenology provides an important contribution to the further development of continental philosophy, and this is the insistence upon the non-reductive nature of objects and properties in the world of experience. The properties in this world are richly anthro-po-centric : the world is full of color and taste, but also of "sound and fury", of sad and happy scenes and vistas, of natural beauty and ugliness: of secondary qualities, emotional properties and, most importantly, of significances, of humanly relevant sense and meaning (*Sinn*) of things and events. No question of reducing them to pairs of physical-properties-plus-subjective-reactions. They are there, making up the meaningful world of human life. The analytic tradition, of course, admits that properties are there, at least for us, but its mainstream representatives demand a physicalist explanation: either dispositionalist, of purely physicalistic, or subjectivist-eliminativist. Authors that don't make this demand create a bridge over the rift, most famously John McDowell (and recently Akeel Bilgrami).

A fine illustration of the continental-analytic contrast in this field is offered by the sub-domain of investigation into body and embodiment. For phenomenology, the body is the experienced body (liv-

ing Leib), the carrier of experiences, central to us in our normal life. Some organs make their appearance in this context, but one never does, namely the brain. The "Eigenleib" offers no direct information about the brain. On the analytic side, ninety percent effort and interest is directed to that organ: the mind-body problem is centrally the *mind-brain* problem. The remaining ten percent offers a bridge to the phenomenological tradition, and a very useful and reliable one, for that matter, as we mentioned in the Introduction. So much about phenomenology, with sincere apologies for brevity.

With Heidegger all pieces of the puzzle will come together. A new element makes its appearance, crucial in itself, but fortunately not contributing to the rift, namely the centrality of language. It will be shared by most important currents of thought in the first half of 20th century and even later; the continental—analytic divide will show not in attention to language, but to the kind of discourse that is being privileged: poetic, literary –philosophical (Plato), and gnostic-philosophical (Presocratics) on the one side, and scientific, with elements of mathematical logic in use, on the other. A shared interest in ordinary language will occasionally serve as a bridge.

Consider now the old friends. The two tectonic processes that have brought philosophy to its present stage. First, historicization of ontology. Being as such has a history, and it essentially involves human history, commanding it and structuring it.

This history has the well known structure of Fall and Redemption, alienation and return, as Mulhall has nicely shown in his (2005).

BASIS	ALIENATED FORM: THE FALL	SUBJECT
B E I N G	FORGETTING (INAUTH- ENTICITY, -ERA OF METAPH.)	DASEIN -ME
SEIN / TIME , LANGUAGE		

The move of historicizing ontology and thereby ontologizing human history has had a special impact upon understanding history of philosophy. As usual, Hegel is the founding father and Heidegger the main revolutionary. The whole of cultural history being

ontologized, it is accepted that cultural changes might be equal to, or at least point to changes in the fundamental ontological configuration of the world and man's role in it. As mentioned, it is then normal for the philosopher to see history of philosophy as a privileged part of cultural history: its foundation, or pivot, or at least, its most telling aspect. So history of views about Geist (in its various incarnations under various names) or Sein becomes interpreted as the history of the very item itself: history of Spirit, of Being and the like. By doing history of philosophy, one does participate in the ontological history itself. This changes the self-understanding of philosophers: if I, the philosopher, get the things right, the things themselves get in their right state in my thinking and writing. It also enhances the role of history of philosophy in philosophy itself: if you want to know how Being was "communicating" with the mankind in Middle Ages (either hiding or revealing Itself), just study medieval philosophers. The history of philosophy becomes almost the center of philosophy. In Heidegger this line gets combined, step-by-step, with the importance of poetic language; in history of philosophy this will favor writers like Presocratics who write in gnomic sentences or verse, or Nietzsche.

One more thing happens, namely the birth of "negative ontology", in the sense of "*via negativa*", the characterization of the ultimate reality just by denying any ordinary properties to it. Since late Husserl there is a tendency to move clearly ontological issues into this negative, shadowy domain. In Husserl it is the *epoche*, the "don't ask" about the ultimate nature of reality. In Heidegger the issue of what is Being itself is never addressed directly, and in his later work one notices quasi- mystical silence about its ultimate nature. In the historicized ontology, we encounter ignorance of the future face-of-the Being. This *via negativa* culminates in Derrida, and is implicitly there in Foucault's silence about the ultimate. With post-structuralism one starts directly deconstructing ontological structures: fundamental vs. derived, primary vs. secondary and the like. Not that the secondary becomes primary (although sometimes it does), but that the distinction itself loses its relevance. Little is left, after the deconstructive work is done: no foundations, no ordering, just a free play, at best. It is hard to imagine a more fundamental contrast with the analytic obsession both with the commonsense and the scientific ontology. In the aftermath of all this, the links with traditionally central ontological problematic become attenuated.

Consider now our second old friend, the rejection of rationality, staying with the more moderate thesis, merely about nature of our mind, the A-RAT-mind. Let me borrow from Richard Wolin two dramatic quotes he uses as mottos for his book on "The Seduction of Unreason" (2004). The first is from Heidegger, the second from Foucault, both commenting Nietzsche. First, Heidegger.²¹

Thinking begins only when we have come to know that Reason, glorified for centuries, is the most stubborn adversary of thought. ("The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'" in his *Off the beaten track*, 2002, CUP, p. 199).

The next is Foucault. In the text quoted ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History", he talks about Nietzsche, and in the last lines of the famous essay he will endorse the view, speaking of "the injustice proper to the will of knowledge" (1977, p.164):

All knowledge rests upon injustice; there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for truth; and the instinct for knowledge is malicious (something murderous, opposed to the happiness of mankind. (1977, p. 163.)

Ironically, in his polemic with Chomsky, Foucault insists that the notion of justice is deeply suspect (1974, p. 187); so one might wonder with what right he is using the notion, and condemning (what he himself describes as) injustice.

²¹ Renato Cristin tries to show in his *Heidegger And Leibniz, Reason and the Path* Kluwer, 1998, that Heidegger is closer to the reason than it is usually thought. The idea of reason that is called into play here is different from the traditional ratio and represents the point of arrival of Heidegger's path. But to be different does not mean to deny reason, nor is there any absence of reflection: "meditating thought does not happen without effort, almost by itself; in this respect it is like calculating thought. But meditating thought requires an even greater effort." (quote from Heidegger, NM) It is an effort of the reason to overcome the limits of rationalism and to reawaken to a new way of thinking: "once meditating thought is well awake, reflection will go on incessantly."130

but his own conclusions are more poetic than argumentative:

The path along which Heidegger reaches us, and penetrates to the very heart of our philosophical thought, is arduous and dangerous precisely because it bears within itself the impressions of the entire tradition, without any exceptions. It is the riskiest of all paths because, while straying far from rationalism, it leads one to think to the bottom of things, in the phenomenological spirit of a search for the things themselves, the essence of reason (Ibid.)

Even if the quotations are taken out of context, and presented in their drastic nudity, there is something to them. Indeed, for Heidegger the traditional forms of rationality are all on the side of the fallen humanity: classical logic, scientific thinking, technological intelligence and rational planning. In contrast, the authentic forms of Dasein are famously given in the early work through existential, emotionally colored attitudes, above all the attitude of care. In later work a crucial role will be played by art, and in particular poetry, and the language of philosophy will tend to imitate the poetic language. Foucault most often writes in the spirit of the quotation; rarely, and almost in passing he notes that maybe, some forms of “local knowledge” are not so bad (e.g. in the Preface of *Il faut défendre la société*, 1997.) An even more radical variant is to be found in Lacan who, as already mentioned, combines the play of words derived from the Freudian tradition of the study of slips of tongue with poetic variations on it, unexpectedly enriched by mathematical looking formulae and diagrams, which, however, in their interpretation offer a wide space to freedom, multiple ambiguity and other typical poetical virtues.

III. Conclusion: between hope and despair

Let me summarize the tectonic development sketched so far. On the continental side we first have the AHO-rule: many prominent philosophers accept the idea that world is basically human world, so that anthropological problematic belongs to the very heart of the ontology of the world. (Others, following Husserl’s strategy of *epoche*, accept that there is, or might be, a material world largely indifferent to human concerns, but then claim that their philosophical interest is only in the “human reality”). The idea is extremely attractive, since it gives our concerns a cosmic and ontological dimension, in comparison to which the realistic naturalism, either early modern or contemporary analytic, seems pale, alienated and unappealing.

Second, we often have an acceptance of A-RAT-mind either alone or in addition to AHO: non-rational domains are anthropologically central. The followers of Nietzsche, the fans of psychoanalysis and many friends of existentialism belong here. The next step is combining A-RAT-mind with AHO, which results in the passage to A-RAT-world: desire, affect and drive are features of the deep reality of the world. We end with a philosophical ontology often inimical to rationalism, enjoining the thinkers

to turn the drive *t* into the ontological basis of reality. (Not all continentals join in. Some stay content with AHO, others with A-RAT-mind, e.g. most Lacanians who are not interested in general ontology).

By SMC, the domain, either simply mental-affective and/or ontological-arational, should then be presented in an a-rational (paradoxical, etc.) mode. If the style of thinking and of writing turn to poetic and non-argumentative in general on the continental side, and on the opposite side favor detailed, explicit and even regimented argumentation, keeping a strong connection to logic (indeed, to technical mathematical logic), the dialog threatens to end before it begins. “This is poetry, not philosophy; where is the argument?” is the typical reaction of one side. “This is dry, pedantic hair-splitting and humanly irrelevant”, is the reaction of the other. Further, in the post-modernist phase the topics of knowledge, reality and truth are either deconstructed or, more often, set aside, whereas the cultural-political interest and stance are absolutely dominant, so the central interest diverge.

This cumulative effect, of course, creates big problems for bridging. Too many too energetic moves away from the classical problematic tend to widen the rift, and the remaining continental analytic-connections tend to snap. What is the worse case scenario, the geologists ask when it comes to rifting and other massive geological changes. This question, applied to our continental rift leads us to an interesting topic: two symmetrical kinds of danger lurking, one for the analytic and the other for the continental traditions. The dangers lie in the seduction to commit philosophically suicidal moves, abandoning philosophical thought for something completely different, bio-psychological sciences for the former, and cultural-political writing and activism for the later.

Let me put the matters briefly into historical and philosophical context. The idea of the end of philosophy has been seducing philosophers since Hegel. His triumphant claim that philosophy has ended, reached its perfection, indeed, in his own work, was inspiration and provocation for generations to come. Marx and his followers offered an alternative proposal, namely overcoming of philosophy: philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it, as the eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach famously has it. Heidegger’s 1964 essay “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” has it that philosophy is metaphysics, and “metaphysics thinks being as being in the manner of

representational thinking which gives reasons". (1973.p. 55). Giving reasons is bad, as versions of A-RAT thesis and SMC suggest. So, the end of philosophy, Heidegger goes on to say, is "the triumph of the manipulable arrangement of a scientific-technological world."²² Heidegger's alternative is "thinking", open to what determines it, namely Being itself. The most recent continental version of the end and overcoming of philosophy claims that it should culminate and in a way disappear in "Theory". What is "Theory"? Let me quote Žižek who talks about "the deconstructionist/feminist/post Marxist/psychoanalytic/sociocritical/cultural studies etc. approach, ironically nicknamed 'Theory' (which, of course, is far from a unified field - the above chain is more a series of Wittgensteinian 'family resemblances') by its opponents" (2001, p. 1)²³ In short, the relevant End-of-philosophy thesis claims the following: philosophers should abandon the traditional philosophical reflection in favor of participating in more concrete theoretical and political practices.

Here is then the danger on the continental side that might give rise to despair: the AHO thesis gives cultural-historical-political practices an ontological status. Add the critical and deconstructive pathos: commenting these practices the philosopher gets rid of problematic and repressive metaphysics, and of the injustice of reason and knowledge. Philosophy moves to cultural politics, as Rorty wants it to move, and to Theory –cultural studies, black, feminist, gay studies–and the actual political struggle. They constitute whatever is its proper target of research and arena of activity. But the practices are already studied by cultural studies people, historians of literature, of political movements, etc., so the philosopher

just joins in. She or he starts talking about one's work as about post-philosophy. Richard Rorty as the continental refugee from his own tough naturalism has come to the same result: the only value of philosophy is its contribution to cultural politics (Rorty, 2007). The danger is that the link with philosophy becomes hardly more than a sentimental memory revealing itself in the borrowing of some terminology and in mentioning of grand names.

Let me mention the parallel danger for the tough naturalism on the analytic side. Authors like Stephen Stich, and Paul Churchland have dedicated their philosophical carriers to the task of criticizing the standard analytic philosophy, moving even closer towards science, mainly cognitive science and neuroscience. Of course, while criticizing philosophy one remains philosopher with a charming negative, critical pathos to boot. But the next generation, if it takes the advice of its teachers seriously just merges with scientists. Philosophy disappears as a discipline. The recent debates about "experimental philosophy" bear witness to the seduction. The twin dangers of disappearance of philosophy in the cumulative effect of either strong naturalism or strong culturalism might show one day their full teeth. :

Back to continental philosophy. An interesting further process is discernable along the way, a turn to pop-culture in post-philosophy. Where does it come from? First, pop-culture is very strong in culture. Second, and this is an internal philosophical reason, a strong value(s)-relativism accepted by main Theorists leads to a dramatic leveling, raising the status of pop-aspects and parts of culture: Madonna and soap operas are as good as Beethoven and Eisenstein. Third, the general market favors books on pop-culture: if you write about Madonna you sell hundred times more than if you write only about Heidegger or Lacan. So, the pop-elements of cultural-historical-political practices get a place of honor in "Theory". The more philosophically oriented post-structuralists (Derrida, Foucault) are read selectively in search for less philosophical (and more political) material. As Rorty said in the line we quoted, "the question "Is it true?" has yielded to the question "What's new?" (2007), p.92. Pop-philosophy, pop-culture and daily politics get combined in an easily marketable production. So, this is the worst scenario: continental tradition ends as pop-philosophy. Let us hope this will not happen.

Now, after exercising ourselves in philosophical plate tectonics we should return to the crucial question: what about bridging the rift? Is it an impossible

²² See the fine analysis in Joana Hodge (199), p. 148 ff and in Patrick L. Bourgeois (2001).

²³ Here is the context:

"... the principal contradiction of today's cinema studies is the one between the deconstructionist/feminist/post-Marxist/psychoanalytic/sociocritical/cultural studies etc. approach, ironically nicknamed 'Theory' (which, of course, is far from a unified field - the above chain is more a series of Wittgensteinian 'family resemblances') by its opponents, and the so-called 'Post-Theory', the cognitivist and/or historicist reaction to it. Here, however, we immediately encounter a paradox. Although Post-Theorists acknowledge the inner differences in the field of Theory (say, between the early Screen focus on interpellation, Gaze, suture, and the later more historicist-culturalist feminist orientation), they nonetheless emphasise a common Lacanian element as central. (2001, p 1)

mission? We have listed five theses that in our view distance the contemporary continental thought from the early modern and the contemporary analytic one. The last, the End of philosophy we may set aside, since here we consider philosophers doing their work without regret and without wish to change its deep nature. Let us look at possible compromises in regard to each of the remaining four.

First, the thesis that anthropological and historical is deeply ontological (AHO). Some actual cooperation is due to the fact that the participants simply abstract from it. One can do philosophy of mind inspired by both phenomenology and cognitive science, concentrating upon particular issues (e.g. the role of embodiment in experience) and abstracting from the ultimate framework. One investigator might view the research as simply research in human mind and body, the other as revealing the deep nature of Being itself, but as long as they keep this difference on the side, they might agree on everything else. Similarly, two philosophical scholars investigating a Greek philosopher might agree on everything internal (philological, conceptual, interpretative), but keep for themselves the ultimate judgment: for one the Being itself speaks in the work of the philosopher, for the other the philosopher is just an extremely clever and creative thinker that has figured out something true and important about reality. Similarly, many good analytic interpreters of Hegel try not to stress AHO, or just quietly set it aside (Brandom, 2002, Stern 2009, most chapters in the *Cambridge Companion to Hegel*), the tactic that seems a bit funny given the centrality of AHO in Hegel's thought; but, funny or not it does work.

The other possibility is one of deeper agreement. An analytic philosopher might accept AHO, and defend it in an analytic style, with perspicuous and provocative arguments (even using some formal logic). Or, her continental colleague might give up on AHO, and thus narrow the gap along one essential dimension.

Second, the thesis that the central element of human mind is a-rational, the A-RAT-mind. By itself, it should give no offence to the analytic side, since it is just a dramatized Humeanism about motivation and action. If presented in a neutral style, as it was done by Maine de Biran two centuries ago, it is very much discussable in a joint, continental-analytic framework.

In contrast, the third thesis, that the basic reality of the world is akin to the a-rational element of human mind, A-RAT-world, is the last to be accepted

by analytic philosophers, since it combines a-rationality view with AHO that is deeply problematic for analytic philosophers. No productive dialogue on this is in sight.

What about the call to a more literary, less argumentative style, grounded in SMC and in the a-rationality of the domain of interest? In good old times the contrast in style was compatible with important agreement(s). For instance, although Marcus Aurelius writes as a good, sophisticated literary writer (who has learned his style by studying a refined Hellenistic epic, "The Argonauts"), he is philosophically close to the dry and "analytic" Chrysippus, the logic genius who invented propositional logic: they are both Stoics of the same school. So, why not today? Well, there is no dialogue between extremes. Derridian sophisticated, highly literary and allusive play with words is incompatible with a mania for seriously using formal logic in discussing every philosophical issue. What about less drastic differences? The example of Habermas nicely shows the situation "in the middle": a creative philosopher, writing in an argumentative, but rather heavy manner, rich with allusions to German theoretical heritage, but also to the analytic speech-act theory and theory of truth, is respected by both sides. Similarly, on the analytic side, the late Wittgenstein and the work of Austin on philosophy of language is attractive to many continentals, with their brilliant style, informal ways of presentation, and, in the case of Wittgenstein, his bracketing the issues of realism and the AHO.²⁴ Finally, also on the recent analytic side, the style of Bernard Williams has moved to a more literary one in his last works, but without drastic jumps; combined with his sensitivity to the central analytic issues, the final result is attractive to both camps. Finally, an ironic example: we quoted Rorty defending a turn to literary manner. It should be added, that he preserved his analytic manner in spite of the defence, and is excellent in a debate with his analytic colleagues (see Rorty and Engel, 2007).

And finally, why bother? Well, the profession as a whole would gain in respectability, students would be less confused, unitary criteria could be worked out. But what could each side gain by trying a compromise? The analytic philosophers might gain two important items. First, on the internal, philosophical side, they might widen their

²⁴ I have done my passage from my continental early youth to my analytic dissertation through a period of enthusiasm for Austin, and a lot of admiration for late Wittgenstein.

area(s) of interest. Topics like philosophy of history have been sadly neglected, philosophical reflections on culture are very much underdeveloped, and whole areas of history of philosophy are almost a taboo for them. These territories do present a challenge worth addressing. On the external, more social side, they might widen the range of audience, addressing people who are deeply curious about philosophical issues, but repelled by the cold and abstract style demanded by the analytic establishment.²⁵

Continental philosophers might gain from sheer clarity of exposition, and awareness of the demands of argumentation. Most of them do use arguments, but hide them in a literary and hermeneutic context. Once they make them clearer, their strength and weaknesses will reveal themselves, as they do in the Socratic dialogue. And finally, this kind of move might block the most dangerous, suicidal tendency so strong in present day continental writing, to melt into non-philosophical Theory, and perhaps finally disappear in sheer commenting media events and the daily politics. A modicum of analytic therapy might here prevent suicide.

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²⁵ Writing about political issues is another matter. Most well-known analytic philosophers who write for a wider audience, say in their blogs, are extremely good at presenting issues in an objective and distanced manner, and being fair to the opponent (who is never considered an enemy). But this makes them boring to those who have already taken sides, and want calls to action.

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THE WIDER SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURALISM: A GENEALOGICAL ESSAY*

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Abstract:

The paper discusses the issue whether or not value may be seen as being in the world, thus opening the dialog between analytic tradition and authors like Marx and Heidegger, and reviving some important issues prominent in the work of John McDowell. It stresses the deep connections that exist between value and agency and a certain conception of the perceptible world which we inhabit as agents. It argues that it would be no bad thing for analytic philosophers, who are engaged with issues of naturalism, to allow themselves to be mobilized by broader terms that Weber and Marx deployed such as 'disenchantment' and 'commodification' and 'alienation' in order to understand our unease with the narrow and "thin" variant of rationality, characteristic of science.

Key words: naturalism, value, agency, thick and thick concepts.

Some of the philosophical debates of our time are secular echoes, indeed secular descendants, of disputation some centuries ago that was no less intense and of measurably greater and more immediate public significance. If some of this sort of significance persists in our current debates, it is seldom on the surface. This is because of our tendency in analytic philosophy to view our metaphysical and epistemological concerns in relatively autonomous terms, unburdened by any political and cultural implication or fall-out. Hence, such wider significance as might still exist can only be unearthed by paying some *genealogical* attention to the antecedent disputes in which the issues at stake loomed larger and more visibly in public and political life.

Though it is not by any means the only one that comes to mind, I will restrict my discussion to one

example—the deep division among philosophers today over naturalism,¹ understood as the metaphysical claim that there is nothing in the world that is not countenanced by the methods of natural science.² Naturalism in this sense has evolved in recent years into a sophisticated doctrine and with sophistication there has been a certain degree of acknowledgement that some concepts describing or expressing certain properties that are, on the face of it, non-natural properties may not get a strict rendering into the conceptual vocabularies (physical, causal, functional...) of the various natural sciences. Even so,

¹ Though, the debate has spread widely across the discipline of Anglophone philosophy in the last few years, naturalists continue to be the overwhelming majority in the discipline, with volumes like the present one and its predecessor, *Naturalism in Question*, eds. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) gathering the voices of a recently emerging opposition.

² One caveat: I am using the term 'naturalism' in a rather restricted way, limiting the term to a scientific form of the philosophical position. So, the naturalism of Wittgenstein or John McDowell, or even P.F. Strawson falls outside of this usage. In fact all three of these philosophers are explicitly opposed to naturalism in the sense that I am using the term. Perhaps 'scientism' would be the better word for the philosophical position that is the centre of the dispute I want to discuss. It accommodates a certain attitude exemplified in naturalism that is present in a certain way of understanding the nature of the social and behavioural sciences. I will say more about this later. David Macarthur, an editor of this volume, explicitly asked me if I had any objection to a term he favours and uses in his Introduction, 'liberal naturalism', to describe a position distinct from 'naturalism' in the narrow scientific sense that I mean, a position which accommodates the kind of naturalism that McDowell and Strawson and Wittgenstein embrace. I have no objection to that term or the position it describes, no more than I do to Marxists aspiring to 'people's democracy'.

* I am grateful, as always, to Carol Rovane and Stephen White for helpful discussions on the themes of this paper.

naturalism posits various forms of *systematic dependency relations* in which these properties stand to the properties traversed by the explanatory methods of the natural sciences.³ No properties are allowed which do not stand in these dependency relations. The primary focus of the debate has been over value properties—with intentional properties of mind plausibly thought to be, for reasons that I won't elaborate here, just a special case of value properties.⁴ In a word, the debate is over whether values are or are not reducible to (do or do not stand in systematic dependency relations with) natural properties as defined above.

This debate has a well-studied history within the confines of Philosophy and in that history the chief protagonists have been Hume and Kant and their many successors down to this day. On the Humean side, there is a conception of value in which they are considered largely to be a refinement of our desires.

³ The range of such dependency relations goes from various versions of what is called 'non-reductive materialism' to versions of what is called 'supervenience'. The former doctrine and label surfaces more in naturalism about intentional states in particular rather than value, though it is perhaps extendable in its proponents' ambitions to the latter. My own commitment to anti-naturalism that will emerge in the present paper is opposed to most, if not, all of these views. I have argued elsewhere—see *Self-Knowledge and Resentment*, chapter 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008)—that even the weakest form of the supervenience thesis is not quite coherently assessable. But that is a strong claim (stronger than anything even in John McDowell with whom I wrestle in that chapter on this very subject) and I doubt that anything I say in the present paper presupposes the truth of that claim. So its diagnosis of these issues should be acceptable to those like McDowell, who do embrace some version of supervenience of evaluative properties on natural properties, understood as properties countenanced by the methods of natural science.

⁴ Davidson in a number of articles—see especially his *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980)—was perhaps the first to introduce value or normative considerations in the understanding of intentionality, though he was much less clear than he might have been about the extent to which intentional states are just a special instance of values (or commitments), that is, are themselves values or commitments of a special sort. Once one is clear about this, one can see the naturalistic irreducibility of intentional states as just a special case of the naturalistic irreducibility of value. There is, then, no need to think of there being two irreducibilities, one of intentionality to the properties of the central nervous system, and the other of value to the natural properties studied by the natural sciences. The latter irreducibility subsumes the former. See chapter 5 of my *Self-Knowledge and Resentment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) for a detailed discussion of this issue.

They are mental states we possess which, though they may be more reared in and geared to social relations and social constraints than other passions (as, for instance, in Hume's elaboration of the notion of 'sympathy' or in Adam Smith's account of them as 'moral sentiments'), they are nevertheless *tendencies* of our mentality. On the other side, finding all this too psychologistic and tied to human inclination, Kant had relegated morals to a 'noumenal' status within 'pure practical reason' whose relation to the *perceptible* world was rendered at least *prima facie* problematic. I want to steer past this canonical dispute between Humeans and Kantians, and in its stead make my subject, John McDowell's conception of value because it helps to bring to the front much more specifically than either of those positions, a genealogy of the political and cultural significance of the vexed disagreement between 'naturalists' (as I have defined the term) and their opponents.⁵

In the next section, I will motivate this conception of value and then, in the rest of the sections that follow, I will present the sort of genealogical analysis that displays the wider significance of the dispute about naturalism that this conception of value generates.

I. Let me motivate this conception of value via a dialectic that begins with a familiar distinction.

It is a relatively familiar point, sometimes attributed to Spinoza, that one cannot both *intend* to do something and *predict* that one will do it at the same time⁶. When one predicts that one will do something, one steps outside of oneself and looks at oneself as the object of behavioural and causal and motivational

⁵ McDowell's position is presented in a number of essays, some of which are gathered in his *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), but see especially "Values and Secondary Qualities". Among contemporary Humean positions on value, the most resolute is Simon Blackburn's which is presented in some of the writings in his *Essays in Quasi-Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). There are several contemporary Kantians too, of course, such as Nagel, Scanlon, Parfit, Korsgaard... The classic statement is Nagel's *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). For Hume and Kant themselves see respectively any of the various editions of, *A Treatise of Human Nature* and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

⁶ See especially Stuart Hampshire's book on Spinoza, first published in 1951 and republished as *Spinoza and Spinozism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also Hampshire's *Freedom of the Individual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

tendencies, one looks at oneself as another might look at one, and so this is often called the ‘third person’ point of view’ on oneself. But when one intends to do something, one is asking ‘What should I do?’ or ‘What ought I to do?’, one is being an agent not an observer of oneself, one is a subject rather than an object, and that is why this is sometimes known as a ‘first person’ perspective on oneself. Even when intentions to do something are formed without being deliberately decisional answers to explicit questions of that form, they are distinctively within the first person point of view by contrast with predictions of what one will do.

[A terminological aside: This vocabulary may be misleading since ‘first person’ and ‘third person’ can give the impression of being merely grammatical categories involving the first and third person pronoun, while the perspectival categories that the distinction between intention and prediction invoke are *philosophical* categories which *do not coincide* with the *grammatical*. Proof of this failure of coincidence can be found in examples such as when someone says, “I predict that I will...,” where the first occurrence of the first person pronoun, ‘I’ is an agentive use and the second occurrence refers to oneself as an object of detached study or observation—raising hard questions, incidentally, about breezy assumptions we make about unproblematic anaphora in such cases. For this reason it may be sensible to replace the terms ‘the first person’ point of view and ‘the third person’ point of view with ‘the agent’s’ or ‘the engaged point of view’ and ‘the observer’s’ or ‘the detached’ point of view, respectively.]

With whatever terminology we describe it, the crucial point is that though one can and does have both these points of view on oneself, we cannot have both these points of view on oneself *at once*.

The distinction, as I have presented it so far, is a distinction regarding two perspectives or points of view on *oneself*. But there ought also to be a similar distinction that holds for perspectives we have on the *world*. We can have a detached perspective on it, a perspective of study as is paradigmatically found in natural science (though that is just one very highly systematic form that that perspective takes), and we can have a perspective of agency on the world, one of responding to it with practical engagement rather than with detached observation and explanatory purpose.

[Here again there is scope for being misled. The point is not that we are not agents when we are observing and explaining the world in scientific terms,

but that we, as agents, are taking a perspective of detached observation or study on it rather than one of practical engagement. A scientist in her scientific observation and study does engage with the world and is an agent when she does so, but she does so with a perspective on the world that is detached. This point was already visible in the example I gave above when I was speaking of a third person perspective one can take on oneself. When I say, “I predict that I will...,” the first use of the personal pronoun is an agentive one, but the fact is that, qua prediction, the angle I have taken on myself is that of detached observation rather than of agency, by contrast with when I say “I intend to...” Exactly the same point holds of one’s third person perspective on the world. One does not cease to be an agent when one has a detached perspective on the world, one just treats the world as an object of detached study rather than as something that prompts our practical engagement.]

So, these contrasting points of view one has can apply to oneself *as well as to the world*. I want now to consider the *latter* and ask a crucial question: what must the world be like, what must the world contain, such that it moves us to such practical engagement, over and above detached observation and study? If the world prompts such engagement, it must contain elements over and above those we observe and study from a detached point of view. The obvious answer to the question is that over and above containing the facts that natural science studies it contains a special kind of fact, evaluative facts and properties, or more simply, it contains *values*; and when we perceive them, they put normative demands to us and activate our practical engagement. Values, being the sort of thing they are, are not primarily the objects of detached observation, they engage with our first rather than our third person point of view on the world.

Thus if we *extend* in this way *onto the world* a presupposition of the fundamental distinction between intention and prediction (the presupposition of two contrasting perspectives that one can have *on oneself*), we get a conception of values that is neither Humean nor Kantian. We get a conception of values by which they are not merely something *we* generate with our mental tendencies and ‘*project*’ onto the world (a favoured metaphor among Humeans), but, they are properties that are found in the world, a world of nature, of others who inhabit nature with us, and of a history and tradition that accumulates in the relations among these, and within which value is understood as being ‘in the world’. So conceived, values are not dismissible either as mere inclinations

as Kant did of Hume's psychologicistic conception of values, nor (since they are perceptible properties in the world, precisely what Kant denied) are they dismissible as populating some gratuitous noumenal ontology of the pure and unencumbered will of 'Practical Reason'. It is not as if sympathy and moral sentiments, much stressed by Humeans, are left out of this picture, but sympathy and moral sentiments, on this picture, are our responses to the normative demands that we apprehend in our perceptions of the evaluative properties of the world.

I have tried to motivate a view of value that places it in the world as flowing from our commonsensical commitments to agency. The motivation was presented in two stages. 1) I had said there that if the distinction between intention and prediction presupposes a distinction between a first person or agent's point of view and a third person or disengaged point of view that we can take on ourselves, then there ought to be a similar distinction of points of view that we can take upon the world; and, 2) if there is to be a first person or agent's point of view we can take on the world of the sort that we can take on ourselves, then the *world* must contain values which prompt such a point of view of agency to be activated in our agentive responses to them.

The notion of agency and its presuppositions, derived from the initial Spinozist distinction between intention and prediction, play a crucial role in the motivation for such a view of value. But a question might be raised: Why can't agency consist in nothing more than the fact that we try and fulfill our desires, intentions, and so on. True, there is a first person point of view that is activated and exercised in agency, but why can't it simply be exercised merely in our efforts to satisfy our desires and fulfill our intentions? Why do I insist that agency comes into play *only when our desires (and moral sentiments) are responding to the callings of something external, the evaluative properties in the world?* To put it in terms of my two-stage dialectic for the motivation, the question is: It is true that the distinction between intention and prediction points to a distinction between the first and the person point of view *on ourselves*, but why am I insisting that there actually be a replication or version of this distinction in points of view we have *on the world*.

These are good questions and fruitful ones. Rather than the conception of agency presented in 2) above, they urge upon us much the more standard and much the more minimal and simple philosophical conception of practical agency, our capacity to

act so as to fulfill our *desires* (on the basis of our *beliefs* about what will be a suitable available way to fulfill them); and by stressing this standard view of agency they resist the consequent of the conditional presented in 1), while granting the antecedent.

The questions, then, throws down the following challenge. The motivation I have presented for a conception of value that places values in the world depends on an unmotivated conception of agency as requiring an exercise of the first person point of view conceived of as responses to normative demands from the world. On this conception of agency, as I put it earlier, desires (including those desires that are loftier and amount to moral sentiments) are *not self-standing* but rather are responses to things in the world which have whatever it takes (evaluative properties) that prompt their activation. Why does this seem compulsory, why can't desires be thought of as self-standing? How can we motivate the denial of their self-standingness, philosophically?

To answer this, we need to look a little harder at the relationship between desires and agency.

Gareth Evans had once said illuminatingly that questions put to one about whether one believes something, say whether it is raining outside, do not prompt us to scan our mental interiority, they prompt us to look outside and see whether it is raining.⁷ That is to say, one not only looks outside when one is asked, "Is it raining?" but also when one is asked, "Do you believe it is raining?"

Now, let's ask: Is this true of questions put to one about whether one *desires* something? When someone asks one, "Do you desire x?," are we prompted to ponder our own minds or are we prompted to consider whether x is desirable? There may be special sorts of substitutions for x where we might ponder our own minds but for most substitutions, I think, we would consider x's desirability. This suggests that our desires are presented to us as having desirabilities in the world as their objects.

If one thought this extension of Evans's point wrong, if one thought that a question of that sort prompted one to step back and consider by scanning our minds what we desired (rather than to consider what was desirable), that would suggest instead that our desires were presented to us in a way such that *what they were desires for* was available to us only as something that we could have access to when we stepped back and pondered our own minds—in the *third* person. But now, if the presupposition of

⁷ Gareth Evans, *Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 225.

Spinoza's point is right and if agency is present in the possession and exercise of the *first* person rather than the third person point of view, that makes it a question as to how this conception of our desires can square with the fact of our agency. To see our desires as reaching down all the way to desirabilities in the world places our desires squarely within the domain of our agency since now *what* we desire is presented to us in the experiencing of the desiring itself, rather than presented to us when we stepped back to observe our desires—thereby abdicating our agency.

This gives a decisive reason for resisting a self-standing view of desires—such a view cannot accommodate the fact of our agency—and in doing so it establishes two things. First it establishes the deep and essential links between value and agency, and second it motivates the conception of value that resists naturalism about value by resisting (unlike Kantian forms of resistance to it) a purely 'naturalistic' conception of *nature* and, more generally, the perceptible (phenomenal) *world*.

Putting it just this way as I have, following McDowell, in order to contrast it with the Kantian resistance to naturalism, might invite a confusion that needs to be preempted at the very outset. It would be a confusion to dismiss such an anti-naturalist conception of value as taking an 'unscientific' view of nature and the world. To say values are properties in the world (including nature) is to make the world (including nature) not comprehensively surveyable by the methods of natural science. That is the anti-naturalism. How could this be an unscientific thing to say? Something is unscientific, one must assume, if it falls afoul one or other of the claims of one or other of the natural sciences. What else could 'unscientific' mean? But if this is what it means, then anti-naturalism is not unscientific since no natural science contains the proposition that natural science has full coverage of the world (including nature). That is something that only a philosopher says (or a scientist, playing at being a philosopher, says). And one can find it to be bad philosophy, as McDowell no doubt does, without being accused of doing bad science in return. Claims such as those made by 'creationism', 'natural design'... are unscientific since they say something by way of answer to a question that is scientific (about the origins of the universe) and contradict what the best current science has to say on that question. But the anti-naturalism we are considering, the claim that values are properties in the world, makes no attempt to answer any question of that kind. It is not a question within natural science. It is

just a confusion to dismiss it as unscientific.

There is more to be said on this subject because there are sometimes concessions made by naturalism to anti-naturalism that do little to redeem the deeper prejudices – accumulated over the centuries as I will try and show in the next section in spheres of broader cultural and political significance than those that surface in current debates—that naturalism is prone to. Indeed sometimes the concession only extends these prejudices.

Let me look a little closely at one such concession that merely carries these prejudices over from the natural sciences to the social.

Suppose one were to concede that the natural sciences do not have full coverage of the world (including nature). And suppose one does so specifically by conceding the importance of what I have placed on centre-stage, the notion of agency and the contrast of the point of view of agency with the point of view of detached observation and study. This can be done by allowing that the world contains such things as '*opportunities*'. Thus, for instance, here in front of me in a glass there is a substance with the chemical composition H_2O , but right there, in the very same place, there is also something properly describable as 'an opportunity' to satisfy a desire of mine, the desire that I quench my thirst. The first is something that I study from a detached point of view, but the latter is necessarily something I respond to with practical engagement. The world, now, will not be comprehensively surveyed by the natural sciences since no natural science studies opportunities.

This is a concession that a naturalist, as I have defined him, might make. Has he conceded enough to the anti-naturalist as I have defined him? Perhaps the answer has to be 'yes', if all we care about is the letter and not the spirit of the anti-naturalist's objections to the disenchantment that naturalism has wrought. And if so, we will need another label than naturalism for what the anti-naturalist most deeply opposes (and a correspondingly different label for his own position). I had already in Footnote 2 suggested that that label might be 'scientism'. Let me explain why that term is apt.

This concession by naturalism to anti-naturalism can be made with the following theoretical and methodological aim in mind. Let it be that the world contains such things as opportunities that fall outside of the purview of *natural* sciences. What they fall within is the *social and behavioural* sciences which now can be described as having the following as one of their goals (of course one among many other

goals, though it may, in some sense that I won't try and elaborate here, be a very central and frameworking goal for these sciences within which more specific goals get their specific point): the goal of studying and explaining individual (possibly even eventually social) behaviour as a kind of desire-satisfaction in human subjects in the light of their (probabilistic) apprehension of the desire-satisfying properties in the world, i.e., *opportunities* that the world provides to satisfy our wants and preferences.

On this picture values themselves continue to be seen in entirely Humean terms, as generated by placing some internal constraints upon desires viewed as dispositions and tendencies in the subject. The subject, however, also has beliefs about what in the world is most likely to fulfill those desires. These may be described, as in the concession being considered, as opportunities in the world for desire-satisfaction. Though the world is now said to contain something (opportunities) that surpass the subject matter of the natural sciences, they contain nothing that is itself intrinsically normative. So what are allowed as properties in the world (these opportunities that prompts our first person point of view of agency) are mere instruments to satisfying desires, but it is only these desires which (as Humeans insist) exclusively generate values when we put the right internal constraints upon them, and none of these constraints are in any way normative constraints coming from the world. If there is any impression that values are in the world in this view, that is a phenomenological illusion brought about by our own 'projections' onto the world. The perceptible world contains only *means* that human subjects perceive as having a measurable likelihood of satisfying their desires.

The social and behavioural sciences can see in this picture of the world, the scope to extend the notion of scientific rationality. True, their angle on the world is less detached than the natural sciences. One, after all, looks at the world with more practical engagement when one sees something not merely as H₂O but as an opportunity. Despite this concession to anti-naturalism, the normative element in this picture of the practical domain is constructed entirely out of a normative void. It emerges only from within human causal tendencies and *dispositions* (desires) plus the likely *means* provided by the perceptible world (opportunities) to gratify them. There are two aspects to the normative element, on this view. The aspect of *value*, which is restricted to some sophisticated and constrained understanding of the former and the aspect of *rationality*, which is exhausted by the latter's

perceived contribution to the former's satisfaction. No more intrinsic normative element is acknowledged and that is the reason to think of this picture as rightly describable by the term 'scientistic'.

Sometimes a further concession toward anti-naturalism is made by philosophers (such as Donald Davidson) whereby the normative element is seen as irreducible to human dispositions and causal tendencies but it is not clear how, on this view, that concession can be ultimately grounded, if those tendencies are not responsive to normative demands made by evaluative properties *in the world*. In this further concession, the irreducible normativity is supposed to enchant the human subject but it remains mysterious how this is supposed to happen when the world the subject inhabits remains disenchanting. The human subject is supposed to be enchanted wholly from within. We may try to remove some of the mystery in this idea by saying: unlike non-human animals, human beings can ask of any one or more of their desires and inclinations and tendencies, "Is it good to have it?," a possibility that only comes with language and a level of sophistication of thought that only linguistic creatures can possess. This question, "Is it good to have this desire, this disposition or tendency?," is a clear and intelligible one and to the extent that it is intelligible, this use of 'good' in a question of that form is proof that value is not simply reducible to desire and inclination and causal tendency.⁸ It must be something over and above these, else that question cannot quite make sense.

This is all salutary and convincing, but the question remains as to what are the normative sources a subject can turn to in order to answer the question: Is it or is it not good for me to have a certain desire, a certain disposition or tendency? Davidson himself does not locate the source in anything other than desires themselves. There is no hint in his writing that the dispositions we have which are distinctly relevant to values are dispositions to respond to normative demands coming from the evaluative properties of the perceptible world that we inhabit with others, along the lines I tried to convey at the beginning of this section. Davidson is impervious to such a normative source because he is impervious to the considerations that I had raised earlier via Evans's insight, considerations which displayed the deep links between value and agency. Because it has no

⁸ The alert reader will recognize this to be an extension of G. E. Moore's open question argument. For more on this subject, see Chapter 5 of my *Self-Knowledge and Resentment*.

place for evaluative properties, for desirabilities that the world contains to which our desires are responses, the Davidsonian position must find another answer than the one we gave to the question about desires that parallels the question Evans raises about beliefs. And the only other answer there is, as I pointed out, forces an abdication of agency.

Thus though Davidson was among the first to make an important concession to anti-naturalism when he claimed an irreducibility for intentionality on the grounds that they are essentially caught up with normative considerations, his anti-naturalism remains quite incomplete without the further claim that he fails to make—that those normative considerations are grounded in the world to whose demands our intentional states are responsive.⁹

There is something that needs to be qualified in my constant use of expressions such as “values in the world make normative *demands* on us, they *move* us to or *prompt* our engagement with the world.” For someone like me, keen on making the evaluative enchantment of the world so much of a piece with our own capacities for agency, indeed grounding the possibility of agency in such enchantment, this vocabulary might seem to betray a curious lapse, an undermining of the voluntaristic and decisional aspects of agency by the coercive force (betrayed in this rhetoric) of such an external calling from the world.

An external source of value that moves or prompts or makes demands of our agency is not coercive of the subject because it is only from within the first person, agentive, point of view that these external callings can so much as be recognized by the subject. That was the point of the appeal and the extension of the insightful point by Gareth Evans about belief, to desires. If these callings’ demands are recognized only from within the first person point of view, there is no question of their being *coercive*

forces. Rather, the subject, in such a recognition of the callings, acknowledges something on its own agentive terms, acknowledges by his agency the authority of those values to make those demands and calls. Agency, then, requires *two things at once*: a) a source of value from the outside and not merely from within our own causal tendencies and dispositions, as well as b) the human subject itself acknowledging this authoritative source of value from the first person point of view and, therefore, allowing that authority to make its demands on one. Both points are implicit in the use I made of Evans’s insight.

This essential role for the human subject in the very understanding of values as properties of the world makes values a very *distinctive* kind of property or fact in the world. One cannot aspire to apprehend such facts wholly without context and without interest weighing in. The subject is in some sense, then, central to the properties that are in perceptible view to him. McDowell himself represents this in an analogy with secondary qualities. But that analogy is imperfect in some respects and may even mislead, if taken in the wrong direction. If the point of the analogy is to merely say that the human subject is not a cancellable element in the attempt to provide a complete characterization of the evaluative properties in the world, that is true and it is illuminating to have it pointed out. Value is more like ‘red’ than ‘square’. If one feels that a congenitally blind subject misses out more of what the redness of the tablecloth is (in knowing merely the wavelength and other such specifications) than the squareness of the table is (in knowing merely the geometrical properties of a square), then there is an important sense in which the human subject and her specific kind of visual sensibility is more relevant to the property of being red than it is to the property of being a square. Value, too, makes such an essential reference to the subject though, obviously, the relevant sensibility here is a moral, not a visual, one. But in the case of value, the reference to the human subject goes deeper still since the perception of value properties may not be something that we *can* wholly aspire to have speak to us, independent of the context of our social and other background factors that shape our perceptions, in a way that we might aspire to with secondary qualities such as red. Of course, *all* properties—including even primary qualities—are to some extent determined in our perceptions by our background conditions of thought. The familiar point of ‘the theory-ladenness of observation’ was intended to acknowledge just that. But the further point about values is that to say

⁹ This failing in Davidson has a clear antecedent in Weber himself, who was one of the very first to have made this further concession I am discussing, saying that the human subject, individual and collective, cannot be studied by methods that fail to acknowledge that any domain of study in which human subjectivity is to be found, is value-laden. But he nowhere linked this influential observation with his own influential lament about the disenchantment of the world. Such concessions to the irreducibility of the human subject and to the value-ladenness of the human sciences which study it, though not false, remains incomplete and shallow without a full acknowledgement of the fact that the world itself (including nature) is naturalistically irreducible, that it is enchanted with evaluative properties that move us to practical engagement with the world.

that they are in the world (including nature) is to say something richer in assumption. The relations between the human subject and the world (including nature) he inhabits have a history and tradition within which his perceptions of the value properties in the world and nature at any given time speak to him and make normative demands. They will necessarily speak therefore in terms that are *contaminated* (I use a strong term such as that here to mark how much the point is supposed to exceed the acknowledgement of the mere theory-ladenness of observation in general) by a much richer set of background assumptions, and may well therefore speak differentially to subjects in different social and cultural contexts.

None of this should suggest a cultural relativism—any more than the theory-ladenness of observation of non-evaluative natural facts suggests a conceptual relativism. Though no relativism is implied by it, I mention the possibility of differential responses to evaluative facts in the world partly at least to make clear that the *motivation* for insisting on a philosophical conception of value that views them as facts external to human subjects is *not* to provide some sort of argument against a relativism about values. If there are such arguments against relativism, they will not be found by any simple appeal to a conception of value as being in the world. The motivation and argument for such a conception of value rather is entirely as I stated it at the outset and then later consolidated with the Evansian considerations a little later: to get right the relations between human subjectivity (the first person point of view), human agency, and value.

And if we have got these relations right, that is, if we have, via these considerations that first originated in a roughly Spinozist distinction and deepened in the Evansian argument I gave, given some genuine theoretical motivation and for this conception of values as being in the world, then, without distraction from the debate between Humeans and Kantians, the dispute over naturalism can be recast as a dispute as to whether the world really does contain values, as McDowell claims, and therefore is not comprehensively surveyed by the methods of natural science. Naturalists (at least as I have narrowly defined them) deny that the world contains values. They don't deny that we may meaningfully talk of values but they do deny that the talk's meaningfulness has to be understood in realist terms, whereby evaluative concepts describe real properties in the world that fall outside of the purview of natural science.

II. I have sought to arrive at the realist picture of values via a dialectic that began with what seemed like a common sense distinction between intention and prediction partly in order to convey how commonsensical it should seem to say that values are in the world. And a first pass at the genealogical issues I want to raise in this essay can be made by asking: why has this very natural way of thinking about values found so little place in the history of thought (and not just strictly philosophical thought in the narrow sense) about value in the last two or three hundred years? To answer this question would require one to get a sense of the very interesting genealogy of our current debates about naturalism, and thereby to give a sense of the wider significance of that debate which today is, at best, only highly implicit, and, at worst, altogether missing, in the idiom and the arguments in which the debate is conducted.

The answer to the question is to be found in one central strand in the intellectual and cultural history of the West in a phenomenon that can be traced, using a term that Weber put into currency and which McDowell too often uses to describe it: 'disenchantment'. For many centuries this natural way of thinking about values as being in the world that I have presented within the secular terms of the more or less atheistic intellectual orientation I share with most philosophers today (and presumably with John McDowell, who has most explicitly revived this way of thinking) had its source in the presence of a *divinity* which was, in many a view, itself immanent in the world. And it is this source which was undermined in the modern period that Weber described with that term.

This sort of point has, for sometime now—ever since Nietzsche's slogan—been made by summoning the image of the 'dead father'. And it continues to be made in this way in the current revival of tired Victorian debates about the irrationality of belief in a God and in his creation of the universe in six days a few thousand years ago. It is common in the rhetoric wielded by those who speak and write today with scorn of such irrational beliefs, that they describe them in terms of one's continuing immaturity, one's persistence in an infantile reliance on a 'father', whose demise was registered by philosophers (Nietzsche, but Hegel before him) much more than a century ago, one's abdication of responsibility and free agency in the humbling of oneself to an authority that is not intelligible to human concepts and scientific explanatory methods, concepts and methods hard won in a struggle towards progress and enlight-

enment, after centuries of obscurantism.

All this may be true enough, but there is something concealing about making the point in just this way since it impoverishes the notion of ‘disenchantment’ to one merely about loss of faith in God and his creation and his authority. What goes missing in this picture is the intellectual as well as cultural and political *pre-history* of the demise of such an authority figure. Well before his demise, brought about I suppose by the scientific outlook that we all now admire and which is rightly recommended by the authors of the string of recent, somewhat tedious, books that have inveighed against such irrational belief, it was the metaphysics forming around the new science itself and *nothing less than science* which—far from registering his demise—proposed instead in the late seventeenth century, a quite different kind of fate for ‘the father’, a form of *migration*, an *exile* into inaccessibility from the visions of ordinary people to a place outside the universe, from where in the more familiar image of the clock winder, he first set and then kept an inert universe in motion. And much more than his ‘death’, it is this exile and *deracination* of God from the world of matter and nature (and therefore from human community and perception) that reveals what is meant by ‘disenchantment’.

There is no Latin expression such as “Deus Deracinus” to express the thought that needs expounding here. The expression for the God exiled by the ideologues of the Royal Society in England in the wake of the developments in science around Newton in the late seventeenth century is “Deus Absconditus,” which may convey to the English speaker a fugitive fleeing rather than what I want to stress—the idea that it is from the roots of nature and ordinary perceptible life that God was removed. ‘Racine’ or roots is the right description of his immanence in a conception of a sacralized universe, from which he was torn away by the exile to which the metaphysical outlook of early modern science (aligned with thoroughly mundane interests) ushered him. Even so “Conditus” which literally means “put away for *safeguarding*,” (with the “abs-” reinforcing the “awayness,” of where God is safely placed) conveys something about the question I want to raise. What I want to ask is: why should the authority figure need safeguarding in an inaccessibility? What dangers lay in his immanence, in his availability to the visionary temperaments of all those who inhabit his world? And why should the *scientific* establishment of *Early* Modernity seek this safekeeping in exile, for ‘a fa-

ther’ whom its successor in *late*, more mature, modernity would properly describe as “dead”?

These *genealogical* questions are crucial to the analysis I want to present about the wider significance of the debates around naturalism, first, because an answer to them would show that the ‘scientific rationality’ which is so insistently extolled by these attacks on religious belief today, did not emerge whole all at once, but also because the answer reveals that—even if we allow it to be a gradual outcome of a triumphantly progressive intellectual history—to focus merely on the end-point of that history as an ideal of rationality towards which we have sequentially and cumulatively progressed and converged in a long struggle against obscurantism, is to give oneself an air of spurious innocence

Narratives of progress have been much under attack for some time for their self-congratulatory triumphalism, but I think it is arguable that things are methodologically much worse than that. They are wrong—at any rate, deeply limited—on, and by, *their own* terms.

In general, a sequence, especially when it is consecutively narrativized and dialectically and cumulatively conceived, as progressive ideals are bound to conceive it, cannot have started from the beginning of thought and culture itself. If a sequence is to aspire to conceptual and cultural significance (as the very idea of progress suggests) it cannot have *its* beginnings at the very beginning of conceptual and cultural life. That would trivialize things—evacuate the notion of sequence of any of the substance and significance that progressivist narrative aspires to. It cannot be that we have been converging on the significant end-point from the random inceptions of our intellectual and cultural existence. One assumes rather that there were many strands at the outset, endless false leads, but then at some point (what I am calling the *beginning* of the progressivist trajectory) we got *set* on a path, which we think of as the *right* path, from which point on the idea of *cumulative* steps towards a broadly specifiable end began to make sense, a path of *convergence* towards that end. Accumulation and convergence, then, don’t start at the beginning of thought, but rather they start at some juncture that we think of as the *start* onto a *right* path.

This has many implications for intellectual historiography, some of them highly critical. Just to give you one example, I think it implies a real difficulty for philosophers such as Hilary Putnam when they say that scientific realism is true because it is the

only explanation of the fact that there is a *convergence* in scientific theories—that is to say, the posits of science must be real because it is only their reality which would explain the *cumulative* nature of the claims of scientific theories over time.¹⁰ What is the difficulty with this that I have in mind? It is this. Here too, the fact is that these converging and cumulative trends have not existed since the beginning of theorizing about nature. In fact Putnam would be the first to say that it is only sometime in the seventeenth century that we were set on the right path in science and from then on there has been a convergence that is best explained by the corresponding reality of what the converging scientific theories posit. But now a question arises. *What* makes it the case that *that* is when we were set on the *right* path? What is the notion of *rightness*, here? If we have an answer to this last question (about what makes the path the *right* path at *that* starting point), then that notion of rightness would *already* have established scientific realism and we don't need to wheel in scientific realism to explain the subsequent convergence.

Well, my subject is not scientific realism, so I give this example only to display the more general point that accounts of our rationality that stress our sequential development and progress towards a hard-won end, cannot then just focus on the end-point and avoid the importance of the *beginning* of the sequence, which, may have the greater power to illuminate than its end or even the sequence itself. If you wanted a slogan for what I have been saying, it is: No teleology without genealogy! And, as I have said earlier, my own reason for stressing the Early Modern *origins* of our late modernity's proud embrace of scientific rationality, is to make us less complacent about the ideal that we have embraced by uncovering in its genealogy the thick *accretions* to it that have had large implications for politics and culture.

Let me turn to these now and say more specifically why a scientific establishment of Early Modernity would have found it convenient to put away 'the father' in a safekeeping away from the visionary access of ordinary people.

III. There are three things to observe at the very outset about this exile of the 'father' for some two hundred years until Nietzsche announced his demise.

First, intellectual history of the Early Modern period records that there was a remarkable amount of dissent and very explicit dissent against the notions that produced the exile, dissent by a remarkable

group of intellectuals, who were most vocal first in England and the Netherlands and then elsewhere in Europe. For the sake of focus, I will restrict myself to England. Second, there was absolutely nothing unscientific about these freethinkers or their dissent. They were themselves scientists, then of course called 'natural philosophers', fully on board with the new science and the Newtonian laws and all its basic notions, such as gravity, for instance. They were only objecting to the *metaphysical* outlook generated by official ideologues around the new science, who began to dominate the Royal Society, in which the much more complicated Newton of his private study was given a more orthodox public face by people such as Boyle and Samuel Clarke, a public move in which Newton himself acquiesced. And third, the metaphysical outlook of the dissenters was suppressed and the Royal Society ideologues won out and their metaphysics became the orthodoxy, not because of any superiority, either metaphysical or scientific, but because of carefully cultivated *social and political factors*, that is to say, alliances that the 'Newtonians' formed with different social groups such as the Anglicans and the commercial and mercantile interests of the time.¹¹

To put a very complex range of interweaving themes in the crudest summary, the dispute was at first sight about the very nature of nature and matter and, relatedly therefore, about the role of the deity, and of the broad cultural and political implications of the different views on these metaphysical and religious concerns. The metaphysical picture that was promoted by the exile of 'the father' to a place outside the universe was that the world itself was, therefore, 'brute' and 'inert' and needed an external divine source for its motion. In the dissenting picture, by contrast, matter was *not* brute and inert, but rather was shot through with an *inner* source of dynamism responsible for motion, that was itself divine. For the dissenters, God and nature were not separable as in the official metaphysical picture that was growing

¹⁰ See Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978)

¹¹ I am deliberately focusing on a later period and not tracing some of these tendencies to the more general and somewhat earlier mechanistic turn which is so often emphasized in the literature of Early Modern intellectual history partly because the worldly motivations to support a certain incipiently 'naturalist' metaphysics was most explicitly formulated by figures in the Royal Society after Newton and it is they who formed the alliances with the Anglican religious interests as well as the commercial and mercantile interests that I want to emphasize. I am grateful to Mario De Caro for insisting that I explain in a footnote why I focus on this later period.

around the new science, and John Toland, for instance, to take just one example among the active dissenting voices, openly wrote in terms he proclaimed to be ‘pantheistic’.¹²

This metaphysical disagreement, however, was caught up in a range of wider implications. One was this: Some of the dissenters argued that it is only because one takes matter to be ‘brute’ and ‘stupid’,¹³ to use Newton’s own term, that one would find it appropriate to conquer it with nothing but profit and material wealth as ends, and thereby destroy it both as a natural and a human environment for one’s habitation. In today’s terms, one might think that this point was a seventeenth century predecessor to our ecological concerns but though there certainly was an early instinct of that kind, it was embedded in a much more general point, a point really about how nature in an ancient and spiritually flourishing sense was being threatened and how therefore this was in turn threatening to our moral psychology of engagement with it, *including the relations and engagement among ourselves as its inhabitants*. This last point is vital to the breadth of significance of the issues at stake, which were not about nature in a purely self-standing sense. That is why the qualms expressed by the term ‘disenchantment of nature’ were not by any means merely ecological qualms. The ideal of enchantment was (and is) an ideal of an unalienated life (to use Marx’s later term), whether from nature or from one another as its inhabitants. Nature, itself, therefore was conceived in terms of its relations with its inhabitants and a history of those relations and a tradition that these engender in different societies, within which subjects engage with nature (broadly conceived in this way). All this went into the understanding of ‘nature’ in what I have called the “ancient and spiritually flourishing sense” of that term.

Today, the most thoroughly and self-consciously

secular sensibilities may recoil from the term ‘spiritually’, as I have just deployed it, though I must confess to finding myself feeling no such self-consciousness despite being a secularist, indeed an atheist. The real point has not much to do with the rhetoric. If one had no use for the word, if one insisted on having the point made with words that we today can summon with confidence and accept without qualm, it would do no great violence to the core of their thinking to say this: the dissenters thought of the *world* not as brute but as *suffused with value*. That they happened to think the source of such value was divine may not to be the deepest point of interest for us today. And, in fact, many of the dissenters were attacked by an inner circle of the Royal Society (consisting of Richard Bentley and Samuel Clarke, among others, and all approved by Newton himself) that had formed around the Boyle Lectures,¹⁴ for having too tenuous a commitment to the divine on the grounds that the line between pantheism and atheism (as well as materialism) was much too thin. They argued that what was needed for the Protestant faith to flourish in a stable and abiding form was not merely an opposition to the Catholic sympathizers among the High Tories but an opposition to these ‘freethinkers’ on the republican Left among the Whigs, who opposed their metaphysics and denied a providential role to God by making Him co-eternal with matter itself and thereby too easily subtractable from it to yield materialism and atheism. So, though many of the freethinkers had an explicitly pantheistic commitment (Toland is said to have actually coined the term ‘pantheism’), they provided by this perceived approximation to materialism and atheism, an excuse for those who opposed them to cast them as beyond the pale.¹⁵

¹² In a series of works, starting with *Christianity Not Mysterious* in 1696, more explicitly pantheistic in statement in the discussion of Spinoza in *Letters to Serena* (1704) and then in the late work *Pantheisticon* (1724). These writings are extensively discussed in Margaret Jacob’s excellent work, *The Radical Enlightenment* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).

¹³ The point is not that there was contempt for nature after the exile of God. God’s creation and ward could be something that one could respect with wondrous awe, even as miraculous, as scientists often did. The point rather (see below for more on this) was that the exile, by removing from nature any ingredient within it that would prevent its being viewed primarily as natural resources, gave sanction via a set of worldly alliances, to a certain form of political economy and political culture.

¹⁴ In his will, Boyle endowed these lectures saying that there were to be given by a chosen London clergyman eight times a year and they were ‘for proving the Christian religion against notorious infidels, viz., Atheists, Theists, Pagans, Jews and Mahometans, not descending lower to any controversies among Christians themselves.’ (Quoted in John J. Dahm, “Science and Apologetics in the Early Boyle Lectures,” *Church History* 39, No. 2. (1970): 172–186.

¹⁵ The history of this heterodox pantheism is disparate and not without its inner transformations. The leaders of radical groups such as the Levellers and Diggers during the English revolution, (figures such as Overton and Winstanley) wrote and spoke of the presence of God in all things and all matter. For them, to resist the gap between God and His Creation was part of their resistance to the privileged place given to an elite clergy that could claim to mediate that gap. This entire resistance both in its metaphysical and its political aspects was anxiously

I will return later to the wider political reasons for insisting on the importance for the Anglican establishment of a providential God keeping a universe in order from *without*. But for now, the point I am stressing is that to see God *within* was to see nature as sacralized, with the strict implication that it was thereby laden with *value*, making *normative* (ethical and social) demands on one, normative demands, therefore, that did not come merely from our own desires and subjective utilities. It is this sense of forming commitments by taking in, *in our perceptions*, an evaluatively 'enchanted' world which—being enchanted in this way—therefore moved us to normatively constrained *engagement* with it, that many dissenters contrasted with the outlook that was being offered by the ideologues of the new science. A brute and disenchanting world could not move us to any such engagement since any perception of it, given the sort of thing it was, would necessarily be a *detached* form of observation; and if one ever came out of this detachment, if there was ever any engagement with a world so distantly conceived, so external to our own sensibility, it could only take the form of mastery and control of something alien, with a view to satisfying the only source of value allowed by this outlook—our own desires and utilities and gain.

We are much used to the lament that we have long been living in a world governed by overwhelmingly commercial motives. What I have been trying to do is to trace this to its deepest *conceptual* sources and that is why the seventeenth century is so central to a proper understanding of this world. Familiarly drawn connections and slogans, like "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, are only the beginning of such a tracing."

dismissed by the Anglican establishment as 'enthusiasm' preached on behalf of the aspiring lower classes that would destabilize the order that had finally come with the Restoration. Successive Boyle lecturers inveighed against the legacy of 'enthusiasm' and the unrest of the revolutionary period that was generated in its name. I say more about this below. The dissenters against the Newtonians' 'holy alliance' (as it was called) with the Anglican establishment, also invoked pantheism some decades after the revolutionary period of the forties. Toland had studied Bruno's Italian works of a century earlier and was much influenced by its neo-platonist, hermeticist ideas, but possibly because of the tremendous hostility to 'enthusiasm' in the previous few decades, he had begun to eschew the mystical elements in Bruno, and seemed to subscribe to a more domesticated, more 'rational', form of hermeticism, though he still declared himself a pantheist.

In his probing book, *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke says that "the experience of an impersonal outlook was empirically intensified in proportion as the rationale of the monetary motive gained greater authority."¹⁶ This gives us a glimpse of the sources. As he says, one had to have an impersonal angle on the world to see it as the source of profit and gain, and vice versa. But I have claimed that the sources go deeper. It is only when we see the world as Boyle and Newton did, as against the free-thinkers and dissenters, that we understand further why there seemed no option but to stress this impersonality in our angle on the world. A desacralized world, to put it in the dissenting terms of that period, left us no other angle from which to view it, but an impersonal one. There could be no normative constraint coming upon us from a world that was brute. It could not move us to engagement with it on *its* terms. All the term-making came from us. We could bring whatever terms we wished to such a world; and since we could only regard it impersonally, it being brute, the terms we brought in our actions upon it were just the terms that Burke describes as accompanying such impersonality, the terms of 'the monetary' motives for our actions. Thus it is, that the metaphysical issues regarding the world and nature, as they were debated around the new science, provide the deepest *conceptual* sources.

But why, one might ask, should the fact of 'the father's exile to an external place as a clock winder have led to an understanding of the universe as wholly brute and altogether devoid of value? Why was it not possible to retain a world suffused with values that were intelligible to all who lived in it, despite the inaccessibility of the figure of the father? Why must value require a sacralized site for its station, without which it must be relegated to proxy, but hardly proximate, notions of desire or utility and gain? It might seem that these questions are anachronistic, suited only to our own time when we might conceivably (though perhaps not with much optimism) seek *secular* forms of *re-enchanting* the world. One cannot put them, at least not without strain and artificiality, to a period in which value was so pervasively considered to have a sacred source. But even if we cannot put these questions to a world view which, by our modern lights, was constricted by impoverished conceptual options, we can ask a diagnostic question about what forces prevented the *development* of the idea that the world is enchanted

¹⁶ Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

with evaluative properties whose normative demands on us, even if now purely secular, move our first person point of view to a responsiveness into moral agency? The diagnosis has many elements and needs more patient elaboration than I can possibly give it here, but one or two of the more straightforward points can be put down briefly.

IV. The core of the diagnosis is that (an alternative and more secular) ideal of enchantment never took hold because there were too many powerful social forces that were complicit in keeping it out.

The conceptual sources of disenchantment that we have traced are various but they were *not* miscellaneous. The diverse conceptual elements of religion, capital, nature, metaphysics, rationality, science, were *tied together* in a highly *deliberate* integration, that is to say in deliberately accruing worldly *alliances*. Newton's and Boyle's metaphysical view of the new science won out over the freethinkers' and became official only because it was sold to the Anglican establishment and, in an alliance with that establishment, to the powerful mercantile and incipient industrial interests of the period in thoroughly predatory terms. Terms which stressed that how we conceive nature may now be transformed into something, into the *kind* of thing, that is indefinitely available for our economic gain by processes of extraction, processes such as mining, deforestation, plantation agriculture intended essentially as what we today would call 'agribusiness'. None of these processes could have taken on the *unthinking* and yet *systematic* prevalence that they first began to get in this period unless one had ruthlessly revised existing ideas of a world animated by a divine presence. From an *anima mundi*, one could not simply proceed to take at whim and will. Not that one could not or did not, till then, take at all. But in the past in a wide range of social worlds, such taking as one did had to be accompanied by ritual offerings of reciprocity which were intended to show respect towards as well to restore the balance in nature, offerings made both before and after cycles of planting, and even hunting. The point is that, in general, the revision of such an age-old conception of nature was achieved in tandem with a range of seemingly miscellaneous elements that were brought together in terms that stressed a future of endlessly profitable consequences that would accrue if one embraced this particular metaphysics of the new science and build, in the name of a notion of 'rationality' around it, the institutions of an increasingly centralized political oligarchy (an

incipient state) and an established religious orthodoxy of Anglicanism that had penetrated the universities as well, to promote these very specific interests. These were the very terms that the freethinkers found alarming for politics and culture, alarming for the local and egalitarian ways of life which some decades earlier the radical elements in the English Revolution such as the Levellers, Diggers, Quakers, Ranters, and other groups had articulated and fought for.

These scientific dissenters themselves often openly avowed that they had inherited the political attitudes of these radical sectaries in England of about fifty years earlier and appealed to their instinctive, hermetic, neo-Platonist, and sacralized views of nature, defending them against the conceptual assaults of the official Newton/Boyle view of matter. In fact, the natural philosophies of Anthony Collins and John Toland (and their counterparts in the Netherlands drawing inspiration from Spinoza's pantheism, and spreading to France and elsewhere in Europe, and then, when strongly opposed, going into secretive Masonic Lodges and other underground movements) were in many details anticipated by the key figures of the radical groups in that most dynamic period of English history, the 1640s, which had enjoyed hitherto unparalleled freedom of publication for about a decade or more to air their subversive and egalitarian views based on a quite different conception of nature. Gerard Winstanley, one of the most well known among them, declared that "God is in all motion" and "the truth is hid in every *body*" (my italics).¹⁷ This way of thinking about the corporeal realm had for Winstanley, as he puts it, a great 'leveling purpose'. It allowed one to lay the ground, first of all, for a democratization of religion. If God was everywhere, then anyone may perceive the divine or find the divine within him or her, and therefore may be just as able to preach as a university-trained divine.¹⁸ But the opposition to the monopoly of so-called experts was intended to be more general than

¹⁷ Cited by Christopher Hill in his *The World Turned Upside Down* (London: Penguin, 1975), 293, from *The Works of Gerard Winstanley*, ed. G.H. Sabine (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1941).

¹⁸ The significance of this is not to be run together with the cliché about the Protestant reformation's sustained opposition to the priestcraft enshrined in popery. The later scientific dissenters who appealed to Winstanley's metaphysics and politics found themselves opposing precisely the Protestant establishment, which, in explicit alliance with the dominant ideologues of the Royal Society, had exiled God to a place inaccessible to all but the learned scriptural judgement of its university-trained divines.

in just the religious sphere. Through their myriad polemical and instructional pamphlets, figures such as Winstanley, John Lilburne, Richard Overton, and others reached out and created a radical rank and file population which began to demand a variety of other things, including an elimination of tithes, a leveling of the legal sphere by a decentralizing of the courts and the elimination of feed lawyers, as well as the democratization of medicine by drastically reducing, if not eliminating, the costs of medicine, and disallowing canonical and monopoly status to the College of Physicians. The later scientific dissenters were very clear too that these were the very monopolies and undemocratic practices and institutions which would get entrenched if science, conceived in terms of the 'Newtonianism' of the Royal Society, had its ideological victory.

Equally, that is to say, conversely, the Newtonian ideologues of the Royal Society around the Boyle lectures, saw themselves—without remorse—in just these conservative terms that the dissenters portrayed them in.¹⁹ They explicitly called Toland and a range of other dissenters, 'enthusiasts' (a term of opprobrium ever since it had been deployed against the theology and politics of the radical elements of the revolutionary period) and feared that their alternative picture of matter was an intellectual ground for the social unrest of the pre-Restoration period when the radical sectaries had such great, if brief and aborted, popular reach. They were effective in creating with the Anglican establishment a general conviction that the entire polity should take the form of orderly rule (over a populace that had been unruly and restive for two decades) by a state apparatus around a monarch serving the propertied classes and that this was just a mundane reflection, indeed a mundane *version*, of an *externally* imposed divine authority which kept a universe (of brute matter) in orderly motion, rather than an *immanently* present God in all matter and in all persons, inspiring them with the enthusiasms to turn the 'world upside down', in Christopher Hill's memorable, eponymous

phrase. To see God in every body and piece of matter, they anxiously argued, was to lay oneself open to a polity and a set of civic and religious institutions that were beholden to popular rather than scriptural and learned judgement and opinion. They were just as effective in forging with the commercial interests over the next century, the idea that a respect for a sacralized universe would be an obstacle to taking with impunity what one could from nature's bounty. By their lights, the only obstacles that now needed to be acknowledged and addressed had to do with the internal difficulties of advancing an economy geared to profit—the difficulties of transporting goods to markets, of mobilizing labour, and so on. No other factors of a more metaphysical and ideological kind should be allowed to interfere with these pursuits once *nature* had been transformed in our consciousness to a set of impersonally perceived '*natural resources*'.

It is these alliances brought together by these anxieties which ensured that the exile of 'the father' from his immanent presence would leave in the world, thus desacralized, no residual evaluative properties that might provide an alternative, more secular, source of enchantment. To repeat, it did so *first* with the argument that the exile would have the effect of creating a religious and metaphysical sensibility which could view nature as desacralized and ready for a predatory form of capitalist extraction, initially via a rapidly expanding system of 'enclosures' and then over time in the next century via the industrial technologies that the new science had made possible for European economies. And *second*, a distinct but supplementary argument that in this safeguarding of the father in an inaccessibility, it was only a priestcraft emerging in a class of scripturally trained and learned divines from the universities that could fully comprehend a deity unavailable to the perception and comprehension of ordinary people; and that this was to be integrated—by the very same economic, religious, and scientific alliances—with the elite possession of the *cognitive and informational* sources of power *quite generally*, whether in matters of law or medicine or the offices of government and administration. In a word, a creation of the oligarchic basis for a statecraft needed to ensure the profitable extractive economies that were being generated effectively by and for the propertied classes. From the point of view of this emerging ideology around the new science, the idea that values to live by are available to the ordinary perceptions of a world we live in, would have the effect of demoting these privileged knowl-

¹⁹ I say 'conservative' but the label may be misleading. On the political landscape, these figures are best described as 'moderates'. They used arguments derived from the metaphysics around the new science to oppose both the Tory Jacobites, who were supporters of the 'Catholic King' (now exiled), James II, as well as opposed the pro-Revolution republican section among the Whigs. I use the term 'conservative' only to mark their vehement opposition to the latter. Over the next few decades, it is these 'moderates' who dominated the Whig party itself and were entrenched in the ruling oligarchy.

edges possessed by the elites to something more arcane, by making the sources of political morality much more democratic.

It was precisely the threat of the *democratization* of value that was arrested in the Early modern developments I have briefly – much too briefly – sketched. And it was replaced instead by the ideals of civility generated by the courts of a monarch and the propertied classes,²⁰ a phenomenon well studied by scholars such as Norbert Elias,²¹ though I would add one functional gloss to his illuminating survey of its historical importance. These courtly civilities did not merely contrast with the rude social turmoil of a brute populace, they formed themselves into a screen that had the function of hiding from the early modern European courts and elites themselves, the cruelties of their own perpetration, recognizing cruelties only in the behaviour and life-styles of the brute populace against whom they defined themselves;²² and this went on to lay the ground for the abstract morphing of these civilities into the codifications of rights and constitutions of later modernity in orthodox liberal frameworks which, despite all the *enormous good* they have done and are *deservedly admired* for, similarly hide from ourselves the cruelties of our own perpetration on distant lands, allowing one to recognize cruelties only in societies where they are unaccompanied by the concealing formalities of such liberal codifications.²³

²⁰ This is the wider political outcome regarding value that came out of the repudiation of the more democratic possibilities that Winstanley and others had hoped for from their quite different conception of value emerging from a quite different understanding of the relations between nature and human community. It is what gets lost in the genealogical recesses of our more abstract philosophical understanding of the Humean outcome regarding value that comes from a repudiation of ‘enchantment’ that McDowell speaks of. I will not try and make the links between this more abstract and the more political levels of discussion regarding value here – will simply rest with having tried to reveal some of the wider significance in the genealogy.

²¹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

²² This attitude towards the mass of working people is manifest, for instance, in Boyle, who wrote of the radical sects and their ‘vulgar’ followers with great anxiety and determined opposition. For a good discussion of Boyle’s attitudes in this regard and his highly complicit role in the alliances I have mentioned above, see James R. Jacob, *Robert Boyle and the English Revolution in the Studies in the History of Science series* (New York: Burt Franklin and Company, 1977).

²³ The word ‘morph’ might be misleading here, so let me warn against it. I am not suggesting by any means that

V. These considerations, unearthed in the last three sections, give a sense of the wider significance that historically grounded the dispute over whether or not value may be seen as being in the world, and they show how genealogically loaded the term ‘disenchanted’ is, despite McDowell’s rather bland use of it in the contemporary version of the dispute

It is important to record that the diverse elements in these considerations I have traversed, of metaphysics, theology, politics, political economy and culture, were integrated by these alliances I mentioned in a recurring rhetoric of ‘*rationality*’ and ‘*science*’; and it is this thickly laden ideal of scientific rationality that is entirely missing in the story that is told by contemporary writers such as Dawkins²⁴ and Dennett²⁵ and others when they present their much ‘thinner’ ideal of rationality as the outcome of a struggling modernity against a long history of reactionary obscurantism. In our own current philosophical idiom, ‘*rationality*’ is a rather ‘thin’ and circumscribed ideal, referring mainly to the codifications of inductive, deductive, and decision-theoretic reasoning, with perhaps some more or less elaborated notion of ‘coherence’ thrown in. This is just how it should be. But the term in the earlier much ‘thicker’ sense that I have been outlining was meant to identify much more than the principles that relate observational evidence to theoretical conclusions (principles, that is, which would show the hypothesis of creationism, for instance, to be spectacularly false), or the princi-

these civilities are all that there is to the codifications we find in modern constitutions. The arguments given for rights and constitutions are quite distinct from those that ground notions of civility and so is their content and substance. I am saying rather that the screening function of ‘*civility*’ that I had mentioned, which blinds one to the cruelties that one perpetrates, carried over to ‘*rights*’ in modern, liberal ideology as it is practiced by advanced, industrial liberal democratic nations of what we have taken to calling ‘the North’ who are also blind to the cruelties they have perpetrated upon countries of ‘the South’, recognizing cruelties only in the form they occur in southern nations that lack constitutions and commitments to rights. I want to stress too that when I make this point about this function that rights have in our time, I mean merely what I say and no more. The point is ripe for misunderstanding and should not be taken to express any hostility to rights, whose important and beneficial achievements for modern society is undeniable.

²⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 2006).

²⁵ Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking, 2006)

ples of logical deduction or of practical reason as we now think of it; it was meant to mark an entire way of thinking of nature and its relation to our economic and political interests. This was most evident when these mercantile, political, scientific, and religious alliances produced over time the mentality that justified the colonial conquest of distant lands. The justification was merely an extension of the ideas that I have outlined to colonized lands, which too were to be viewed as brute nature that was available for conquest and control—but only *so long as one was able to portray the inhabitants of the colonized lands in infantilized terms*, as a people who were as yet unprepared—by precisely a *mental lack* of such a notion of *scientific rationality*—to have the right attitudes towards nature and commerce and the statecraft that allows nature to be pursued for commercial gain. It is this integral linking of the new science through its metaphysics with these attitudes that was conveyed by the earlier, thicker understanding of ‘scientific rationality’

It is not as if one cannot find in the writing of philosophers and scientists of an earlier time, the ‘thinner’ and more circumscribed ideal of rationality, and scientific rationality in particular. But part of the point of my tracing the work of a range of worldly alliances in this genealogy of the notion of ‘disenchantment’, is to show how many of them were also, in the name of ‘science’ and a metaphysics growing around the new science, ‘thickening’ what would otherwise have been an innocuous and ‘thin’ notion of scientific rationality.

Once that point is brought on to centre stage, a whole tide of confusingly ambiguous disputation regarding the Enlightenment subsides. The fact is that there was more than one strand in the Enlightenment and some of these strands were so different from one another that it is perhaps best to say that there was more than one Enlightenment. This has come to be recognized in the recent writing on the idea of a ‘radical Enlightenment’, a label that suits well the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century freethinkers as well as some of the later figures in the British and German Romantic tradition.²⁶ What

distinguishes this radical tradition from the more orthodox and canonical strand of the Enlightenment has partly at least got to do with differing attitudes towards what I have called the ‘thick’ notion of scientific rationality. In fact, once we disambiguate the notion of scientific rationality in its thick and thin meanings, a standard strategy of the orthodox Enlightenment against fundamental criticisms raised against it, is exposed as defensive posturing. It would be quite wrong and anachronistic to dismiss this initial and early intellectual—and, as I said, perfectly *scientific*—source of critique in the seventeenth and eighteenth century that I have expounded in the last three sections, from which later critiques of the orthodox Enlightenment derived, as being irrational (as was sometimes done), once one disambiguates the term ‘rational’, as I just have. Far from being irrationalist, opponents of the incipient values of the Enlightenment, these early dissenters, whose ideas have clear affinities with recurring heterodox traditions in the West since their time, constitute what can rightly be thought of as the early phase of ‘the Radical Enlightenment’.

To dismiss their pantheistic tendencies as being unscientific and in violation of norms of rationality, as was done by their orthodox contemporaries, would be to run together in a blatant slippage the general and ‘thin’ use of terms like ‘scientific’ and ‘rational’ with just this ‘thick’ notion of scientific rationality that we have identified above, which played a justificatory role in the development both of a predatory form of capitalism as well as later colonial conquest, and it is only this ‘thick’ notion that the dissenters were so jittery about. They had nothing against any more attenuated notion of rationality whatever and were themselves, as I said, quite on board with the details of the scientific laws. Later dismissals of later critiques of the orthodox Enlightenment exploit the same slippage—and the entire appeal to ‘scientific rationality’ as a defining feature of our modernity trades constantly on just such a slippage, subliminally appealing to the hurrah element of the general and ‘thin’ terms ‘rational’ and ‘scientific’, which we all applaud, to tarnish serious criticism of the orthodox Enlightenment, while ignoring the fact that the in their critique the opposition is to the thicker notion of scientific rationality, that was defined in terms of very specific scientific, religious, and commercial alliances.

Were we to apply the *thin* conception of ‘scientific’ and ‘rational’ (the one that is widely accepted among philosophers today), the plain fact is that *no-*

²⁶ See Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1981) and *Radical Enlightenment* by Jonathan Israel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Israel emphasizes much more than Margaret Jacob does the influence of Spinoza. I should also add that what is meant by ‘radical’ and who the exemplars are of ‘the radical’ in the two works do not by any means coincide.

body in that period was, in any case, getting prizes for leaving God out of the world-view of science. That one should think of God as voluntaristically affecting nature from the outside (as the Newtonians did) rather than sacralizing it from within (as the freethinkers insisted), was not in any way to improve on the *science* involved. Both views were therefore just as ‘unscientific’, just as much in violation of scientific rationality, in the ‘thin’ sense of that term that we would now take for granted. What was in dispute had nothing to do with science or rationality in that sense at all. What the early dissenting tradition was opposed to is the *metaphysical* orthodoxy that grew around Newtonian science and its implications for broader issues of culture and politics. This orthodoxy with all of its wider implications is what successive critiques of the mainstream of the Enlightenment have opposed; and the sleight of hand in the frequent dismissals of all opposition to the Enlightenment as being irrationalist, lies precisely in the hope that accusations of irrationality, because of the *general* stigma that the term imparts in its ‘thin’ usage, will disguise the very specific and ‘thick’ sense of rationality and irrationality that are actually being deployed by the opposition. Such (thick) *irrationalism* is precisely what the dissenters yearned for and hindsight shows what an admirable yearning it was.

Part of my motivation for giving this genealogy of the debates around naturalism is to help bring out how that genealogy provides for a disambiguation of the term ‘scientific rationality’, which would expose this sleight of hand. If Dawkins and Dennett and others, rightly inveighing against our current irrationalism of clinging to the figure of a father whose demise followed upon our embrace in Late modernity of a ‘thin’ notion of rationality, had also acknowledged the wide range of issues that centred on the exile of the father in Early Modernity and the ‘thick’ notion of rationality that it engendered, their books might have a much greater interest for those who are trying to come to a deep understanding of the widespread religiosity in our midst in our own time.

VI. I have sketched why, for considerations that have a significance well outside of philosophy, indeed strictly outside of science as well (since it is the *reception* of the new science by worldly alliances formed around it that was the moving force and not the scientific ideas and laws themselves), a *sacralized version* of a certain conception of value that I tried to motivate in Section I, was very aggressively opposed in the late seventeenth century. Those alliances won out and their philosophical position that

Weber described with the term ‘disenchantment’ was consolidated over the next two or three hundred years for the sorts of worldly reasons I have briefly sketched. Such a philosophical position may accurately be described in hindsight and in our own vocabulary as an early form of ‘naturalism’ that would not countenance *in* the world anything that was not susceptible to study by the methods of natural science. It is not that in that earlier period nothing was countenanced to exist at all that was not susceptible to scientific inquiry as we conceive of it now. But since ‘the father’ had been exiled to a place outside the universe, no such countenanced thing or property was *in the world* (except under the exceptional and occasional category of ‘miracles’.²⁷) The subsequent ‘death’ of the ‘father’ then transformed the philosophical doctrine of naturalism to its more current forms that will not brook even the *secular version* of enchantment that a position like McDowell urges. That lands us with our current disputation over naturalism with which I began.

I had pointed out that some key concessions that were made to anti-naturalism by naturalists in the history of this dispute between these two philosophies of value, merely extended the reach and scope of naturalism from the natural to the social sciences. Far from conceding anything deep to anti-naturalism, this form of concession to our agency and the first person point of view on the world (which allows the world to contain ‘opportunities’, i.e., properties that fall outside of the reach of the *natural* sciences because they prompt our agential, first person responses to the world) promoted a certain scientific conception of the *social* sciences. *And this too had its wider significance.* It extended the alienating elements of a disenchanted world by explicitly making it a site of instrumentality. With this concession, the ideal of scientific rationality in its ‘thin’ version can now be presented as being more than the codifications of confirmation theory and inductive logic. It can be presented as the frameworking ideal of the disciplinary regimes of the social sciences as follows: rational human behaviour consists in acting so as to satisfy our desires on the basis of these perceptions of opportunities in the world. So the world, in con-

²⁷ Why do I emphasize the category of the ‘exceptional’? Because though, miracles were, of course, countenanced as occurring in the world over these centuries, these were essentially considered to be punctuations in an otherwise disenchanted world. They were not pervasively present in the form of enchantment as in the hylozoic or pantheistic picture of the dissenting deists.

taining opportunities, contains things that go beyond what the natural sciences study but it contains nothing that this specific understanding of the social and behavioural sciences cannot bring within *their* purview. And now the surrounding metaphysical or philosophical picture in which the world is viewed as a site of opportunities of this form can generate its own more specifically ‘thick’ version of rationality a century and more after the Early Modern period I was discussing. The thickening this time is also, as always, via worldly alliances, though with far less input from the protestant religious establishment than in the earlier period and with the far more overtly developed industrial technologies to tap these ‘opportunities’ the world contains. The effects on us and the world wrought by this thick ideal deserve—and get—a more detailed specification than is given by Weber’s earlier and very general term ‘disenchantment’ with the later rhetoric of terms such as ‘commodification’, ‘alienation’, ...and so on that one finds in Marx and those influenced by him.

But the very fact that Weber and Marx were able to mobilize terms such as ‘disenchantment’ and ‘commodification’ and ‘alienation’ at all against these thick notions of rationality makes absolutely clear—what I have tried to motivate in the first half of this paper—the deep connections that exist between value and agency and a certain conception of the perceptible world which we inhabit as agents. These are all terms that describe how our relations to the world were impoverished in ways that desolate us, once we sever these deep connections in our conceptual and material lives. This was the wider significance of the disputation about naturalism in the Early Modern period that I have tried to excavate genealogically.

The extent to which that wider significance survives *in our own time* is a fascinating question but it is a very hard question to answer in depth and detail with full attention to the range of different interests that it integrates. It would be no bad thing for analytic philosophers, who are engaged with issues of naturalism, to allow themselves to be mobilized by these broader terms that Weber and Marx deployed, and to come out of their more cramped focus and idiom, to do their bit in answering it.

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THE QUESTION OF THE MEANING OF BEING: HEIDEGGER AND WITTGENSTEIN CONVERSE

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Abstract:

The paper encourages the dialogue between the Wittgensteinian and Heideggerian traditions, by pointing to joint motives and similar deep understanding of the task of philosophy. It argues that what is regarded as a distinctively Heideggerian form of philosophical inquiry is in fact a development to which philosophy naturally subjects itself as a result of reflexively reiterating exactly the same human tendency to question whatever is at the moment given to the thinker. For instance, at the level of Heideggerian regional ontologies, the dialogical openness of any one regional ontology to its others naturally engenders the question of fundamental ontology as a result of the natural tendency of human comprehension to thematise and question itself. This points to the dual-aspect nature of philosophy * from the unavoidable fact that it forms one part of the phenomenon it aspires to take in as a whole. For insofar as philosophy is defined as an inquiry into the human capacity for comprehending inquiry as such, beyond any particular way of acquiring understanding of any particular domain of reality, it amounts to a kind of absolutely purified or intensified exemplar of this aspect of the human way of being.

Key words: philosophical inquiry, regional ontologies, language plurality, reflexive iteration.

1. A Genealogical Myth of Philosophy, after Heidegger

Human beings are creatures whose modes of existence exemplify a comprehending grasp of the phenomena they encounter in the world they inhabit. When a man transfers the contents of the family laundry basket to the washing machine, sets it going, then spends an hour or two ironing the clean but crumpled items of clothing that emerge, every aspect of his endeavours presupposes an implicit understanding of the various things he utilizes. Unless he was capable of correctly identifying the presence and location, the nature

and the functional possibilities of the basket, the clothes, the washing machine and the iron, he would be in no position to perform his domestic duties. Human beings are in this sense immersed in a world of comprehensible entities as fish are immersed in water; but they are also capable of reflecting upon their implicit comprehension of that world – thematizing it and putting it in question. Our laundryman might, for example, be struck by the efficacy of the washing liquid with which he loads the washing machine, and wonder exactly how it achieves its cleansing purpose; or he might, as he unloads the machine, wonder how exactly shirts are constructed, by whom, and in the light of what conception of what is needed to be respectably dressed. Any such moment of reflective questioning might be thought of as the beginning of an intellectual trajectory that culminates in the development of a systematic body of knowledge such as chemistry, textile design, social history or economic theory – what Heidegger would call an ontic science, in which a particular domain or dimension of the world is delineated and made the subject of a correspondingly specific kind of intellectual inquiry.

But our laundryman's capacity to question his own everyday comprehension of the world, and thereby to deepen that comprehension, can also be turned upon the more systematic bodies of knowledge that he now inhabits. For having established himself in the field of chemistry, he might ask himself what mode of understanding of that aspect of the world is implicit in the rigorous procedures whereby he investigates it with a view to building powerful theories of its nature. In developing a theory about the chemical structure of a particular substance, for example, what is he presupposing about the essential nature of the elements from which any such structure must be

composed, and their combinatorial possibilities? In assuming that all material entities are possessed of chemical structure, what is he presupposing about materiality as such? And in testing his theory, why does he presuppose that what he can establish about observed instances of the behaviour of this substance will apply to unobserved instances? What mode of reasoning is he employing, and what if anything grounds his confidence in the reliability of its deliverances?

In thus thematizing and questioning the conceptual and methodological resources deployed in any given ontic science, our laundryman-turned-chemist is now transforming himself into a philosopher. The purpose here is not to mark a point at which the individual chemist must acquire membership of a different disciplinary union; it is to mark the introduction of a particular kind of question – the kind which naturally arises from the modes of procedure internal to an ontic science (any answers to which can therefore be regarded as deepening our understanding of whatever kind of knowledge that science delivers), but which necessarily cannot be answered by utilizing its characteristic investigative procedures, since every such use presupposes the validity of exactly what is now in question. To raise and pursue such questions is to find oneself engaged in the kind of philosophical inquiry that Heidegger calls ‘regional ontology’ – an inquiry into what it is for something to have a particular kind of nature, and into what makes it possible for us to acquire genuine knowledge of that nature. In this case, another name for that regional ontology would be: ‘the philosophy of science’; but such familiar branches of philosophical inquiry as ‘the philosophy of religion’, ‘aesthetics’, and ‘the philosophy of history’ can also be thought of as each denoting a distinctive regional ontology.

Thus far, my mythical genealogy of philosophy (my account of its unaccountable origins) might not seem particularly Heideggerian – that is, I don’t think of myself as having thus far said anything with which any self-respecting analytical philosopher might want strenuously to disagree. But there is a further step to be taken in the terms my myth articulates, and this step is often regarded as being the distinctively and controversially Heideggerian one. I, however, want to suggest that it emerges as naturally from the questions of regional ontology as questions of regional ontology emerge from those of ontic science; and

consequently, that what is regarded as a distinctively Heideggerian form of philosophical inquiry is in fact a development to which philosophy naturally subjects itself as a result of reflexively reiterating exactly the same human tendency to question, and so deepen, our comprehension of the world that engenders philosophy in the first place.

What, then, is this next step? In the terms of my myth, its ineluctability begins to emerge when we imagine our laundryman-turned-chemist-turned-philosopher-of-science being naturally moved to consider the following question: what, if anything, is being presupposed when we conduct regional ontological inquiries? If each of these modes of inquiry can be thought of as enhancing our understanding of whatever the relevant ontic science reveals to us by subjecting its presuppositions to productive questioning, must we not – sooner or later – be struck by the possibility that whatever is presupposed in the acquisition of that enhanced understanding might itself be put in question, and to equally productive effect? If and when we are so struck, then the question that strikes us is: what exactly is it to engage in regional ontology?

Precisely because each species of regional ontological inquiry concerns itself with what we comprehend of a specific region or dimension of the world, what most immediately strikes us about it is its differences from other species of regional ontology. The issues and problems that preoccupy philosophers of art or religion often appear to be very distant from those that predominate amongst philosophers of science or mind or language; and that might itself seem unsurprising, given the obvious differences between the various ontic enterprises (art, theology, physics, psychology, linguistics) from which each regional ontology emerges. This, one might say, helps us to answer the question: what makes a regional ontology ‘regional’?

On the other hand, even if each such branch of philosophy focuses on a very different domain of human knowledge, and so of the world we thereby know, it is equally true that it focuses on a strikingly similar dimension of that knowledge, and so of that world. After all, each regional ontology is, precisely, an inquiry into the *ontology* of that region – an inquiry into what it is for an entity or property to exist as, to be, an entity or property of the relevant kind (material, aesthetic, linguistic or

mental), and what it is for us to grasp that kind of entity or property as it is. And once we appreciate this, a second question naturally arises: what is it for a regional ontology to be 'ontological'? What, if anything, links inquiries in the philosophy of science to those in aesthetics or the philosophy of religion or the philosophy of language?

Such links appear to exist at two main levels. First, there will be specific links between questions that emerge in one regional ontology and those that emerge in another. For example, one cannot move far into the domain of philosophy of religion without realizing that an understanding of religious beliefs and judgements means establishing an understanding of distinctively religious language; and that understanding cannot be acquired independently of addressing broader questions about the nature of language as such – the domain of the philosophy of language. Note that I am not suggesting that either of these regional ontological inquiries has any priority over the other: if philosophers of religion claim to establish certain conclusions about how language works in religious contexts, how exactly those claims are to be brought into alignment with claims made by philosophers of language who may have very different kinds of language use in focus (whether either party should give ground in the light of the results of the other, and if so which) is and should be an open question – something to be settled by a dialogue between the two parties. My point is simply to register the fact that such dialogues are possible, a fact which in turn demonstrates the dialogical openness of any one regional ontology to its others.

But I said that there were two main levels at which such links existed. The second can be articulated in terms which will sound more distinctively Heideggerian. If the philosophy of religion concerns itself with what it is for something to be divine, and the philosophy of mind with what it is for something to be mental, and the philosophy of science with what it is for something to be material, then one way of articulating the unity of these distinct enterprises is to say that all are concerned, in their different ways, with what it is for something to be: with what it is for a phenomenon to manifest itself, both as it is in itself and as being rather than not-being, and with what it is for us to be capable of comprehending it as such – as something in particular rather than something else or nothing at all. This, one might say, is the

meaning of the question of being, the question of the meaning of 'being': it is what Heidegger calls the question of fundamental ontology. And what my genealogical myth is intended to demonstrate is that its emergence as a question is not an arbitrary 'Continental' imposition on an otherwise perfectly rational and exhaustive cultural economy of knowledge, in which each legitimate ontic science naturally incubates its own regional ontological discipline, and nothing else. For if the mere existence of a diverse array of ontic sciences naturally engenders a diverse array of regional ontologies, that array of regional ontologies will as naturally engender the question of fundamental ontology, and for exactly the same reason – as a result of the natural tendency of human comprehension to thematise and question itself.

I just said that one might think of the question of fundamental ontology as directing us towards linkages between regional ontologies at two different levels. But I hope it is now obvious that this image of different levels is here potentially misleading. For it may be taken to imply that the two levels are essentially distinct and self-sufficient. Whereas, in truth, if there is no such thing as something's being (as opposed to not-being) except as a particular kind of thing – if something can exist only as some specific thing or other – then the fundamental ontological question of what it is for something, or anything, to be is internally related to the question of what it is for something to be a particular kind of thing, and so is internally related to the business of some particular regional ontology. And that business is itself internally related to questions that arise in other regional ontologies – internal relations of the kind I acknowledged earlier when discussing the first level at which the enterprise of regional ontology is unified. In this sense, to raise the question of fundamental ontology is, necessarily, to raise the question of links between regional ontologies on both levels at once; those two levels are simply different aspects of one and the same articulated unity.

Other clarifications are equally in order at this point. In particular, I need to emphasize that recognizing the reality and significance of the question of fundamental ontology does not require that we commit ourselves to the legitimacy or even the availability of a single, specific answer to that question – to, for example, one and only one mapping of any given regional ontology's relations

with any other, and so to a single exhaustive taxonomy of the various ways in which things may be, or to a specification of some feature (or some set of features) that all existent beings must exemplify or instantiate insofar as they exist. Some philosophers have thought it possible to give such a specification of what it is to be, and have disagreed with the specifications of others; others still have denied that any such specification is conceivable. Similarly, some philosophers have argued that work in certain regional ontological inquiries should be constrained by results established in others, whilst disagreeing with one another about which regional ontology should constrain and which should be constrained; others have argued against any, even provisional, assignments of relative priority; and others still have denied the existence of any significant relations between any two given ontological regions. For example, many analytical philosophers feel that theories of meaning constructed in the philosophy of language and logic should constrain the interpretative options available to aestheticians and philosophers of religion; some feel that attention to religious and aesthetic uses of language should rather constrain our choice between general theories of meaning; and others again may feel that, once specific accounts of language use in particular circumstances are established and given due weight, there may be nothing left for a theory of meaning to be a theory of.

The point of emphasizing the reality and significance of the question of fundamental ontology is not to adjudicate between these disagreements, or to deny that they may persist beyond any adjudication, thereby betraying a fundamental mutual incomprehension; the point is rather to thematize the sheer fact of their existence – the fact that it is so much as possible to have such intelligible discussions about whether and how the various regional ontologies relate to one another. For the reality of such debates, whatever their terminus in any particular case, serves to make manifest a horizon of intelligibility within which they are conducted. The various positions taken up in such debates adumbrate a determinable and endlessly-redetermined categorial field of diversity-in-unity or unified diversity to which the articulation – more precisely, the sheer articulability, the simple comprehensibility – of the question of fundamental ontology bears witness.

And those who are struck by the articulability

of that question are not committed to one particular way of articulating it or making sense of it; in particular, they need not regard themselves as posing a familiar kind of request for causal explanation, only one that (impossibly) aims to treat all that is as an effect of some cause. For to treat the question of fundamental ontology as articulable need not involve assuming that any particular way of making sense of things within the world might be used to make sense of the world as such, or as a whole; it merely involves acknowledging that there is something inherently questionable about the many and various ways in which we do make sense of any and every particular kind of thing. For if we are capable of making sense of whatever we encounter, then that too (the validity, the diversity and the inter-relatedness of the ways in which things make sense) is something of which we can attempt to make sense (to thematize, to put in question, and so – we hope – to grasp more fully).

2. A Wittgensteinian version of Heidegger's vision

Couched this way, Heidegger's articulation of the question of the meaning of Being might seem to be of interest solely to philosophers, since its primary focus appears to be the internal dialogical structure of the discipline. It will help to dispel this impression if we compare Heidegger's way of formulating the matter to that implicit in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, in the use he famously makes therein of the idea of a 'language-game'. This is how the term is introduced:

We can also think of the whole process of using words in section 2 [the famous tale of the builders] as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games 'language-games' and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game.

And the process of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses.

I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the 'language-game'. (PI, 7)

This 'introduction' invokes at least four ways in which the term might be used – to pick out certain ways of teaching children to speak, certain

ways in which words are woven into children's games, certain primitive kinds of language, and finally 'the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven'. But most commentators have tended to focus on the fourth canvassed way of using the term, and taken it to suggest that Wittgenstein means the idea of a language-game to have a wholly general application to the phenomenon of language.

Perhaps so: but which kind of general application does he envisage? Some of Wittgenstein's later general pronouncements suggest that he thinks we can often dispel our philosophical unclarity about our lives with words by imagining primitive versions of some aspect of them purely as objects of comparison (and hence not as revelations of essence). As he puts it, 'Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language... [but] are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities' (PI, 130). However, other things that Wittgenstein says about his 'language-game' methods have encouraged people to attribute two rather different ideas to him – that to speak is to make a move in a language-game, and that language should be thought of as a family of such games.

Take one of his most famous methodological remarks:

When philosophers use a word... and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?

What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI, 116)

Taken together, these sentences seem to imply that our actual, everyday uses of words are not simply to be compared with (and hence recognized as essentially distinct from) the uses of words in deliberately simplified, imaginatively constructed language-games, but are rather to be understood as themselves language-games, or at least as sets or arrays of language-games. On this account, ordinary language for Wittgenstein is actually composed of, and so analytically separable into, a very large number of language-games with words: they comprise the basic units or building blocks of language, and hence of linguistic competence – not a philosopher's artefact, but rather the *heimat* of our words, our haven from metaphysics. Such a picture of language and speech is taken to be essential to

Wittgenstein's vision of words, and so of philosophy, by many commentators – both those sympathetic to Wittgenstein's work, and those deeply out of sympathy with it. But Rush Rhees' view is that if that picture were correct, then conversation would be impossible, and our very notion of a language would be obliterated.

If understanding the meanings of words really were exhausted by grasping rules for their use, if words were equivalent to pieces in board-games, then they could not form the medium of conversational exchanges. For understanding how to converse – how to follow the development of a conversation, how to make a pertinent or telling contribution to it, how to re-direct its focus, how to acknowledge the relevance of another's contribution without agreeing with it, how to recognize when it has reached a dead-end or when a little further persistence will bring it to an illuminating resting-place – understanding all this is not something that can be reduced to the application of a body of rules, or fruitfully compared with learning how to make moves in a game. This kind of understanding is essentially responsive both to the subject-matter of the conversation and to the individual contributions of those participating in it; but moves in chess do not have a subject-matter, and do not give any individual player the logical room to give expression to what they bring to a game from their experience outside it. If being able to speak involves being able to converse, then it is not just a matter of applying words in accordance with criteria, of making linguistic moves, or of doing things with words.

Rhees is equally concerned to block the thought that language as a whole should be thought of as a collection or family of distinct language-games. For if that were so, then it might be thought that there must be something wrong with the question 'What does it mean to say something?' or 'What is the unity of language?' For why should we expect there to be any such unity in any given collection of language-games, in the fundamentally various ways we speak or do things with words? Wasn't this assumption precisely what led the author of the *Tractatus* astray, compelling him to seek the will-o'-the-wisp of the general form of the proposition, and to attribute to ordinary language the structural unity of a calculus? And doesn't the author of the *Investigations* repeatedly find that philosophical confusions result from a conflation or crossing of language-games – a failure to respect differences of use, and hence of meaning? By con-

trast, Rhees not only thinks that there *is* something that might be called the unity of language, and that Wittgenstein never lost his desire to thematize it; he also believes that trying (and failing) to get this unity into focus has been *the* characteristic business of philosophy since its inception, and hence that any conception of language that occludes the question of its unity thereby threatens not only the historical unity, but also the deepest concern, and even the ultimate point, of the enterprise of philosophy as such.

This is where the notion of ‘conversation’ as a centre of variation finds a second major point of application in Rhees’ thinking; for as well as bringing out certain crucial aspects of what is involved in an individual’s ability to speak or say something, it provides a way of conceiving of how language as a whole hangs together. Rhees’s claim is that the various different forms of human discourse and practice relate to one another in the way that various contributions to a conversation relate to one another. In other words, the unity of language is the unity of a dialogue; the various modes of human discourse about things interlock intelligibly with one another, and the sense that each makes is both constituted by and constitutes the sense of these interconnections. As Rhees puts it: the generality or unity of language is the generality or unity of a form of life.

Part of what Rhees is driving at is already implicit in the ways in which one participates as an individual in specific conversations. Two builders discussing how best to solve a construction problem will bring to bear not only an understanding of construction techniques, but also of the economic and political contexts within which they and their employer is working (which option is cheaper, and how much additional expense matters here and now), the kind of building under construction (a house, a church, a factory), and thereby an understanding of the particular activities that go on in such a building, and their relation to other activities in the culture more generally, and so on. The conversation might be about this building project, but it will draw upon the participants’ understanding of the bearing of a variety of other domains and concerns upon this particular practical problem; and in the absence of a grasp of those interlocking considerations, the conversation would lose any proper grip on its subject-matter.

What this exemplifies is the way in which the various aspects or dimensions of human social life

are interwoven with one another. The same phenomenon is also exemplified at what one might call the disciplinary level of culture – the level at which particular domains of human inquiry and activity are rendered systematic and reflective. On the one hand, especially since the Enlightenment and its concern for the autonomy of both individuals and cultural spheres, we have tended to think of the domains of politics, morality, religion, art, history, physics, astronomy and so on as essentially distinct, possessed of a particular internal logic and purpose that separates them from even cognate domains, and that might itself be the subject of systematic study. On the other hand, whenever human beings try to make sense of a particular phenomenon, we find that any of these disciplines may have a contribution to make to that project.

Suppose we want to understand the phenomenon of global deforestation. We will certainly need to acquire statistical information about its prevalence and rate of acceleration, and thus draw upon a variety of technological and computing resources, as well as developing a sense of its historical context. If we are to understand why it is happening, we will need to grasp its underlying economic rationale, the ways in which local and international political systems react to it, and in which a given country’s climate and geography, social composition and cultural expectations contribute to it. To determine its costs, we may need to range further, into the realms of botany, biology and other environmental sciences, into aesthetic, moral and religious conceptions of its significance – even perhaps into the domains of psychoanalysis, literary criticism and cultural studies (in order to grasp what kinds of imaginative and psychic meanings have informed our relations to the forest, and hence what – beyond economic and social forces – might be driving us to remove them, as well as what might be lost with their loss).

Like most other issues of interest to us, then, the phenomenon of deforestation will have its historical, political, moral, technological and scientific, social and cultural aspects and implications, and so can only be properly understood by seeing how each of these aspects and implications bear upon the others; and this means that it forms a fit subject for conversation between those well-versed in a variety of forms of human inquiry – between historians, scientists, political theorists, sociologists, literary critics, and others. Each participant will bring her own particular understanding and

expertise to the conversation; but each can learn from what the others bring to that conversation, and may even alter their understanding of their own enterprise as a result; and each can in principle grasp that the others are capable of making a significant contribution to the task of better understanding the subject-matter of the conversation. This is the individually-mediated cultural analogue of what Rhees calls the kind of understanding that is capable of growth – of a deepening that finds expression in one's ability to see how things hang together: both the various distinctive modes of human understanding of our life in the world and the various aspects of that life itself.

At this kind of level, Rhees' image of a conversation foregrounds his sense that the various branches of human culture have a bearing on one another, that their distinctive concerns and methods nevertheless can and do interlock intelligibly with each other; and he encourages us to see this as both a reflection and an exemplary instance of the fact that their subject-matter – any aspect of reality whatever that bears upon and is engaged by the forms of human life in the world – itself manifests a dialogical unity, each of its aspects having an intelligible bearing on the others. This is why Rhees claims that language makes sense insofar as living makes sense.

3. Philosophy, Sophistry and Forms of Life

What I hope that this binocular approach is now beginning to clarify is the extent to which the question of the dialogical unity of our forms of life with language and the question of the dialogical unity of philosophy are internally related.

The point becomes evident if we note, as Heidegger's way of articulating our question anyway emphasizes, that philosophical inquiry is essentially parasitic on the existence of the various forms of human understanding of, and inquiry into, reality; in Wittgensteinian terms, it is a mode of discourse whose subject-matter is the various forms of human discourse. And if those forms of human discourse manifest an essentially dialogical unity, then so must the various forms of distinctively philosophical discourse; if our life with language, and so language itself, have a dialogical unity, then so must the aspect of our (life with) language that takes that life as its distinctive concern. Conversely, if one holds that philosophical discourse has no dialogical

unity, that amounts to saying that its subject-matter has no such unity; it amounts to assuming that language, and hence our life with language, do not manifest any interlocking intelligibility of the kind that might be a possible object of the kind of understanding that can grow and deepen (or fail to). To adapt Rhees' claim that I cited earlier: if living makes sense, and hence language makes sense, then so must philosophy; and if philosophy does not have this kind of sense, then neither will language, or the human form of life with language.

One might think of this claim as having implications that ought to resonate in two different dimensions or directions. One reminds us of the institutions which reflect or fail to reflect this vision of philosophy's cultural significance; the other recalls us to philosophy's own mysterious origins.

In Western European culture, the exemplary institutional expression of this sense of the dialogical unity of reality, our knowledge of it and our way of living is the university. The point of bringing a representative variety of ontic sciences (by which I mean sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts) under one roof is not simply to reduce overheads or to corral socially disruptive clerks within an easily-policeable space; the point is to create a context which embeds and embodies a vision of the denizens of each branch of human knowledge as conversing with one another. To be sure, each department pursues its own ways of acquiring knowledge under its own direction; but each does so in a context which makes it as easy as possible for its members to encounter, learn from and put in question the findings and queries of members of any other department. Certain institutional arrangements may make this kind of unregulated and unpredictable intercourse more natural than others – and here, the collegiate model of a university (as exemplified by Oxford and Cambridge) may have something vital to be said in its favour, since each college's self-governing membership amounts to a microcosm on a humane social scale of the university's aspiration to intellectual diversity-in-unity. But that is only one way of aspiring to facilitate this ideal of mutual conversibility in the face of explosively expanding bodies of knowledge, not to mention financial, political and cultural pressures that work to eviscerate both the substance and validity of that ideal.

If, however, the way in which I have attempted to articulate the question of fundamental ontology

in the preceding pages is at all plausible, then there is one university department whose existence is of particular importance to the university's *raison d'être*; and that is its department of philosophy. That department's internal articulation into various branches reflects as broadly as possible the internal articulation of the university as a whole; and its inherent tendency to put in question the intelligibility of the relations between those branches – to reflect upon the significance of the fact that they are the internal articulations of a single subject – means that it is uniquely committed to bearing witness to the dialogical diversity-in-unity of human knowledge and of the reality it aspires to grasp. Philosophy itself is not an ontic science: it is rather the subject which aims to comprehend and question the very possibility of an ontic science, the subject for which the intelligibility of that possibility (the possibility of knowing something, anything, as it really is, hence as being rather than not-being) is an issue, an inherently questionable matter. Philosophy is the subject for whom that possibility matters because it is a way of posing the question of its own nature – the question of whether its own continued existence matters, or matters any longer, to anyone other than itself.

And of course, sometimes philosophy finds that its own continued existence does not in fact matter to anyone else. It discovered this, in my neck of the political woods, when the British government of the 1980s decided to reconfigure its funding of universities, and many universities responded to this pressure by closing their philosophy departments; and it may discover it again now, in 2010, when another such reconfiguration has occurred, and the same response is (to say the least of it) in prospect. By responding that way in the 1980s, those universities made manifest their inability to see the point of the existence of philosophy in the context of a university, and inadvertently made manifest their inability to see the point of their own existence as universities; and in refusing to contest these responses, the British government and the British people made manifest its own inability to see the point of either philosophy or universities in and for the wider culture. And what are we to say of a culture that no longer sees any point in raising the question of whether its own particular formation, its internal articulations of intelligibility, have any point – whether it continues to makes sense to

inhabit the cultural forms through which its inhabitants are currently formed?

But philosophers shouldn't repress the question of their own responsibility for this fate. For, when all is said and done, how many of our existing philosophy departments reflect in their internal structures a sense of the vital significance of the question of fundamental ontology? How far does the inner life of our departments make room for raising the question of how its various activities hang together or make sense in relation to each other, as opposed to amounting to an assemblage of self-sufficient enterprises, or a domain within which the relative importance of various branches of the subject are fixed, effectively put beyond question? If, on reflection, we cannot confidently say that our own ways of living as philosophers are marked by the conviction that the question of whether philosophy makes sense is of such importance, then we should not be too quick to heap all the blame for our present cultural irrelevance on either universities or governments, as if confident that our fate could only have been forced upon us from without.

I said a little earlier that these issues also return us to the unaccountable origins of philosophy as a discipline; and this is something that Heidegger and Wittgenstein (at least as read by Rhees) both register in their different ways. At the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates is confronted by the sophist Thrasymachus, who claims that justice is best understood as whatever is in the interest of the stronger party. One might therefore take him to be offering one amongst a variety of possible interpretations of our concept of 'justice'; and indeed, a little later in the dialogue, Adeimantus and Glaucon develop a recognizably similar view, and thereby induce Socrates to offer a detailed dialectical critique of their stance with a view to developing his own alternative account. But Thrasymachus's position is in fact very different from that of Adeimantus and Glaucon, and in a sense far more logically consistent; for in suggesting that justice amounts to whatever is in the interests of the powerful, he is in fact doubting the reality of justice altogether. If what we talk of as 'just' and 'unjust' merely reflects the balance of power in a given social group, then there is in fact no substance or reality to that stretch of our discourse; all that there is to talk about in this domain could be exhaustively expressed in terms of power, and hence language could suffer the loss of the concept of justice alto-

gether without losing its ability to register the reality of things in our human social world.

But even characterizing Thrasymachus as denying that our discourse about justice embodies any reality fails properly to capture the true reach of his skepticism; for it is part of the sophists' position as Plato understands it that they hold the same view of human discourse in general. Their characteristic view that mastery of discourse is a matter of understanding how to achieve rhetorical effectiveness – how to use words to achieve one's goals, that is, to move others to align themselves with the speaker – reduces all speech to a matter of practical efficacy or power (the view that twentieth-century emotivists held of all non-descriptive discourse). In other words, 'Thrasymachus' view about the true nature of talk about justice is merely a particular application of the general sophistic view about the true nature of human speech as such; it has no reality to it, it embodies distinctions and values to which nothing corresponds in reality, and hence it lacks any genuine substance.

This is why Thrasymachus (unlike Adeimantus and Glaucon) is rightly wary even of entering into a conversation with Socrates: for he knows that in so doing, he is merely entering an arena for the exercise of rhetorical power, and he knows that Socrates is a master of such power. So he demands to be paid for his participation; he repeatedly tries to avoid answering Socrates' questions and criticisms, and he tries as far as possible to avoid saying anything himself in defence or elaboration of his position; he also indulges as frequently as possible in more or less vicious forms of abuse – asking why Socrates' nurse allows him to go around spouting drivel, and describing his hollow acceptance of Socrates' successfully argued conclusions as a holiday treat for his interlocutor. Socrates thus characterizes Thrasymachus as springing on the group like a wild beast, as if he wanted to tear them in pieces; he sets his face against the possibility of participating in the epitome of human conversation that is dialectical philosophical discourse, because his position amounts to a denial of the possibility of discourse of any kind.

This portrait of the sophist as an abusive wild animal utterly resistant to domestication in discourse is thus not simply a caricature of the sophists' position – a way of making Socrates' victory over his most intimate enemy far too easy; it is a drawing out and rendering concrete of the sophistic view of language as such, and hence of our life

with language. To view human discourse with the sophists is to reduce it to the brutish exercise of power, to void it of any genuine substance; it amounts to denying that there is anything to understand in what people say to one another in conversation – to view language as a whole as entirely failing to make any contact with reality. This is more than mistaking a particular appearance for reality, more even than losing one's grip on the very distinction between illusory appearance and reality in some particular domain; it amounts to rendering utterly unreal or empty the distinction between making contact with reality and failing to do so right across the board.

For Rhees, this is the threat contained in any attempt to understand what it is to speak in terms of an analogy with moves in a game, and to understand language as a family of self-sufficient language-games. Such attempts teeter on the brink of characterizing linguistic understanding as a matter of knowing how to do things with words, to achieve certain effects or practical outcomes; and in so doing they risk eviscerating human modes of discourse of any genuine substance, regarding them as akin to moves in a meaningless game rather than ways of being responsive to reality. They thereby doubly deprive philosophy of any genuine substance, by depriving it of its central subject-matter (by denying that there is any such thing as human discourse) and by regarding its distinctive brand of dialogue as having no more genuine substance than any other mode of discourse. To present philosophical wisdom as one more commodity for sale in the agora, and to present it to one's paying customers as a matter of mastering rhetorical techniques, is not so much to mistake sham philosophy for the genuine article; it is to lose one's grip on the very idea that there is a real distinction to be drawn in this area. And that not only deprives philosophy of sense; it implies a corresponding lack of sense in language, and in our life with language, altogether. Hence, Rhees at one point claims that sophistry is not so much mistaken as evil; for to take it seriously is to empty human life of meaning or sense.

Rhees does not think that a thoroughgoing sophist will be converted simply by offering him a philosophical account of human discourse as having some bearing on reality. In part, this is because the consistent sophist will deny that any such philosophical account will itself have any reality to it; it will rather be an exercise in rhetorical manipulation. In part, it is because the sophist is not defend-

ing a coherent alternative view of thought and language, but rather inhabiting a self-subverting fantasy of them; she believes that she has grasped the truth about discourse, but her view empties the very ideas of discourse, truth and reality of any content. Hence, one might say that there is no argumentative route from sophistry to a perception of human discourse as genuine; there are only sophistic ways of removing oneself from a life within the reality of human discourse (amongst which we might count talk of language-games), and hence ways of trying to prevent or discourage people in general, and philosophers in particular, from so exiling themselves.

But how exactly does the idea of language as having the unity of a dialogue or conversation discourage us from such damaging errancies? How does it allow us satisfactorily to acknowledge the reality of discourse? One way that it must avoid is that of suggesting that human culture amounts to one big conversation, hence that our various ways of discursively grasping reality constitute contributions to an overarching discourse that takes as its subject-matter Reality as such – Reality as essentially One. We must recall that the idea of conversation at this (or indeed any) level of Rhees' account is a centre of variation, not a putative description; and although Plato might have been tempted by such a hypostasization of the Real, Rhees is not.

His thought is rather that the image of a conversation suggests an account of any given mode of human discourse in terms of its own dialogical unity. It is the multiple bearings of each branch of that discourse on other branches that gives substance to the thought that each individual branch gets a purchase on reality, by showing how the purchase it offers hangs together with (that is, is fruitfully intelligible to, and can itself render fruitfully intelligible) the purchase offered by other branches. And the same kind of account can then be given of the relations between these given modes of discourse: their various ways of interlocking with one another substantiate the claims of each to register some aspect of the reality of things.

Once again, we see the contextualizing thought that what centrally constitutes the nature and reality of a given form of discourse is its specific place in the interlocking unity of human discourse as such. In its proper place in this discursive context, each such mode of discourse really is a way of getting to grips with what is real; and apart from it, its claim

to be a mode of discourse (and hence to articulate a way of distinguishing reality from illusion, a way of getting at the truth of things and of achieving a growth in understanding) loses its substance. One might say, then, that, for Rhees, all that can be milked out of the idea of Reality as such, Reality as essentially One, is the fact that our modes of discourse are dialogically articulated and dialogically inter-related. Hence, to show that and how those different modes of discourse are so articulated and bear upon one another in such ways just *is* to show that there is genuine reality in the different ways we talk to one another about our world. It doesn't give us good or bad grounds for believing this to be the case; it clarifies what the claim that it is the case – and hence what the possibility of discourse, of language that is open to reality, of speech – in fact amounts to.

4. Philosophy, Finitude, Mystery

It might be worth emphasising in conclusion a variety of ways in which the significance of the role I have been assigning my discipline – in the university, in the broader culture, and in (what one might call) the cosmos – will naturally tend to condition, qualify and more generally put itself in question.

Whilst my genealogical myth is designed to capture the sense in which philosophy can be said to be rightly and intelligibly interested in everything, in all that is, it may also thereby create the impression that the philosopher must be occupying a position above or beyond all that is – a kind of God's eye view on Creation from without (for how else, it might asked, could he take it in as a whole?). But in truth, philosophy does and must occupy a position within the domain that it aspires to take in as if from the outside. Just as philosophy's claim to be the university department which uniquely aspires to acknowledge the articulated unity of the university as a whole must cohere with the fact that it is nevertheless also just one more department within that articulated unity, so philosophy's claim to be the singular point within the culture at which its articulated unity is acknowledged must cohere with the fact that it is simultaneously one node in that cultural economy.

Two important conclusions follow from this. First, philosophy's various ways of putting the deliverances of other intellectual disciplines in

question can themselves intelligibly be put in question from the perspectives afforded by those very disciplines. Practitioners of any ontic science can question the accuracy of any philosopher's characterization of their founding presuppositions; they might claim for themselves a field of inquiry that philosophers have long regarded as their own (as has happened repeatedly in philosophy's history, to the point at which some philosophers have claimed that philosophy can retain any given field of inquiry only until its distinctive nature and resources have been clarified or thought through to the point at which a genuine science of that domain can be founded); others even argue that philosophy can claim to be grappling with anything of any genuine intellectual substance only insofar as it regards itself as continuous with some ontic science or other.

It should be obvious that I don't find the last of these claims at all convincing; but some of my colleagues do, and I can make sense of their sense of conviction. Be that as it may, one can surely acknowledge the way in which other intellectual disciplines might have a bearing on philosophy and its concerns without conceiving of this as a matter of usurpation or reduction. For example, one might think (as does Stanley Cavell) that aspects of the phenomenon that philosophy grapples with under the name of scepticism are engaged with in literature under the name of tragedy; or one might hope to learn something about the roots and the significance of philosophy's apparent aspiration to find a God's-eye view of reality and culture by drawing upon the lessons of psychoanalysis or theology; or one might be brought by the work of historians and sociologists to appreciate the cultural specificity of the terms in which philosophy understands any given aspect of its concerns (in ethics or politics or aesthetics), and so understands itself.

Such possibilities of inter-disciplinary dialogue cannot be rejected a priori by any philosopher who recognizes the pertinence to their enterprise of the question of fundamental ontology; for as I have derived that question, it precisely depends upon acknowledging that a culture hangs together only insofar as any of its thematized modes of understanding can in principle intelligibly and fruitfully be engaged in dialogue by any other. Whether any such encounter will in fact be fruitful, or even mutually intelligible, can only be proven through its concrete working-out from case to case;

but its bare possibility is surely something that anything worth calling philosophy is obliged (on pain of self-subversion) to acknowledge.

I said that this was one of the conclusions that followed from an acknowledgement of the dual-aspect nature of philosophy – from the unavoidable fact that it forms one part of the phenomenon it aspires to take in as a whole. The second may be no more than a restatement of the first, but it may also help to bring home the central moral of this moment of humility or self-abnegation in my analysis. For what the first conclusion really registers is the fact that any philosophical work is necessarily situated or conditioned by its place in the broader economy of a culture; and that directs us towards the more general point that philosophy is and must be thorough-goingly conditioned or situated insofar as it is (in effect) one step in the reflexive unfolding of the distinctively human mode of comprehending the world.

To say that that comprehension of the world is distinctively reflexive – that is, that it is always capable of putting itself in question – is simply another way of saying that human comprehension is essentially finite (for if it were not, if it were absolute or unconditioned, it would be beyond any possible question). It is a way of acknowledging that any given body of knowledge has limits, that it is always capable of and subject to further refinement (which will sometimes take the form of revolutionary reconceptualisation), and that it will always be conditioned or informed by a variety of presuppositions which can themselves be the subject of inquiry – perhaps within its own precincts, certainly within the precincts of other branches or modes of human inquiry. In other words, there can be no such thing as an absolute end or terminus to human knowledge of reality – nothing that is beyond further interrogation, hence closed to further enrichment or deepening.

Since my genealogical myth of philosophy is driven from beginning to end by a characterization of human comprehension as inherently produced by, and hence inveterately subject to, questioning, it should be no surprise that the conception of philosophy that emerges from that mythical account should be marked by the same acknowledgement of our finitude. What is now perhaps becoming clearer is that philosophy's way of being marked by, hence of bearing witness to, our finitude has to do with the fact that its defining aspiration (to articulate the question of fundamental

ontology) is both undismissable and unfulfillable.

For insofar as philosophy is defined as an inquiry into the human capacity for comprehending inquiry as such, beyond any particular way of acquiring understanding of any particular domain of reality, it amounts to a kind of absolutely purified or intensified exemplar of this aspect of the human way of being (one in which questioning comprehension aspires to be both subject-matter and means, with nothing other than itself involved). But insofar as any such inquiry must itself be questionable, because it is no less subject to condition and limitation than any other exercise of this capacity, it is destined to fail to fulfil its own defining aspiration. In the end, then, what is revealed by the fact that there is something called

philosophy rather than nothing is the fact that human beings aspire by their very nature to a completeness of understanding that they cannot realize. Philosophy constitutes the place at which finite human understanding endlessly attempts, and as endlessly fails, to take itself in as a whole; and it thereby reveals that it is internal to the nature of finite beings to be subject to the mysterious, unsatisfiable desire to transcend their own finitude. In this way, philosophy's unending struggle with the question of whether it makes sense even to try making sense of the many and varied ways in which reality does (and does not) make sense to us is the most fundamental way in which human beings manifest the essentially enigmatic finitude of their being.

OF SUPPLEMENTARITY: DERRIDA ON TRUTH, LANGUAGE AND DEVIANT LOGIC

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Abstract:

This article seeks to correct some widespread misunderstandings of Derrida's thought, mostly amongst philosophers working in the mainstream analytic line of descent. I put the case – with reference to *Of Grammatology* along with other writings of his earlier period – that Derrida has made important contributions to philosophy of language and logic, especially with regard to issues of modality, tense, and the scope and limits of classical (bivalent) reasoning. Moreover I contend, again contra the received analytic view, that his texts themselves bear witness to the highest standards of conceptual and logico-semantic precision. That there are now some signs – albeit hesitant and belated – of their coming to recognise these virtues of Derrida's work is welcome evidence that philosophers in that 'other', analytical tradition are beginning to move beyond the old outlook of mistrust or downright hostility toward their typecast 'continental' counterparts.

Key words: analysis, anti-realism, deconstruction, Derrida, language, logic, non-bivalence, Rousseau, supplementarity.

I.

Jacques Derrida's extended reading of Rousseau in *Of Grammatology* puts forward some far-reaching claims about the relationship between language and logic that have so far not been examined with anything like an adequate regard for their rigour, subtlety, and scope of application beyond the particular case in hand (Derrida 1976: 141–316). What I shall seek to do here is outline that reading – albeit in highly condensed and schematic form – and then discuss its wider implications for philosophy of language and logic. I had better say first (so as to preempt one likely rejoinder) that Derrida's commentary is *not* (or not only) a piece of interpretative criticism, one that fastens on certain themes – like the term 'supplement' in its various contexts of occurrence – and then deploys them with a view to subverting other, more orthodox interpretations. To be sure, he does spend a great deal of time expound-

ing particular passages in Rousseau's work which have to do with a large variety of topics, from the origin of language to the development of civil society, from the history of music to the genealogy of morals, or from educational psychology to the role of writing as a 'supplement' to speech which (supposedly) infects and corrupts the sources of authentic spoken discourse. What these all have in common – so Derrida maintains – is a sharply polarised conceptual structure whereby Rousseau equates everything that is good (spontaneous, genuine, passionate, sincere) with the approbative term *nature* and everything that is bad (artificial, civilised, decadent, corrupt, merely conventional, and so on) with the derogatory term *culture*.

The same goes for those cryptic passages in the *Confessions* where Rousseau obliquely acknowledges his 'solitary vice' and reflects on the perversity of supplementing nature (the good of heterosexual intercourse) with a practice that substitutes imaginary pleasures and the 'conjuring up of absent beauties' (Derrida 1976: 149–57). So to this extent, granted, the Derridean reading has to do with certain distinctive (not to say obsessional) *topoi* that can be seen to exercise a powerful hold on Rousseau's memory, intellect, and imagination, and which lend themselves to treatment in something like the traditional expository mode. Still, as I have said, it should not be construed by philosophers as evidence that Derrida is here practising a mode of thematic or literary commentary, one that makes play with certain 'philosophical' themes – like the logic (or pseudo-logic) of supplementarity – so as to disguise that fact. Rather, what chiefly interests Derrida in the reading of Rousseau's texts is '[the] difference between implication, nominal presence, and thematic application' (ibid: 135). In other words it is the kind of difference that emerges – unnoticed by most commentators – when one strives to read Rousseau in accordance with his own explicit inten-

tions (his *vouloir-dire*) only to find that those intentions are 'inscribed' in a supplementary logic beyond his power fully to command or control. No doubt Rousseau '*declares* what he *wishes to say*', namely that 'articulation and writing are a post-originary malady of language', introduced with the passage to a 'civilised' (= corrupt, artificial) state of society when language would have lost its first (natural) character of spontaneous, passionate utterance. Yet it is also the case – on a closer reading – that Rousseau '*says or describes* what he *does not wish to say*: articulation and therefore the space of writing operates at the origin of language' (ibid: 229). For as he well knows – and indeed on occasion quite explicitly states – there *can never have been* any language that lacked those various articulatory features (phonetic structures, semantic distinctions, grammatical parts of speech, etc.) which alone make it possible for language to function as a means of communicative utterance.

Nevertheless, according to Rousseau, these must all be counted 'supplementary' (bad or corrupting) additions to an 'original' language – an authentic speech of the passions – that would surely have had no need for such artificial devices since its purpose was fully served in the face-to-face (or the heart-to-heart) of intimate mutual exchange. Even now, he remarks, there are certain languages – those of Italy and Southern Europe – which continue to manifest something of that natural character since they have remained close to the wellspring of passionate speech and have not (like the 'Northern' tongues) acquired all manner of progressively debilitating structural traits. Yet Rousseau is once again compelled to acknowledge that this can be only a matter of degree, and moreover that everything which *ought* by rights to be considered merely a 'supplement' to language in its first (natural) state must rather be thought of as integral and prerequisite to any language whatsoever. Hence the ambiguity – more precisely, the double and contradictory logic – that Derrida discerns in Rousseau's usage of the term across an otherwise diverse range of argumentative contexts. On the one hand 'supplement' may be taken to signify: that which is added *unnecessarily* – by way of gratuitous embellishment – to something that is (ought to be) complete as it stands and which does not (should not) require – even tolerate – any such otiose addition. In this sense the entire development of language away from its passional origins and toward more complex, articulate, or structured forms of expression must be counted a definite *per-*

version of language, that is to say, a melancholy sign of the way that 'supplementary' features or devices can somehow (deplorably) come to *stand in* for the living presence of authentic speech. However there a second sense of the term that obtrudes itself – most often – against Rousseau's express intent and which constantly threatens to make him say just the opposite of what he means. On this alternative construal 'supplement' signifies: that which is required in order to complete what must otherwise be thought of as lacking or deficient in some crucial regard. Thus the 'original' language of Rousseau's conception would quite simply *not have been* a language – would have lacked some or all of those constitutive features that define what properly counts as such – if indeed (as he thinks) it belonged to a time when human beings managed to communicate through a kind of pre-articulate speech-song wholly devoid of phonetic, semantic, or grammatical structures. Hence that curious 'logic of supplementarity' which complicates Rousseau's texts to the point where his explicit statements of authorial intent are called into question by other (less prominent but strictly unignorable) statements to contrary effect.

This example gives substance to Derrida's above-cited cryptic remark that what interests him chiefly in Rousseau's texts is '[the] difference between implication, nominal presence, and thematic application' (ibid: 135). Moreover it is a characteristic of his writing that emerges in so many different connections – or across such a range of thematic concerns – that it cannot be put down to just a blind-spot in his thinking about this particular topic. Thus culture is invariably conceived by Rousseau as a falling-away from that original state of nature wherein human beings would as yet have had no need for those various 'civilised' accoutrements like writing as a bad supplement to speech, harmony as a bad supplement to melody, or civic institutions, delegated powers, and representative assemblies as a bad supplement to that which once transpired in the face-to-face of oral community. That this fall should ever have occurred – that nature should have taken this perverse, accidental, yet fateful swerve from its first state of natural innocence – is the chief sign or diagnostic mark of those various 'supplementary' evils that have come to exert their corrupting effect on individual and social mores. In each case, however, it is Derrida's claim that Rousseau's overt (intentional) meaning is contradicted by certain other, strikingly discrepant formulations whose logic runs athwart the manifest sense of his argument. Thus on

the one hand, there to be read plainly enough, is what Rousseau *wants to say* – and does quite explicitly say – with respect to the intrinsic and self-evident superiority of nature over culture, speech over writing, melody over harmony, passion over reason, the law of the heart over laws of state, and small-scale 'organic' communities over large-scale, anomic and overly complex societal aggregates. Yet on the other hand, there to be read in certain passages – often in parentheses or *obiter dicta* where their disruptive effect may be least felt – is a series of concessions, qualifying clauses, and seeming non-sequiturs that exert a constant destabilizing pressure on Rousseau's more explicit avowals of intent. So in reading Rousseau it is not so much a matter of discounting or routinely disregarding his intentions but rather one of aiming, in Derrida's carefully chosen words, at 'a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses' (Derrida 1976: 158).

This point is worth emphasis since hostile commentators – John Searle among them – have often charged Derrida with showing no respect for authorial intentions or with riding roughshod over passages which make it quite plain what the author wanted to say (Searle 1977; also Ellis 1989). So I had better now cite the well-known paragraph from *Of Grammatology* where Derrida specifies (again very carefully) the principles that he takes to govern a deconstructive reading and which set it firmly apart from any such free-for-all or 'anything goes' attitude of hermeneutic licence. 'To produce this signifying structure', he writes,

obviously cannot consist of reproducing, by the effaced and respectful doubling of commentary, the conscious, voluntary, intentional relationship that the writer institutes in his exchanges with the history to which he belongs thanks to the element of language. This moment of doubling commentary should no doubt have its place in a critical reading. To recognize and respect all its classical exigencies is not easy and requires all the instruments of traditional criticism. Without this recognition and this respect, critical production would risk developing in any direction at all and authorize itself to say almost anything. But this indispensable guardrail has always only *protected*, it has never *opened*, a reading.

(Derrida 1976: 158)

We should not be too quick to conclude, with the hostile commentators, that this is just a pious expression of respect for principles – those of 'traditional' exegesis or commentary – that Derrida is perfectly willing to flout whenever it suits his convenience. For it is a statement that is fully borne out by the detailed reading of Rousseau which forms its immediate context and also by those other readings – of philosophers from Plato to Kant, Husserl, and Austin – where Derrida likewise combines a due regard for the author's professed intent with a *principled* (not merely opportunist) allowance that authorial intention cannot have the last word (Derrida 1973, 1981, 1977, 1987). After all, 'the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely' (ibid: 158). And again: '[h]e uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system' (ibid).

None of this should be taken to suggest – let me emphasise again – that authorial intentions are wholly irrelevant or even subject to a large discount when it comes to the business of deconstructing this or that text. Rather, it is a question – in the more familiar analytic parlance – of distinguishing 'utterer's meaning' from 'linguistic meaning', or what a speaker intends to convey by some particular form of words in some particular context of utterance from those background norms (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, etc) which determine what their utterance standardly means according to shared linguistic criteria (Davidson 1984; Grice 1989). What is distinctive about Derrida's approach is the fact that he reverses the usual order of priority whereby it is assumed that utterer's meaning can always trump linguistic meaning if the speaker must be taken to intend something different from the standard or default interpretation. (For an extreme version of this argument, see Davidson 1986; also my dissenting commentary in Norris 1997.) On the contrary, Derrida maintains: although it is always possible for speakers (or writers) to express more than could ever be grasped on a purely 'linguistic' construal, still there is a need to remark those counter-instances where logic countermands any straightforward ascription of utterer's intent, or where analysis reveals a certain non-coincidence of authorial meaning and linguistic (logico-semantic) sense. Such is the case with Rousseau's usage of the term 'supplement', a usage that cannot be reduced to the order of univocal meaning or intent and which thus holds out against any attempt to close or to reconcile this conflict of inter-

pretations. That is to say, it has to function *both* in a privative, derogatory sense ('supplement' = that which subtracts and corrupts under the guise of adding and improving) but also – despite Rousseau's intention – in the positive sense: 'supplement' = that which fills a lack or makes good an existing defect. And this is a matter, Derrida writes, 'of Rousseau's situation within the language and the logic that assures to this word or this concept sufficiently *surprising* resources so that the presumed subject of the sentence might always say, through using the "supplement", more, less, or something other than he *would mean* [*voudrait dire*]' (Derrida 1976: 158).

What is 'surprising' – in the root etymological sense – about this logic of supplementarity is the way that it *overtakes* authorial intentions and twists them around, so to speak, through a kind of involuntary reversal that leaves Rousseau strictly incapable of meaning what he says or saying what he means. No doubt it is the case that 'Rousseau would like to separate originary from supplementarity', and indeed that 'all the rights constituted by our logos are on his side', since surely 'it is unthinkable and intolerable that what has the name *origin* should be no more than a point situated within the system of supplementarity' (ibid: 243). Yet this system (or logic) cannot be ignored if one is to take account of the objections that rise against Rousseau's thesis *by his own admission elsewhere* and which constitute a standing refutation of his claims with respect to the order of priorities between nature and culture, speech and writing, origin and supplement. For in each case the latter term can be seen to 'wrench language from its condition of origin, from its conditional or its future of origin, from that which it must (ought to) have been and what it has never been; it could only have been born by suspending its relation to all origin' (ibid: 243). Which is also to say – if one reads Rousseau with sufficient logical care – that '[i]ts history is that of the supplement of (from) origin: of the originary substitute and the substitute of the origin' (ibid). And this is not just a kind of wilful paradox-mongering on Derrida's part but a conclusion arrived at (as I seek to show here) through textual exegesis and logical analysis of the highest, most rigorous order.

II.

At any rate Derrida's main thesis with regard to the conditions of possibility for language is one that would most likely be endorsed by many analytic

philosophers. What it amounts to is a version of the argument advanced by (among others) Donald Davidson: that in order for anything to *count* as a 'language' it must possess certain minimal features that permit it to function in a strictly non-denumerable range of expressive-communicative roles (Davidson 1984). Of course there are significant differences between Derrida and Davidson when it comes to specifying just what those features are or just what constitutes the threshold point beyond which language – as opposed to some proto-'language' of the passions – may properly be said to exist. For Derrida, this issue is posed very much against the background of mainly French debates, from Rousseau to Saussure, about the relative priority of *langue* and *parole*, or language-as-system (the object of study for structuralist linguistics) and language as produced by individual speakers in particular contexts of utterance (Saussure 1990). This in turn gives rise to the paradox – or the chicken-and-egg conundrum – that language (*la langue*) must already have existed in order for those individual speech-acts to possess any proper, linguistically communicable sense even though it is hard to conceive how *langue* could ever have developed except through the gradual codification of individual speech-acts or items of *parole*. Thus Derrida's interest is chiefly in the way that a thinker like Rousseau attempts to resolve the paradox in favour of a speech-based account even though this involves the projection of a mythic 'original language' which must *either* have been no language at all *or else* have been marked by those very same traits (articulation, structure, difference, hierarchy) which supposedly belong only to language in its 'civilised' (decadent) state. As a result, when Derrida specifies the minimal conditions for what counts as a language, he does so in broadly Saussurean terms which depict Rousseau as a kind of proto-structuralist *malgré lui*, one whose intermittent grasp of those conditions compelled him to question the very possibility that language might once have existed in any such natural, innocent, or prelapsarian state. From which it follows – on Derrida's account – that the structures concerned are primarily those which form the basis of Saussurean linguistic theory, that is to say, structures having to do with the various systemic and contrastive relationships that constitute *la langue* at the phonetic and semantic level.

For Davidson, conversely, the prerequisite features of language are those various logico-syntactic attributes – negation, conjunction, and disjunction

along with the quantifiers and sentential connectives – which can plausibly be argued to provide a common basis for inter-lingual translation (Davidson 1984). This reflects his primary concern to explain how such translation (or mutual understanding) can indeed take place despite the arguments for radical incommensurability mounted by paradigm-relativists of sundry persuasion such as Quine (1961), Kuhn (1970), Feyerabend (1975), and Whorf (1956). Where these thinkers go wrong – Davidson argues – is in being decidedly over-impressed by the evidence that different languages (or language communities) operate with different *semantic* fields and under-impressed by the extent of those shared structural features that languages must possess if they are to function effectively as a means of communication. This is why, as he puts it, syntax is so much more ‘sociable’ than semantics, namely through its offering grounds for the assurance that reliable translation *can* indeed occur despite and across those divergences of ‘conceptual scheme’ that would otherwise render it impossible. So it is natural enough – given this agenda – that Davidson should place maximum stress on the logical connectives and allied functions rather than the structural-semantic aspects of language that tend to predominate in Derrida’s approach.

All the same – as I have said – their thinking has more in common than might appear from this face-value characterisation. For with Derrida also the main point of interest is not so much the ambiguity (or semantic overdetermination) of a word like ‘supplement’ in isolated instances of usage but rather the *logic* of supplementarity as revealed through a mode of conceptual exegesis that scarcely conforms to accepted models of textual or thematic exegesis. Indeed there is a somewhat comical footnote in *Of Grammatology* (243n) where he cites Rousseau on the supposed fact that ‘the Arabs have more than a thousand words for *camel* and more than a hundred for *sword*, etc.’, just as the semantical case for paradigm relativism makes much of the fact that the language of certain nomadic farmers picks out manifold shades of ‘green’, or that Eskimo language has many different words for ‘white’. All the same, as Davidson sensibly remarks, Whorf makes a pretty good job of describing *in English* what it is like to inhabit the conceptual scheme of cultures very different from ours, just as Kuhn makes a fair shot at describing the worldview of pre-Copernican astronomy or the thinking of physicists before Galileo and chemists before Lavoisier

(Davidson 1984: 184). What enables them to do so – despite and against their sceptical-relativist principles – is the existence of certain basic regularities (like the logical constants) which must be at work in any such process of inter-lingual or inter-paradigm translation. So likewise, when Derrida talks of the ‘logic proper to Rousseau’s discourse’ (Derrida 1976: 215) he is not referring only to certain blind-spots of logical contradiction in Rousseau’s text or to the kind of paradoxical pseudo-logic that literary critics often treat as a hallmark of poetic value. Still less is he suggesting – as Nietzsche and some deconstructionists would have it – that the ground-rules of classical logic (such as bivalence or excluded middle) are in truth nothing more than illusory constraints that can always be subverted by a reading that demonstrates their merely persuasive (i.e., rhetorical) character. (See especially de Man 1979.) Rather, his point is that Rousseau’s discourse exemplifies a form of deviant, ‘classically’ unthinkable, but none the less rigorous logic which cannot be grasped except on condition – as Derrida declares in his response to Searle – that one attempts *so far as possible* to read his texts in accordance with those strictly indispensable ground-rules.

This is why Derrida, like Davidson, rejects any theory that would treat semantics as prior to logic, or issues of meaning as prior to issues concerning the various logical functions that enable speakers to communicate reliably across otherwise large differences of linguistic or cultural context. Of course this goes against the dominant idea – among hostile and friendly commentators alike – that Derrida is out to deny the very possibility of reliable communication, or at least any prospect that it might be based on trans-contextual regularities and constants of the kind that early Davidson seeks to establish. I say ‘early Davidson’ in order to distinguish the truth-based, logically grounded approach that he once developed with a view to countering Quinean, Kuhnian and other versions of the conceptual scheme-relativist argument from the strikingly different (indeed, flatly incompatible) line of thought pursued in his later essay ‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs’ (1986). Here Davidson famously proposes that ‘there is no such thing as a language’, if by ‘language’ we mean something like the notional object of theoretical linguistics, philosophical semantics, transformational-generative grammar, or any such attempt to describe or explain what underlies and makes possible our various kinds of linguistic-interpretive-communicative grasp. Thus, according

to Davidson's 'minimalist' view, we most often get along in figuring out people's meanings and intentions through an ad hoc mixture of 'luck, wit and wisdom', that is to say, through a socially acquired knack for responding to various context-specific cues and clues, rather than working on a 'prior theory' that would somehow provide an advance specification of what it takes to interpret them correctly. This goes along with a generalised version of the Davidsonian 'principle of charity' which requires nothing more than our predisposed willingness to 'bring them out right' – or interpret them as saying something relevant and meaningful – even where they mis-speak themselves, use the wrong expression, or utter some piece of (apparent) nonsense. Since we do this all the time – and manifest a striking degree of tolerance for verbal aberrations of just that kind – then surely it must indicate something important about what goes on in the everyday business of understanding others and getting them to understand us.

Davidson's main example here is that of malapropism, as in the title of his essay which is taken from Sheridan's play 'The Rivals' and alludes to Mrs. Malaprop's comical penchant for mixing up her words, e.g., saying 'a nice derangement of epitaphs' when what she *means* – and what the audience knows she means – is 'a nice arrangement of epithets'. However this optimizing strategy is by no means confined to such extreme (pathological) cases or to speech-acts, like hers, where there is simply no connection between utterer's meaning and the sense of their utterance as given by a dictionary or survey of standard lexico-grammatical usage. For – as Davidson argues – it is a strategy everywhere involved in our capacity to interpret novel utterances, fresh turns of phrase, metaphors, ironies, oblique implications, and even the most familiar items of language when these occur (as they always do) in new or at any rate slightly unfamiliar contexts. So linguistic competence is much more a matter of pragmatic adjustment, intuitive guesswork, and localised (context-sensitive) uptake than of applying a set of interpretative rules that would somehow – impossibly – determine *in advance* what should or should not be counted a meaningful, well-formed, or relevant usage. Hence Davidson's idea that 'prior theories', though playing some minimal role in this process, are largely irrelevant when it comes to interpreting particular speech-acts in particular contexts of utterance. What we chiefly rely on here is the kind of 'passing theory' – or informed guess as to

what the speaker most likely intends to convey – that works well enough for such one-off applications but which has to be revised (or abandoned altogether) as soon as we are faced with a different speaker or the same speaker in a different context.

Thus we don't get much help – if any at all – from our generalised competence as language-users, at least if this 'competence' is taken to involve the interpreter's possession of a prior theory (an innate or acquired grasp of meanings, structures, grammatical rules, and so forth) which by very definition fails to provide the relevant sorts of guidance. For there are, according to Davidson, 'no rules for arriving at passing theories, no rules in any strict sense, as opposed to rough maxims' (Davidson 1986: 173). On his view 'the asymptote of agreement and understanding is where passing theories coincide', and if we want to explain this in terms of two people 'having the same language', then we shall need to qualify the claim by saying 'that they tend to converge on passing theories' (ibid: 173). In which case it follows that 'degree or relative frequency of convergence [is] a measure of similarity of language' (ibid). So in the end there is no difference – or none that really counts in philosophical or linguistic-theoretical terms – between 'knowing a language' and 'knowing our way around in the world generally'. Both come down to our practical savvy, our 'wit, luck and wisdom' in judging situations, and – what amounts to the same thing – our readiness to junk any prior theory that doesn't fit the case in hand. By the same token linguists and philosophers are getting things back-to-front when they try to produce some generalised (non-context-specific) account of the rules, regularities, semantic structures, generative mechanisms, or whatever, that supposedly subtend and explain our powers of everyday linguistic-communicative grasp. Such theories miss the point when it comes to describing how people *actually* manage to do things with words just as those people would themselves miss the point – fail to get their meanings across or understand what was said to them – if indeed they were wholly or largely reliant on the kinds of linguistic competence the theories purport to describe. So any project of this sort must inevitably fail 'for the same reasons the more complete and specific prior theories fail: none of them satisfies the demand for a description of the ability that speaker and interpreter share and that is adequate to interpretation' (Davidson 1986: 171).

I have taken this rather lengthy detour *via* Davidson's 'A Nice Derangement' because it has

struck some exegetes as adopting an approach to issues of language, meaning and interpretation which invites comparison with Derrida's work, in particular his deconstructive reading of Austin in 'Signature Event Context'. (See for instance Pradhan 1986; Wheeler 1986.) What these thinkers have in common, so the argument goes, is (1) an emphasis on the capacity of speech-acts to function across a vast (unpredictable and unspecifiable) range of communicative contexts; (2) the rejection of any theory that would claim to establish normative criteria for deciding in advance just which kinds of speech-act are meaningful, valid, or appropriate in just which kinds of context; and (3) – resulting from this – a 'minimalist-semantic' conception of meaning which strives so far as possible to avoid all dependence on prior theories of whatever type. Thus, according to one of these commentators,

[i]f a sentence can be put to any use, and if its meaning does not restrict its use in any way, and it retains the same meaning in the context of those multiple uses; or if a sign can always be removed from its context and grafted into another context and its identity as a sign does not hamper its functioning as that sign in those new contexts; then we had better posit only the minimum required semantically to constitute that sentence or that sign as that unit of language. (Pradhan 1986: 75)

For Derrida this involves the notion of 'iterability' as that which enables speech-acts, written marks, or other such linguistic tokens to be cited ('grafted') from one context to the next while avoiding any more specific appeal to identity-conditions or criteria for deciding what shall count as an appropriate or relevantly similar context (Derrida 1977a). For Davidson, as we have seen, it takes the form of a basically pragmatist approach according to which 'passing theories' (or adhoc adjustments) are the best we can reasonably hope for since they alone offer any prospect of achieving some measure of convergence between utterer's intent and communicative uptake. Hence the idea that Davidson and Derrida are likewise converging – albeit from different angles – on a kind of interpretative theory to end all theories, or a minimalist conception that finds no room for more substantive specifications of meaning or context.

It seems to me that this proposal gets Derrida wrong on certain crucial points and that his readings of Austin and Rousseau (among others) have more

in common with the 'early' Davidson position than with that advanced in 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs'. (See also Norris 1997.) That is to say, what Derrida shares with early Davidson is the belief that interpretation cannot even make a start except on the premise that linguistic understanding is primarily a matter of the logical resources that alone make it possible for speech-acts or texts to communicate across otherwise unbridgeable differences of language, culture, social context, background presupposition, and so forth. Early Davidson sets these conditions out in the form of a Tarskian (truth-based) formal semantics which – as he argues – can then be extended to natural languages by way of those various logical constants in the absence of which they would fail to qualify as 'languages', properly speaking. In which case there is no making sense of the Quinean, Kuhnian, or Whorfian claim that since 'conceptual schemes' (semantically construed) vary so widely across different languages or cultures therefore translation from one to another is strictly impossible, or at best a matter of approximate convergence for practical purposes. After all, as Davidson pointedly remarks, 'Whorf. wanting to demonstrate that Hopi incorporates a metaphysics so alien to ours that Hopi and English cannot, as he puts it "be calibrated", uses English to convey the contents of sample Hopi sentences' (Davidson 1984: 184). The same goes for Quine's across-the-board talk of 'ontological relativity' and Kuhn's idea that scientific revolutions bring about such a wholesale paradigm-shift that there is simply no room for comparing different theories in point of truth, explanatory power, or predictive warrant. Where the error comes in, so Davidson maintains, is through these thinkers' shared tendency to promote issues of semantics – the fact that various languages differ in their range of lexical or descriptive resources – over issues concerning the elements of logical structure that all languages must have in common in order to qualify as such. Thus 'what forms the skeleton of what we call a language is the pattern of inference and structure created by the logical constants: the sentential connectives, quantifiers, and devices for cross-reference' (Davidson 1984: 182).

All of this seems to go pretty much by the board when later Davidson advances his claim that 'there is no such thing as a language' and puts the case for regarding 'prior theories' – among them (presumably) truth-based logico-semantic theories of just this type – as more or less redundant when it comes to the business of figuring out what speakers mean in

particular contexts of utterance. One way of bringing this lesson home – he suggests – ‘is to reflect on the fact that an interpreter must be expected to have different prior theories for different speakers – not as different, usually, as his passing theories; but these are matters that depend on how well the interpreter knows his speaker’ (Davidson 1986: 171). In which case clearly the role of prior theories must be thought of as ‘vanishingly small’, or as subject to revision – or outright abandonment – whenever we encounter some speech-act that fails to make sense (or which yields an aberrant interpretation) on our currently accepted prior theory. What this amounts to is a massive extension of the early-Davidson ‘principle of charity’ which now requires not that we maximise the truth-content of sample utterances by construing their sense in accordance with shared (presumptively rational) standards of accountability but rather that we simply ignore or discount the linguistic meaning of any utterance that doesn’t make sense by our best interpretative lights. For if indeed there is ‘no word or construction that cannot be converted to a new use by an ingenious or ignorant speaker’ (*vide* Mrs. Malapop), and if linguistic uptake can amount to no more than ‘the ability to converge on a passing theory from time to time’, then surely it follows that ‘we have abandoned... the ordinary notion of a language’ (Davidson 1986: 170). But this is no great loss, Davidson thinks, since we can get along perfectly well by applying the extended principle of charity plus those elements of ‘luck, wit and wisdom’ that always play a part in our everyday dealings with language and the world.

So one can see why some theorists (or anti-theorists) have perceived a striking resemblance between late Davidson’s ‘minimalist-semantic’ approach and Derrida’s idea of ‘iterability’ as the best – least semantically burdened – account of how speech-acts or textual inscriptions can function across an open-ended range of possible contexts while somehow retaining just sufficient in the way of identity criteria from one such context to the next. However, as I have said, this resemblance turn out to have sharp limits if one looks in more detail at Derrida’s readings of Austin, Rousseau, and others. For it then becomes apparent that he, like early Davidson, places more emphasis on the logical components of linguistic understanding – the connectives, quantifiers, devices for cross-reference, etc. – as opposed to the kinds of primarily semantic consideration that lead thinkers like Quine, Kuhn, and Whorf to raise large problems about inter-lingual

translation or cross-paradigm understanding. To be sure, Derrida’s ‘logic of supplementarity’ is one that might itself be thought to raise similar problems for any attempt – like early Davidson’s – to resist the force of such sceptical arguments. Thus it does, undeniably, complicate our sense of the relationship between what Rousseau expressly intended to say and what – on a closer, more critical reading – turns out to be the counter-logic at work in various passages of his text. Yet this is *not* to say either that Rousseau’s intentions must henceforth be counted irrelevant for the purposes of any such reading, nor again that the ‘logic of supplementarity’ precludes our ever grasping the operative concepts that organise Rousseau’s discourse. Rather, it is to say that we can best understand what Rousseau gives us to read through the kind of close-focused textual exegesis that registers precisely those logical tensions and moments of aporia which mark the presence of incompatible themes and motifs. And such a reading could not even make a start were it not for the imperative – as Derrida conceives it – of applying the ground-rules of classical (bivalent) logic right up to the point where those principles encounter some obstacle or check to their consistent application.

III.

I must now give substance to these general claims by examining a number of extended passages from *Of Grammatology* where Derrida spells out exactly what is involved in this logic of supplementarity. One has to do with the origins, nature, and historical development of music, a subject that greatly preoccupied Rousseau and which called forth some typically complex sequences of assertion and counter-assertion. What Rousseau explicitly says about music is very much what one might expect him to say, given his general view that the ‘progress’ of civilisation has been everywhere marked by a falling-away from the innocence of origins and a decadent resort to the kinds of ‘supplementary’ device that typify latter-day European culture and language. So the story that Rousseau chooses to tell is one in which music at first took rise from a spontaneous expression of the feelings which as yet had no need for merely decorous conventions or for supplements – such as harmony or counterpoint – whose advent signalled a thenceforth inevitable process of long-term decline. ‘If music awakens in song, if it is initially uttered, *vociferated*, it is because, like all speech, it is born in passion; that is to

say, in the transgression of need by desire and the awakening of pity by imagination' (Derrida 1976: 195). Indeed music and spoken language have their shared point of origin in a kind of pre-articulate speech-song that would have served to communicate all those genuine emotions – prototypically, that of 'pity', or compassion – which set human beings apart from the other animals and must therefore be taken to have marked the emergence of human society from a pre-social state of nature. Moreover, just as spoken language began to degenerate with the development of grammar, articulation, and other such gratuitous 'supplements', so music acquired those disfiguring features that Rousseau identifies with the predominant French styles and conventions of his time. Here again, he makes a partial exception of the Italian and other Southern-European musical cultures where melody has retained at least something of its primacy as an authentic language of the passions, and where music has not yet gone so far down the path toward harmonic-contrapuntal decadence. But in general the process has been one of progressive corruption which reflects – for Rousseau – the wider predicament of a culture whose ever more complex forms of social and political organisation are likewise to be seen as so many symptoms of the same chronic malaise.

What is more, this unnatural degenerative process finds an analogue in the way that writing – or the graphic 'supplement' to speech – comes to an exercise altogether bad and corrupting influence on the development of language in general, and especially those languages that count themselves the most 'advanced' or 'civilised'. For 'if supplementarity is a necessarily indefinite process', then

writing is the supplement par excellence since it marks the place where the supplement proposes itself as supplement of supplement, sign of sign, *taking the place of* a speech already significant; it displaces the *proper place* of the sentence, the unique time of the sentence pronounced *hic et nunc* by an irreplaceable subject, and in turn innervates the voice. It marks the place of the initial doubling. (Derrida 1976: 281)

Thus writing takes on for Rousseau the full range of pejorative associations – artifice, conventionality, removal from the sphere of authentic (face-to-face) communication – which Derrida brings out in a great many texts of the Western logocentric tradition from Plato to Husserl, Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss (Derrida 1981, 1973, 1976, 1978a). At its most straight-

forward the link between harmony (or counterpoint) and writing is simply the fact that whereas melodies can be learned – or got 'by heart' – without any need for graphic notation in the form of a musical score, this becomes more difficult – and finally impossible – as music acquires harmonic complications beyond the unaided mnemonic capacity of even the best-trained musicians. However the connection goes deeper than this and involves all those above-mentioned negative attributes or predicates which mark the term 'writing' as it figures in Rousseau's discourse. Thus, according to Rousseau, it was once the case – and would still be the case had language and music not taken this 'disastrous' wrong turn – that the human passions were fully expressed in a kind of emotionally heightened speech-song that communicated straight from heart to heart and which had no need for such supplementary adjuncts as articulation, grammatical structure, writing, harmony, musical notation, or the 'calculus of intervals'. These latter he thinks of as having somehow *befallen* language and music through an accident of 'progress' that need not – should not – have happened yet which also (by a certain perverse compulsion) marked their development from the outset. This is why, as Derrida shows, Rousseau's language is itself subject to extreme complexities of modal and temporal articulation whenever it broaches the issue of priority between nature and culture, speech and writing, melody and harmony, or origin and supplement. In each case what should by all rights have been a self-sufficient entity requiring (or admitting) no such addition turns out – by the logic of Rousseau's argument – to have harboured a certain incompleteness *at source* which belies that claim and thus complicates his argument despite and against its manifest intent.

This complication first enters at the point where Rousseau attempts to define what it is about passionate utterance – speech or song – in its earliest (i.e., most natural, spontaneous) character that none the less sets it decisively apart from the expression of animal need. 'Everything proceeds from this inaugural distinction: "It seems then that need dictated the first gestures, while the passions wrung forth the first words"' (Derrida 1976: 195). By the same token music could only have arisen when speech had advanced to the stage of expressing passions – distinctively human passions – as opposed to mere snarls of 'anger', grunts of 'contentment', or other such non-human animal noises. Thus '[t]here is no music before language. Music is born of voice and not of

sound. No prelinguistic sonority can, according to Rousseau, open the time of music. In the beginning is song' (ibid: 195). 'Song', that is, in a sense of the term that would include those instances of passionate language (or emotionally heightened speech) which had not yet become 'music', properly so called, but would exclude – as Rousseau firmly declares – any animal sound (such as birdsong) which lacks the distinctively linguistic attributes of meaning and articulation. 'That is why there is no animal music', as Derrida writes, closely paraphrasing Rousseau. 'One speaks of animal music only by looseness of vocabulary and by anthropomorphic projection' (ibid: 195–6). Yet in that case one is surely entitled to ask what has now become of Rousseau's claim that language and music both took rise from a 'natural' expression of feelings, emotions, or sentiments which would somehow have remained as yet untouched by the corrupting ('supplementary') effects of culture or civilised artifice. For there is simply no way that Rousseau can put this case while maintaining the distinction – equally crucial to his argument – between that which belongs to the realm of merely animal pseudo- or proto-'expression' and that which belongs to the human realm of articulate and meaningful language. Thus if the stage of transition from 'sounds' or 'noises' to language in the proper usage of that term is the point at which culture supervenes upon nature – or the point at which intersubjective feeling takes over from the dictates of animal need – then clearly *by the logic of Rousseau's argument* one has to conclude that language could never have existed in any such 'natural' (pre-linguistic) state. And if the song is indeed, as Rousseau declares, 'a kind of modification of the human voice', then just as clearly 'it is difficult to assign it an absolutely characteristic (*propre*) modality' (ibid: 196). For it is just those defining or 'characteristic' features – of melody, cadence, emotional expressiveness, empathetic power – which Rousseau takes to distinguish song (authentically *human* song) from the kinds of song-like animal 'expression' which possess no genuine claim to that title.

The same complication emerges when Rousseau attempts to make good his argument for the 'natural' priority of melody over harmony, or the straightforward expression of human sentiments through an unadorned singing line over the various false and artificial embellishments introduced by later composers, among them – pre-eminently – Rameau and the fashionable French figures of his day. (That Rousseau's own compositions in a more 'natural'

Italianate style enjoyed no comparable measure of success is doubtless a fact of some psychological or socio-cultural significance but philosophically beside the point.) 'Melody being *forgotten*', Rousseau laments,

and the attention of musicians being completely turned toward harmony, everything gradually came to be governed according to this *new object*. The genres, the modes, the scale, all received new faces. Harmonic successions came to dictate the sequence of parts. This sequence having *usurped the name* of melody, it was, in effect, impossible to recognize the *traits of its mother* in this new melody. And our musical system having thus *gradually* become purely harmonic, it is not surprising that its *oral tone* [*accent*] has *suffered*, and that our music has lost almost all its *energy*. Thus we see how singing *gradually* became an art entirely *separate* from speech, from which it takes its origin; how the harmonics of sounds resulted in the *forgetting* of vocal inflections; and finally, how music, restricted to purely physical concurrences of vibrations, found itself *deprived* of the moral power it had yielded when it was the *twofold voice of nature*. (cited by Derrida, 1976: 199–200).

This passage brings out very clearly the logical strains that emerge within Rousseau's discourse when he attempts to theorise the origins of music and the causes of its subsequent decline. For how can it be thought – consistently maintained – that the fateful swerve from melody to harmony (or nature to culture) was something that befell music only by an accident of cultural change and not through its inherent propensity to develop and extend its resources in just that way? After all, on Rousseau's own submission, the earliest (most natural) stage of musical expression was one *already marked* by certain characteristics – 'the genres, the modes, the scale' – which could only have belonged to that post-originary (decadent) phase when melody had acquired a range of conventional forms and devices, along with the 'supplementary' traits of harmony and counterpoint. Thus, far from having wrongfully 'usurped the name' of melody, harmony must rather be conceived as an integral component and defining feature of all melodious utterance, even at the outset – the mythic point of origin – when by rights it should have found absolutely no place in the authentic speech-song of passionate language. For has not

Rousseau quite explicitly acknowledged that song is in itself and by its very nature 'a kind of modification of the human voice'? In which case the 'twofold voice of nature' – originary speech and song – would not so much have 'suffered' a gradual decline and a process of increasing 'separation' that deprived it of its 'moral power' but would rather have taken the course that it did through a *natural* development of harmonic resources that were *always already* present at the earliest stage of melodic expression.

Again, how could it have been that 'the harmonics of sounds resulted in the *forgetting* of vocal inflections'? For, according to Rousseau, those inflections *originally* came about through a certain harmonic modification of the human voice that marked the transition from a realm of animal noises (such as birdsong) provoked by nothing more than physical need to a realm of humanly significant passional utterance. 'To the extent that 'music presupposes voice, it comes into being at the same time as human society. As speech, it requires that the other be present to me as other through compassion. Animals, whose pity is not awakened by the imagination, have no affinity with the other as such' (Derrida 1976: 195). Such feelings should have characterised the earliest stage of musical development, a stage (more properly) when 'development' had not yet occurred and when there was – as yet – no room for the 'desolating' split between nature and culture (or melody and harmony) which wrenched music from its otherwise preordained natural path. Yet it is impossible to ignore the counter-logic that runs athwart Rousseau's professed statements of intent and compels him to acknowledge – not without 'embarrassment' – the fact that this split must *already* have occurred by the time that music was able to express even the most basic of human feelings and emotions.

Rousseau strives to avoid this self-contradictory upshot by specifying just how the accident befell and by means of what alien, parasitic device harmony managed to substitute itself for the melody of living song. It is the musical *interval*, he thinks, that must be blamed for having thus opened the way to all manner of subsequent abuses. For the interval brings with it an element of 'spacing', a *differential* relationship between tones which disrupts the otherwise self-sufficient character of melody by introducing an unwanted harmonic dimension that breaches the original (natural) unity of speech and song. Such is at any rate what Rousseau wishes to say: that the interval obtrudes as a bad supplement, an accidental perversion of music, or a source of

harmonic conflicts and tensions that should never have befallen the development of music had it only remained true to its original (purely melodic) vocation. And he does indeed say just that in a number of passages – cited by Derrida – where the emphasis falls on this unnatural, perverse, and above all *accidental* character of harmony as that which can only have impinged upon melody as a threat from *outside* its original (proper) domain.

Yet there are other, symptomatically revealing passages where Rousseau is constrained to say just the opposite, namely that harmony is and was *always* implicit in melody, since the interval – or the differential 'spacing' of tones – is something which enters into all conceivable forms of musical expression, even those (such as monody, folk-song, or 'primitive' chant) that *on the face of it* haven't yet arrived at the stage of multivocal harmony or counterpoint. For in these cases also it is a fact of acoustics as well as a subjectively verifiable truth about the phenomenology of musical perception that we don't hear only the bare, unaccompanied melodic line. Rather that line is perceived as carrying along with it an additional range of harmonic overtones and relationships in the absence of which we should simply not perceive it as possessing the distinctive melodic traits of contour, cadence, modal inflection, intervallic structure, and so forth. Hence – to repeat – that curious 'logic of supplementarity' which brings it about that what *should* have been original, self-sufficient, and exempt from addition turns out to harbour a certain lack that can only be supplied by conceding its dependence on some 'accident' of culture or history which should *never have occurred* in the natural course of things. However this logic is none the less rigorous – and Derrida's reading likewise – for the fact that Rousseau is compelled to articulate some 'classically' unthinkable conjunctions of claim and counter-claim with regard to these strictly undecidable issues of priority between nature and culture, speech and writing, melody and harmony, etc.

To be sure, when his commentary comes closest to a *paraphrase* of Rousseau's arguments then this requires some highly complex – at times even tortuous – deviations from classical logic, deviations that typically involve the recourse to modal or tensed constructions which strain the limits of intelligibility and often lean over into downright paradox. Thus for instance (to repeat): the 'supplementary' character of articulation is that which 'wrenches language from its condition of origin, from its conditional or future

of origin, from that which it must (ought to) have been and what it has never been; it could only have been born by suspending its relation to all origin' (Derrida 1976: 243). In such passages Derrida is no doubt pressing beyond any order of statement that might be acceptable in terms of those various modal or tense-logics that philosophers have lately proposed by way of extending and refining the resources of the first-order propositional and predicate calculus. (See especially Hintikka 1969; Loux (ed.) 1979; Hughes and Cresswell 1996; Prior 1957.) However it should also be clear that he does so precisely in order to reveal the kinds of paradox and *illogicality* that result when Rousseau attempts to make good his case for there once having existed a proto-language devoid of those necessary (language-constitutive) features which *must* have been already in place for the transition to occur from the realm of pre-articulate (merely 'animal') sounds. Granted, Rousseau 'wants us to think of this movement as an accident' (Derrida 1976: 242). Yet despite his intentions Rousseau 'describes it... in its originary necessity', that is to say, as a 'natural progress' which 'does not come unexpectedly' on the origins of spontaneous, passionate speech-song but *which must be there* from the very first moment when language arrives on the scene.

I hope to have communicated something of the way in which Derrida's commentary pursues the twists and turns of Rousseau's argument by citing passages that directly contradict his thesis and thereby expose the 'supplementary' logic that structures his entire discourse on the origins of language and music. As direct quotation gives way to paraphrase and paraphrase, in turn, to a detailed analysis of Rousseau's discourse and its various complexities of tense, logic, and modal implication so Derrida's reasoning can be seen to maintain a clearly-marked distance from the text in hand, or from anything like a straightforward proposal that the exegete endorse this logic of supplementarity as a substitute for 'classical' concepts. Indeed it can be seen that Derrida *necessarily* deploys those concepts by way of showing how Rousseau's discourse is compelled to undergo such 'supplementary' swerves from manifest or overt expressive intent in order to avoid more blatant instances of self-contradiction and thereby preserve at least some semblance of coherent sense. So commentators like Priest (1995) are right to find something of interest here for theorists of deviant, many-valued, or paraconsistent logic but wrong to suppose that Derrida's exposition of Rousseau

should be taken as a straightforward recommendation that we adopt the logic of supplementarity as another such alternative to classical norms. Rather, it is a mode of paradoxical pseudo-logic that is forced upon Rousseau by those false premises which cannot but generate aporias or contradictions once subject to a reading that calls them to account in rigorous (bivalent or classically consistent) terms. Thus where Rousseau claims to measure the degree of 'deviation' that separates civilised (articulate) language and music from their presumed 'natural' origin, Derrida estimates the 'deviant' character of Rousseau's discourse precisely by its ultimate failure to redeem that claim and its need to adopt such exiguous logical (or quasi-logical) resources in the effort to sustain its *strictly unthinkable* thesis. At any rate it is clear from a careful reading of the above passage that Derrida is applying standards of consistency and truth which place his commentary decidedly at odds with the manifest purport of Rousseau's argument and which construe that argument in deconstructive (i.e., critical-diagnostic) rather than purely exegetical terms.

IV.

Thus Derrida's approach to philosophy of logic is in this respect more conservative – or classical – than that of empirically-minded logical revisionists like Quine or anti-realists, such as Michael Dummett, who would renounce bivalence or excluded middle whenever it is a question of statements that lack any determinate proof-procedure or means of verification (Quine 1961; Dummett 1978). In their case the willingness to revise logic is more a matter of foregone philosophical commitment, even if Quine takes it as something that might be forced upon us by certain empirical discoveries in physics (such as wave/particle dualism) and Dummett is led to suspend bivalence chiefly on account of his intuitionist, i.e., non-classical and anti-realist approach to issues in the philosophy of mathematics (Dummett 1977; also Norris 2002a, 2006). Still both thinkers may with justice be said to incline very strongly in this direction and to do so for reasons which – although different – involve a predisposed readiness to give up the principles of classical logic. For Derrida, those principles hold as a matter of strict necessity *right up to the point* where it can actually be shown – on the textual evidence to hand – that they encounter some obstacle which leaves no alternative except to 'transform' or 'complicate' the

logic that assigns truth-values to a given statement. Indeed I would claim that Derrida's exposition of the 'logic of supplementarity' as it emerges through his reading of Rousseau is in this respect more rigorously argued and more responsive to the demonstrable need for such analysis than either Quine's somewhat speculative arguments based on just one possible interpretation of the quantum phenomena or Dummett's highly contentious understanding of the scope and limits of mathematical knowledge. Thus it has to do not only with certain curious blind-spots or logical anomalies in Rousseau's text but also with the plain *impossibility* that things could ever have been as Rousseau describes them, e.g., as concerns the absolute priority of melody over harmony in music or of a natural 'language of the passions' over all those mere 'supplementary' devices – articulation, grammar, structural traits of whatever kind – that supposedly signalled the onset of linguistic and cultural decline. For there is simply no conceiving that idyllic phase when speech would have lacked those same *language-constitutive* features yet would still have been a 'language' in the sense of that term which Rousseau elsewhere (in his more theoretical, even proto-structuralist moments) considers to mark the stage of transition from animal noise to human speech.

That this impossibility is found to emerge through a meticulously argued reading of Rousseau should lead us to conclude that the aporias in question are not so much products of 'textualist' ingenuity on Derrida's part but rather have to do with certain empirically warranted and theoretically ascertainable truths about language. Thus, as I have said, his approach falls square with an argument like 'early' Davidson's concerning the minimal range of necessary attributes – quantifiers, devices for negation, conjunction, disjunction, anaphora, cross-reference, etc. – that any language surely *must* possess if it is to function effectively *as* a language, rather than a means of vaguely emotive pseudo-communication (Davidson 1984). So the Derridean 'logic of supplementarity' has this much in common with other, more 'classical' modes of logic: that while laying claim to its own kind of formal rigour and validity-conditions it must also correspond to the way things stand with respect to some given subject-domain or specific area of discourse. That is to say, when Derrida finds Rousseau obliquely conceding (despite his declarations elsewhere) that 'harmony is the originary supplement of melody', or that melody could never have existed in a state of

pure pre-harmonic grace, this has implications not only for philosophy of logic but also for our thinking about music and the history of music. For indeed it is the case – empirically so, as a matter of acoustics and the overtone-series, and phenomenologically speaking, as concerns the ubiquitous role of harmony in our perceptions of melodic contour – that what *ought* (for Rousseau) to figure as a mere 'supplemen' turns out to be the very *condition of possibility* for music and musical experience in general.

There is a sense in which Rousseau acknowledges this – recognises it to follow from the basic principles of acoustics and music-theory – but also a sense in which he constantly endeavours to deny or repress that knowledge. For 'Rousseau never makes explicit the originarity of the lack that makes necessary the addition of the supplement – the quantity and the differences of quantity that always already shape melody. He does not make it explicit, or rather he says it without saying it, in an oblique and clandestine manner' (Derrida 1976: 214). And again: 'Rousseau wishes to restore a natural degree of art within which chromatics, harmonics, and interval would be unknown. He wishes to efface what he had... already recognised, that there is harmony within melody, etc. But the *origin must (should) have been* (such is, here and elsewhere, the grammar and the lexicon of the relationship to origin) *pure melody*' (ibid). That Rousseau is unable to sustain this thesis against certain powerful objections that arise from the logic of his own discourse is a fact that should interest logicians as much as musicologists and cultural historians. For it offers a striking example of the way that complications which develop in the course of arguing from (apparently) self-evident premises to (apparently) sound conclusions can introduce doubt as to whether those premises are indeed self-evident or those conclusions warranted by anything more than strength of doctrinal attachment. This emerges very clearly from certain passages in Rousseau's writing on the theory of music where he effectively concedes as much through a curious reversal of the very terms – or the order of priority between them – which bear the whole weight of his argument. Thus: 'harmony would be very difficult to distinguish from melody, unless one adds to the latter the ideas of rhythm and measure, without which, in effect, no melody can have a determined character; whereas harmony has its own by itself, independent of every other quality' (cited by Derrida, 1976: 210). But in that case – as Austin might have said – it is harmony that 'wears

the trousers' with respect to this conceptual opposition and melody that lacks the self-sufficient expressive resources which would enable it to manage perfectly well without the 'supplement' of harmony.

This I take to be the single most distinctive feature of the 'logic of supplementarity' as Derrida expounds it through his reading of Rousseau. That is to say, it is an exception to the general rule which requires that we distinguish logical *validity* from argumentative *soundness*, or the question what counts as a case of formally valid inference from any question concerning the truth of premises or of conclusions drawn from them. In this respect the logic of supplementarity has more in common with certain kinds of abductive reasoning – or inference to the best explanation – than with classical (e.g., deductive) schemas of truth-preservation (Peirce 1992; Harman 1965; Lipton 1993). Abduction is essentially a mode of inference that reasons backwards (so to speak) from whatever we possess in the way of empirical evidence to whatever best explains or accounts for that same evidence. In so doing it allows for the standing possibility that premises may be confirmed, infirmed, strengthened or indeed *discovered* through just such well-tried methods of reasoning, especially in the physical sciences. It is therefore a process of rational conjecture which involves the application of standard principles – such as bivalence and excluded middle – but which deploys them in a non-standard way so as to extend the resources of logic beyond its classical limits.

Among other things this provides an answer to the 'paradox of analysis', or the claim that since deductive logic comes down to a matter of purely definitional (analytic) truth, therefore its conclusions must always be contained in its premises and hence be incapable of making any new or substantive contribution to knowledge. (See also Mackie 1973: 1–16; Moore 1968; Pap 1958: 276–79.) The paradox received its classic statement in the following passage from C.H. Langford's essay 'The Notion of Analysis in Moore's Philosophy'.

Let us call what is to be analyzed the analysandum, and let us call that which does the analysing the analysans. The analysis then states an appropriate relation of equivalence between the analysandum and the analysans. And the paradox of analysis is to the effect that, if the verbal expression representing the analysandum has the same meaning as the verbal expression representing the analysans, the analysis states a bare identity and is trivial; but if the two verbal

expressions do not have the same meaning, the analysis is incorrect. (Langford 1968: 323).

The approach *via* inference to the best explanation gets around this seeming paradox by maintaining (1) that abductive logic *can* provide grounds for a non-tautological (ampliative) process of knowledge-acquisition, and (2) that this process is none the less consistent with an application of classical precepts such as bivalence and excluded middle. That is to say, it rejects any Quinean empiricist recourse to across-the-board logical revisability – or any Dummett-type anti-realist proposal to suspend those classical precepts – while none the less extending the scope of valid inference well beyond the highly restrictive terms laid down by a hard-line deductive-nomological conception of valid reasoning. It may well be objected that arguments of this sort have their place in philosophy of science and other empirically-oriented disciplines but not – surely – in the business of textual interpretation where the only 'data' are words on the page and where these are subject to entirely different (by which it is implied, less exacting or rigorous) standards of accountability. However this objection misses the mark if applied to Derrida's commentary on Rousseau since the operative standards here – as I have argued – are simply not those of 'interpretation' in the usual (literary-critical) sense of that term. Rather, they have to do with the evidence of certain logical anomalies that *cannot be ignored* by a sufficiently attentive reading and which therefore require an abductive revision of various 'self-evident' premises – such as the absolute priority of nature over culture, speech over writing, or melody over harmony – whose claim is countermanded by the logic of Rousseau's discourse.

Thus, on his account, there was once (must have been) a time when speech and song had not yet gone their separate ways and when '[a]ccents constituted singing, quantity constituted measure, and one spoke as much by sounds and rhythm as by articulations and words' (cited by Derrida, 1976: 214). Yet here already – as Rousseau is constrained to acknowledge – there is simply no conceiving how 'accent' is produced (or how languages might be compared in point of their accentual features) unless with regard to differential structures like 'quantity', 'measure', and 'articulation'. That is to say, it is impossible for Rousseau to maintain his position concerning the natural priority of melody over harmony without *either* ignoring these various items of counter-evidence *or* allowing them to twist the logic of his

argument against its own avowed or manifest intent. The same applies to Rousseau's concept of *imitation*, referring as it does to that which defines the very nature of human sociality – whatever lifts music and language beyond the realm of mere animal need – yet also to that which supposedly inhabits a realm of spontaneous (natural) human passion as yet untouched by the disfiguring marks of cultural progress. 'Rousseau has need of imitation', Derrida writes:

he advances it as the possibility of song and the emergence out of animality, but he exalts it only as a reproduction adding itself to the represented though it *adds nothing*, simply supplements it. In that sense he praises art or *mimesis* as a supplement. But by the same token praise may instantly turn to criticism. Since the supplementary mimesis adds *nothing*, is it not useless? And if, nevertheless, adding itself to the represented, it is not nothing, is that imitative supplement not dangerous to the integrity of what is represented and to the original purity of nature? (Derrida 1976: 203)

Thus 'imitation', like 'supplement', is a term whose logical grammar – whose 'syncategorematic' status, to adopt the analytic parlance – is such as to induce an unsettling effect in any context of argument where it purports to establish that certain concepts (like 'nature', 'speech', and 'melody') must take priority over certain others (like 'culture', 'writing', and 'harmony').

In Rousseau's case what emerges is a sequence of contradictory propositions which cannot be reconciled according to the terms of a classical (bivalent) logic and which therefore require *either* that this logic be abandoned *or* that Rousseau abandon his cardinal premise with respect to that supposedly self-evident order of priority. As I read him Derrida regards the first option as philosophically a non-starter since it would licence any number of revisionist proposals – like the suspension of bivalence or excluded middle – whose effect would be to render thinking altogether devoid of conceptual clarity and precision. Rather what is required, here as in discussions of speech-act theory, is a rigorous deployment of bivalent logic – 'a logic of "all or nothing" without which the distinction and the limits of a concept would have no chance' (Derrida 1989: 117) – but one that goes on to reason abductively from certain contradictions in Rousseau's discourse to the necessity of revising or abandoning Rousseau's

premises. Thus the Derridean 'logic of supplimentarity' differs from other revisionist programmes in its insistence that any change in our thinking can only be warranted – logically justified – when arrived at through a strict application of bivalent ('all or nothing') criteria. Otherwise it could offer no adequate grounds for drawing the kinds of conclusion that Derrida draws, i.e., that *as a matter of logical necessity as well as a matter of empirical fact* there cannot be melody without harmony or a language of the passions that is not already marked by those differential features – of accent, tonality, 'laws of modulation', etc. – that belong to a given (however 'primitive') stage of cultural development. And this not merely as an odd, unlooked-for consequence of Rousseau's obsessional desire to prove just the opposite but rather as a matter of linguistic, historical, and *logical* necessity.

V.

My point is that Derrida arrives at these claims through a reading of Rousseau that undoubtedly places considerable strain on the precepts of classical (bivalent) logic but which is none the less obliged to respect those precepts – to follow them so far as possible – since it would otherwise be able to establish nothing concerning the self-contradictory nature of Rousseau's thematic premises. Thus when Derrida notes the emergence of a different, i.e., non-classical or 'supplementary' logic in Rousseau's text it is only on the basis – as the logical outcome – of applying the axioms of bivalence and excluded middle to certain problematical passages which must then be seen to cast doubt on the coherence of Rousseau's project. This is why Derrida's commentary goes out of its way to insist on the strictly unresolvable tensions and logical strains that characterise not only Rousseau's writings about language, music, history, and social development but also its own best efforts to produce a consistent (non-contradictory) reading of Rousseau. These complications arise at precisely the stage where commentary is obliged – logically compelled – to register the presence of a deep-laid conflict between 'implication, nominal presence, and thematic exposition'. They typically take the form of an attempt, on Rousseau's part, to establish a clear-cut conceptual distinction which *should* be sufficient to resolve the problem but which then turns out to require yet another distinction, and so on to the point where his argument displays that repeated pattern of substitutive swerves

from origin which Derrida terms the 'logic of supplementarity'. However, once again, this case would lack any semblance of demonstrative force – of philosophical cogency and rigour – were it not for Derrida's applying the precepts of classical logic in his own exposition of Rousseau's text and also his holding that text accountable to standards which cannot be other than those of bivalence and excluded middle. For it is crucial to his argument that any relaxation of those classical criteria will produce a merely 'approximative' logic and a blurring of conceptual distinctions whose effect is to render thought incapable of reflecting critically on its own premises or presuppositions.

Let me take one further example from Derrida by way of bringing out this requirement that bivalence retain its place even – or especially – where it encounters obstacles such as those thrown up by Rousseau's discourse on the origins of language and culture. Thus, according to Rousseau, the first societies exhibited a state of natural, harmonious human co-existence that was as yet unmarked by those various differential structures – rank, class, social privilege, delegated power, representative assemblies, and so forth – which only later came to exert their artificial and corrupting social effect. However it is clear as a matter of conceptual necessity as well as of historical, anthropological, or socio-cultural reflection that such structures – in some form or another – must be taken to constitute the *very precondition* of societal existence. This is why, as Derrida remarks, all attempts to draw a line between 'nature' and 'culture' while counting some cultures more 'natural' than others must at length give rise to the kinds of logical complication that characterise Rousseau's text. In short, 'language is born out of the process of its own degeneration' (Derrida 1976: 242), a statement that may seem wilfully paradoxical but which captures both the curious double-logic of Rousseau's discourse and the straightforward (conceptually self-evident) truth that there cannot ever have been any language – or any state of social existence – that would meet the requirement of transparent communion in the face-to-face of unmediated mutual understanding. Just as language depends on a system of differential structures, contrasts, and relationships so society depends on – cannot be conceived in the absence of – those structures which articulate social or cultural distinctions of various kinds. And this applies just as much to that Rousseauist conception of 'nature' – a nature supposedly untouched by the ravages of cultural decline – which

is yet paradoxically required to do service as a description of how human beings once lived in a state of (what else?) social co-existence under certain distinctively *cultural* rules and constraints. 'All the contradictions of the discourse are *regulated*, rendered necessary yet unresolved, by this structure of the concept of nature. *Before all determinations of a natural law, there is, effectively constraining the discourse, a law of the concept of nature*' (Derrida 1976: 233; author's italics).

Hence the difference that Derrida constantly remarks between that which Rousseau *expressly wishes to say* and that which he is none the less *compelled to describe* by a logic that resists, contradicts, or countermands his avowed meaning. Thus 'Rousseau's discourse lets itself be constrained by a complexity which always has the form of a supplement of or from the origin. His declared intention is not annulled by this but rather *inscribed* within a system which it no longer dominates' (ibid: 243). Moreover this demonstrable non-coincidence of meaning and intent has implications beyond what it tells us concerning Rousseau's problematic ideas about the origins of human society. Nor are those implications by any means exhausted when Derrida extends his analysis to other texts – notably by Saussure and Lévi-Strauss – where a range of kindred binary oppositions (nature/culture, speech/writing, authentic passion *versus* civilised artifice) are likewise subject to a deconstructive reading. (See Derrida 1976: 27–73, 101–40.) Rather his case is that Rousseau's predicament is one that will inevitably mark any discourse on these or related themes beyond a certain stage of conceptual or logico-semantic complexity. That is to say, this particular form of deviant ('supplementary') logic is certain to emerge whenever it is a question of fixing – or attempting to fix – some notional point of origin for language or society that would *not yet* partake of the defining traits (articulation, difference, structure, hierarchical relationship, etc.) in the absence of which no language or society could possibly have come into being. Indeed, Derrida remarks,

[t]he expression 'primitive times', and all the evidence which will be used to describe them, refer to no date, no event, no chronology. One can vary the facts without modifying the structural invariant. In every possible historical structure, there seemingly would be a prehistoric, presocial, and also prelinguistic stratum, that one ought always to be able to lay bare. (Derrida 1976: 252)

However it is precisely Derrida's point – borne out by the meticulous analysis of passages in Rousseau's text – that this zero-point of history, society and language is one that cannot be described or evoked without giving rise to that counter-logic (or logic of logical anomalies) which marks the emergence of supplementarity and hence the non-existence of anything that answers to Rousseau's wishful description.

So it is wrong – a very definite misreading of Derrida's work – to suggest that deconstruction is really nothing more than a rhetorical technique for generating textual aporias which has long been the stock-in-trade of literary critics professionally skilled in finding out instances of paradox, ambiguity, or multiple meaning (Brooks 1947; Wimsatt 1954). Indeed Derrida is at pains – in *Grammatology* and other texts – to insist that his readings are not so much concerned with localised examples of semantic overdetermination but rather with the logical syntax of terms (such as 'supplement', 'différance', 'pharmakon', and 'parergon') whose contradictory meanings cannot be contained by any such familiar model of literary interpretation (Derrida 1973, 1981, 1987). To be sure, Derrida makes this case through a critical-expository reading of Rousseau which promotes textual fidelity to a high point of principle and which even insists – in one notorious passage – that 'there is nothing outside the text' (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*; more accurately: 'no "outside" to the text') (Derrida 1976: 158). However this should *not* be taken to suggest that he is concerned only with the sacrosanct 'words on the page' or that he must subscribe to some kind of far-gone transcendental-idealist doctrine according to which textual inscriptions are the only items that should figure in this drastically pared-down ontology. What he is claiming, rather, is that deconstruction is able to bring out certain logical complications which also have much to tell us concerning the *real* (as distinct from the mythic or idealised) conditions of emergence for language and society.

This is why, as I have said, Derrida's reading of Rousseau has less to do with thematic commentary in the literary-critical mode than with issues in philosophy of logic and philosophical semantics. Chief among them are (1) the status of 'deviant' *vis-à-vis* classical logics, and (2) the question – at the heart of much philosophical debate from Aristotle to Kant and beyond – as to how logic can be *both* a matter of formal (or transcendental) warrant *and* a mode of reasoning that, in some cases, permits the extension or refinement of our knowledge concerning matters

of empirical fact. Given time one could pursue these topics back to Derrida's early, in many ways formative studies of Husserl and his detailed account of the latter's attempt to reconcile those seemingly discrepant claims (Derrida 1973, 1978b). One could also instance the numerous passages in *Of Grammatology* where Derrida takes up this theme from Husserl – the opposition between logical 'structure' and empirical 'genesis' – and finds it prefigured in the texts of Rousseau at just those points where Rousseau's argument manifests the kinds of conceptual strain imposed by his attempt to theorise the natural (pre-cultural) origins of culture. Thus, according to Rousseau, there *should* or by rights *must have been* at one time a mode of social existence – a 'perpetual spring', a 'happy and durable epoch' – when humankind enjoyed all the benefits of society without its subsequent corrupting effects. 'The more we reflect on it', he writes, 'the more we shall find that this state was the least subject to revolutions, and altogether the very best man could experience; so that he can have departed from it only through some fatal accident, which, for the public good, should never have happened' (cited by Derrida, 1976: 259). Yet this idea is called into question by the counter-logic that regularly surfaces to undermine Rousseau's wishful professions of belief and to demonstrate the sheer impossibility that any such state could once have existed, let alone have formed 'the most happy and *durable*' epoch of human history. In Derrida's words, '[t]he passage from the state of nature to the state of language and society, the advent of supplementarity, remains then outside the grasp of the simple alternative of genesis and structure, of fact and principle, of historical and philosophical reason' (ibid: 259).

VI.

It seems to me that logicians – especially those with an interest in issues of modal and tense-logic – have much to learn from a reading of Derrida which accords his text the kind of detailed attention that he brings to the texts of Rousseau. For it is among the most striking features of his Rousseau commentary that Derrida engages in some highly complex – at times logically and grammatically tortuous – attempts to reconstruct the rationale of Rousseau's argument in a form that would respect the principles of bivalence and excluded middle. That he fails in this endeavour and demonstrates rather the sheer impossibility of carrying it through is a sign not so

much of Derrida's fixed intention to subvert those principles as of his fixed determination to apply them right up to the point where they encounter unignorable resistance from Rousseau's text.

Let me cite another extended passage from *Of Grammatology* which exemplifies the kinds of logical complication – the extraordinary twists of tense-logic and modal or hypothetical-subjunctive reasoning – which characterise Rousseau's discourse on the origins of language, music, and society. The passage in question has to do with his attempt to explain how the 'grammar' of music – its codified conventions and (above all) its structures of harmonic development – might somehow be thought of *both* as having their source in the wellspring of natural melody *and* as having come upon that source from outside through an accident of culture that need not – better not – have happened. Thus:

instead of concluding from this simultaneity [i.e., their common point of origin] that the song broached itself in grammar, that difference had already begun to corrupt melody, to make both it and its laws possible at the same time, Rousseau prefers to believe that grammar *must (should) have* been comprised... within melody. There *must (should) have* been plenitude and not lack, presence without difference. From then on the dangerous supplement, scale or harmony, *adds itself from the outside as evil and lack* to happy and innocent plenitude. It would come from an outside which would be simply the outside. This conforms to the logic of identity and to the principle of classical ontology (the outside is outside, being is, etc.) but not to the logic of supplementarity, which would have it that the outside be inside, that the other and the lack come to add themselves as a plus that replaces a minus, that what adds itself to something takes the place of a default in the thing, that the default, as the outside of the inside, should be already within the inside, etc. What Rousseau in fact describes is that the lack, adding itself as a plus to a plus, cuts into an energy which *must (should) have* been and remain intact. (Derrida 1976: 215)

There are two main points that I wish to make about this passage – and about Derrida's reading of Rousseau more generally – by way of bringing out its relevance to issues in philosophy of logic. One is that it shows the complex array of tensed and modal constructions ('had already', 'must [should have]

been', 'would come from', 'would be simply', 'would have it that', 'should be already', etc.) to which Rousseau typically has recourse in order to maintain the natural – supposedly self-evident – priority of passion over reason, melody over harmony, or spontaneous utterance over grammar and articulation. Thus what Rousseau undoubtedly 'prefers to believe' with regard to these and other, kindred topics is expressed clearly enough in various propositions (or individual statements) concerning those respective orders of priority. However it is far from clear that Rousseau can maintain this position if one looks beyond the presumptive self-evidence of authorial intent to the logical grammar of a term like 'supplement'. For it then turns out that he cannot get around the obstacles to any straightforward (empirically plausible and logically coherent) statement of his views without having recourse to some tortuous locutions which symptomatically betray the stress-points in his argument. Yet of course those stress-points could never emerge – or register as such – were it not for Derrida's applying the precepts of classical (two-valued) logic and his doing so, moreover, in keeping with the strictest requirements of Rousseau's text. That is to say, Rousseau could not possibly advance a single proposition concerning those topics except on the understanding that every such statement is subject to assessment in bivalent (true-or-false) terms. And this condition applies whatever the extent of those modal, counterfactual, or tense-logical complexities that Derrida brings out in his reading of Rousseau.

Hence my second point: that the 'logic of supplementarity' is *not* proposed by Derrida as a substitute, replacement, or alternative to 'classical' logic but rather as a measure of just how far Rousseau is forced to equivocate in the effort to maintain his express position with regard to these various *topoi*. Here again I should wish to make the point that if Derrida is indeed a logical 'revisionist' then this is not so much – as with Quine or Dummett – a distinctive philosophical *parti pris* but a matter of remarking certain logical *aberrations* that characterise the discourse of certain writers, chief among them Rousseau. That is to say, there is no question of renouncing those classical precepts (such as bivalence or excluded middle) which alone provide Derrida with the necessary means by which to analyse Rousseau's text and to bring out its various tensions, complications and aporias. On the other hand this is not merely a matter of Rousseau's having fallen prey to conceptual confusions which he might have

avoided with a bit more care in framing his arguments or thinking their implications through. For the logic of supplementarity is both indispensable to Rousseau's argument – the only form in which he is able to articulate its various propositions – and also (as Derrida shows) the main point of leverage for a reading that effectively subverts all its governing premises. This is why Derrida is at pains to insist that deconstruction is in no sense a 'psychoanalysis' of philosophy, or a depth-hermeneutical technique whose chief aim – as might be supposed – is to uncover certain 'repressed' or 'sublimated' themes in Rousseau's discourse. Rather it is concerned with those blind-spots of *logical* contradiction where that discourse runs up against the impossibility of straightforwardly saying what it means or meaning what it says.

Nor should this position seem so far removed from a good deal of work in the mainstream analytic line of descent, i.e., the Frege-Russell tradition of thinking about issues in philosophy of language and logic. After all, it is taken for granted there that analysis can quite legitimately challenge the presumed self-evidence of utterer's intent – or the normative authority of 'ordinary language' – and concern itself with logico-semantic structures that need not be thought of playing any role in the consciousness of this or that speaker. Frege's canonical account of the relationship between 'sense' and 'reference' and Russell's broadly similar 'Theory of Descriptions' are of course the paradigm examples of this approach (Frege 1952; Russell 1905). Thus Derrida's 'revisionism' is more like that which separates thinkers in the Frege-Russell camp from thinkers (such as Wittgenstein and Austin) who take it that 'ordinary language' is our best source of guidance in these matters, and hence that any claim to go beyond the deliverance of unaided linguistic intuition – or, worse still, to correct for certain 'blind-spots' in our everyday habits of usage – is so much wasted effort (Wittgenstein 1953; Austin 1963). That is to say, Derrida takes the view – upheld by analytic 'revisionists' like Gilbert Ryle – that ordinary language can be systematically misleading and that in such cases we are entitled to press the claims of logical analysis beyond anything acceptable in terms of straightforward (philosophically untutored) linguistic grasp (Ryle 1949, 1954). It is also one reason for his downright refusal to accept Searle's idea that concepts (or logical distinctions) need only be as precise as required by this or that context of usage, so that – for instance – an 'all-or-nothing' logic has

no valid application in the context of Austinian speech-act theory (Searle 1977). For the point is, surely, that *even if* such a loosening of clear-cut logical criteria has its place in some items of everyday parlance *even so* it should not be thought to carry over – or to licence a similar laxity of conceptual grasp – in the philosophic treatment of those same items.

Whence, to repeat, Derrida's remark that 'the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely' (1976: 158). This comment has a double pertinence as applied to Rousseau since his discourse can be seen to exhibit all the signs of a thinking that is caught between two logics – that of classical (bivalent) truth/falsehood and the logic of supplementarity – whose conflicting claims it has somehow to negotiate from one sentence to the next. But it also applies to any speaker or writer whose language might always be logically constrained to mean something other than what they intend or have it in mind to say. 'This is why', as Derrida writes,

travelling along the system of supplementarity with a blind infallibility, and the sure foot of the sleepwalker, Rousseau must at once denounce *mimesis* and art as supplements (supplements that are dangerous when they are not useless, superfluous when they are not disastrous, in truth both at the same time) and recognize in them man's good fortune, the expression of passion, the emergence from the inanimate.

(Derrida 1976: 205)

Commentators like Priest are right to suggest that the Derridean 'logic of supplementarity' merits recognition as one among the range of deviant, non-standard, or paraconsistent logics that have lately received a good deal of philosophical attention (Priest 1994, 1995). However it is also important to emphasise that Derrida is not for one moment proposing the overthrow, abandonment, or supersession of classical (bivalent) concepts. For the point about *any* such deviant logic – whether adopted in response to anomalous quantum-physical data or to textual aberrations like those of Rousseau – is that it must be taken to indicate some problem or unresolved dilemma with respect to the topic in hand (Gibbins 1987; Haack 1974). Thus it requires not so much an outlook of unqualified endorsement – such as commentators often ascribe to Derrida concerning the logic of supplementarity – but rather a process of

diagnostic reasoning that questions the premises (the 'unthought axiomatics') which can be shown to have produced that dilemma.

At any rate there is no justification for the idea that Derrida seeks to subvert the most basic principles of truth, logic and reason. How this idea took hold in so many quarters is perhaps more a question for sociologists and chroniclers of academic culture than for philosophers who might in stead take the time actually to read Derrida's work rather than endorse the standard dismissive estimate. Then they will find, I suggest, that his Rousseau commentary makes a highly original contribution to philosophy of logic and language, not least for its being cast in the form – one more familiar to literary critics – of a critical exegesis finely responsive to verbal details and nuances. What distinguishes Derrida's work is the way that he raises such issues through a mode of analysis that combines textual explication with the utmost rigour of logico-semantic grasp. Beyond that, he draws out some extreme complexities of modal, subjunctive, or counterfactual reasoning – like those cited above – whose gist can be paraphrased (albeit very often at tortuous length) and whose logical form can sometimes be captured in a suitably refined symbolic notation but which serve above all to indicate the aberrant (logically anomalous) character of Rousseau's discourse. Thus Derrida implicitly rejects any approach that would assign the 'logic of supplementarity' to its rightful (albeit 'deviant') place within the range of alternative, i.e., non-classical logics which might always be invoked so as to accommodate some awkward or recalcitrant case. Quite simply, bivalence is the *sine qua non* for a reasoned and philosophically accountable treatment of these topics that would not rest content with an 'approximative' logic, and thereby forego any claim to conceptual rigour. At the same time, *contra* theorists like Searle, Derrida insists on the absolute impossibility that philosophy of language should somehow attain a methodological perspective outside and above the kinds of problematic instance that provide its most challenging material. Hence his attraction to Austin as a thinker who remained keenly aware of the problems thrown up for his own theory by cases which failed to fit in with some existing categorical scheme. Yet it is also very clearly the case that Derrida never goes so far as his post-structuralist disciples would wish in renouncing the distinction between object-language and metalanguage, that is, the necessity that reading should aim 'at a certain relationship, unperceived by the author,

between what he commands and what he does not command of the language that he uses' (Derrida 1976: 158). In keeping with these principles – as I have argued here – his work offers some of the best, most searching and perceptive commentary anywhere to be found in the recent literature on philosophical semantics and philosophy of logic.

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KIERKEGAARD AND RATIONAL JUSTIFICATION OF MORALITY
-A CRITIQUE OF MACINTYRE'S ACCOUNT-

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Abstract:

This essay is the critique of MacIntyre's thesis that Kierkegaard isn't trying to justify morality at all. Using MacIntyre's account of Kierkegaard's work *Either/Or*, and comparing his interpretation to Kierkegaard's works, I aim to show that MacIntyre's conclusions are wrong. In doing so, I will provide a different interpretation of *Either/Or*, while arguing that it is possible to use later Kierkegaard's works in that interpretation. Contrary to MacIntyre's assertion, Kierkegaard does not change his characterization of the ethical in his later works, but outlines in *Either/Or* the same problems he will deal with in *Fear and Trembling*. The foundation of his conception of the ethical lies in his conception of the self, given in *The Sickness unto Death*. Analyzing this conception of self through Kierkegaard's account of the forms of despair, I will argue that the significance of morality lies in delivering the self from various forms of despair. As Kierkegaard's thesis on the ubiquity of despair provides a horizon for the debate between the aesthetic and the ethical individual, we can say that the concept of despair provides a basis for his justification of morality.

Key words: Kierkegaard, the aesthetic, the ethical, despair, self, justification of morality.

Introduction

In his work *After Virtue*, Alisdair MacIntyre asserts that the interminability of contemporary moral debates and the domination of emotivism are the results of the failure of the Enlightenment project to rationally justify morality. As a „third way“ between a morality that refers to universal criteria (e.g. Kantian reference to the concept of practical Reason) and a morality that refers to individual criteria (e.g. emotions or attitude of the speaker), MacIntyre offers a contextualistic *virtue ethics* based on a „specific interpretation of aristotelian tradition and a functional concept of good“¹.

I won't attempt to estimate whether MacIntyre

rightly ascribes negative value to this development of ethics – to do so would require a thorough examination of MacIntyre's view that there cannot exist any concept of good outside a tradition and tasks which that tradition prescribes to its inheritants. I will focus our attention to a specific part of his critique of the Enlightenment project of rational justification of morality. Namely, after providing an account of the attempts to found morality given by the philosophers of Enlightenment, such as Hume, Diderot and Kant, MacIntyre turns to Kierkegaard's work *Either/Or*, in which, according to MacIntyre, we can find the first expression of a modern stance „which envisages moral debate in terms of a confrontation between incompatible and incommensurable moral premises and moral commitment as the expression of a criterionless choice between such premises, a type of choice for which no rational justification can be given“². Such an understanding of *Either/Or* will lead MacIntyre to argue that „Kierkegaard no longer attempts to *justify* morality at all“³. The aim of this essay is to show that this MacIntyre's assertion cannot hold. To show that, I will present the basic traits of MacIntyre's account of Kierkegaard, argue against it using the very text of *Either/Or*, and finally, referring to the structure of self that Kierkegaard gives in his later works, attempt to defend the thesis that Kierkegaard does not give up on rationally justifying morality.

After Virtue and Either/Or

MacIntyre commences his interpretation of *Either/Or* by distinguishing its three central features. The first is the connection between its mode of presentation and its central thesis: „the authors“ of the book are „A“, „B“ and their editor, Victor Eremita. „A“ expresses and argues for the aesthetic view of life, the essence of which, as MacIntyre sees it, is „the attempt to lose the self in the immediacy of

¹ E. Tugendhat, „Etičko protuprosvetiteljstvo: Hegel i Riterova škola; *After Virtue* Alasdair MacIntyreja“ u *Predavanja o etici*, naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2003, p.181 (E.Tugendhat, *Lectures on Ethics*)

² A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1984. p. 39.

³ *ibidem*, p 52

present experiences“⁴. Contrary to that, „B“ commends the ethical way of life, which is characterised by accepting obligations through time and connecting the present with the past and future (Kierkegaard refers to marriage as the paradigm of the ethical). How is one to evaluate the reasons that can be stated for either of these views of life? According to MacIntyre, in order for a reason to be convincing for a person, he or she must previously accept the view of life supported by that reason. In other words, the domain of a reason's validity is the very position it supports - it is worthless outside that position. Although MacIntyre admits that it is hard to establish what Kierkegaard's position is, he tends to identify it in B's thesis that „anyone who faces the choice between the aesthetic and the ethical will in fact choose the ethical; for the energy, the passion of serious choice will, so to speak, carry the person who chooses into the ethical“⁵. According to MacIntyre, this is a false assertion, for a serious and passionate aesthetic choice can be made - his example are the young men who have survived the massacres of World War I and decided after that that nothing will matter to them anymore.

The second feature of *Either/Or* is a deep internal inconsistency between the concept of radical choice and the concept of the ethical. Namely, if the ethical should have any authority, it must be supported by reasons. The choice of the ethical should be founded on reasons, and the ultimate reason that Kierkegaard gives us is the very act of choice.

The third feature is the conservative and traditional character of the ethical as Kierkegaard presents it. Once we make that radical choice that B and, according to MacIntyre, Kierkegaard himself incite us to, there is no dilemma about the principles that we are to choose – they are the very principles that Kierkegaard had „received“ during his lutheran upbringing: promiss-keeping, truth-speaking, benevolence etc. Thus, states MacIntyre, „Kierkegaard is providing a new practical and philosophical underpinning for an older and inherited way of life“⁶.

I will try to show that these three central features of *Either/Or* are a result of MacIntyre's false assumption that *Either/Or* can be taken independently from other Kierkegaard's works. The arguments that MacIntyre uses to support this assumption are not very convincing – he confronts Kierkegaard's later interpretation of his own works with

the text and pseudonyms of *Either/Or* as the best testimonies of the ethical stances of Kierkegaard at the time (the year in question is 1842). This would be legitimate if MacIntyre's interpretation of the structure of *Either/Or* could actually find support in the very text. However, that is not the case – apart from the pseudonyms that MacIntyre specifies („A“, „B“ and Victor Eremita), *Either/Or* has two more authors: Johannes the Seducer, the author of *The Seducer's Diary* and a pastor from Jylland, the author of *Ultimatum*, the final chapter of the book. Now it is more difficult to maintain MacIntyre's thesis that *Either/Or* is about A commending the aesthetic, B commending the ethical view of life, and Victor Eremita - being the editor refraining from judgement – arguing that it's impossible to end this debate being that the premises of the debaters are incommensurable. If that were the case, what would be the role of these two pseudonymous authors that MacIntyre intentionally omits? What does the structure of *Either/Or* tell us once we decide to move out of MacIntyre's *back yard*, out of which he decided to exclude two Kierkegaard's pseudonyms that couldn't fit into his interpretation? First of all, a third, religious view of life emerges, and is, for now, characterized only by its guiding thought that we are always in the wrong in relation to God⁷. Of course, one could say that it's not a moment of great importance, because the debate between the presented positions still remains interminable and the premises incommensurable. That objection is in place, but the significance of introducing the religious perspective lies elsewhere: while the ethical individual posits himself, as well as good and evil⁸, the religious individual has his authority outside of himself. That is the same conflict that continues in *Fear and Trembling*, a works that was published by Kierkegaard a year after *Either/Or*. According to MacIntyre, Kierkegaard's characterization of the ethical had by then undergone a radical change⁹. At first glance, that seems to be the case: while the ethical is presented in *Either/Or* as founded by a radical choice through which the individual chooses himself as a self, in *Fear and Trembling* it is presented as a set of socially established norms that claim universal validity. We can show that Kierkegaard didn't change his characterization of the ethical by means of his characterization of the aesthetic provided in *Ei-*

⁴ *ibidem*, p. 40.

⁵ *After Virtue*, p. 41.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

⁷ S. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part II, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1987, p. 339

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 224.

⁹ *After Virtue*, p. 41.

ther/Or. First of all we need to point out that MacIntyre's interpretation misses the essence of the aesthetic view of life. In his example concerning the young men of WWI that passionately choose the aesthetic way of life, MacIntyre displays an obvious misconception of the aesthetic. Kierkegaard's aesthetic individual is not able to experience anything that is so shocking as to force him to resolutely make a choice that would be a choice for life – for him, each moment has just enough value to be revoked at any time, to be forgotten so that he could start over, not taking into account the previous resolutions he had made. The reason that MacIntyre makes this mistake lies exactly in his reduction of *Either/Or*'s structure to a simple conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical.

Namely, the aesthetic is not a homogeneous category. There are three paradigms (of various sub-stages) of the aesthetic: Don Juan, Johannes the Seducer and „A“. Don Juan is the paradigm of an immediate aesthete and, which is not irrelevant, the only one of these paradigms that even in the book itself figures as an imaginary character, a character from a work of fiction. As Louis Mackey notices¹⁰, Don Juan represents a lament of „immediacy hopelessly lost in reflection“¹¹. While writing about Don Juan, A laments the impossibility of actualizing the purest idea of the aesthetic embodied in Don Juan. Just like Benji of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, crying over a meadow he doesn't recall owning, but only losing, A, a „reflexive aesthete“ attempts to replace the never-owned, but always-already-lost innocence of the aesthetic with other forms of aesthetic existence, like poeticizing his own life, or as Mackey says, „If he cannot make immediacy his life, he will make life itself an art“¹². He avoids obligations, does not bring passion to any of his enterprises, does not make decisions that have lasting consequences. In other words, he lives just like MacIntyre's aesthetes. But now comes a significant difference between Kierkegaard's account of aesthetic existence and MacIntyre's interpretation: enter Johannes the Seducer. He lives by the same „principles“ as A: not attaching to anything perma-

nent, he plans to seduce a girl, seduces her, gets engaged with her, breaks off the engagement and then dishonors and leaves her. But if his actions are not to be judged according to ethical standards, but exclusively aesthetic ones, how come that A, who is also an aesthete, can say things about him such as: „the contriving heart of that corrupt man“¹³, „he has suffered from an *exacerbatio cerebri* (exacerbation of the brain), for which actuality did not have enough stimulation, at most only momentarily“, or finally „and the evil in him lay in this“¹⁴. These assessments are more likely to be expected from the pen of B, and that fact seriously challenges MacIntyre's assertion of an incommensurability of premises of the aesthetic and ethical view of life. What we're actually dealing with is a sort of „evolution“ in the conception of the aesthetic view, that is to say, in the self-conception of the aesthetic individual. Kierkegaard starts with the immediate aesthetic and the impossibility of actualizing it, and arrives to the final consequences of the poetization of life, where the aesthete realizes that the aesthetic view of life does not suffice to describe all the phenomena that he is dealing with – the novum that A is trying to cope with is conscience, a category which belongs to the ethical. It could seem that this sudden appearance of conscience is used by Kierkegaard as a sort of *deus ex machina*, but such an objection would assume that the aesthetic sphere of existence precedes the ethical sphere, which can be true in an empirical sense, but not in a transcendental one. Much like in Kant's work, where the categorical imperative is presented *a priori*, in such a way that every immoral act we commit is actually an act of disobedience to the moral law, there are passages in *Either/Or* that can lead to a conclusion that all aesthetic existence is rather a refusal to assume responsibility for one's own self than a „natural state“ from which one can advance to the ethical. B says: „the person who chooses the aesthetic after the ethical has become manifest to him is not living aesthetically, for he is sinning and is subject to ethical qualifications, even if his life must be termed unethical“¹⁵. Although Kierkegaard's examples are mostly empirical, he is interested neither in anthropology nor in the empirical moment in which a person can become capable of moral judgement. What he wants to point out is that once the moment occurs, that person cannot

¹⁰ L. Mackey, „The Poetry of Inwardness“, in J. Thompson (ed.), Kierkegaard, a Collection of Critical Essays, Doubleday Anchor Books, Garden City, NY, 1972., p. 1-102.

¹¹ L. Mackey, „The Poetry of Inwardness“, in J. Thompson (ed.), Kierkegaard, a Collection of Critical Essays, Doubleday Anchor Books, Garden City, NY, 1972., p. 4.

¹² Ibidem, p. 8

¹³ S. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part I, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1987, p. 303.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 306.

¹⁵ S. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part I, p. 168.

undo this capability, so that every attempt he or she makes to live in aesthetic terms cannot avoid ethical assessment – this person is, so to speak, in a state of „self-incurred immorality“. Thus, the conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical view of life is not, as MacIntyre sees it, a conflict between two opposed ways of life, but can be seen either as a conflict between the ethical and refusal of the ethical (not an ethically indifferent refusal) or as a pedagogical relation between a person that has become capable of ethical judgement and the one that hasn't become ethically „mature“ yet. Of course, this is not to say that MacIntyre first objection doesn't work on another level: once we have chosen the ethical, there is still the choice of substantial ethical principles. As MacIntyre notes, Kierkegaard accepts without question the principles of his own moral tradition. But it is no longer the case that Kierkegaard isn't trying to justify *morality* as such, but only an inherited set of moral norms – a particular *Sittlichkeit*.

Let us now return to the MacIntyre's problematic assertion that Kierkegaard's characterization of the ethical in *Fear and Trembling* differs from the one given in *Either/Or*. If we look at Kierkegaard's exposition of the ethical in a similar way we did with the aesthetic view, where *The Ultimatum* would have a role similar to the one that *The Seducer's Diary* has for the aesthetic view, we will notice that Kierkegaard's account of the ethical changes in the very text of *Either/Or*. Namely, B states in the chapter *The balance between the Esthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality* that the task of ethics is achieving the universal¹⁶, while in the chapter *The Ultimatum*, he forwards to A a letter of a pastor from Jylland in which two moments are already present, moments that will be developed again in *Fear and Trembling*: a thought that there are situations that are inherently singular, that is to say, situations where ethical demands are not applicable, and a thought that one cannot apply categories of reason, i.e. moral judgement on God. Just like A, B changes his view of the ethical from accepting a Kantian test of morality by way of applying the form of universality and necessity, to an observation that every Christian culture accepts exceptions from this rule, or, as Kierkegaard puts it in *Fear and Trembling*, there is a teleological suspension of the ethical. In other words, Kierkegaard points out that there is an inconsistency in the Christian philosophical thought which remains unrecognized in the philoso-

phies of Kant and Hegel. The result of that lack of recognition is the gap between Christianity and that which Kierkegaard calls Christendom, and which is characterized by the so-called „aesthetic delusion“ that one is made a Christian just by being baptised or by being a member of a Church (and that couldn't be avoided in Denmark at the time) and the „speculative delusion“ that Christianity could be adequately represented through terms of hegelian philosophy. As references to that inconsistency can be found from the beginning of Kierkegaard's writing career to the retrospective explanation of his entire production, given in *A point of view of my work as an Author*, it is hard to defend MacIntyre's distrust in that explanation and his isolated account of *Either/Or*.

The structure of self and justification of Morality

In the previous section I have tried to show two things: first, that MacIntyre is wrong to see the subject of *Either/Or* as an interminable conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical way of life and Kierkegaard's giving up on offering any justification of morality, and second, that there is no gap between Kierkegaard's conception of the ethical in *Either/Or* and in his later works. Thus I have provided legitimacy for my future references to later Kierkegaard's works in attempting to present what I believe to be the foundation of his justification of morality. That primarily concerns his conception of the structure of self given in his work *The Sickness unto Death*.

Analyzing the forms of despair, as a distinctly human phenomenon, Kierkegaard finds the cause of despair in an inadequate relation of the self to itself. Self is a relation that involves multiple factors: „Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity“¹⁷, and as a synthesis, it relates on one hand to itself, and on the other hand to „the Power which constituted it“¹⁸. Hence, self is „a relation which relates itself to its own self, and in relating itself to its own self relates itself to another“¹⁹. What is the place of morality in a thus presented structure of self? The easiest way to find it is to present in short a „map“ of the forms of despair. First of all, Kierkegaard offers two possible divisions of despair: the first is a division seen „under the category of con-

¹⁶ S. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part I, p.255–7.

¹⁷ S.Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, Princeton University Press, 1941, p.9.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p.10.

sciousness"²⁰, while the second concerns a moment of synthesis of self. According to the first division we can discern:

- a) „The Despair which is unconscious that it is Despair, or the Despairing Unconsciousness of having a Self and an Eternal Self“²¹
- b) The Despair that is conscious of being a Self, but does not want to be itself (that is, does not want to be an authentic Self)
- c) The Despair that is conscious of being a Self and wants to be itself, but resolved of the relation with „the Power that posited it“.

According to the second division, we can discern:

- a) The Despair of infinitude
- b) The Despair of finitude
- c) The Despair of possibility and
- d) The Despair of necessity

Michael Theunissen notices in his *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair* that the forms of despair that Kierkegaard is naming actually represent stages of a process through which an individual alienates himself from his own self²². In the concept of despair that is unconscious of having a self we can easily recognize the characteristics of the aesthetic individual. And here we can begin with mapping the *locus* of morality: morality is necessary to deliver us from this form of despair. Actually, although morality itself does not suffice to deliver us from all forms of despair (faith is required for that), it has an irreplaceable part in delivering us from several forms of despair. The first form is already mentioned: in order to start our „delivering process“ from despair in general, we need the consciousness of having a self. Therefore, the transition from the aesthetic to the ethical stage isn't commended, as MacIntyre claims when suggesting the second central quality of *Either/Or*, by merely referring to a „radical choice“ between the aesthetic and ethical, but, as he later acknowledges, by referring to despair which is „everyone's negative Prime Mover“²³. The ubiquity of despair, a thesis that Kierkegaard advocates in *The Sickness unto Death*²⁴ provides a common context that enables a dialogue between different spheres of existence.

The despair that is unconscious that it is despair is not the only one that can be overcome through morality. In the despair of infinitude the self becomes abstract. „The self thus leads a fantastic existence in abstract endeavor after infinity, or in abstract isolation“²⁵. By bonding with a community and its *Sittlichkeit* and by agreeing to subsume one's self under the universal, the common *telos*, one is prevented from falling into this form of despair (although without that ability of abstracting, this bonding can produce the opposite form of despair – the despair of finitude. A similar case is with the despair of possibility: „Now if possibility outruns necessity, the self runs away from itself, so that it has no necessity whereto it is bound to return – then this is the despair of possibility. The self becomes an abstract possibility which tries/tires? itself out with floundering in the possible, but does not budge from the spot; nor get to any spot, for precisely the necessary is the spot“²⁶. MacIntyre would probably agree with this – without a starting point that's placed within a tradition, without the ethical that bonds us to a community there is neither a possibility to assess or accept any other *Sittlichkeit*, nor – and that is what matters to Kierkegaard – anything to transcend every *Sittlichkeit*, or even the very sphere of ethics.

The rationality of Kierkegaard's justification of morality

Justification of morality, or the ethical, as Kierkegaard calls it, is not direct – being that the ethical itself can not deliver us from despair, we can only refer to it as a necessary step leading towards final deliverance from despair. However, the ethical is not like the Wittgensteinian ladder that we can toss away once we're done with the climbing. The ethical is a constitutive moment of the self, and its validity does not cease even when it is teleologically suspended. Belonging to a community, accepting its tradition, its values, its *Sittlichkeit* is an essential trait of self if it is to be authentic. Of course, one can have further objections to this justification of morality, but MacIntyre's claim is not that Kierkegaard fails in providing a justification of morality, but that he isn't trying to provide it at all. The question now, is whether this justification is rational? The attempts of justifying morality before Kierkegaard were based on a reference to a self that was conceptualized either in a naturalistic way (by referring to its desires and passions), as is the case with Diderot and

²⁰ Ibidem, p.28.

²¹ Ibidem, p.44.

²² M. Theunissen, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair*, Princeton University Press, 2005, p.17.

²³ A. MacIntyre, „Once more on Kierkegaard“, in J.Davenport & A.Rudd (eds), *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative and Virtue*, Open Court, Chicago and La Salle, Illinois, 2001, p. 346.

²⁴ S.Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, p. 20.

²⁵ Ibidem, p.32

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 36.

Hume, or an idealistic way (by referring to reason) as is the case with Kant. Kierkegaard in a way continues the Kantian line of argument, ultimately presenting morality as a necessary step toward an universally desirable *telos* – deliverance from despair. If morality, as the key for winning a self, is necessary for achieving that goal, it is expected that a rational agent should consider its demands not only appealing, but also compelling.

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**THE THIRD WAY OF PHILOSOPHIZING:
THE TOPIC OF SCIENTISM IN PERSPECTIVE OF HERMENEUTIC REALISM**

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Abstract:

The paper tries to demonstrate how a hermeneutic critique of scientism raises important issues not only about the dialogue between (post)analytical and Continental philosophers but also about a third way of philosophizing that gets rid of traditional dilemmas and stubborn dividing lines inherited from the "two cultures" paradigm. In outlining a conception of hermeneutic realism, the paper elaborates on a distinction between ontic and ontological forms of realism. An ontic form specifies a certain range of entities whose existence is reified as something "given", as presence-at-hand. An ontological form of realism is realism about the reality that is ready-to-hand within the "readable technologies" of interrelated practices. The paper argues that the ontological forms of realism provide opportunities for combating scientism philosophically, while advocating a cognitive autonomy of science based upon the interpretative openness of scientific research.

Key words: Scientism, Hermeneutic Realism, Hermeneutic Fore-Structure, Situated Transcendence.

I.

There are many ways in which one can draw an essential demarcation between Continental and analytical kinds of philosophizing. There is also a genuine proliferation of forms of cooperation and exchange between them promoted by works like Richard Rorty's *The Mirror of Nature* and Robert Brandom's *Making It Explicit*. It seems that mutual reinforcement and mutual compensation of deficiencies have become distinctive features of the dialogue between analytical and Continental philosophers. At those points at which the disagreement seems insurmountable successful peace treaties have been concluded. The political map of the contemporary philosophizing looks as if settled. Only the topic of scientism remains perhaps the source of troubles and discontents.

To be sure, for many historical reasons cooperation in handling this topic is impossible. Amazingly enough, however, the peace treaty looks also chi-

merical. Not because the parties are not willing to conclude such a treaty. To pass a sentence on the worldview and ideology of scientism or, on the contrary, to vindicate (at least some of) the values of scientism is (in both cases) a duty of philosophy. Yet one can find neither in the programs of Continental philosophy nor in the versions of (post)analytical philosophy a viable conception about how the values of scientism are related to scientific rationality and to science's cognitive autonomy. Instead, a dilemma that is deadly wrong puts down roots: Either one goes on to reject any form of scientism, whereby one will walk away from the search for science's unique status in culture, and will plea for a "democratization" of scientific research; or one goes on to subscribe to scientism, thereby claiming that foundationalism, representationalism, and objectivism unveil the "essence of science", and are requisites for defending science's cognitive autonomy. The dilemma gets overcome if one succeeds in demonstrating that because of its interpretative openness that is at odds with foundationalism, representationalism, and objectivism, scientific research enjoys cognitive autonomy, and protects itself from an external control that results in a compelled "democratization of science". On the claim I am going to advocate in the remainder, one would be not able to address the topic of scientism philosophically, without overcoming the dilemma in the way being indicated.

It deserves mentioning that at the height of the science wars (the period 1994-2001) both types of philosophers were rather marginal figures in the debates. They either expressed their sorrow for the continuous politicization of philosophical controversies, or remained participants in the wars without really provocative positions. The first case is illustrated by a symptomatic reaction to Sokal's hoax at the biannual meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association held in November 1996. Philosophers like Arthur Fine and Philip Kitcher stressed that the

hoax hampered the productive dialogue between epistemologists, on the one hand, and social constructivists and cultural relativists, on the other. The infamous participation of Continental philosophers in Sokal affair exemplifies at the same time the willingness of these philosophers to guard only their own status as “postmodern intellectuals”.¹ In fact, the leading protagonists in Sokal affair were physicists (like Steven Weinberg), exponents of cultural studies (and critics of this enterprise like Roger Kimball), literary critics (like Stanley Fish), columnists (like Martin Gardner, Katha Pollitt and Janny Scott), social theorists (like Ruth Rosen)... They all were able to draw political consequences from the hoax, and to spell out value attitudes (not towards the ethos of autonomous scientific research – this was not at issue at all, but) towards scientism.

The diverse participants in the science wars shifted the accent (and reversed some traditional political positions) in Charles Snow’s “two cultures” paradigm.² This paradigm was reevaluated (and thus, rehabilitated). (Is not the dividing line between the analytical and the Continental philosophy to a great extent only a subspecies of the growing hiatus between the scientists’ culture and the “intellectuals’ culture”?) The depressing feeling still remains that the philosophers missed a historical opportunity to demonstrate the possibilities for a dialogue between the two cultures. The pity is not that the philosophers were not able to articulate pro- or anti-scientistic values and arguments in pondering over the role of scientists and “intellectuals” in the contemporary societies. This is not their job. This is a job of those who are directly involved in public debates. Genuine philosophical arguments cannot take place in such debates that belong rather to what Hei-

degger calls “the publicness of the they”. What one expects from philosophy is to address the problem of whether scientism is the meta-scientific position appointed to legitimate the unique nature of science. The aftermath of the science wars suggests that for the moment it is idle to expect reliable solutions of this problem from (Continental or analytical) philosophy. Now, in pushing aside this pessimistic recapitulation, let me turn to the very problem.

I shall begin with what by now seems to be a standard view of scientism. I refer in this regard to writings of Richard Rorty who defined this view in a most succinct way. Rorty remains at the same time the most influential antagonist to scientism. According to him, the kernel of scientism is the idea that natural science has a distinctive method, one that makes it a better paradigm of rationality than other intellectual enterprises like historiography or jurisprudence.³ In granting natural science with epistemological and metaphysical privileges, the proponents of scientism believe that scientific knowledge is the only source that gives us essences and necessities. In Rorty’s view, those who support scientism think that pragmatist, conventionalist and instrumentalist philosophies of science and of language are dangerously irrational in declaring that all distinctions between necessities and contingencies are artifacts that change as our choice of description changes. The weak point of scientism is seen in “the inference from the fact that a certain descriptive vocabulary enables us to predict and utilize the causal powers of objects to the claim that this vocabulary offers a better understanding of those objects than any other.”⁴

In my view, Rorty suggests a minimal basis for pondering over scientism. At the same time, his recommendation to get rid of scientism by giving up the attempts to preserve a certain picture of the relation between scientific language and the entities of the (non-human) physical world provoke critical reactions from both analytical and Continental philosophers against this too simplistic neo-pragmatist

¹ Two significant exceptions have to be mentioned. I have in mind the positions of Patrick Heelan and Babette Babich who reveal the potential of hermeneutic philosophy to cope with the predicament of the science wars. More generally, it is the American Continental philosophy which seems to me most successful in avoiding traditional dilemmas when dealing with the issue of scientism. It is not by accident that the roots of hermeneutic realism are in traditions of the American Continental Philosophy – the traditions in which the meeting of analytic and Continental ideas is most authentic and fruitful. Not to forget also, that in these traditions there is a growing tendency of a productive reception of American pragmatism, which makes the interchange between the two types of philosophizing more flexible.

² See in this regard the cogent study of James R. Brown, *Who Rules in Science? An Opinionated Guide to the Wars*, Harvard University Press 2001.

³ Richard Rorty, “Being That Can Be Understood Is Language”, in: Bruce Krajewski (ed.), *Gadamer’s Repercussions. Reconsidering philosophical Hermeneutics*, University of California Press 2004, p. 22. Some authors add to this minimalist definition of scientism an axiological moment. Thus, Steve Fuller holds that in “its simplest form scientism is the doctrine that science can justify value commitments.” (Steve Fuller, *The Philosophy of Science and Technology Studies*, Routledge 2006, p. 122.)

⁴ Richard Rorty, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

approach.

If one assumes that scientific research is an interpretative undertaking, then one has good reasons to address the topic of scientism from a hermeneutic point of view. From this viewpoint, scientism is an ideology in the classical sense of “false or distorted consciousness”. For reasons that will become clear later, the viewpoint I am speaking about might be dubbed “hermeneutic realism”. The hermeneutic realist supports the claim that scientism is a false attitude towards both the philosophical identity of scientific research and the cultural-historical role science plays in modernity. No doubt, scientism is a hidden (and sometimes official) confession of many practitioners of scientific research.⁵ Yet among the working scientists there are several attitudes that combat scientism or are at least incompatible with it. Scientism is an ideological attitude distinguished by the idea that the more objective scientific knowledge is the more successful science becomes as a means for instrumental-technical control. Based on this consciousness, scientific research gets guided by the standards of instrumental rationality. Yet, in contrast to Habermas and many other representatives of the Continental thought, the hermeneutic realist does not admit that scientific research is doomed to be tied to these standards solely, thereby lacking the opportunity to gain an identity alternative to that of scientism. Consequently, scientism as attitude, ethos and professional ideology is only a historically conditioned state of affairs.

II.

At this point, I have to introduce a minimalist portrait of hermeneutic realism. For the analytical philosophers, who are involved in the realism-instrumentalism debate the word “realism” in philosophy usually carries with it a commitment to a certain range of entities which is usually specified. Yet the very specification of entities of a given kind would imply the adherence to an essentialist position – there is a class of (mathematical, linguistic, physical, social, cultural or whatever) entities whose existence is reified as something “given”, as presence-at-hand. Metaphysical realism, scientific realism, structural realism, and even Hacking’s “entity realism” and Putnam’s “internal realism” cannot avoid the

pitfall of essentialist reification, when asserting the existence of an “external reality out there”, of mathematical structures, or of “empirical content”. Is it possible to have a philosophical position of realism without essentialism? *Prima facie* hermeneutic realism is the affirmative answer to that question. In breaking in a radical manner with the “myth of the Given”, the hermeneutic realist holds that there is no “access” to reality but through the interrelatedness of practices. By implication, the reality investigated by science is the reality that is ready-to-hand within the interrelatedness of scientific practices. This view, however, does not imply that the reality is constructed by scientific practices. Putting scientific practices first is not a kind of constructivism. It means rather that meaning of reality is disclosed by these practices. On the existentialist tenet of hermeneutic realism, there is no reality without meaning. Hermeneutic realism is realism about the reality-with-meaning disclosed by practices.

In a broader context, hermeneutic realism is a family of post-metaphysical doctrines whose common denominator is the conviction that (*pace* Rorty) the place vacated by (foundationalist and representationalist) epistemology should be occupied by hermeneutics. In supporting this thesis, hermeneutic realism opens an avenue to new forms of dialogue between (post)analytic and Continental traditions of philosophizing. There is no objective reality that precedes the reality of being-in-the-world. Before having the “world out there” as opposed to (and represented by) mind (the human cognitive abilities), human beings are always already in the world of practices. Even the contemplation of “the world as objective reality” is a practice *sui generis* that is embedded in a configuration with other (cognitive and non-cognitive) practices. In another formulation, the ways of being in a practical world precedes the world as represented (or cognitively constructed) by mentality. Furthermore, the subject-object relation comes always into being within configurations of practices. Human agents might construct objective knowledge because of their involvement in “work-worlds”. Moreover, “representing the world” or “constructing objective knowledge about the world” are actually sophisticated arrangements of various practices that cannot be isolated from the rest of the world of practices.

Starting out from the ways of being in the world of practices prevents one from an initial hypostatization of a dualism between the epistemic subject and the objective world (and the dualism of conceptual

⁵ On a nice articulation of scientism-as-ideology by an excellent working scientist, see Steven Weinberg, *Facing up: Science and Its Cultural Adversaries*, Harvard University Press 2001.

framework and empirical content). The involvement in the world of practices is an interpretative mode of being in the world. Human beings are interpreting themselves in accordance with the possibilities they can appropriate and actualize in this involvement. In so doing, they are also interpreting the world of practices within the horizon of possibilities they have at their disposal. Being in the world of practices amounts to interpreting the world (and one's involvement in it) as a world projected upon possibilities that are engendered by the very interrelatedness of practices. On hermeneutic realism, the "horizon of understanding the world" (as a prerequisite for having an objective knowledge about the world) is tantamount to the "world as a horizon of understanding". Thus, the hermeneutic circularity is to be ascribed not only to interpretation as a particular cognitive procedure, but first and foremost to the being of human existence as being in the world of practices.

Hermeneutic realism opposes all views that admit the following clauses: (a) the credentials of all truth claims must be checked by a foundational theory of knowledge; (b) the objective reality is organized into distinct objects, and the distinctness of each of them is prior to the constitution of meaning; (c) the mind of man is isolated from the world in a manner that enables it to represent the world through images, ideas, concepts and categories; (d) there is an invariant and universal semantic core in mind that contains series of meanings related to the basic structure of objective reality. Roughly speaking, hermeneutic realism is a kind of realism that gets rid of Cartesian dualism, epistemic representationalism, foundationalism, and cognitive (including linguistic-semantic) essentialism. It is a common place for those who subscribe to a certain version of hermeneutic philosophy that the world is not out there, and mind is always within the world. Hermeneutic realism is opposed above all to metaphysical realism and by implication to scientific realism. Metaphysical realism is criticized for the uncritical postulation of ontic primacy of the dualism between mind and mind-independent objective reality over the totality of being in the "work-world" of practices. The hermeneutic realist raises the critical question of whether mind does not belong to reality. Since most-metaphysical realists are inclined to argue that mind is a part of objective reality, the hermeneutic realist, on the other hand, would focus their criticism on the predicament concerning the reconciliation of the following two doctrines: (a) objective reality is inde-

pendent of mind; and (b) mind is part of this reality.

As a specific mode of "practical being in the world", scientific research is predicated on a dynamics of changing configurations of routine practices of constructing instruments, designing and repeating experiments, preparing reports on observations, applying formal techniques for a graphical description, constructing systems of differential equations, calibrating instruments, controlling experimental systems, measuring control parameters of experimental systems, constructing various kinds of models, devising thought experiments, creating computer simulations, and so on. The routine reproduction of configurations of such practices constitutes the normal scientific everydayness of a certain research domain. It is the interrelatedness of practices of inquiry that projects an open horizon of possibilities for the research process. Such a horizon is always already transcendent with respect to the possibilities that get actualized in each particular situation of this process.

As a mode of being-in-the-world, scientific research projects its being of interrelated practices upon possibilities. There is an ongoing appropriation of these possibilities in normal science. Through this appropriation an ongoing articulation of a domain's objects comes into being. The ongoing actualization of possibilities and the concomitant articulation of a domain of research objects are characterized by anticipations, expectations and orientations assigned to the community which carries out the research process. The possibilities projected by a normal scientific interrelatedness of practices are not to be confused with the possibilities stemming from a mental activity planning such a behavior, thereby providing an algorithm of how to choose and appropriate possibilities. Like the routine practices of research, the possibilities upon which the research process is projected do not have an autonomous reality *sui generis*. Any suggestion of a pure presence of possibilities projected before the practitioners of scientific research would rehabilitate essentialism in a new form. The existential possibilities of articulating a world are not independent of the ways of their actualization.

More specifically, the projection of possibilities by configurations of scientific practices is always entangled with choosing, appropriating, and actualizing them. In stating that the articulation of meaningful objects comes into being through an ongoing interpretative appropriation of possibilities, one assumes that the configurations of practices are predicated on an intrinsic interpretative potentiality. This

potentiality is due to the fact that all scientific practices serve the function of readable technologies in scientific research. Within the range of the cognitive outcomes of implementing such technologies are reports on observations or experiments, diagrams, comparative tables of measurements, analytical techniques for selecting control parameters in investigating dynamic behaviour, systems of equations, etc. To be sure, these outcomes are always semantically integrated in larger theoretical frameworks. Yet all situational outcomes as well as the very process of their semantic (trans-situational) integration (by means of a theoretical framework) are *fore-structured* by the interrelatedness of practices.

From the standpoint of hermeneutic realism, the critique of scientism must be carried out as an *internal* critique of the nexus of epistemological objectivity and instrumental theory of rationality in scientific research. This is a critique that leads to disentangling science from the destiny informed by the rationality of the instrumental control over what gets objectified in the research process. There is a Heideggerian moment, but also an anti-Heideggerian component involved in this critique. Hermeneutic realism allows one to undo the way in which Heidegger ties down in a crucial fashion the postulate of the ontological priority of modern technology over modern science with the claim about modern science's instrumental rationality. Heidegger's way of conjugating both statements (in the celebrated essay "The Question Concerning Technology") is continuous with the form of mathematical essentialism, which paradoxically enough characterizes the existential conception of science in *Being and Time*. (A domain of scientific research is disclosed by a mathematical projection of nature.) To say that hidden behind modern physics is the spirit of technological enframing amounts to claiming that the only *destiny* (in Heidegger's sense) of modern science is to serve the instrumental rationality in conquering Nature. In opposing this view, the hermeneutic realist emphasizes that modern natural science can be the herald of *Ge-stell* if and only if it is governed exclusively by the standards of that kind of objectivism-essentialism which necessarily puts into play the rationality of instrumental control. The constellation of mathematical essentialism, epistemological objectivism, and technological enframing (the "constellation of scientism") does not exhaust – so the argument of hermeneutic realism goes – the leeway of possibilities within which scientific research is free to orient itself.

The critique of scientism suggested by hermeneutic realism is in many respects a strong alternative to the anti-scientism that dominates in the Continental philosophy.⁶ Roughly speaking, the hermeneutic realist displays discontent with the mainstream form of anti-scientism, in which the attitude of scientism is directly derived from constitutive characteristics of the epistemic rationality of science.⁷ The hermeneutic realist strongly opposes the linkage of the critique of scientism with the search for a political control over scientific research that threatens science's cognitive autonomy. This linkage is typically supported by the champions of social epistemology and other branches of social-philosophical constructivism about the nature of scientific research. The plea for anti-scientism turns here into an appeal for demolishing the autonomy of scientific research in the name of a radicalization of democratic process. On the critical agenda of social epistemology, society has to control not only the utilization of the outcome, but the very process of scientific research as well. Only in this way one might say farewell to scientism. In opposing the ideology of scientism, the hermeneutic realist defends the cognitive autonomy of science in terms of the interpretative openness of scientific research. Furthermore, the hermeneutic realist argues that scientific research has intrinsic resources to overcome the externally imposed identity of science as an enterprise being guided by instrumental rationality.

III.

In order to sharpen the profile of the critique of scientism I am aiming at, let me address in this section two other celebrated kinds of such a critique. They are suggested respectively by the strong program of cognitive sociology and the feminist standpoint epistemology. I am choosing these two programs since they bring into being the extreme poles in approaching the issue of whether normative epistemology is a reliable framework of criticizing scientism. The main philosophical doctrines taking issue with scientism are oscillating between the pole

⁶See on this point, Cathryn Carson, "Science as Instrumental Reason: Heidegger, Habermas, Heisenberg", *Continental Philosophy Review*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2010), pp. 483–509.

⁷See Dimitri Ginev, "Varianten der kritischen Wissenschaftstheorie", *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 23(1992), pp. 43–67.

of total rejection of normative epistemology and the pole of looking for maximally strong epistemic norms and standards of epistemic objectivity. At stake in my further considerations will be the question of whether hermeneutic realism may shift the paradigm of criticizing scientism, thereby offering an alternative that is located somewhere in-between the two extreme poles.

(a) The critique from the viewpoint of a strong program (based upon the symmetry principle) goes as follows. If one ignores the symmetry principle in approaching scientific rationality, one would be committed to a defense of scientism. In explaining only the “deviations” from the rational scientific behavior in terms of social causes, and thereby assuming that the established scientific beliefs do not have social causes, one is idolizing a mysterious (empirically unexplainable) cognitive specificity of science. The violation of the symmetry principle privileges tacitly science as a cognitive institution that is independent of the causal-dynamic factors of social life. Following the strategy of violation, one assumes that this institution is endowed by the ability to be a jury of all decision making in problem situations caused by identifiable social factors. Consequently, there is a perfect defense of scientism.

The first step in rebutting scientism by applying the symmetry principle must be the deconstruction of all types of a rational reconstruction of science based on normative epistemology. The symmetry principle requires a radical deflation of normative epistemology in favor of empirical (sociological) theories. Scientism is combated by a kind of “sociologizing epistemology” (as a subspecies of naturalizing epistemology). However, there is a significant flaw in the constructivist version of the symmetry principle, to which James Brown draws the attention. He makes the observation that if this version is confined to the requirement that same types of explanation should be given for true and false beliefs, then the version would be quite tenable. Yet there are no grounds whatsoever to extend the principle “to requiring the same types of explanation for rational and irrational beliefs.”⁸ This flaw makes the strongly constructivist version of the symmetry principle an ineffective tool in opposing scientism. More generally, the prize one has to pay for overcoming scientism by applying consequently the symmetry principle is the universalizing of a kind of naturalism. The intrinsic debates in the cognitive sociology

of science show that the sociological way of naturalizing epistemology makes the so called “issue of reflexivity” an irresolvable problem. Furthermore one is to ask the question of whether naturalism (regardless of its sort) is not only a particular dimension of scientism.

(b) The critique of scientism from the perspective of standpoint epistemology suggests with regard to the symmetry principle the opposite type of critique. The adherents to this doctrine get rid of the idea that objectivity requires value-neutrality. A standpoint epistemology is such a doctrine that recognizes cultural pluralism and historical relativism, while rejecting epistemological relativism. There is room for an epistemological advocacy of scientific objectivity, and, by implication, of science’s cognitive specificity. Since only science can provide epistemologically legitimated objective knowledge there is a dissolvable rationality of science. Reaching this conclusion does not amount to devising a prelude to a plea for scientism. The conclusion in question is rather a prerequisite of an extreme ideological attack on all scientistic tenets. Objectivity in standpoint epistemology’s scenario means a strongly normative engagement in the political re-structuring of science’s cognitive structures. Sandra Harding coins the expression of “strong objectivity” to refer to epistemologies that do not ignore the social-situatedness and the historicity of scientific knowledge in formulating optimal standards, norms, and criteria of objectivity. Strong objectivity is the doctrine which traffics with scientific accounts of the relationships between historically located and maximally objective belief.⁹ The association of objectivity with socially situated knowledge – so the argument goes – is not only an entirely possible combination, but it outlines the most reliable way to overcoming scientism. According to Harding’s conception, a scientific objectivity much stronger than the conventional one can be claimed to result from grounding research in women’s lives. Following “strong objectivity” implies a strategy of struggling with scientism on the terrain of (politically guided) normative epistemology. A great advantage of standpoint theories of scientific knowledge is the disclosed opportunity to challenge scientism with philosophical arguments. By implication, “strong objectivity” promises to address the issue of developing epistemological models of scientific rationality that are alternatives

⁸ James R. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁹ Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women’s Lives*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1991, p. 142.

to the models on which scientism gets justified.

Is the “issue of reflexivity” the handicap in the strong program critique of scientism, so the “issue of reification” plays a similar role in standpoint epistemology scenario of undoing the pathologies of scientism. Combining value engagements with claims of objectivity is the shortest way to reification. What gets reified in the feminist standpoint epistemologies is the array of social-historical events, relations, and processes that inform a specific epistemic position within “women’s lives”. There is a strong objectivity that results from transforming the totality of a certain historical experience into a privileged reality of scientific research. Is the epistemic standpoint resulting from women’s lives immune against the threat of reifying consciousness (in this case, the consciousness formed and embedded within women’s lives)? In a Pickwickian sense, the basic argument the feminist standpoint epistemology directs against scientism would be that one brand of reification is better than another one. What standpoint epistemology forgets to take into consideration is the specificity of the existential openness which has to be assigned to the epistemic situatedness. Being situated within practices of a certain life-form amounts to having a being in the world projected always already upon possibilities. The situatedness can be never exempt from possibilities to transcend the present status quo of the life-form. Following this line of reasoning, the figure of the fixed situatedness (fixed by values, aims, standards, norms, criteria, etc.) should be replaced by the figure of situated transcendence. Such a replacement would have profound consequences for the critique of scientism. The focus of criticism now would be the issue of reification.

Notoriously, Axel Honneth champions the view that prior to cognition there is a “fundamental experience of intersubjective recognition”. (He believes that this experience may serve as a source of normative standards for structuring cognition.) Following this line of argument, he comes to the conclusion that reification results from the forgetfulness of the experience of intersubjective recognition.¹⁰ With regard to my previous comment on the situated transcendence, I would like now to extend partially and to modify partially Honneth’s view. The intersubjective recognition can take place only within a world that is in a state of an ongoing interpretative articulation. Those who are involved in such a world

do not experience it as a presence-at-hand, but as something that is ready-to-hand in their practices. The more the world gets articulated, the more new possibilities of articulation come into play. This means that what is ready-to-hand within a totality of practices is at the same time always already transcending each particular stage of world’s articulation. The intersubjective recognition may only come into being when there are shared possibilities of articulating a world through shared practices. In other words, this recognition presupposes a world that transcends the intersubjectivity itself. Recognition is prior to cognition, but its priority does not mean an absolute apriority. It is always already situated within a world. There is no recognition disentangled from the situatedness within practices that make a world ready-to-hand. To be situated is to be in need of interpreting what is ready-to-hand. Thus, interpreting the world that is ready-to-hand correlates with the situatedness within-the-world, on the hand, and with the transcendence of the world, on the other. Like cognition, recognition consists of interrelated practices. Against the background of the foregoing considerations, they both (recognition and cognition) are ontologically fore-structured by interpretation.

Now, Honneth’s thesis should be modified in the following manner: Reification is forgetfulness of the situated transcendence which fore-structures in a hermeneutic fashion the production of objectifying knowledge. Reification refers to a behavior that ossifies a normative perspective as an epistemic standpoint. The critique of reification as forgetfulness of situated transcendence based upon a reflection on the hermeneutic fore-structuring of objectifying knowledge coincides with the hermeneutic critique of scientism.

IV.

I would like now to move to an extension of the critical task of hermeneutic realism being depicted so far. My aim will be to demonstrate that scientific research conceived of as an interpretative process is a locus of formation of a dialogical-communicative attitude towards nature. The extended task of hermeneutic realism as a critical philosophy consists in overcoming scientism in a manner that would allow one to elaborate on models of science-nature relationship beyond scientism and the objectivist reduction of nature. In saying this, I touch upon the question of the sense in which hermeneutic realism does

¹⁰ Axel Honneth, Judith Butler, Raymond Geuss, Martin Jay, Jonathan Lear, *Reflection: A New Look at an Old Idea*, Oxford University Press 2008, pp. 42-57.

put forward an alternative to Habermas' quasi-transcendental epistemology as a base of critical theorizing. On Habermas' (and Karl-Otto Apel's) position, we cannot have a dialogical (communicative) relation to nature. The talk about the "liberation of nature in the name of its own rights" does not make sense in the epistemology of knowledge-guiding interests as well as in the theory of communicative action. In opposing the confinement of the rational dialogue in the sphere of social interaction solely, one gets the opportunity to show that hermeneutic realism (in rehabilitating motifs of Marcuse's project for a "new science") involves the moment of scientific (and technological) interaction with nature.

Hermeneutic realism binds the perspective of critical theorizing not to the "question of validity" but to the "question of constitution". Steven Vogel (who applies doctrines of Continental traditions in environmental philosophy) is right when arguing that by treating the natural sciences' guiding interest in prediction and control of nature as determined by a mode of action that is built into the structure of the species as such, Habermas precludes the opportunity to address the issue of how interests in constituting scientific knowledge get generated in the dynamics of changing practices of research.¹¹ By overlooking this issue, he acknowledges tacitly the objectivist picture of science and the positivist view about scientific rationality. This is why an interest in a dialogical partnership with nature is declared to be pointless in the realm of natural-scientific research. There is in Habermas's philosophizing a hypostatization of a "species-wide universal interest" that is exempt from a genesis within the practical contexts of being-in-the-world (or to pit it in a more Heideggerian parlance, an interest that is deprived of "existential genesis").

Hermeneutic realism repudiates any kind of philosophy that in transcendental or quasi-transcendental manner claims that the "potential world" of natural-scientific research is constituted by a global knowledge-guiding interest. Such a philosophy – so the argument goes – hypostatizes the global interest by ignoring the real dynamics of changing configurations of practices in which domains of scientific research (and thus, the world of the natural sciences) get articulated. More specifically, Habermas' quasi-transcendental epistemology fails to resist the "anthropological reification" of an invariant interests-

structure embedded in human action. In "deriving" all interests in having knowledge of a certain kind from the choices of possibilities within particular configurations of practices, hermeneutic realism avoids both the hypostatization of knowledge-guiding interests and the concomitant fallacy of an "anthropological reification".

The constitution of an interest takes always place in the hermeneutic circularity of trans-subjective horizons and contingent-situational actualizations of possibilities. By the same token, it is always hermeneutically fore-structured with regard to the possibilities of reading one can appropriate by implementing the available readable technologies. A knowledge-guiding interest is neither fixed by internal (cognitive) goals, aims and values, nor determined by extra-scientific factors and demands. The former case is that of cognitive essentialism, typically illustrated by dominant doctrines in the analytical philosophy of science, while the latter epitomizes the social determinism, typically advocated by constructivist sociologists. Being situated in an open leeway of possibilities that plays the role of a hermeneutic fore-structure, a knowledge-guiding interest retains its "flexibility" within changing configurations of research practices. The formation of an interest in the constitution of scientific knowledge of a certain kind is never a finished process. It is rather a process that takes place within the ongoing interpretative circularity of projecting and appropriating possibilities of reading.

By getting rid of objectivism about the image of a reality-in-itself, hermeneutic realism devises an existentialist approach to knowledge-guiding interests, opposing thereby cognitive essentialism and social determinism. On the hermeneutic account of scientific research, these are interests in the interpretative constitution of various kinds of research objects. Since the constitution of objects in scientific research becomes possible through choosing, appropriating, and actualizing possibilities projected by the very interrelatedness of scientific practices, a knowledge-guiding interest is a stable tendency of choosing possibilities. In other words, regardless of how the possibilities of doing research are informed by external (economic and political) factors or by established internal cognitive values, the knowledge-guiding interest (as fore-structured by the possibilities of reading) gets generated by the intrinsic dynamics of scientific practices. Due to this intrinsic dynamics, scientific research has its own potentiality for generating dialogical attitudes towards nature,

¹¹ Steven Vogel, *Against Nature. The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory*, Albany: SUNY Press 1996, pp. 106-144.

since there is a leeway of possibilities whose choosing and actualizing leads not only to getting rid of the objectivist image of a reality-in-itself, but to constituting research objects that can be read in different contexts and horizons.

Per definitionem, distinctive features of a “dialogical research” (such as interactive questioning, reflexive responsibility for asking questions, recasting outcomes of research in new horizons of interaction, asking about contextual meanings displayed by the objects of research, disclosing intrinsic historicity of sedimented meanings due to the “cultural destiny” of the “natural things”, etc.) are displayed when the research objects are not entirely de-contextualized in accordance with objectivist epistemological criteria and norms, but their constitution remains open to new contexts and configurations of practices. (A requisite for an extreme de-contextualization is a sort of “mathematical reification” that consists in admitting the mathematical idealizations of objectification to be a pure presence of idealized objects independent of the dynamics of scientific practices and pre-given to the choices of possibilities for doing research and reading.) Accordingly, the openness to a re-contextualization marks off a dialogical interaction with “natural things” under investigation. Re-contextualizing the research objects provokes at the same time a kind of interpretative reflexivity, which is also a part of the dialogical research.

Hermeneutic realism is a program that tries to scrutinize science’s intrinsic potentiality for constituting research objects in a dialogical manner. In appropriating possibilities for further contextualization of the reading process, and in overcoming the reificationist objectivism that forgets the meaningful constitution of reality, one turns to a kind of *cognitive existentialism* (as opposed to cognitive essentialism and social determinism) about the nature of scientific research.¹² On its central tenet, the choice of possibilities in scientific research is not determined by a reality that is outside (beyond or behind) the dynamics of practices with readable technologies. The possibilities for a “dialogical research” are also possibilities of de-reifying (or de-constructing) what gets objectified in scientific research. De-reifying is accomplished by re-contextualizing research objects in new configurations of practices. Put differently, within “dialogical research” the de-

reification (of presumably static objects in their “pure presence”) goes hand in hand with the re-contextualization and the re-constitution of research objects. To stress once more, the dialogue consists in questioning what is under investigation in new contexts of practices characterized by new horizons of possibilities.

Being attached to “dialogical research”, a knowledge-guiding interest comes into being in a characteristic hermeneutic situation of the research process. The latter is a process oscillating between the pole of objectivist de-contextualization of what is under investigation and the pole of “dissemination” of the research objects in as many as possible configurations of scientific practices. The knowledge-guiding interests are located within the spectrum between these poles. This is why each of them is characterised by an objectivist and an interpretative-reflexive (dialogical) dimension. A characteristic hermeneutic situation in which a knowledge-guided interest is constituted should be defined by the balance between both dimensions. The more one is de-contextualizing the reading process (and the objects involved in it), the more the “dialogical dimension” gets hidden. Consequently, what is under investigation acquires the status of a reality-in-itself. By contrast, the more the interpretative-reflexive dimension gets emphasized, the more scientific research takes on the form of a dialogical process, and the more research process approaches the tenets of hermeneutic realism.

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¹² See Dimitri Ginev, *The Tenets of Cognitive Existentialism*, Athens: Ohio University Press, forthcoming.

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PHENOMENOLOGY OF PREPREDICATIVE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract:

The paper reconstructs Husserl's investigations into prepredicative experience supposed to ground predicative thinking and logic. It suggests that this investigation is one of the crucial points where phenomenology should seek out cooperation with cognitive science, especially with experimental neuropsychology and psychopathology. It suggests that these disciplines can present us with valuable descriptions of prepredicative experience, whether they be records of brain activity, observations of infant behavior, or descriptions of pathological changes in self-awareness and intentionality, although the naturalistic approach of positive science and the transcendental stance of phenomenology are based on different methodological and metaphysical grounds. It suggests a fertile dialog between phenomenology, essentially based on rational predicative thought, and cognitive science rich with information about deeper preconceptual processes of our cognitive processing.

Key words: prepredicative experience, phenomenology, attention, passive meaning constitution.

Predicative apophantic thinking and logical judgment were among the primary concerns of Husserl's investigations throughout his life. It was only in his later works, though, that he turned to the analyzing of the prelogical grounds for logical thinking, or to prepredicative experience of consciousness that is founded in essentially passive predispositions, which make conceptual knowledge possible. In what follows I will explicate and analyze Husserl's arguments for the necessity of studying the prepredicative sphere in order to gain a more complete understanding of the process of concept and judgment formation.

This thesis is not immediately obvious. Starting with Aristotle, who have theorized on the subject of logic, conceptual thinking, and judgment began their analyses from the simplest concepts and rarely looked 'beneath' the conceptual. This seems right insofar as what cannot yet be conceptualized cannot be properly expressed in language. Nevertheless, it was Husserl's firm conviction that in order to lay bare the foundations of logic we have to trace its

rootedness in what precedes it, i.e. prepredicative experience.

In what follows I will elaborate on the complex structure of prepredicative experience of consciousness. It will be exercised along phenomenological lines, that is it will present an illuminating, detailed description of the phenomena in question. I will rely on Husserl's endeavors in his posthumous book *Erfahrung und Urteil (EU)*¹ as theoretical support and present my own examples in order to achieve more clarity and provide an illustration for the dense forest of Husserlian terminology. I will conclude with some suggestions about the possible benefits that phenomenology of prepredicative experience can gain from its cooperation with cognitive science.

1. Prepredicative Origins of Predicative Logic

According to Husserl, the traditional concept of predicative judgment occupies the center of the science of formal logic. It is evident from his late works that he came to believe that the origin of logic need to be clarified phenomenologically. Such an analysis is to show that the sphere of the logical consists of several layers, some of which have not received primary attention in history of philosophy. It is the deepest layers, though, that conceal the ground for the true understanding of the upper ones.

In the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* Husserl says that logic is supposed to be a self-explication of pure reason, where 'pure reason' is understood as containing nothing empirically factual, material or hyletic. Logic is a formal system of principles of a theoretical science and knowledge. Insofar as knowledge is judgment-based, logic is primarily concerned with a formal theory of judgment.

¹ All citations of *Erfahrung und Urteil* refer to the James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks' translation: Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, revised and edited by Ludwig Landgrebe, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973. Throughout this article I will use the following shorthand notation: EU, page number.

ment. Nevertheless in *EU* Husserl insists that we must investigate deeper into the origins of logic, judgments, and concepts, and look into their prepredicative origin.

The disclosure of the foundation of the predicative self-evidence (Evidenz) in prepredicative represents not merely the genealogy of certain kinds of predication and predicative self-evidence but the genealogy of logic itself in one of its fundamental elements – precisely because all self-evidence, even that of the logician himself, has the foundation of its sense in the conditions to which the possible making self-evident of the ultimate substrates of the act of judgment is subject.

This passage begs the question, how is the grounding of logic with the help of the phenomenological investigation of prepredicative experience possible if logic, as stated above, contains nothing from the field of receptivity? To clarify the question: if the realm of the logical starts from our apophantic judgments, or, even earlier, from the constitution of concepts, then how can it be related to, not to mention justified by our pre-predicative experiences (*Erlebnisse*)? On the other hand, our sense impressions definitely play a role in the formation of simple concepts and judgments in consciousness, which in turn results in more complicated operations, such as the constitution of categories and abstract concepts, the composition of judgments of a higher order, in which the roles of subjects and predicates are played by already constituted judgments. Needless to say, it is the task of phenomenology as a science of experience of consciousness to describe in detail this process of transformation of our sensual experience into an experience of concept constitution. It is also the task of phenomenology to find out the conditions of consciousness' active elaboration on its passive impressions of the world. The problem is whether or not we staying within the framework of such a phenomenological analysis, would really find in the pre-predicative realm a ground (*ratio*) for our constitution of conceptual meaning, and predicative thought, while staying within the framework of such a phenomenological analysis.

It is tempting to state, judging from what Husserl says in the *EU*, that consciousness' ability to constitute concepts and judgments depends solely on its creative spontaneity, and that the realm of the data given in our perception does not play any significant role in the process (but only that of raw material, out of which consciousness can receive predicative re-

sults in the form of concept, judgment, or set of judgments etc.). Still, it can be argued that this is not so.

In order to clarify the relation between prepredicative knowing (*vorprädikative Kenntnis*) and predicative knowledge (*prädikative Erkenntnis*), it is very important to consider another crucial pair of concepts, passivity (*Passivität*) and activity (*Aktivität*) of consciousness and their flexible relations.

Husserl starts with the claim that even in the sphere of passivity, in the sheer givenness of the fundamental substrate there is always at least a minimal activity of consciousness: an act of objectification which involves an actively believing cognizance of that of which we are aware, this something which is one and continuously the same, is identified in distinct acts which form a synthesis.² Taking place in prepredicative experience, it is this activity, which constitutes the lowest level of judgment. With every prepredicative, objectifying turning-toward an existent, it is already necessary to speak of an act of judgment in the broader sense. Further, even a passive reception of sense data likewise involves a bestowal of meaning on this allegedly ultimate object-substrates; or, to put it in another way, even the lowest level of experience involves its own horizon.

This means that the process of judgment constitution does not start from the predicative realm, but is genetically rooted deep within the structures of receptivity, which already involves the lowest level of activity. It is a continuously flowing activity or a continuous stream of activity, which is possible only while the sense impressions are *im-Griff-behalten* to us. Still, it is definitely an *act* of consciousness. Only given these passive-active *Im-Griff-behaltens* can the object of sheer perception be grasped as a persisting object, i.e. as the one which does not exist only in the particular now, but has been essentially the same while we perceive it, and is expected to remain the same. Only in this way, i.e. with the help of such a lower level of activity of consciousness can an object be constituted as a persisting object of perception, i.e. as a possible substrate for judgment constitution and logical thinking understood in the traditional sense.

Therefore, phenomenological analysis is necessary to show us how exactly the lowest level of activity of consciousness proceeds. Moreover, it proves that the ground for predicative knowledge is deeply rooted in the activity of consciousness, which

² *EU* 62.

can already be found in seemingly passive receptivity.

2. Receptive Consciousness and Passive Meaning-Constitution.

What is contained in our field of passive receptivity before any conceptualizing of experience takes place? This is definitely not a field of objectivities insofar as there is no object selected yet, which is proved by absence of even basic conceptualizing or active objectifying operation. On the other hand, what we experience is not pure chaos, it is a field of sensuous data, which are already unities of identity on a very primitive level.

The first type of unity that consciousness constitutes in its passive comprehension of any sensuous field, visual, acoustic or sensory, is a *unity of homogeneity*. It constitutes a basis for any further experiences such as *heterogeneity*. It is within a homogeneous field only that a particular element can be exposed as standing out and contrasting with the field, in Husserl's example, a red patch on a white wall. In order to avoid the impression that all passive impressions of consciousness lie primarily in the visual field, we can add to this such examples as hearing a noise in silence, or sensing a cold spot on a warm surface. Basically all our prepredicative impressions start with this duality: homo- and heterogeneity: we either experience the similarity (yet undetermined) or the difference. Husserl states that both are based in the phenomenon of *association*, although he does not use this term in its ordinary psychological sense. Association in this context means that some impression comes to prominence on the basis of another impression. We are able to recognize similarity (before any thinking and conceptualizing) when we look at a white wall and nothing stands out for us in this sensual experience, one part or moment of which is in complete accordance and can be associated with any other part or moment. On the other hand, there is a certain 'disturbance' when we come to observe a red patch on this wall. The difference becomes prominent as a result of previous experience of the similar. 'Homogeneity and heterogeneity, therefore, are the result of two different fundamental modes of associative unification'.³

We see the intrinsic activity even on the most passive level of consciousness apprehension of the world. Particular parts of a homogenous background

come to prominence and are associated with other parts. This is the synthesis of coincidence on its most basic level that is undetermined coincidence of similarities and differences. It is usually a perception of difference that strikes us and draws our attention, and it proves that the ability of consciousness to be affected is manifested on a deep prepredicative level. Once again, the similarities and differences are not yet conceptualized and articulated: they are just noticed and manifest themselves in the change of attention focus. Our gaze is directed naturally to the bright patch on the otherwise homogeneous surface or our hearing is concentrated on an unusual sound within the otherwise identical background noise. It is usually the intensity of a particular datum that makes it stand out for us from the multiplicity of other data that affect us simultaneously. The 'obtrusiveness' of the difference should be of considerable degree, and the more it stands out from homogeneity the greater the chances that it will affect our attention. Husserl draws a parallel with predicative thought here. Certain thoughts can also be obtrusive and persistent and stay in our mind for longer than others: seemingly without or against our will to concentrate on them, they force themselves onto our consciousness.

Even on this most basic level of consciousness' affection we are able to distinguish two essential sides of this affection that should never be confused. It is *that which drags our attention and the attention itself*. Consciousness itself, even when essentially passive, should never be confused with what is given to it, and, accordingly, passive data itself are essentially different from the receptivity, by means of which they are given. We observe the essential two-sidedness of each prepredicative process. It consists of the obtrusion of consciousness and the tendency of consciousness itself to be affected. The active part that consciousness plays in this seemingly strictly passive process of being affected consists in its compliance with this tendency that can have different strength and tempo. Husserl provides us with an example of a locomotive whistle, a powerful stimulus which can direct our attention without our will. It cannot pass totally unnoticed, but the way consciousness notices it can vary. If we are engaged in a very important and interesting conversation, for example, it is very likely that we will be diverted from it only momentarily and involuntary, and will not concentrate on the loud whistle so that it is not given a chance to become a proper object of our attention. It can happen that we will not remember that there was any distraction even only a few min-

³ EU 75.

utes after it happened. On the other hand, under different circumstances the whistle would be given our proper attention and brought to the foreground of the mind. The whistle could even cause our attention turning to its source and lead to a different chain of thoughts. Husserl calls the latter case 'being properly awake for something', so that we direct our attention to it, turn to it actively and bring to the foreground. We see that consciousness can be active even at the level of pure receptivity. Not only does it have the given data in itself, but it can push this data into prominence and apprehend the objects inside the data field.

The core of our prepredicative experience is attention, which Husserl defines as 'tending of the ego toward an intentional object'⁴. Let us look more closely at this definition. It tells us that even at the most basic level of consciousness there is always a tendency to 'put things together', to make sense of a blend of appearances, to constitute an object, in contrast to remaining at the level of the simple reception of ever-changing prominences. There is an inclination to concentrate on something that stands out, and make it an object for consciousness.

When we concentrate on an intentional object, or rather on an intentional object coming into existence, what is it exactly that we concentrate on, asks Husserl. The seemingly trivial answer – 'exactly on the object in the way it is given' – is not so trivial, when we emphasize that consciousness directs attention to the *object itself*, not the *existence of this object*. It is indeed more easily demonstrated on the level of predicative experience, and thus not surprising that Husserl provides us with examples that are applicable to this level only. One example he gives is the pleasure we experience contemplating the beauty of the painting which is the pleasure given by painting, not by

our belief in its existence. Likewise, being immersed in some exciting activity we pay attention to the activity itself and our involvement in it, not to our belief in the reality of our actions. Some examples, though, can also be drawn from the realm of prepredicative consciousness. When a loud noise attracts our attention on the prepredicative level, we do not conceptualize that it is a sound, concentrate on its properties, or contemplate where it is coming from: it just captures our attention in a somewhat violent way. There is definitely no separate thought of the existence of this noise attached to our com-

prehension of it. It is not the actual (or imaginary) being of the noise and its source that causes attention of consciousness: it is the noise itself. Something stands out from the perceptual field and brings about the directedness of consciousness to this object. What follows is a possible continuous synthetic process of constituting an object throughout the coincidence of meaning-intention and meaning fulfillment, or noetic-noematic correlation. Also, even before that, at the prepredicative level, a general tendency of consciousness to be directed toward intentional objectivity is manifested.

Our observation that it is objectivity itself that consciousness is affected by, not the actual existence of this objectivity, has one important phenomenological consequence. It shows that on the very basic level when we start to apprehend an object, there is no question about its actual existence attached to our perception. An object should be constituted first in order to indulge in the question about its real existence. This reminds us of what Husserl called the 'natural attitude,' i.e. our common belief in the existence of the world outside consciousness. It is an attitude that does not necessarily come together with either our attention to something that has potential to become an object, or with our apprehension of a constituted object. The 'natural attitude,' i.e. the positing of a mind-independent reality, is posterior to constitution of objectivity. This clarifies Husserl's thesis '*Zu den Sachen selbst*' (To the things themselves!) that was meant to make manifest the essence of phenomenology. In performing the phenomenological reduction and bracketing our judgments about the existence of reality outside consciousness we return to the attitude of consciousness that has its *cogitatum* and comprehends it attentively, possibly ascribing meanings to sets of adumbrated impressions and forming judgments about them. Consciousness deals with things given to it as with the given, and the question of their independent existence comes later, if at all. In any case it is impossible that the question of real mind-independent existence of an object arises before the object is constituted. For Husserl then, turning to the things themselves means a return to the state of consciousness when things are just constituted, simply as they are, before questioning their source of existence. It is the prepredicative stage of consciousness' involvement with the given that is supposed to give us a clue as to how something meaningful arises from a mere perceptive field where nothing but homo- and heterogeneity can be distinguished at first glance.

⁴ EU 80.

So far it was said that it is the attention of consciousness that picks out certain heterogeneities within a perceptual field, and that this attention has its passive and active sides. The active side of attention Husserl calls *interest*. Interest is an activity with a motivation, a striving. We can arguably interpret it as striving for knowledge, a tendency of consciousness to turn something into a proper object, grasp and define it. The given field of sense-data is simply a field that cannot help but be perceived and this field-perception, in which objects are simply held in view, undistinguished, is the passive side of prepredicative consciousness. At the same time, consciousness turns toward an object that cannot be considered as purely passive: it manifests a certain interest in getting to know its object. We strive to perceive this object in an uninterrupted way that would give us a necessary continuity of a multitude of appearances, which compose a synthesis of coincidence and yield a proper object for consciousness. Husserl writes: 'There is an intention that goes beyond the given and its momentary mode of givenness and tends toward a progressive plus ultra.'⁵ This beyond-going intention is both having an object firmly in grasp through the multitude of its momentary appearances, and striving towards new appearances and details to ensure complete fulfillment. Due to the intrinsic interest of consciousness in its object, it is not only able to grasp it as an undetermined unity, but to divide it into its constitutive moments.

It is interest that aims to gain more and more appearances of an object to get a full picture, to investigate it from every possible side in order to get a clear 'image'. Here the word 'image' is used in the relative sense, since one can speak about objects not only from the visual field, but also from the acoustic and sensory. A particular smell or taste can be an object of interest or, as in most cases, the perceptual field contains a 'mixed object' that is constituted by, say, vision and taste, or vision and hearing.

To clarify these matters, I will consider an example that does not involve a visual comprehension of an object. Suppose we perform a blind tasting of wine⁶, so that it is only our senses of smell and taste that present the object to us. While tasting, consciousness expresses a certain interest, a striving for new alterations of the sensual appearances of an

object, exploring the complexity of taste and letting it evolve in the process of going from entry to mid-palate and then to finish, at the same time preserving the identity of an object that presents itself in its different modes. Thus an object, a taste in our case, or to be more accurate a blend of tastes, is being constituted in the synthesis of multiple taste sensations that come to coincidence. Due to this synthesis, an experienced taster can pronounce her verdict: confirm that the liquid in the glass is indeed wine and not some other beverage; continue to bestow meaning upon the object giving different taste-notes, such as cherry or grapefruit; then proceed to making a judgment about the type and origin of the wine; and finally pronounce her judgment of taste about its quality. If she is right in identifying the wine, then what we are witnessing is an accomplished synthesis of coincidence and a fulfillment of intended meaning. A taster with an inexperienced palate can wrongly guess about the sort of grape that is used in the wine or about its origin. Nevertheless, a judgment of taste about the pleasantness of wine will necessarily be evident and true to the experience of this particular taster.

Husserl claims that an exploration of the various aspects of an object to which our attention is drawn is essentially a *practical* possibility. The fact that an object appears on the horizon does not depend on consciousness. Even initial attention to an object can be explained 'from an object side', as in the case of a loud sound, or an irritatingly bright patch of color that 'violently' draws attention to itself. However, it is not preconditioned by the object itself that consciousness will continue to have an interest in it, and not in other objects, or that it will purposively explore its parts and moments. There is a freedom of consciousness that allows it to browse different sides of the same object, getting to know it in a more and more determinate way. This is clearly manifested in bodily reactions, the observation of which, can grant us access to prepredicative consciousness. We turn our eyes and heads to the object of interest, change the position of the body, and so on. In these *kinaestheses* that are not voluntary actions in the strict sense, our genuine interest is manifested even before it taken account of consciousness itself, says Husserl. We jump in our seats and turn our heads to the source of the loud noise immediately, without thinking about these movements or planning them through a complicated process of decision-making.

The interest of prepredicative consciousness in its object should not be confused with an ordinary

⁵ EU 82.

⁶ with strict rules, so that even a glass is opaque and we do not see the color of wine

concept of interest that can be found on the predicative level. The interest Husserl speaks of here is not the kind of voluntary interest of a scientist in the subject of an experiment, or of a reader in a book. There is no deliberate positing of goals to know facts about an object, but only a certain striving that accompanies any perception. It is an interest in the very general sense (not a *thematic* interest in Husserl's words) and it does not have any particular reason behind it (in contrast to a the case when someone is interested in reading a book because it is useful for her scientific endeavours, for example). Moreover, prepredicative interest does not necessarily signify any particular pleasure that an object evokes.

3. General Structure of Prepredicative Experience

Obviously, it is easier to look inside the process of object constitution if we start from the simplest cases, when our anticipations are satisfied and no obstruction takes place. This process has a threefold structure, according to Husserl. The first stage is the lowest level of objectifying activity, namely, simple contemplative intuition. No explication is involved at this stage. All we have is simply a consciousness encountering its object as an object *per se* without any further specifications.

The next stage involves *explicative contemplation* of an object. Here protentional expectations are awakened and an object presents itself at a certain level of familiarity, however vague it might be. It is perceived as an object of an already familiar type, even if the type is not determined and named properly. There is an awakened interest to apprehend what this object is, to encounter its parts and moments. All this happens within a dynamic framework of a synthetic unity of retentions and protentions that together constitute a total temporal apprehension of an object. '*Explication is penetration of the intentional horizon of the object by the direction of perceptual interest*'.⁷ If no obstruction takes place during the course of the encounter with the object and it reveals itself just as anticipated we can speak of original givenness.

The third stage of perception is an expansion of the original intentional horizon of an object. Objects that are co-present are taken into account as well. Thus, the object in question is comprehended together with its relative determinations, such as rela-

tions to other objects. The original object still remains the center of attention and other objects come into play only as additional relational determinations of the main one. For example, we can apprehend a sound as 'coming from outside' or 'louder than other sounds.' It is one object that we are striving to get to know at the given moment, and all other objects are singled out from the perceptual field only to help the main one achieve a more precise determination.

An encounter of consciousness with its object is by no means a simple unitary process. Simple apprehension is a complex structure with a multiplicity of moments that together constitute an immanent temporal unity. Let us go back to our example of wine tasting. Suppose we just look at a glass of wine and make it an object for consciousness. For the sake of simplicity, let us assume that this object appears unchangeable to us, i.e. the glass does not move and the light in the room does not change. Nevertheless, what we experience is a temporal flow and continuous change of its phases despite the fact that the perceived data remain invariable at any given moment. We perceive an object that endures in time and each moment gives us a new now-point of perception together with outstretching horizons of continuous past and future. The now-point is in an ever-changing continuous flux and both horizons change in the flow of perception accordingly. Our past perceptions (same color of the wine, same transparency of the glass, same proximity of the glass to our body) belong to the retentive horizon and our expectations (that the glass will continue to look the same, that the color will not change, that it would look similar from another side) form the protentional horizon of perception. This unity of duration is passively pre-given to us, this is the only way time-consciousness is able to encounter its object, namely as durable objects. Even if they appear for just a single moment, it is always possible to divide this moment into phases, hardly noticeable to consciousness itself.

Our apprehension of an object is never limited to a given 'now' of this object. On the contrary, what is perceived in pure receptivity is always a consciousness of endurance, an object with a double horizon. Consciousness holds in view all the past phases of its perception of an object exactly as past, and anticipates the future phases. We are not turned toward the momentary present, but toward a *continuously changing* present that we perceive through and beyond it, toward a 'now' as an ever-changing

⁷ EU 105.

flux of moments passing from the anticipated future to the lived-through past.

Consciousness does not meet its object in a moment, take a 'snapshot' of it and then ascribe meaning to it. The process of meaning constitution necessarily has its duration and happens in time consciousness so as to always perceive an object within its two ever-changing horizons, of past and future. Even at the most passive level of encountering an object there is a certain level of activity of consciousness that manifests itself in retaining previous phases of its givenness and projecting new protential expectations upon the object. The object is constituted as a continuous transitional flux even if there is seemingly no change occurring in this flux, as happens in the case of simple perception of a glass. Even in such case, now never remains as such; each now is first anticipated on the horizon of protentions and then becomes retained as 'just having passed.' In order to constitute meaning, consciousness undertakes the inner work of active perception of an immanent unity in the flux of appearances. Obviously, this activity of consciousness is much more noticeable when an object undergoes significant changes during flux and is still perceived as one and the same object. Melting wax, a chameleon changing colors, or a complicated melody are good examples of such a case. The object remains as one and the same in the continuously active grasp of consciousness. Thus, in consciousness' passive encounter with its object we witness a flowing unity of activity that corresponds to the flow of moments, in which the object is given. A *dynamic* noeticnoematic correlation takes place. This is an activity of unification that we are able to comprehend only if we understand consciousness as essentially time-consciousness that together with grasping a 'now' of an object always has an anticipating foregrasp alongside the still-in-grasp retentions.

The activity of apprehending a concretely enduring sound has a complex structure founded on the laws of constitution of living duration. Accordingly, there is not only passivity *prior* to all activity, a passivity of the originally constitutive temporal flux which is only preconstitutive, but also passivity erected on the contemplation of this flux. This passivity, which thematizes or co-thematizes objects, is truly objectifying and properly belongs to the act of consciousness itself, it is a kind of *passivity in activity*.⁸

Once again we see here that Husserl uses the terms 'passivity' and 'activity' in a flexible way. Not only are they not opposed to each other, but most of the time they are inseparable; even at the deepest, seemingly purely passive receptive levels of time-consciousness we find original activity, without which no constitution of meaning is possible.

When it comes to retentional horizon of a contemplated object, we observe that this horizon differs from the case when an ego turns successively to different objects, each of which evokes a separate interest. There can be a book beside the glass of wine on the table, to which our attention turns after contemplating the glass. Then we can concentrate on the table itself and so on. In this case the image of an object that has just ceased to be of interest is not abandoned completely. We do not speak of the horizon of retentions here, as in the case when consciousness concentrates upon one and the same object, but the object is also 'held in grasp', although in a modified way. This holding in grasp does not coincide with the current perception of an object, but its retentional reverberation remains alive for consciousness. In contrast to the impressional retaining-in-grasp of an object, which is in continuous givenness, there can also be a *nonimpressional* retaining-in-grasp that still persists after the original givenness of an object comes to an end. Only on this ground is the third phase of perception – comprehension of an object together with its relative determinations – possible. This happens when consciousness turns to a new object while still retaining the one that was given first, when, for example, attention and interest are redirected from our wine glass to the book next to it. If it did not have such capacity for retaining in grasp previous objects of attention, it would never be possible to comprehend another object as related in any way to the first, i.e. to grasp the book as being next to the glass. Here we see how important are the basic features of primary prepredicative consciousness for its higher levels, such as the formulation of predicative judgments.

The object of previous attention can be retained in grasp in another way: when an object has ceased to be, for example, a sound that we no longer hear. We can still concentrate on this sound in the mode of 'just heard' and retain it in grasp without actually perceiving it. For example, we can try to remember who has composed a certain melody, or simply guess where the sound might have come from.

This modification belongs to the regularity of the original constitution of immanent temporal-

⁸ 8EU 108.

ity, in which every impressional having-consciousness of an original momentary now is constantly changed into still-having-in-consciousness of the same in the mode of the just-past (the just-having-been-now).⁹

It follows that every consciousness of any present moment is originally filled with retentions of the past moments regardless of whether the latter have any connection to the former or are significant for its determinations. Consciousness may also jump randomly between objects that bear no connection to each other, as in the case of looking at a wall and then turning one's gaze to a window on another wall. In other cases, the objects might be closely connected and retaining the past in grasp can actually help to comprehend of a present, as when we concentrate on a blackbird flying and retain in grasp a loud sound that we have just heard. Then we can conclude that it was that sound that probably scared the bird.

To conclude these considerations of the simple apprehension of an object we should state that all phenomenological data appear necessarily in the *stream of consciousness*. Every act of consciousness is already loaded with its previous impressions that are retained, and each act is itself included in the temporal field as temporally constituted datum. This retaining in grasp as well as anticipating of the future manifests the activity of consciousness that emerges at the most passive level – that of pure contemplation. Consciousness is never purely passive; on the contrary, it elaborates on the given data-field and comprehends it as a temporal structure.

The second stage in the perception of an object is *explicative contemplation*. It is the place of origin for both individual meanings and logical categories. Despite the fact that logical categories in the proper sense emerge only on the level of predicative judgment, Husserl shows that 'all categories and categorical forms are erected on the prepredicative syntheses and have their origin in them'.¹⁰

In general, explicative contemplation is an orientation of perceptual interest towards an object and its horizon, in which an object is properly determined in its essence as a polythetic unity of its determinations (parts and moments). It is the tendency of consciousness contemplating an object to push its interest beyond simple passive contemplation¹¹ and

engage in active determination of the object in question making it familiar to consciousness.

It is important to note that every contemplated object is already somewhat familiar to consciousness; it is essentially given within a horizon of familiarity, apprehended more or less as an already determined type. Consciousness remembers its previous experiences and retains in grasp the most recent ones. Thus, no new impression is completely new to it, and every new impression falls and takes its place within consciousness' intentional horizon of familiarity. This is not to say that consciousness cannot, in principle, encounter new things and learn about new object; in fact, it does so regularly. Still, all objects, however unfamiliar, are nevertheless given within the horizon of what was already experienced and explicated by consciousness. A trivial example would be seeing a new animal at the zoo, say, an elephant, and if we imagine that someone has never heard of this animal before there is still a lot of familiarity involved in her first encounter: the general context of being at the zoo, remembering the features of other animals while comparing them with this one etc. (Obviously finding a elephant in your bedroom after waking up in the morning would be a more difficult example, but even in this case we can find a certain evidence of familiarity that previous experiences provide us).

What is the basic structure of any explication of an object? The core of it is to bring to light general essence of an object, thereby clarifying its parts and moments. The crucial part here is to distinguish an object proper from its mere determinations, and to comprehend that these determinations never have an equal status with the object proper but rather serve the purpose of getting to know the object per se. What makes an object the general theme for consciousness, and how can it be properly distinguished from its parts? In every object-constitution, a two-fold constitution of meaning occurs: an object is brought to explicit intuition and constituted as a substrate, while its determinations are constituted precisely as determinations.

An overlapping of two apprehensions, which we see here, is necessary for the constitution of an object as an object proper, having its parts and moments. The object itself is apprehended as a unity in a synthesis of coincidence of all its momentary appearances in the flow of now-points with their retentional and protentional horizons. Together with this synthesis, other syntheses are taking place: namely, the syntheses of parts and moments of this object. In

⁹ EU110.

¹⁰ EU 115.

¹¹ As shown above, every passive contemplation already involves a certain level of activity.

the apprehension of parts and moments the substrate does not disappear; it is neither pushed to the background of consciousness, nor simply retained in grasp. On the contrary, the substrate is comprehended inseparably from its parts and moments. Husserl calls this coincidence of attention to the substrate and to its different parts as merely parts ‘a single double ray’ of attention. For example, we observe a glass of wine on the table, our eyes scan it: at one moment we are fixed on its shape, at another on its transparency.¹² Then the strikingly rich color of the wine redirects and drags our attention. In the next moment we start to perceive the smell of it, and so on. In all these changes of attention we are continuously oriented toward the object proper, the glass itself. Although each of its peculiarities receives our privileged interest in succession, it is always the object itself as a whole that remains our primary focus: the attention that each of its parts receives is loaded with the general context of the substrate that we are encountering. It is the glass that we look at, regardless of whether we concentrate on its bowl or stem, its color or shape. Partial apprehensions coincide with the total apprehension in such a way that the whole is always vividly present to consciousness.

In the first stage of perception – contemplation – we only have an initial apprehension of the whole without consideration of its parts as parts, thus having in grasp an undifferentiated unified object. By contrast, in the second stage we, in spite of remaining directed to the entire object, apprehend all of its determinations and thereby make this object more and more known to us in detail. In every step of apprehension a new detail emerges, thus making the main object more and more clear and familiar to us, more and more determinate. We have a coincidence of whole and partial intentions here: while apprehending the object as a whole, it is through its parts and moments that we are becoming familiarized with it by means of enriching its content. Both types of active apprehension emerge in a permanent unity. Our consciousness is active in the apprehension of the whole substrate and at the same time is occupied with a series of its determinations. Thus we see that intentional explication is a constant movement. An object, while remaining essentially one and the same unity, acquires more and more determinations in the

process of being encountered by consciousness. This movement consists of a series of discrete steps, or of an explication of an object’s properties one by one. We cannot concentrate on both roundness and transparency of the glass at the same time, but we can retain the already explicated properties in firm grasp as belonging to the central object of attention while we are busy with new properties that emerge for consciousness.

What is given to consciousness at the end of such contemplation is a basic logical structure of substance and its predicates. It is not yet comprehended abstractly, but the essential givenness of the meaning of substrate as well as its determinations is already achieved in its fullness in prepredicative consciousness.

4. Methodological Difficulties

It is not an easy or natural task to ascertain the most basic level of consciousness, i.e. pure receptivity. In fact, we never experience it in its purity because whenever we try to look upon our experience, it turns out to be already based on the multiple layers of previous experience, on our being familiar with perceptions, concepts, and judgments, on the memories of constituting objects and predicating something of them. Thus, there is a world of familiarity and trustworthiness that surrounds us in the natural attitude. The phenomenological method of bracketing and limiting our analysis to experiences of consciousness helps in this respect, but there are certain difficulties even within the phenomenological method when it comes to investigating the most basic level of conscious activity. We need to concentrate on the perceptual field given to consciousness before any objectifying activity takes place and before any operations of sense-bestowal are carried out. The most obvious difficulty associated with this task is getting access to experiences of this level. Most of the experiences on the predicative level can be formalized in the way of concepts and judgments we utter, and thus manifested. Predicative level is essentially prelinguistic, therefore it cannot be articulated meaningfully.

One possible way of dealing with this obstacle is to take signals and reactions of the body as manifestations of experience of consciousness. Such examples as an immediate turn of the head after hearing a noise, or walking along a familiar route without actually thinking about this route (and probably thinking about different things instead) arguably present us with evidence of the experience of con-

¹² Obviously, we perceive both at the same time, but our attention is concentrated on certain properties of the object at different moments.

consciousness without, or prior to any actual thinking and conceptualizing takes place. On the other hand, if we remain on the grounds of a 'first-person perspective' (referred to as 'introspection' by phenomenologists), we have to agree that all of these experiences can be analyzed only postfactum, i.e. after they actually happen, and, more importantly, after they have been grasped conceptually. Whether or not prepredicative experience can be articulated in its purity, without any additions that predicative thought brings to it, remains an open question. In addition, our analysis would have to start from the most basic occurrences of prepredicative receptivity, such as the passive reception of the visual field. In this case, there will hardly be any visible bodily manifestations of this experience, still less manifestations that could provide us with valuable data about the experience in question.

Consider a suggestion that probably does not go along with Husserl's line of thought. Investigation into prepredicative experience is one of the crucial points where phenomenology should seek out cooperation with cognitive science, especially with experimental neuropsychology and psychopathology. These disciplines can present us with valuable descriptions of prepredicative experience, whether they be records of brain activity, observations of infant behavior, or descriptions of pathological changes in self-awareness and intentionality. It is well known that the naturalistic approach of positive science and the transcendental stance of phenomenology are based on different methodological and metaphysical grounds; nevertheless, during past decades we have witnessed repeated attempts to reconcile the two and pave the way to a productive and fruitful exchange.¹³ It is not within the scope of our present investigation to discuss the possible benefits and compromises of such cooperation. However, I want to emphasize, that if there are certain advantages for phenomenology in using the empirical findings of modern science, then they are located first and foremost in in-

vestigations of receptivity and prepredicative experience. Phenomenology, essentially based on rational predicative thought, may find itself at a loss when it comes to consciousness gaining a greater intimacy with its own experiences of the prepredicative level, and articulating them in a way that does not add much conceptualizing absent from the experiences themselves, and does not impose predetermined theories on the level that precedes any theoretical categorizing. Thus, it would be extremely useful to employ the achievements of science for obtaining at least the data concerning prepredicative experience of consciousness, if not the scientific explanation thereof.

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THINKING AND PHENOMENAL CONSCIOUSNESS*

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Abstract:

The topic of this paper concerns the relation between thinking and phenomenality as it is discussed in the Philosophy of Mind. Thus, I am addressing the following questions: does the domain of phenomenal consciousness include thinking? And if so, is the phenomenality of thinking (PT) proprietary or not? I will firstly present the debate and the main notions involved in it, by contrasting a certain mainstream picture of the mind with the one offered by Phenomenology. Second, I will consider the particular question of a proprietary phenomenology of conscious thought through the examination of the reductionist and antireductionist positions, concluding with a sceptical remark towards this dialectics.

Key words: consciousness, phenomenality of thinking, dialogue, reductionism, anti-reductionism.

1. Introduction: the topic and some historical remarks

A legitimate question when it comes to the study of experience is precisely which is the *domain* of our investigation. There are various interesting philosophical questions regarding experience, but if we want to set what *experience* amounts to and which structures underlie the mental episodes of our conscious life, then it would be a good starting point to know which kind of mental states fall under the umbrella of 'experience'.

It is a common place in the contemporary Philosophy of mind that a person who undergoes a perceptual experience or is in pain has a certain subjective

feeling, that there is a 'what it is likeness' or what does it feel like for the subject to be in pain (Nagel, 1974). The 'what it is likeness' talk has become a standard use to refer to the *phenomenal consciousness* or to the phenomenal character of our mental states. The phenomenal character of consciousness is meant to consist of the way in which the mental states are experienced. The important question for our problem is to notice that phenomenal consciousness usually appears as restricted to *sensory* mental phenomena while many intentional states do not seem to involve phenomenal consciousness. Cognitive states such as thoughts do not seem to involve a phenomenal character, at least without the mediation of sensory experiences. The term 'experience' is thus normally used to refer to sensory experiences. Whereas it is commonly agreed that sensory states possess this qualitative character, some philosophers cast doubt on the fact that there is something as a phenomenal character related to thinking, something like a phenomenology of thought (PT) or cognitive phenomenology¹.

A first reasonable way to approach the relation between thinking and phenomenality is trying to define which is the domain of thinking, which kind of mental states we are talking about. A significant number of the philosophers involved in the debate primarily have in mind *propositional attitudes* when theorising about thought. Among the defenders of a proprietary PT for instance, Horgan & Tienson (2002), Goldman (1993) and Pitt (2004, 2009) explicitly consider propositional attitudes. Among the deniers, Robinson (2005), and Carruthers (2006) rely on

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¹ 'Cognitive phenomenology' is the expression used in the literature and I have followed this to introduce the topic, but I prefer to talk about the phenomenology of thinking or thought (PT), as it points to a more restricted phenomenon.

the same framework for understanding thought. The sense of thought which seems to be at stake and taken as an assumption is the *concept-involving* character. It must be clear, however, that the ontological category apt to thought in the relevant sense for our question is an *occurrent episode of thinking* (Pitt, 2004, 2009; Smith, forthcoming) rather than a dispositional state such as belief.

The question of a cognitive phenomenology came up within Philosophy of mind as a quite controversial question. The issue was absent from the current discussions in the field for some decades, so as to lead to the situation in which many authors take it to be definitional that phenomenal or 'what it is likeness' is exclusively applied to sensory experiences. Other authors have a more permissive position – Goldman (1993, p.365–366): “The terms *qualia* and *qualitative* are sometimes restricted to sensations (percepts and somatic feelings), but we should not allow this to preclude the possibility of other mental events (beliefs, thoughts, etc.) from having a phenomenological or experiential dimension”. In any case, it is difficult to pick up clearly defined positions with respect to the *reach* of phenomenal consciousness and it may be better described as a cluster of loosely related approaches (see Bayne, forthcoming). From holding that only low-level perceptive properties (being an edge, being red²⁹) enter phenomenal consciousness to claim that all propositional attitudes enjoy phenomenal properties (Pitt, 2004, 2009, Klausen, 2008), there is a wide range of theoretical positions.

From the recognition of such different takes and positions on consciousness, how should we decide on the reach of phenomenal consciousness? Operating with the restrictive sense of phenomenal consciousness by definition without an argument seems an *ad hoc* position, as well as taking the non-restrictive sense beforehand. Both moves seem like holding an extension fixed, then picking a concept and a name for it and excluding (or including) all other phenomena from (or in) the extension just by definition. It is *ad hoc* when it comes to the case of phenomenal consciousness and I believe that the problem at hand is not only terminological, since it concerns the metaphysics of mind and the reach of phenomenality as an important feature of the mind². How should we decide on the issue, then?

² Here we enter into the relation between phenomenology and metaphysics, and which of both approaches should restrict the other one.

This contemporary use of experience and phenomenal consciousness may sound incredibly striking to phenomenologists or to someone familiarised with Phenomenology³ as a philosophical tradition. The study of experiences and the objects given in them gave rise to Phenomenology as a philosophical discipline, founded and developed by Edmund Husserl. For Husserl as well as for the phenomenologists who followed him – Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty...– the field of experience in the mental realm was so broad as to include perception, imagination, memory, emotion, thought, and all those mental episodes present in the stream of consciousness. Experience in a broad sense was the starting point and equated to consciousness, and intentionality was understood as a determining feature of consciousness⁴. From this starting point, it is obvious that states like thoughts have phenomenality. By saying that it is obvious I mean that for phenomenologists the question of whether there is a phenomenology of thought would sound very striking⁵. Phenomenology as the study of different kinds of experiences would lead to the phenomenologies of perceptual experience, emotions, memories, thoughts, and so on.

Phenomenology was not the only one in conceiving the field of experience as broad as to include thought. A little earlier than Husserl, William James (1890) also uses a notion of consciousness that infuses thought. His notion of 'stream of consciousness' means also 'stream of thought' in a very liberal sense. A contemporary philosopher of Husserl, G.H. Moore, also includes understanding, a paradigmatically thought-involving state, as an event in consciousness: “something happens in your minds -some act of consciousness – *over and above* the hearing of the words, some act of consciousness which may be called understanding their meaning” (Moore, 1962, 281–3). The contrast between this late nineteenth/early twentieth century way of thinking about consciousness and the latter

³ I distinguish 'Phenomenology' as the philosophical tradition from 'phenomenology' as the phenomenal character of experience, the normal use in contemporary debates of Philosophy of mind.

⁴ All conscious states are intentional for Brentano, but not for Husserl.

⁵ More about this on the following section.

half of the twentieth century philosophy of mind becomes evident⁶.

What has happened in-between? One author who may have had influence on this development is Gilbert Ryle with his book *The Concept of Mind* (1949), where he can find no use of the phrase stream of consciousness, unless that it perhaps refers to a “series of *sensations*”, which, by their very nature, are incapable of being correct or incorrect, and manifest no quality of intellect (1949, 203–5). From Wittgenstein (1953) on, it became a commonplace for philosophers to contrast the sensory with the conceptual, sensed qualities with propositional attitudes, relating the first with the “qualitative domain”. With functionalism as a popular and important view on the mind, mental states are “functionally” individuated and sensory experiences preserved the “qualitative aspect” of Ryle’s “logical geography”. From then on, many philosophers educated in the Anglophone philosophy since the 1950’ find the following picture familiar: the division of the sensory and the cognitive and the equation of the first with the phenomenal domain and the latter with the intentional one (focusing on propositional attitudes)⁷. The mind is thus divided between the “qualitative aspect” which is purely sensory, and some behavioural/functional aspects, related to intelligence and the use of concepts. And it is a very common view to hold that the latter is all there is in the mind, since the former happens to be reducible (representationalist theories), or illusory and eliminable. With this picture of the mind, then it is understandable why questions such as “does your conceptual thought have phenomenal character?” are quickly answered negatively. It seems, however, that the fact that this is a plausible understanding of the history cannot provide a *justification* for this picture of the mind.

Before going to the second part, let me explain briefly why this topic might be of importance in the philosophical stage. First of all, it is a topic in the interface between analytic Philosophy and mind and Phenomenology and its study can contribute to shed light on the similarities and differences among these two traditions, often thought to be completely strange one to another. At the same time, ap-

proaches in both sides can illuminate the topic, with the difficulty of finding a common ground besides different methodologies. Second, if a permissive view of phenomenal consciousness is right, then this would cast doubt on the contemporary picture of the mind, which could have consequences for explanatory frameworks. Third, it can shed light on the concept of ‘phenomenal consciousness’: the mere existence of this debate undermines the claim that we have a clear-cut conception of ‘what it is likeness’. Fourth, it points to the issue of whether we can account for thought by leaving aside the experiential aspect or not. And finally, it is a topic related to other philosophical important issues such as the relation between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness (treated by Horgan & Tienson, 2002; Loar, 2002; Farkas, 2008, among others), the debate about introspection (Schwitzgebel, 2008) or the relation of cognitive phenomenology and the internalism/externalism debate (Horgan & Tienson, 2002; Loar, 2002; Farkas, 2008).

2. Proprietary PT and reductionism

A particularly important question within the cognitive phenomenology debate is whether, once we accept that there is conscious thought⁸, whether one does something more than acknowledging that thinking is a conscious activity when one talks about a PT. In this sense, one may ask whether there is a further question about the nature of the PT which may require further elaboration and specification: if there is any PT, is it specific? Or can it rather be reduced to the phenomenal character of other kinds of mental states? This question addresses the possibility of a *proprietary PT* (Pitt, 2004, 2009), which is one of the cores of the contemporary debate. That the phenomenology is proprietary means that there is a specific phenomenal character for conscious thought, which can not be accounted with different kind of phenomenologies (sensory-affective, emotional, etc.). A proprietary PT would allow us to distinguish a type phenomenology for conscious thought among other kinds of

⁶ I follow Siewert (forthcoming) for a brief explanation of the development of philosophy which lead to the current situation.

⁷ Perception is a domain that exhibits both features.

⁸ We do not examine here whether ‘consciousness’ and ‘phenomenality’ might have different extensions, which would amount to the possibility of non-phenomenal conscious thought and non-conscious phenomenal thought. If successful, both possibilities would lead to cast doubt on the attribution of both terms to thought.

states⁹. In front of this position, the reductionist about the PT would claim that conscious thoughts are conscious and phenomenal but its phenomenality is not specific, it can be accounted for with the phenomenality of other kinds of mental states.

2.1. The case in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (LU)

One clear position with respect to the question of thinking and phenomenality seems to be the Phenomenological one. Before we mentioned that for phenomenologists the question of a cognitive phenomenology as it is stated in the contemporary debate would sound striking. Why is this so? If we look closer to a particular phenomenological theory of intentionality, the one Husserl defends in the *Logical Investigations* (LU), we can get an answer to this question.

In the first edition of the LU (1901), Phenomenology, understood as descriptive psychology, investigates certain phenomena, namely, experiences (“*Erlebnisse*”). The point is to describe them and not causally explain them, because this is something other kinds of explications pursue. What do we refer to when we talk about experiences? Husserl refers to the modern psychologists (like Wundt) to introduce the term, and psychologists state that experiences are those changing events that constitute the unity of consciousness: “In this sense, experiences or contents of consciousness are perceptions, representations of fantasy and image,

the acts of conceptual thinking, suppositions and doubts, joys and pains, hopes and fears, desires and wills, etc., as they occur in our consciousness” (LU, V, § 2). Within the experiences that are events in consciousness, Husserl distinguishes the category of ‘acts’ (‘*Akte*’) as ‘intentional experiences’. Conscious thoughts are among the category of acts, because they are intentional insofar as they are about something, as they are directed towards something, which is the object of the thought. Insofar as thoughts are considered from the point of view of their experiential character, the experience we have of them, it seems obvious that they enjoy phenomenal character or consciousness. Conscious thoughts fall under the category of intentional episodes, which are considered a ‘lived phenomenon’ (‘*erlebtes phenomenon*’) and thus enjoy phenomenal character.

Moreover, the question of a *proprietary* phenomenology of thought also seems to be clear for phenomenologists. When Husserl (LU, V, § 14) considers the phenomenological difference between understanding (a paradigmatic case of consciously thinking) and not understanding¹⁰ he asks: which is the difference between the two states? Where does this plus of the understood expression over the articulated sound empty of meaning lie? Husserl’s answer is that the difference lies in the “character” of the mental state. “Character” is the general term which covers what he calls the “Quality” and the “Matter” of an act. The Quality, or what we could call the “style of presentation” of the act, is the type of act – a thought, an imagination, a perception, a desire, etc., – (what in analytic terminology are propositional attitudes), whereas the Matter is the aspect under which the object presents itself¹¹. Both aspects constitute an intentional experience or act, according to Husserl. Both are moments (dependent parts) of the act as a whole, and when it comes to psychic phenomena, to experiences, if the whole is experienced, so are the parts (principle of ontological homogeneity).

⁹ Some defenders of a proprietary phenomenology of thought hold that it is also *distinctive* and *individuating* (Pitt, 2004, 2009). That the phenomenology is *distinctive* means it is not generic, that is, that it is not shared by all mental states within the same genus -thought- but that it allows to distinguish different thoughts-types. The further thesis of the *individuating* character of the phenomenality claims that it is what allows the subject of experience to determine all properties of a thought relevant for picking out the thought as the thought it is just by its phenomenality. This third thesis makes the view stronger. In addition to distinguish thoughts from non-thoughts, type-thoughts x from type-thoughts y, the phenomenality of thought is meant to be constitutive of its content. In this paper I only consider the feature of propriety. We should note that the phenomenology could be not proprietary but distinctive, for the distinctiveness could come from the accompanying states of thought. And the other way around: it could be proprietary but not distinctive (if it was not sufficient to distinguish among thought types).

¹⁰ The understanding experience is also put forward by Strawson (2010), Siewert (1998) and many other defenders of a proprietary PT.

¹¹ I am writing ‘Quality’ and ‘Matter’ in capital letters to distinguish Husserl’s technical terms from other senses these words have (like ‘quality’ as the qualitative character of consciousness).

That the Matter of the act is experienced means that the way the object is given to us is experienced, and the way the object is given to us is the meaning. According to Husserl's theory of species and particulars (analogous to the type/token distinction), the Matter is the particular where the meaning as a species instantiates itself. Thus, the meaning of the act belongs to the experienced content. If experienced contents are qualitative contents, and if the meaning is of conceptual nature, it corresponds to them conceptual qualitative content, what can be called "conceptual qualia". Analogously, that the Quality is experienced means that there are experiential differences between different Qualities: whether a certain act or intentional mental state is an imagination, a perception, a thought, a judgement, etc., it is recognised because they are experienced differently, they are different types of experiences which instantiate themselves in token experiences.

One of the upshots of the phenomenological approach to our topic is that once one accepts that intentionality is a lived phenomenon, it follows that intentional mental episodes have phenomenal character. Moreover, the difference between them is an experiential difference (see also Zahavi, 2005). The very fact that we experience a thought as a thought and not as an imagination or as any other kind of mental state. These experiential differences make the phenomenal character of thinking specific, not reducible to the character of other experiences. This approach defends that the experience of understanding or of thinking in general is given in a different way as sensory experiences. The idea is that the thinking experience can -and maybe should- be given through images or other accompanying elements, but we undergo it and properly speak about it as such when these elements are not there.

It is important to note, then, that the question of the phenomenal character of cognitive states is something obvious for Husserl's phenomenology or, in other words, it is not a thesis to be defended but part of his *central point of departure* for his theory of intentionality, that is, part of the primitive notion (intentional experience) which sustains the theory. Maybe this is so because of the descriptive character of the phenomenological approach to intentionality, which aims to show what we find when we reflect upon our mental

lives, without pronouncing itself on the possible reduction of intentionality to a more basic phenomenon (physically speaking). The fact that one can object that Husserl's approach is *question begging*¹² for our topic is revealing of the character of this approach: I think it should be presented as a way to present a theory which has as a consequence that there is a specific experience of thought rather than an effective argument against the denier of the phenomenology of thought. One who does not accept Husserl's characterisation of intentional experiences, and thus the intimate connection between the intentional and the phenomenal character, must not be in a position to accept Husserl's position.

2.2. Reductionism

How should we consider the claim that 'there is no phenomenology of thought?'. We can understand it as an *eliminativist* claim, à la Dennett, who denies the existence of phenomenal character altogether, not only for the cognitive domain. We won't consider this position here. We can also understand it as a *reductive* claim about thought's phenomenal properties. In this sense, we have two states, the thought state and some other kind of accompanying state (be it sensory, emotional, etc.) which is the bearer of phenomenal properties. Among what we have called 'reductionists', there are those who argue that the phenomenology of thought is to be accounted for in terms of only *one* type of phenomenology, and others argue that it is either *one* type or a or a *disjunction* of other non-cognitive phenomenologies. This is the position of Lormand (1996) mentioned above, also defended by other authors (Tye & Wright, forthcoming, Robinson, 2005). The opponent of a PT would certainly accept that there is a PT but argue that it is *reducible* to other kinds of phenomenology. This is one prominent strategy against a *proprietary* PT.

We will go through some examples to try to shed light into the question, leading to a rather sceptical result about the very dialectics of the reductionism/non reductionism positions when they appeal to examples and cases.

¹² It can be question begging only from the perspective of the nowadays discussion, having in mind that this was not a question posed by Husserl himself.

The most discussed example in the literature is the case of *understanding* (Husserl, 1901; Strawson, 2010; Siewert, 1998, forthcoming; Pitt, 2004, 2009; Tye & Wright, forthcoming, and others). The crucial point is to know what accounts for the phenomenological change between understanding what someone tells you or something you read and not understanding it. Proponents of a proprietary PT claim that the difference is not due to sensory-affective accompanying states, while reductionists claim that these elements do suffice. Let's see the question in more detail.

One major candidate for being the case of the reductionist is linguistic phenomenology or the phenomenology of *inner speech*. Carruthers (2005) and Jackendoff (2007) are proponents of this kind of reductionism. Inner speech is meant to point to the inner process when language is produced but not uttered, to the phenomenon of "thinking in words". The following passage from Jackendoff (2007, p. 82) illustrates this position: "I conclude that phonology is necessary and sufficient for the presence of linguistic qualia, and meaning is neither necessary nor sufficient... if we pay attention to the phenomenology of 'conscious thought', we find it most often has the form of linguistic images—'inner speech' or a 'voice in the head,' a Joycean stream of consciousness... The form of the associated thought, a semantic/conceptual structure that is capable of driving inference, is not at all present in experience". Robinson (2005, p. 540) refers to the 'sub-vocalisation' process: "to affirm that for most normal cases, subvocal saying of 'p' is all the phenomenology there is that is distinctive of having the thought that p".

In order to assess this kind of reduction we would have to examine the possible relations between inner speech and conscious thought, namely, whether inner speech is constitutive of conscious thought or not, for example. This goes beyond the scope of this paper, because the question which concerns us now is the possibility of a PT in the absence of inner speech, which could decide the question of a proprietary phenomenology.

An example used in the literature to solve the proposed reduction to inner speech is the *tip-of-the-*

tongue (TOT) phenomenon: the frustrating situation in which one is unable to say a word despite knowing what she wants to say, or the situation in which one is searching the right words to express a train of thought. We find, however, diverging interpretations of the phenomenon. On the one hand, Goldman (1993, p. 365) takes the phenomenon to show that there is non-sensory cognitive phenomenology: "when one tries to say something but cannot think of the word, one is phenomenologically aware of having requisite conceptual structure, that is, of having a determinate thought-content one seeks to articulate.... Entertaining the conceptual unit has a phenomenology, just not a sensory phenomenology". On the other hand, Lormand (1996, p. 247) commenting on Jackendoff, interprets it in the opposite way: "Jackendoff uses the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon to 'demonstrate' that 'conceptual structure is *excluded* from [phenomenological] awareness' (1987, p. 290). He distinguishes the aspects of what the experience is like into a soundless 'form' and an 'affect' of effort, so that 'one feels as though one is desperately trying to fill a void' (1987, pp. 290 and 315). Neither of these aspects seems attributable to nonsensory attitudes.... [T]here is something sensory that having the 'void' is like, akin to what *hearing silence* (as opposed to being deaf or asleep) is like.... [T]here is something sensory that the feeling of effort is like, namely, what feeling physical effort is like" [*italics original*].

What they both agree on is that it is a cognitive phenomenon. It seems to me that Lormand's interpretation can't account for the specificity of the phenomenon: is the feeling of physical effort what specifically accounts for the phenomenology involved in the TOT phenomenon? If not, what does then account for what seems to be phenomenologically specific of this phenomenon? Or are we forced to say that there is nothing phenomenologically specific of it?

It could be objected that the TOT phenomenon is not a phenomenon cohesive enough to take a stand on the PT. Then we look at the case of *multilingualism*, as a test for evaluating the relation between phonological structure, semantic structure and cognitive phenomenology. Imagine a person who masters different languages and thinks a thought which she expresses in those different languages. The phonology will be very different.

It is more difficult to determine whether the meaning would be the same or not, due to the indeterminacy of translation and the various particularities of different languages. What does account for the phenomenological differences? The reductionist would say that the syntactic, phonological and orthographic differences are responsible for the phenomenological differences. And the proponent of a proprietary PT would say that the phenomenological differences between the expressed thought in different languages would not be so extended as the proponent of inner speech is committed to predict.

The proponent of a proprietary PT may insist on the idea that when we consciously think our so doing does not necessarily involve any of the accompanying states. There is no co-variation between understanding and not understanding and the elements in the phenomenological cluster referred to: there may be cases in which the sensory and emotional states are not present and still the thought goes through. One may think that perceptual thoughts (visual thoughts) and imaginative thoughts are more intimately connected with the mechanisms of perception and can thus somehow “inherit” their sensory elements but the more abstract we go, the sensory associated phenomenology becomes sparser, up to the point of becoming extinguished altogether. No sensory elements are possible for those *abstract* thoughts. When we consciously think our so doing does not necessarily involve any of the accompanying states.

An answer that the reductionist has at this point is appealing to the *experience of trying* or to the effort involved in consciously thinking (as we have also seen with Lormand before). Tye & Wright (forthcoming, p.4) mention “the experience of trying” as a valid bearer of phenomenology: “from a phenomenological perspective, thinking a thought is much running a sentence through one’s head and/or (in some cases) having a mental image in mind together with (in some cases) an emotional/bodily response and a *feeling of effort* if the thought is complex or difficult to grasp (my italics)”. I take the point to be: for the case of abstract thoughts considered above, for which no sensory phenomenology is possible (and, assume for the sake of the argument, that also emotions can not account for this phenomenology),

then there is always the sense of effort left, the experience of trying. Neither conceptual nor cognitive phenomenology is involved in trying, according to them: a rat can have an experience of trying when it makes desperate efforts to free itself, for example.

The natural movement to be made at this point by the defender of a proprietary PT is to appeal to cases of *spontaneous thought* (Siewert, 1998), namely, instances in which a thought occurs to you, without words nor images or an abrupt shift in the direction of thought. While you are engaged in some activity, you suddenly remember or it comes to your mind an appointment you had, for example. Sudden wordless thoughts occur to you without the need of imagery and they can be formulated in words, but only after they occurrence. The reductionist defends herself here saying that this may not really be a case of conceptual thought; you might not have the thought before being able to say the sentence to yourself.

If all these cases do not seem conclusive to decide the question, we could still think of a case in which besides all sensory-affective accompaniments, there was neither the sense of trying or effort. These cases would be ‘*pure abstract thoughts*’. Are they possible? If it is possible to consciously entertain a pure abstract thought without any of the mentioned accompanying states being present, then this would be a counterexample for the reductionist and it would allow the proponent of a PT to say that in other cases of thought there is also this kind of phenomenology. What would the reductionist say in those cases? She would probably deny that there is any phenomenology involved in such cases, were they possible. Some authors, like Robinson (2005) have taken the cases in which there is no possible sensory-imagistic accompaniment as evidence for the claim that there is no phenomenality to thought. This holds, however, only if they operate with the restricted (by definition) sense of phenomenality. But if phenomenal consciousness has a broader sense (as reductionists accept), then what would it mean to consciously entertain a pure abstract thought without phenomenology?

As concluding remarks for this section, I would like to point out that we find diverging interpretations of some phenomena, the TOT, multi-

lingualism, spontaneous thought, abstract thought, and so on. But I take the discussion of reductionism/antireductionism to show two main things. On the one hand, the proponent of a proprietary PT seems to be right with respect to “particular reductions”. That is, if a reductionist defends that the PT is reducible to only one kind of accompanying states, then it seems easy for the antireductionist to find other cases without the presence of this particular accompanying state. There seem to be counterexamples for each proposed particular reduction. From a phenomenological point of view it seems more appropriate to describe the PT as specific, since each proposed reduction does not seem to pick out the relevant phenomenal character of the experience of thinking in front of the phenomenality specific of a non-cognitive state. Thus, the antireductionist is able to distinguish thought from other kind of states (partly) because of its phenomenology, which might be a strong intuition among phenomenologists.

On the other hand, the reductionist can adopt a sort of “disjunctive reduction” to find non-cognitive phenomenology to account for the PT (either sensory states or emotional or the effort of trying, etc.). This strategy is difficult to refute inasmuch as the reduction has a wide range of possibilities open. This does not settle the question, however, in favour of the reductionist but it just points out a certain force of her argumentation, because she still has to show that a potential reduction might succeed, namely, might be sufficient to account for what it is like to think. A case which would solve the problem would be, to my mind, the case of pure abstract thought. If such case is sound, then the reductionist is forced to say that there is no phenomenology, and therefore she has to give an explanation of why such thoughts are conscious but not phenomenal appealing to a different strategy than the reductionist one (which is her position with other kinds of thoughts). Her initial position of accepting a PT is then undermined. In this case I think it would be more coherent to defend that there is no PT at all, as for the eliminativist, and give independent reasons for that. In any case, the case of pure abstract thought would have to be shown, maybe with the help of empirical data.

A moral to be extracted from that is a certain scepticism about the dialectics present in the reductionism/antireductionism discussion. I would say

that the issue of a proprietary PT has to be decided on other grounds rather than on the reductionist/antireductionist dialectic, maybe by way of general arguments or general theories or with possible empirical investigations, even if some interpretations may seem more plausible than others. My sceptical result with respect to this dialectics has to be understood within its scope, namely, it does not mean that the authors involved do not have independent arguments to put forward, but I have only focused on the dialectics of presenting cases in order to decide in favour or against a proprietary PT.

3. Concluding remarks

The aim of this paper has been to present the cognitive phenomenology debate we find in the contemporary Philosophy of Mind. In the first section I tried to draw the map of the situation in the topic with the help of some historical remarks, turning the attention to the contrast we find with respect to phenomenologists and other authors of the beginning of the 20th century.

In the first part of the second section, I presented Husserl's approach in the LU as an example, within Phenomenology, of a theory whose point of departure are mental states in the way they are experienced, lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*), and thus it makes the case for a PT to be sound. Moreover, PT is characterised as proprietary, precisely because it is experiential differences which make different kinds of mental states just the kind of mental states they are. I noted some assumptions of this approach for our present topic.

In the second part of the second section I presented some reductionist approaches, mostly focusing on Lormand's (1996) and Tye & Wright (forthcoming) and I have contrasted it with the defender of a proprietary PT, both sides of the discussion appealing to the phenomenology of particular cases. On the one hand, I concluded from this that the proponent of a proprietary PT seems to be right with respect to particular reductions and she seems to be able to account for the phenomenological differences between thought and other kinds of states from the point of view of their way of being experienced. On the other hand, the reductionist of the disjunctive sort is in a position that is difficult to refute, even if her proposed reductions

do not seem to do the work. I concluded with an sceptical remark with respect to the dialectics presented.

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RECONSIDERING AUTHORIAL INTENTION – PERSPECTIVES FROM CONTINENTAL AND ANALYTIC TRADITION

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Abstract:

Paul Ricoeur's narrative and critical hermeneutics provides the conceptual resources to accommodate Barthes' and similar critiques of subjectivity while positing a revised form of authorial intention similar to the "postulated author" of Alexander Nehamas and the "creative process" of Richard Wollheim. Though influenced by Barthian critiques, all three thinkers retain a notion of authorial intent*one distinct from the intentions of the historical author*necessary for the understanding of meaning in the philosophy of literature. Yet, the implications of this allow us to reverse the Ricoeurian insight of understanding human action as a text, and show how human action provides clarification on authorial intention. Using Ricoeur and Nehamas, I would like to revisit the issue of authorial intention in order to show the insights this offers for hermeneutics and philosophy of literature. If authorial intention is properly reestablished as distinct from the intentions of the historical writer, we can turn to a minimalistic version of the analytic philosophy of action based on Ricoeur and Carlos Moya to provide a useful heuristic conceptual framework to look at both authorial and 'readerly' intention.

In employing the philosophy of action, this conceptual framework will be used instrumentally in aid of interpreting the text and providing further analysis and conceptual clarity to the notion of authorial intention. Further, analyzing 'writerly' and 'readerly' intention as action*communicative action*sidesteps the philosophical issue of the 'artistic process' which had absorbed the attention of aesthetics since Plato, without sidestepping the issues of authorial intention and readerly intention.¹ I will argue that in using variants of the philosophy of action, we can ignore psychological issues and instead focus on the broader issues of meaning-expression at the heart of both readerly and writerly intention. I will then demonstrate this heuristic framework using Hölderlin's epic poetry and Blanchot's *The Writing of the Disaster*.

Key words: authorial intention, Ricoeur, Nehamas, action, Donald Davidson, literature, Holderlin.

In interpreting a text we must come to understand an action, and so we must understand an agent and therefore other actions and other agents as well and what they took for granted, what they meant, believed, and what they wanted."

Alexander Nehamas The Postulated Author

The reader himself is to find the motives underlying the questions, and in doing so he participates in producing meaning."

Wolfgang Iser The Act of Reading

In the wake of Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author" and related critiques of subjectivity and authorial intention,¹ critics such as Alexander Nehamas and Richard Wollheim have challenged Barthes' dismissal of authorial intention, arguing that a revised form of authorial intention based on a "postulated author" or "creative process" can save authorial intention while acknowledging certain Barthian' insights.² Paul Ricoeur, in his narrative and critical hermeneutics, arrives at similar conclusions, arguing for a critical rather than naïve understanding of authorial intention.³ Using Wollheim,

¹ Roland Barthes "Death of an Author" in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

² Alexander Nehamas, "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal" *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981): 133–49 reprinted pgs 262–272. Richard Wollheim, "Criticism as Retrieval" *Art and its Objects* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) reprinted 255–261.

³ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* [henceforth HHS] edited and trans. John B. Thompson (Paris: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *Interpreta-*

Ricoeur and Nehamas, I would like to revisit the issue of authorial intention in order to show the insights this offers for hermeneutics and the philosophy of literature. If authorial intention is properly reestablished as distinct from the intentions of the historical writer as these authors suggest, then we can turn to another area of philosophy for further clarification on the notion of authorial intention. To this end, I will turn to a sketch of the analytic philosophy of action based upon Paul Ricoeur and Carlos Moya to provide a useful heuristic conceptual framework to look at both authorial and 'readerly' intention. These authors' conceptions of action share more than a passing resemblance with much of Jurgen Habermas' work on communicative action and the phenomenological tradition of meaning and intentionality, which I am happy to incorporate.

In employing the philosophy of action, this conceptual framework will be used *instrumentally* in aid of interpreting the text and providing further analysis and conceptual clarity to the notion of authorial intention. Further, analyzing 'writerly' and 'readerly' intention as *action*—communicative action—sidesteps the philosophical issue of the 'artistic process' which has long preoccupied aesthetics, without sidestepping the issues of authorial intention and readerly intention.⁴ I will argue that in using variants of the philosophy of action, we can ignore psychological issues (in which Wollheim's view gets caught) and instead focus on the broader issues of meaning-expression at the heart of both readerly and writerly intention.

I will then briefly employ this heuristic framework to Frederick Hölderlin's epic poetry, specifically "Bread and Wine" and the Patmos Hymn, Maurice Blanchot's *The Writing of the Disaster*, and Jean-Paul Sartre's *What is Literature?*⁵ Applying this conceptual scheme to such diverse works will reflect its suitable breadth as well as conceptual depth in discussing authorial or 'writerly' in-

tention in literature broadly construed. Finally, I will attempt to provide a rough sketch to the concept and understanding of readerly intention that I have already hinted at above.

Death and Resurrection of an Author:

In "Death of the Author," Roland Barthes, drawing on insights from structuralism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis, argues that the intention of the author becomes triply subverted by the free play of signs (structuralism), economic structures (Marxism) and the vicissitudes of desire (psychoanalysis). Therefore, the privileged place of the author as the center of meaning in a text is an illusion: Authorial intention neither exhausts, nor even adequately captures, the possibilities inherent in a text.⁶

If authorial intention is understood as the psychologically conscious act, or the 'intended' action of the historical author, then Barthes's critique is fully justified. For as Barthes explains, the locutionary act or 'content' of what the author intends is also accompanied by an illocutionary force implied in that act, as well as the perlocutionary force of performing that act; ie. actually writing the text. All three, the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts are subverted or altered by the language we use, the society we live in, and unconscious elements within us. Yet, if we understand authorial intention in a more expansive and nuanced way, as Nehamas and Wollheim argue, then we might possibly retain the notion of authorial intention.

While Nehamas recognizes that authorial intention is neither the sole source nor justification of meaning of a text, he reminds us that the act of reading or interpreting a text presupposes 'postulating' an author:

To interpret a text is to consider it as its author's production. Literary texts are produced by agents and must be understood as such. This seems to me self-evident; even deconstructive criticism generally accepts it, though it insists that the choice of agent is conventional and arbitrary. And

tion Theory Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

⁴ For the remainder of this piece, I use 'writerly' intention and the 'postulated' author's intentions interchangeably.

⁵ I realize that in analyzing *What is Literature?* and possibly even *Writing of the Disaster* that I might be extending beyond philosophy of literature into general hermeneutics. Yet, each work, especially the second, straddles the divides between 'prose' and 'poetry' as well as literature and non-fiction.

⁶ Barthes, "Death of the Author" in *The Rustle of Language* trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 49–55.

*since texts are products of expressive actions, understanding them is inseparably tied to understanding their agents. But just as the author is not identical with a text's fictional narrator, so he is also distinct from its historical writer. The author is postulated as the agent whose actions account for the text's features; he is a character, a hypothesis which is accepted provisionally, guides interpretation, and is in turn modified in its light. The author, unlike the writer, is not a text's efficient cause but, so to speak, its formal cause, manifested in thought not identical with it.*⁷

The "text's features" or structure occurs as a result of the organizing 'intention' of the author; an author distinct from both the narrator of the work and the historical writer. We can only understand the text by understanding it as the result of an agent who structures the text as an expressive action. Nehamas also suggests that even if we have the wrong, or unknown, writer we still might have the right author.⁸ This 'postulated author' is a construct, but a helpful and necessary construct, that guides interpretation but is not foundational in the sense of unrevisable. The postulated author is not the efficient but formal cause of the work; the author is the source of the unity of the whole.⁹ And it is for this reason that we 'postulate' an author. Without some form of authorial intention, though one distinct from any flesh-and-blood writer, we

lack a focus for meaning. Nehamas is content to allow a methodological pluralism, such as psychoanalytic, Marxist, and structuralist interpretations, if this is "compatible with a monism of content."¹⁰ The monism Nehamas posits is a regulative ideal identifying the meaning of a "text with whatever is specified by that text's ideal interpretation....Meaning therefore depends on an *author's* intentions even if a *writer* is not aware of it."¹¹

Richard Wollheim argues along similar lines. The process of criticism [read interpretation or reading] "is *retrieval*. The task of criticism is the reconstruction of the creative process, where the creative process must in turn be thought of as something not stopping short of, but terminating on, the work of art itself."¹² Properly speaking there is no creative process without the work or text. Wollheim reflects Blanchot and Heidegger's idea that there is no artist without the work of art.¹³ Further, the creative process is not meant to imply the specific psychological activities of genius that so interested past aesthetic theories such as Kant's. We are not to confuse artistic intention with the creative process, or "the meaning of the work of art and the meaning of the artist."¹⁴ The two are distinct and this reflects Wollheim's, at least implicit, acknowledgement of Barthian critiques. Wollheim adds that the creative process "is a more inclusive phenomenon than the artist's intentions, and in two ways."¹⁵ First, it includes 'various vicissitudes' to which artist's intentions are subject to including changing one's mind, providence, or luck. Secondly, it includes background beliefs, conventions, customs, and all the influences on language and consciousness which psychoanalytic, structural, and Marxist critiques remind us.

⁷ Nehamas 267, emphasis added.

⁸ Note, this in no way directly contradicts any sense of the autonomy of the text that Barthes posits (it might indirectly but not directly). The text is autonomous in the sense that it becomes divorced from any real writer and that the 'codes' it contains become internal to it, structuring the text in different ways. But it is not autonomous in a 'free play' of interpretations possible to it. It is constrained and guided by the authorial intention 'postulated' to it.

⁹ This is why later I will reject (efficient) causal accounts of action. Compare this to Wollheim's often psychological emphasis on the "creative process" and Wolfgang Iser's view that "consistency building...depends on the reader and not the work" or the author (Iser 18). Iser's focus on the phenomenology of reading is a helpful reminder of the productive role of reading but it risks lapsing into the Kantian fallacy of placing intelligibility and structure solely on the side of the (reading) subject. Cf. Iser, *The Act of Reading* (John Hopkins U. Press, 1980).

¹⁰ Nehamas, 268.

¹¹ Nehamas 267–268, emphasis added.

¹² Wollheim 255.

¹³ Cf. Martin Heidegger *On the Way to Language* (New York: HarperOne, 1982) and Maurice Blanchot *The Space of Literature* trans. by Ann Smock (University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

¹⁴ Wollheim 259. Wollheim reminds us further that "reconstruction of the creative process is not recording the artist's intentions." (260). The first (reconstruction) requires respecting artist's intentionality, the latter requires knowing it. The second problem is the problem of earlier Schliermachian hermeneutics, the first is coming to grips with the creative process, the writing process by way retrieval.

¹⁵ Wollheim 259.

Yet, where Wollheim's model differs from Nehamas' is also where it is weakest. Despite attempts to distinguish the "creative process" from the writer's intentions, Wollheim still wants to discuss the "creative process" in psychological terms. So while he can acknowledge the subversive effects to the author's intention that enter into the creative process, he wishes to incorporate these purely psychologically and thereby retains a much stronger connection between the real flesh-and-blood writer and the creative process. Nehamas, meanwhile, clearly removes any psychological connection between the real and postulated author, allowing temporal or pragmatic constraints that the 'real' author might place on the text while focusing on logical and conceptual connections that link the meaning of the text to its postulated author.¹⁶

The difference between the 'postulated' author of Nehamas (and Wollheim) and 19th century hermeneutics' focus on authorial intention is the purpose of each. While Dilthey and Schleiermacher wanted to know the fact of the author's intention as fact, Nehamas' 'postulated' author is *in the service of the reader*. We, as readers and critics, 'postulate' an author so that we may read and understand better. The postulated author, alongside the structures of the text, provides us a center or "intentional organization" to our interpretation of the text and is a source of unity of the "field of experience" to which that text corresponds.¹⁷ The way I would like to understand the 'postulated author', or the Action of Writing, is as the *nexus of meaning*. The "wandering viewpoint" of the reader that Iser discusses in *The Act of Reading* helps capture this point, but certain elements that locate that viewpoint belong on the side of the 'writer', at least as 'postulated',

to guide the act of reading. While the reader's viewpoint is what is wandering, the nexus of meaning that is captured in this wandering corresponds to the meaning-intending act of the postulated author.¹⁸

Reading Ricoeur: From Action to Text

Ricoeur uses the polysemy of texts to help understand and explain human action: "As the logic of text-interpretation suggests, there is a *specific plurivocity* belonging to the meaning of human action. Human action, too, is a limited field of possible constructions."¹⁹ As the above quote suggests, Ricoeur follows Nehamas and Wollheim at least in limiting the field of possible constructions or interpretations. The Text is not an unlimited play of possibilities; it is constrained in its interpretations. Some interpretations are better than others. Similarly, human action can be explained and understood via a number of interpretations, but some (and perhaps one) *meaning* of that act is the best. Ricoeur's insight here parallels Nehamas' idea that authorial intention is a limit concept that guides our interpretation but never, or rarely, is reached.

However, since Ricoeur's insights, there have been several advancements and refinements in the understanding of the philosophy of action. I want to employ these insights in action theory to help understand and explain the "text" of literature. If Ricoeur is right that textual interpretation and human action are analogous, then there should be no problem using a theory of human action to explain the text of literature. If there is any disjunct, or if the analogy only holds for the most part, then we can simply use it as a heuristic as I have already implied.²⁰

Ricoeur talks about how human actions may be "*construed*" in different ways,²¹ just as a text may be interpreted or construed in different ways. But some "construals" are better than others, and similarly, some interpretations or readings are better

¹⁶ Wollheim and Nehamas are only to representatives of a rehabilitated approach at authorial intention. Iser in *The Act of Reading* expresses familiarity with a virtual author, using it to coin his own term, the implied reader. He also draws attention to the use of an "implied author" in Wayne C. Booth *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1963).

¹⁷ The term "intentional organization" comes from unpublished lectures notes from a course on Philosophy and Literature by Jennifer Gosetti; (hopefully) to be expounded upon in more detail in her *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* (Penn State University Press, 2007). This "center" addresses the worries of Nehamas and Wollheim against Barthian critiques that in the wake of the death of an author, any and all interpretations are valid. There is no guardrail or guideline to critique 'faulty' interpretations.

¹⁸ Iser, 108-126.

¹⁹ Ricoeur, HHS, 213.

²⁰ Whether the analogy or connection holds in a 'strong' or simply heuristic sense, the point of postulating an author and construing the meaning of action is always for the understanding of the agent looking for intelligibility or meaning. Thus, either way, the reason for postulating an author is in the service of the reader or interpreter.

²¹ Ricoeur, HHS, 213.

than others. And how is one way we understand one interpretation, i.e. the *meaning* of the text, better than another? In much the same way we understand a construal of human action as better than another; by appealing to the intentions of the agent and their pre-requisites: Here, we can turn to a philosophy of action inspired by Ricoeur and Moya that understands the antecedents of intentions in terms of choices, desires, and beliefs that *motivate* intentions.

Action in Aid of Intention:²²

Most contemporary theories of action, following Donald Davidson, associate the structural or psychological pre-requisites of action and intention-formation in terms of desire and belief correlates.²³ In their widest and most charitable form, desires include all motivation or “motivation-encompassing attitudes” while the belief component consists of cognitively definable truth-falsity values of the acting agent, broadly construed.²⁴ I am happy to follow this conceptual schema with two caveats. First, even in terms of the real, psychological person, desires and beliefs are not enough to causally account for the forming of intentions let alone actions.²⁵ What is additionally

needed is a ‘decision’ or choice to endorse these desire/belief correlates. Thus, in the remainder of this piece I use the generic term “motivate” to express the role belief/desires have on the formation of intentions. More importantly for our purposes, by focusing on the non-psychological ‘postulated’ author, the desire/belief components may be necessary constraints on the intentions of the author but are hardly completely *determinative* of the intention of the postulated author. Secondly, our focus on action in aid of the text is not to be solely focused on beliefs and desires, partly because of the first proviso, and partly because there are other important structural components of action than merely the belief/desire pre-requisites.

Yet, beliefs and desires perform an important constraining role to meaning or interpretation of the text in ways hinted at in Nehamas’ example concerning the use of Freudian psychoanalytic theory for interpreting *Oedipus Rex* and *The Metamorphosis*:

If the Oedipal conflict is as basic to behavior as Freud thought, then the historical Sophocles, unaware of it as he may have been, could have considered it an issue...We must not, by contrast, accept a view of *The Metamorphosis* which holds that hours on the clock correspond to years in Gregor’s life...Kafka could not have known this highly technical, and highly doubtful, theory of development.²⁶

Just as the Oedipus complex might be an underlying, unconscious ‘desire’ component in almost any postulated intention, the dubious ‘belief’ component of understanding contentious developmental aspects of the same theory, such as the fact that hours metaphorically represent years, should be outright rejected. As Freudian theory had yet to be expounded, we cannot accept that the beliefs of the postulated (or even real) author can ‘motivate’ the intention to express this symbolically through the use of time metaphors for development, even if we

²² The philosophy of action is not to be confused with speech-act theory. Speech-act theory, though useful to both action-theory and literature is only one species of action. Speech-act theory encounters problems when exploring non-utilitarian or “poetic” uses of language which do not properly fit the model of speech-acts, leading J.L. Austin to consider poetic and literary language “parasitic” to ordinary language. Understanding literary acts as action, broadly construed avoids these as well as other contentious issues.

²³ Cf. Donald Davidson. *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁴ Cf. Alfred Mele *Motivation and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) for an account of species of desire and motivation-encompassing attitudes.

²⁵ This is why I am reluctant to follow the dominant strand in action theory attempting to explain action causally in terms of psychological determinants, and instead follow Ricoeur and Moya in a different direction. For the most promising of recent causal accounts Cf. Alfred Mele, *Motivation and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Michael Bratman, “Two Faces of Intention,” *The Philosophical Review* 93.3 (Jul 1984): 375-405. I think a second reason we can reject or at least remain agnostic on causal/teleological theories of action for our purposes is the fact that we are ‘postulating’ an author and ‘postulating’ intentions; therefore, any causal

explanation seems bizarre if not unnecessary. There is no psychological entity to postulate these causal accounts. What we are looking for is a heuristic or conceptual connection; and in this, remain agnostic on whether action is explained causally or teleologically. Thus, for the remainder of this piece I use ‘motivate’ to express the role belief/desires have on the formation of intentions.

²⁶ Nehamas, 268.

can accept that a universal, unconscious desire may have prompted Sophocles to write *Oedipus Rex*. Therefore, while desires may not be conscious to be 'motivational' in forming intentions, there are limits to the belief-ascriptions we can attribute to a 'postulated author' that are constrained by the possible beliefs the historical author may have held as the Kafka example suggests.

The structural components of action I want to focus upon are Carlos Moya's definitions of action, intention and intention-formation. The fundamental question to any philosophy of action is what makes something an action rather than a mere happening. (We could ask the same question of literature: what makes something a text rather than a mere collection of words and letters). Many accounts try to explain this in terms of 'basic' actions that are the atomistic building blocks of more complex actions. Moya goes another route and argues that what makes something an action is that it is meaningful or meaning-giving.²⁷ Meaningful action "involves commitments."²⁸ What these commitments entail is the forming of an intention and committing oneself to "make that content true, that is, to act in that specific way."²⁹ A word of caution is in order. The way Moya and other action theorists use intention is more specific than the phenomenological tradition's understanding of mental acts as always directed toward an object. "Intentions," writes Moya, "are not mere desires, aims, plans or rules; they are commitments to act so as to match their content."³⁰ Intentions are a specific action-guided and action-prompting form of intentionality. For instance, when I signal to make a turn on my bicycle, this involves a commitment to make a turn and this commitment is not a happening but is something that "has to be *done* by an agent."³¹ I commit to the intention of signaling.

²⁷ The way Moya speaks of something as "meaningful" is similar in many ways to the transcendental conditions Habermas speaks of in his theory of communicative action. Cf. Jurgen Habermas *A Theory of Communicative Action* Vol 1 and 2 (Beacon Press, 1985).

²⁸ Moya 46.

²⁹ Here we can see parallels with the Husserlian phenomenological tradition of empty and fulfilling intentions. The way Moya speaks of intention, however, is more a plan or normative guide to the goal one sets, even implicitly.

³⁰ Moya, 58.

³¹ Moya, 47.

Commitments and the goal of fulfilling my intentions do not exhaust what action entails. These actions, as meaningful, are communicable to other meaning-intending beings. This is especially true in terms of literary action. All actions are holistic and are imbedded in various sedimented levels of meaning. What is paradigmatic about literary acts is their 'imbeddedness' in a world even while transcending that world, and their ability to communicate this dual aspect.

The communicativity at the center of literature has also been explored by Wolfgang Iser in *The Act of Reading*. Iser, drawing on speech-act theory, argues that "the structure conditioning the reception of the work...[is] primarily [seen] as one of communication."³² This "structure of communication" is inherent in the activity of discourse, of the speech-acts of speaking and writing. Every speech-act can be pragmatically judged in terms of its success or failure at communication. But, "these factors also pertain to the reading of fiction, which is a *linguistic action* in the sense that it involves an understanding of the text, or of what the text seeks to convey by establishing a relationship between text and reader."³³ The potential problem with Iser's account—why the present focus turns elsewhere—is Iser's focus on the action or activity solely on the side of the reader. This leads to a potentially distorted picture in which the reader imposes meaning on the written work much like Kant's transcendental ego imposes unity on a senseless manifold. Instead, the focus is on the overall communicative act initiated by the 'postulated author', mediated through the text, and actively synthesized by the reader. *This* is the *literary* act; it is not simply the activity of productive syntheses between reader and text. For this reason, although often paralleling my approach, Iser's interests in a phenomenology of reading neglects the aspects of authorial intention to which we draw attention. Insofar as Iser consistently draws us towards the activity and the communicativity of reading and literature in general, and in his use of speech-act theory and its communicative element, he points us from the act of reading back to the act of writing.

Ricoeur also reminds us that all literary acts—

³² Iser, 178.

³³ Iser, 53-54, emphasis added.

regardless of however mediated –always are acts or instances of discourse: They always involve “someone saying something to someone about something.”³⁴ Structurally speaking, this involves (1) an active subject (I saying), (2) a ‘passive’ recipient, (3) something said, (4) being predicated about something else. Not only is this always structurally the case, it also is always presupposed or pre-figured in the act of reading. When we postulate an author, we postulate the intention of the author *necessarily* involving a mediated ‘saying’ (since it is writing rather than speech), to an audience, with some level of intelligible or determinable content, about something, the ‘World’ opened up by the text.

Ricoeur draws on the Heideggerian notion of the ‘world’ of the text as the “*ensemble of references opened up by every kind of text*, descriptive, or poetic, that I have read, understood, and loved.”³⁵ This ‘world’ interposes the perspective of the text guided by authorial intent into the pre-existing space of the reading subject to be the “something” to which any text or any piece of discourse depicts. Even the most austere text provides some level of “worlding” simply due to its use of language and the ability to convey and uncover. Yet it is only in more ‘poetic’ works that the world of the text becomes differentiated from the world of the reader.³⁶

Action in Action:

The application of writing as action to the texts of Hölderlin, Blanchot, and Sartre is only meant to be a preliminary sketch. My aim is not an exhaustive textual interpretation; I hardly have the space to do so. However, what I want to emphasize is the potential depth *and* breadth this understanding of text as action can accommodate. Here, recall Adorno’s *Parataxis* speech as an attempt to use a

methodic tool (in his case, a form/content distinction) to aid understanding, or to further *meaning* in the text. While Heidegger reawakened our attention to the philosophic importance of Hölderlin’s poetry, it is Adorno’s *Parataxis* that reminds us that some meanings might only be possible through the use of certain aesthetic conceptions. Similarly, I suggest that thinking of writing as action, in the way I have described, can contribute to the meaning of our text. With this in mind we can turn to Hölderlin, Blanchot and Sartre as diverse examples.

As suggested earlier, one way we can see the belief/desire correlates of authorial intention is as constraints on the types of interpretations or readings of any given text. Therefore, we cannot attribute an improbable belief of psychoanalytic human development to Kafka when it is absurd that he might have held that belief. Similarly, desire correlates, whether conscious or unconscious, can provide guardrails or constraints on plausible interpretations. Yet, belief/desire correlates can also provide ‘motivations’ for the intentions of the postulated author,³⁷ and these belief/desires are not as tied to the historical author as they would be if they were merely constraints on interpretations. For instance, in Hölderlin’s poetry, both the insights of Adorno’s interpretation and Heidegger’s reading are partially right. What Heidegger notes as the focus on Being in Hölderlin can be expressed, perhaps contrary to Heidegger’s own formulations, in the confused ‘beliefs’ motivating the work. The fact that they are confused beliefs justifies to some degree Heidegger’s understanding of the poet as an empty vessel through which language speaks.³⁸ Heidegger recognizes, and seizes upon, Hölderlin’s true beliefs. Hölderlin shows Heidegger a way to a future clearing of Being. This ‘content’ to his po-

³⁴ Cf. Paul Ricoeur “Language as Discourse” in *Interpretation Theory*. Ricoeur also draws repeatedly from speech-act theory; therefore it is no surprise the connections between his work and Iser’s. Again, it is merely the focus of each that is fundamentally different.

³⁵ Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 37. Italics added.

³⁶ Ricoeur calls this the “displacement” or “distanciation” of the reader; something that is perhaps most evident in science fiction or fantasy novels. Cf. *Interpretation Theory* and J.R. Tolkien “On Fairy-Stories” in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Del Rey, 1986).

³⁷ Two different factors speak in favor of ‘motivating’ intentions rather than necessitating or causing intentions. (1) On the model of action I am recommending, to form an intention also involves deciding or choosing to endorse belief/desire correlates; in the present use of ‘postulated’ writerly intention I simply leave out any awkward attempt at explaining the ‘decision’ or ‘choice’ of a virtual persona. (2) As this model is decidedly unpsychological and rather conceptual, the ‘motivations’ I speak of, i.e. desires and beliefs ‘motivating’ a intention are necessary rather than sufficient conditions for whatever postulated intention forms.

³⁸ Perhaps this is an Adorno inspired caricature of Heidegger’s neglect of the poet. Still, there is some justification.

etry the poet himself does not fully understand but through Heidegger it is made articulate. So the question Hölderlin asks in "Bread and Wine," Why are they silent, too, the theatres ancient and hal-
lowed?/Why not now does the dance celebrate, consecrate joy?"³⁹ Heidegger recognizes as Hölderlin's lament of the flight of the gods. The gods mingle with the "word as it was once word."⁴⁰ Further, Heidegger elaborates on Hölderlin's sacrifice or destruction of subjective intention: "But so much/Goes on, yet nothing succeeds: we are like heartless shadows,"⁴¹ The lines of the poem reach to connect each other in a Kantian unity of apperception, yet "nothing succeeds" and the we who synthesizes are like "heartless shadows." There is the appearance of subjectivity but it is only a shadow, a shadow which conceals its lack of a heart or center. It is language and not the recollections of the poet, which enters center stage with Hölderlin's work. This emphasis on language is what Heidegger recognizes as the 'prophetic' aspects of Hölderlin's poetry.

However, Heidegger missteps when he thinks that this is the only value of the poet, or the only value to Hölderlin's poetry. Adorno's emphasis on the parataxical scars dominating the work suggest a vibrant tension and dynamic energy which Heidegger's authoritative interpretation threatens to conceal. The parataxical arrangement of "constitutive dissociation" set up by "dispensing with predicative assertion,"⁴² is an 'authorial intention' guided by a 'belief' that it is the form of language which relishes in the tension between synthesizing logic and an "aconceptual synthesis" found in poetic works.⁴³ Yet it is also guided by the primordial desire to play, to communicate an urge to break free from the constraints of language, subjectivity, and the world; leading Adorno to seize on this desire, this energy, as the negative dialectic which brings to bear the fundamental tensions of the world and society, something possible because the poet's fi-

delity and passivity bring the poetic work to autonomy. Where do we see this prevailing desire and the belief (guiding the designs of many poets) of 'ordered form' in the service of the work? Adorno points us towards Hölderlin's Patmos Hymn: "She cared for the seer, beloved of God, / Who in his blessed youth had / Accompanied / The Almighty's son, never leaving his side, for / The storm-bearer loved the simplicity."⁴⁴ The religious language of ancient Greece is juxtaposed to the stark contrast of Christian religious imagery. Seer, God, Almighty's son, and storm-bearer. Back and forth the lines revert, refusing to be tamed. It is the freedom of language, defying synthesis all the while leading to a higher, aconceptual synthesis that underlies the meaning of the whole through the contrastive dissonance of the parts. Yet, accompanying the locutionary 'meaning' of the poem is the illocutionary implications of the text as well as the perlocutionary effects of speaking or reading the poem, just as Hölderlin's "Accompanied" splits up the two halves of the poem while at the same time joining them together into an uneasy whole of meaning. It is this commitment which makes the aconceptual synthesis Adorno speak of as something *constitutive* of the pact between author and reader rather than something 'posited' by either alone.

Turning to Blanchot's *The Writing of the Disaster*, we encounter a 'confused' or 'mixed' intention of a postulated author. Whatever the historical Blanchot's real intentions in crafting the text, *The Writing of the Disaster* comes across as a mixture of a powerful, moving, and insightful act of communication while at the same time disavowing the possibility of conveying or communicating its intention. The 'desire' underlying the text is a strongly performative impulse to convey that it cannot convey; to communicate the incommunicable. Lines like "thus I kill myself opposing them, I remain alive despite them" and "to keep a secret—to refrain from saying some particular thing—presupposes that one could say it," lament the inability to communicate, all while still communicating *something*, communicating—to some degree—the uncommunicable.⁴⁵ The entire form of the work conveys the desire to express the disjointedness, the loss of subjectivity of "the disaster." Lines end

³⁹ Frederick Hölderlin "Bread and Wine" cited in Heidegger *On the Way to Language* 139.

⁴⁰ Heidegger *On the Way to Language* 139.

⁴¹ "Bread and Wine" stanza 9. The bereft aspect to subjectivity is much more prevalent in other Hymns, including the Patmos Hymn which Adorno discusses in more detail. Yet it is never far from Hölderlin's work.

⁴² Theodor Adorno, *Notes to Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). 132.

⁴³ Adorno, 130.

⁴⁴ Adorno, 134 (citing Frederick Hölderlin *Werke* 2 p 175 Sieburth p. 93).

⁴⁵ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 82, 137

unanswered and unfinished. Paragraph fails to follow paragraph but repeats earlier themes, only to jump to new and fragmented ideas. The entire image is a sense of horror, of loss, that is unforgivable and unforgettable yet is in the process of being forgotten *because* it is being remembered falsely and tritely. This is combined with the belief of the ‘postulated author’ (the postulated Blanchot?) that one cannot communicate coupled with the belief that only by some act of communication, however fragmented, is remembering the disaster possible. Only of *writing* of the disaster can we acknowledge without obliterating it. Both the beliefs and desires are confused: The ‘author’ doubts the ability to communicate while firmly *believing* it to be the only way to remember authentically. Simultaneously, the profound desire to express, to reveal, to uncover is commingled with the desire to reverence, preserve, and ‘let be.’ What can come out of such confusion is the mixed intention: sometimes showing, sometimes hiding, something that expresses reverence while simultaneously reveling in the quotidian. It is what makes the work so difficult yet so profound.

Finally, I would like to turn to a much less literary example, Sartre’s *What is Literature?* As might be intuitive, the postulated intention of non-fiction is often much more straightforward than the modern novel or poem.⁴⁶ Looking at *What is Literature?* we see the postulated intentions coinciding for the most part with the historical Sartre. We say “for the most part” because the trust involved in the ‘pact’ between ‘writer’ and reader invoked in the text clashes with the model of interpersonal recognition, of Hegelian Master/slave dialectic and the *pour-soi* and *en-soi* struggle of human relations, which underlies much of the historical Sartre’s motivated beliefs. This is partly explained in terms of the commitments involved in literary actions. The ‘pact’ between reader and ‘writer’ involves performative commitments of each to recognize the necessary participation of the other. In *What is Literature?* there is an appeal to a relationship that does not consist of a polarizing domination of one

consciousness over another but a mutual involvement in the play of ‘aesthetic joy’ and the activity of freedom.

Yet, the desire and belief correlates in this text are much more straightforward than the two previous works. The belief motivating the text is the same belief expressed and conveyed to the reader: Literature has the power to change or transform the world. And the first instance of this is in reading the text which suggests this. The postulated author writes *believing* that the work presented will change the reader, and in changing the reader will begin to change the world. Similarly, the desire motivating the work is the desire to correct an imperfect world, or as Iser suggests, is “the imaginary correction of deficient realities.”⁴⁷ Yet, while the desire motivating the text is to transform the world, the text itself restricts and constrains this desire when the postulated author’s belief suggests that this is done by mirroring reality. Mirroring reality is not enough; something Iser understands: “the repertoire reproduces the familiar, but strips it of its current validity.”⁴⁸ The desire to transform the world permeating *What is Literature?* confronts the belief that reflecting or mirroring reality is enough, and in the intermingling a powerful yet unfulfilling intention is formed. The text reminds us of the capabilities of literature to transform the world, but fails to acknowledge correctly how this all comes about. The reader is left with the fervor and enthusiasm of ‘following its instructions’ only to realize the instructions are inadequate in themselves.

In the three examples, I have often shifted the focus of the level of the belief/desire correlates in each text. Are they to be understood as the overall ‘motivations’ for the general intention motivating the entirety of the text, or are they to be more specific components motivating specific parts of the whole? The immediate answer is both. Although, in stating both it assumes we can separate the two apart. The ‘postulated intention’ of the text as a whole is a synthesis of the intentions of its parts, yet this synthesis is not an aggregating act suggesting we simply add the interpretation of ‘moments’ of the text to equal the whole. Instead, the synthesis of partial intentions (and their belief/desire correlates) continually revises our understanding of the

⁴⁶ I say ‘often’ because works such as political tracts and religious pamphlets might present an exception, where the expressed content of the work is being ‘motivated’ by a often disguised desire to convert and indoctrinate based less on its professed validity and more on rhetorical flourish.

⁴⁷ Iser, 74.

⁴⁸ Iser 74.

whole, just as the whole revises our understanding of the parts.

Finally, it is important to recall the meaningfulness and communicability of all actions, especially literary actions. In each work, I assumed some desire of the author to express, even if as in the case of *The Writing of the Disaster*, this desire is coupled with a competing desire not to communicate. Even the most 'modern' or 'postmodern' literature must retain some desire to communicate or it ceases to be literature, and this is something that contemporary discussions' de-emphasis on subjectivity and the activities of writing and reading neglect.

Readerly Intention: A Sketch

Before turning to a discussion of readerly intention, one might object that the whole enterprise is a nonstarter. For, if as I suggested earlier, we postulate an authorial intention and authorial action in the *service of the reader*, we might ask why and for *whom* we should postulate readerly action and readerly intentions? In whose service is it to understand the role of the reader? It seems like the whole purpose for postulating an author; i.e. to have a center of meaning to guide and help shape our interpretation breaks down. For in discussing readerly intention we are no longer, strictly speaking, interpreting texts at all. Here, I suggest that it is he or she who reflects on reading, on the study of reading and literature itself who benefits from this readerly intention. Only in this second-order reflection, on the act of reading as an analysis in and of itself, do we find that in which we seek to interpret. As the framework of authorial intention allows us to generalize from one text to another in its breadth, now, we can generalize from the reading of any text to the act of reading itself via an analysis of readerly intention.

If I have at least provided a provisional answer defending an analysis of readerly intention, we can now turn again to our model of action to provide our sketch. In turning to the model of action, I am not prejudicing or rejecting phenomenological accounts of reading, such as those sketched by Sartre and Dufrenne, and completed in detail by Wolfgang Iser.⁴⁹ Instead, phenomenological accounts of

reading can supplement, and in many ways, expand upon the account of readerly intention presented here. For the phenomenology of reading includes the whole experience of reading in all its passivity and activity. My focus here is on the activity, the *action* of reading, and what 'motivates' and guides that action. In some ways, this will vary by the individual reader. Yet in a way dissimilar to writing, there is a much more unified account to be had. As Ricoeur remarks, a "specific kind of oneness is implied in the act of reading."⁵⁰ This can partly be captured in general belief/desire correlates. All readers, regardless of how critical the reading is, must address the text with at least some degree of what Ricoeur calls a 'first naivety' in order to see the text as text and understand its meaning. They must believe that the text has meaning, is trying to communicate meaning, and is to some degree, honest. Even the most ardent atheist must approach a religious text *as* a religious text to fully understand its meaning. She might then go on to interpret it as myth, but if the interpretation is originally solely as myth then the critical reader has in some way *misread* the text.⁵¹ Similarly and much less contentiously, to approach a text at all any reader must have the desire to read, and to appropriate the meaning of the text.

Yet, there are other levels of 'readerly intention' that action can account for. Like all actions, reading involves commitments. Commitments to follow the rules, guardrails, or directions of the text, as well as the type of commitment Sartre captures in the notion of a "pact" between the 'writer'

says trans. by Steven Ungar (Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 1988) and Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* trans. by Ed. Casey (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989).

⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 212. One might argue that writing too has its own "onesidedness" just Sartre mentions that a writer cannot be a writer and reader at the same time, since the "imaginative expectations" of the reader must be radically open. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre *What is Literature*. If you write a text, in some way that excludes the possibility of you having a 'naïve' readerly intention necessary for the productive acts of readerly synthesis.

⁵¹ Iser makes a similar point. As opposed to the open 'naïvete' of belief of readerly intention, "The alternative is to adopt a critical attitude toward the viewpoint, but then one is no longer assembling the meaning that was intended to influence the historical public—instead one is showing up the strategy through which this intention was to be realized." (Iser, 152).

⁴⁹ Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre *What is Literature and other Es-*

and reader or reader and text. There are also the specific commitments in the “intention” of the reader that demand fulfillment. All reading requires meaning. If there is no meaning, then the act of reading cannot occur. Just as the action of signaling a turn requires some bodily movement, either flipping the turn signal or motioning with my hand to ‘signal’ the turn; so too does reading require some ‘movement.’ But in the act of reading this is exemplified in the synthesizing activities of consciousness.

Prior to these synthesizing activities is the formation of the readerly intention itself. The reader has to “take and read” as Augustine so famously reminds us of in the *Confessions*. As I pointed out earlier, this presupposes certain belief and desire correlates. The readerly intention is perhaps the most ignored aspect of the writing-text-reading relationship, and properly so. For if the reader reflects on this intention while reading they are no longer reading at all. But the readerly intention is the counterpart of the ‘writerly’ intention. Both occur in the ‘pact’ between writer and reader; and it is only in the overall relationship between writer-text-reader that meaning and the work itself is constituted. Without a reader, writing is useless. Without a writer, we cannot even conceive of a reader. Yet without a text, there is only communication as dialogue, and not literature.

Conclusion:

Following Nehamas and Wollheim, I have questioned the extent we are to follow the “Death of the Author” and the reduction of authorial intention. While Barthes raises criticisms against the conventional model of meaning as derived from the historical author’s proposed intentions, this fails to eliminate the need for authorial intention in aid of the interpreting reader. Nehamas’ “postulated author” and Wollheim’s “creative process” provide a way to discuss meaning as guided by a hypothetical or postulated author without confusing this heuristic or interpretive device with the historical author of the text. Further, this return to authorial intention allows us to turn to a separate philosophical discipline. The study of action in terms of intention, desires, and beliefs provides a second heuristic device to deepen interpretive meaning. The philosophy of action reminds us that all actions—

literary actions foremost among them—are communicative acts that involve commitments of the agent to fulfill or satisfy the intentions guiding those actions. This can be further conceptualized in terms of beliefs and desires ‘motivating’ the formation of authorial (writerly) and readerly intention. Through this lens, I have provided a brief sketch of three diverse literary works and shown how the analysis of text *as* action provides deeper insights in meaning. Finally, I have then turned this heuristic guide to focus on the readerly intention in ways that complement any phenomenology of reading while focusing on other conceptual elements ‘motivating’ our acts of reading.

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RUSSELL'S CRITIQUE OF BERGSON AND THE DIVIDE BETWEEN 'ANALYTIC' AND 'CONTINENTAL' PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract:

In 1911, Bergson visited Britain for a number of lectures which led to his increasing popularity. Russell personally encountered Bergson during his lecture at University College London on the 28th of October, and on the 30th of October Bergson attended one of Russell's lectures. Russell went on to write a number of critical articles on Bergson, contributing to the hundreds of publications on Bergson which ensued following these lectures.

Russell's critical writings have been seen as part of a history of controversies between so-called 'Continental' and 'Analytic' philosophers in the twentieth century. Yet Russell's engagement with Bergson's thought comes as a response to a particular British form of Bergsonism and is involved with the wider phenomenon of the British import of Bergsonism (by figures connected in different ways to Russell, such as Hulme, Wildon Carr or Eliot). Though this may challenge the view of Russell and Bergson as enacting an early version of the 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide, there are however some particular characterisations of Bergson by Russell which contribute to the subsequent formation of the 'rotten scene' (Glendinning 2006: 69) of the divide in the second half of the twentieth century.

Key words: Russell; Bergson; Analytic; Continental; divide.

1. Introduction

The twentieth century has seen the rise of an image of Western academic philosophy as divided between two predominant camps, one 'Continental' and the other 'Analytic'. Whether some or other form of the division which this image purports to depict exists in reality is of course highly disputable and problematic. For example, though the origins of the divide have been traced by some back to Kant or

Hegel,¹ it is clear that there are not two mutually exclusive philosophical movements (united by either theses, or topical, doctrinal, methodological, stylistic concerns) which have consistently divided themselves up according to some disagreement over nineteenth-century philosophy.² Generalising attempts to map a number of dichotomies onto the 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide (e.g. one side is Kantian, or scientific, or counter-enlightenment, while the other is not) often fail to grasp the concrete historical nature of the phenomenon of the rise of such an image of a divide.

The earliest diagnosable sign of confrontation between philosophers associated with either side is to be found in Frege's (1894) polemical review of Husserl's *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (1891). Yet even this dispute is clearly one between kindred spirits, and is only retrospectively related to some notion of divide between 'Analytic' and 'Continental' philosophy.³ Carnap's 1931 criticism of Heidegger's metaphysical language marks the first instance of philosophers associated with either side coming to a kind of aporia over a particular topic, though even this has been shown to be endemic within a Germanophone context where it would be inappropriate to talk of an 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide.⁴

Between 1894 and 1931, there is to be found an intriguing instance of an encounter between two leading philosophers of the early twentieth century: Bertrand Russell and Henri Bergson. Having met Bergson in 1911, Russell criticised his philosophy; Bergson did not respond to Russell's criticisms.

¹ See e.g. Braver 2007; Critchley 1997.

² See e.g. Glendinning 2006; Glock 2008s.

³ See Dummett 1993: 26.

⁴ See e.g. Friedman 2000; Gabriel 2003; Rosado-Haddock 2008: 3.

What is intriguing about Russell's critique of Bergson is precisely the question of its status as a contribution to widening the 'gulf' between 'Analytic' and 'Continental' philosophy.⁵ In what follows, I examine Russell's encounter with Bergson, and his subsequent critical commentary on Bergson's philosophy written in 1912, focusing in particular on his review of Bergson's *Laughter* (1911), and his presentation to 'The Heretics Society' of *The Philosophy of Bergson*. Through examining Russell's encounter with Bergson, I aim to dispel the view that this was a product of a split between 'Analytic' and 'Continental' philosophy which was already in place in 1911. Instead, I aim to show how both Bergson and Russell emerged from a climate which favoured international philosophical debate, of which the import of Bergsonism into Britain was a product. Russell's critique of Bergson is shown to be a response to this import. Though the Russell-Bergson exchange was not the product of a split, but rather of an attempt towards exchange between philosophers in Britain and on the Continent, I claim that there are nevertheless several aspects of Russell's characterisation of Bergson which have ended up contributing to the formation of the abovementioned image of a split.

2. Philosophical Cosmopolitanism?

2.1 Russell's British context

Russell and Bergson were both philosophers of supranational standing and renown. Not only did their influence extend beyond the confines of, respectively, the Anglophone or Francophone academic world, but also influences on their work came from a number of heterogeneous sources that lay outside such strictly confined spaces.

The latter is particularly clear in the case of the third Earl Russell. Russell in a sense could not have avoided being 'multi-cultural' in his philosophical influences, given the environment in which he was educated. Late Victorian philosophical culture in Britain, and most prominently in England, was to a great extent dominated by so-called 'British Idealism', a loose grouping of philosophers who were thought to owe more to Hegel than to Locke and Hume.

As early as 1840, J. S. Mill had already constructed a dichotomy between two tendencies in

philosophy, the Benthamite Anglo-Saxon empiricist tradition which revolved around ideas of scientific progress, and the Coleridgean 'Continental' philosophy which was more or less romantic, reactionary and poetic.⁶ Mill proposed this dichotomy only in order to surpass it by showing the two sides to have mistaken part of the truth for the whole, and in the person of Mill the two tendencies which he describes were synthesised.

The Coleridgean import of the 'Continental' idealists had a profound impact on British academic philosophy. If in 1840 there had been a struggle, as Mill described, between the Benthamites and the Coleridgeans, one might claim that it was the latter who had prevailed through the overwhelming dominance of Idealism in academic philosophy during the late nineteenth century. And even for those who attempted to counter the prominence of idealism, crucial exchange with Germanophone academia nevertheless took place. Perhaps the most striking example of such exchange was the influence of Brentano and his school on thinkers such as J. Ward and G. Stout, who were later themselves particularly influential on the rise of the rebellious new 'analytic' (or, 'scientific', which was the term preferred by its early proponents) philosophy developed by Moore and Russell.⁷

In his philosophical development, Russell would have to absorb and come to terms with a number of the aforementioned Germanophone influences. Together with Moore, they famously attacked the Hegelian doctrines of their predecessors. It is often assumed that their attacks were conclusive – a view which had been instrumental in establishing a kind of borderline between the old Continentalist philosophy of the Victorians and its modernising 'Analytic' counterpart. This 'revolution in philosophy' would become mistakenly viewed as stereotypically not non-Anglophone,⁸ and as disinterested in its continental counterparts and unwilling to engage with the history of its discipline. The latter tendency has included a general lack of interest in the history of the making of this 'revolution', which perhaps led to the formation of such stereotypes.⁹

In contrast to these stereotypes, a quick glance at Russell's work would serve to clarify that his

⁶ Mill 1985.

⁷ See Bell 1999.

⁸ See e.g. Ryle 1971: 182.

⁹ See e.g. Sorell and Rogers 2005. The notable recent rekindling of interest in this area has undermined these stereotypes; see e.g. Preston 2005; Floyd 2009.

⁵ Chase and Reynolds argue that Russell and Bergson were 'significant in the development of the divide' (2010: 23) between analytic and continental philosophy.

commitment to philosophy transcended any barriers between Britain and the continent. Russell's most famous paper, 'On Denoting' (1905), critically introduced two very important Germanophone philosophers, Frege and Meinong, to the Anglophone world. Due at least in part to his location in Jena, and his not so popular mathematical logicism (which was seen by philosophers at the time to fall under mathematical *Logistik*, rather than the philosophical study of the nature of logic), Frege had remained an obscure figure in German philosophy.¹⁰ Russell's critical discussion of Frege's views led to a gradual interest in his work in the Anglophone world and to an appreciation of the significance of his contributions to logic and other fields.

The majority of Russell's writings on such philosophers throughout his career tend generally to be of a form that is necessarily critical, such as for example critical analyses,¹¹ reviews,¹² replies,¹³ or even satire.¹⁴ In Russell's work one finds the prototype of an attempted application of the new logico-philosophical methods of analysis to doing philosophy, and in particular to a certain 'traditional' way of philosophising. In a sense, Russell is paradigmatic in giving himself not only the new tools through which he may dismantle 'old' ways of philosophising, but also a certain aura of this newly found sense of novelty and modernisation which is involved in transforming part of philosophy into an innovatively critical enterprise. Of course, this exercise is not limited to the rejection of theses developed on the continent – Russell is perhaps at his best when he attempts to dismantle the various Victorian pretensions of his English contemporaries. At its most optimistic, the Russellian attitude is one which looks upon some of the most important and highly-regarded philosophers of the past as refutable contemporaries who have not been privileged with the tools of modern logic and its insight into argumentation.

It is partly due to Russell that a precedent is set for a certain tendency by 'Analytic' philosophers to mistakenly see those on the continent as siding with the old ways of thinking (rather than with the 'advances of our logical theory' (Ryle 1971: 182)). Often such attempts are fundamentally flawed, inso-

far as they inevitably lead to talking past each other: one cannot engage one's interlocutor in rational debate over the extent to which the building blocks of her rationality are antiquated through use of those tools which supposedly render it antiquated, without falling into a vicious circle.

It is however clear that, for Russell, if there is to be something like a new 'scientific' or 'analytic' mode of philosophising, this is universally applicable, and obviously not simply a tool for attacking philosophers on the continent. Yet despite any supranational tendencies in early analytic philosophy,¹⁵ one of the effects of its emergence is, in a way, a de-continentalising of English philosophy, which in the long-run leads to various distorted claims being made on the inferiority of its 'Continental' counterpart.¹⁶ But such borders imposed onto international philosophical dialogue (e.g. through false claims to the Britishness of 'Analytic' philosophy) were simply not in place prior to the Second World War.¹⁷

2.2 Bergson's French context

Something of the opposite appears to be true of Bergson. One might claim that Bergson is, in a way, a particularly French philosopher, and that reaction against his thought paved the way for that affiliation between Francophone and Germanophone philosophy which underlies the idea of 'Continental' philosophy.¹⁸ In a sense, this claim is founded on a philosophical taxonomy according to which Bergson's philosophy lies within (by responding to) a particularly French Cartesian tradition. Of course 'Cartesianism', which one might be mistaken in characterising as a French tradition, was as much Bergson's target as it was a tradition Bergson was interacting with. Regardless of the above, Bergson's thought offered an alternative to the then predominant Neo-Kantianism which dominated French academia, and which had also been prominent in the Germanophone world where it originated and from which it was imported into France. Bergson's alternative to Neo-Kantianism was one which attracted a much larger group of readers, a number of which lay outside the academic establishment. Though Russell may have thought of Bergson as representative of the 'old' philosophy, to many Bergson was seen as a

¹⁰ See Kusch 1995: 205–206; Käufel 2005: 141–144.

¹¹ E.g. Russell 1905; Russell 1914a.

¹² E.g. his review of Boutroux's book on James (Russell 1992: 306).

¹³ E.g. his exchange with Koyré (Russell 1992: 57–60).

¹⁴ See Russell 1954: 36–39.

¹⁵ See Sluga 1998: 111–112.

¹⁶ E.g. Ryle 1971; Hare 1960.

¹⁷ Cf. Akehurst, 2010.

¹⁸ It is also likely that this existentialist reaction to Bergson was to a great extent indebted to Bergson. See e.g. Richmond 2007.

moderniser, and this innovative aspect of his thought (with its emphasis on innovation) was conducive to the widespread influence of Bergsonism, particularly among quasi-modernistic cultural movements of the time: 'Bergsonism composed the very atmosphere in which almost all French realities were steeped since 1900' (Papadopoulos 1942: 2, trans. in Guerlac 2000: 195).

Bergson's intellectual influence goes far beyond the national borders of France. A number of examples might be given in support of this, such as his involvement with the League of Nations' International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation, which he presided over in the nineteen twenties. The mutual admiration between Bergson and William James led to certain affinities between Bergsonism and American Pragmatism, culminating in the import of Bergson's philosophy into America which influenced a number of prominent philosophers, literary intellectuals and artists in the twenties.¹⁹ During the twenties Bergson was also appropriated into the Germanophone world by being considered as an early ally of the movement of *Lebensphilosophie* which was coming to the fore at the time.²⁰ It was the Germanophone reaction to this movement, led by Martin Heidegger's rise to prominence in the late twenties, which eventually led to Bergsonism's popularity being replaced by that of existentialism in France.²¹ Heidegger's rise to prominence in Germany is associated with the 1929 International Philosophers' Workshop held at Davos in Switzerland, which had as its mission statement the rekindling of ties between French and German philosophers following the Great War.²² Thus the decline of French Bergsonism was characterised by a strengthening of mutual influence between German and French philosophy.

What is perhaps more crucially relevant to our account, though, was the attempted export of Bergson's thought into Britain during the turn of the century which forms the context of Russell's critique of Bergson. It is well known that various literary intel-

lectuals associated with British literary modernism, most famously T. S. Eliot, were deeply influenced by Bergson.²³ One of the earliest British Bergsonians associated with the early development of literary modernism was T. E. Hulme.²⁴ Hulme was a poet, critic, and self-professed dilettante in philosophy. Following his expulsion from Cambridge, Hulme's travels led him to become an importer of various philosophical currents from the continent to Britain. For example, Hulme's is one of the first Anglophone references to Husserl's work, which is viewed in favourable comparison to that undertaken by Russell (Hulme 1915: 187) and Moore (Hulme 1916).

Hulme wrote a number of articles on Bergson, particularly during the height of British Bergsonism around 1911-12.²⁵ His 'Notes on Bergson' were being published in *The New Age* between October 1911 and February 1912,²⁶ his 'A Personal Impression of Bergson' in the *Westminster Gazette*, November 1911.²⁷ He presented a series of lectures titled 'The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds' in November and December 1911,²⁸ while he published 'Bergson's Theory of Art'.²⁹ Hulme also translated the first English edition of Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1912).

Hulme's involvement may have tinged British Bergsonism, at its outset, with a certain political outlook which was otherwise highly disputed among the multiple French interpretations of Bergson. Hulme's later polemics against Russell's pacifist stance certainly did not help alleviate Russell's antipathy towards Bergson. Hulme was killed by a shell in 1917 while fighting in Oostduinkerke, and his early death possibly played its role in limiting the dissemination of certain 'Continental' philosophers in Britain, including Bergson.

Another early proponent of Bergson's thought was Herbert Wildon Carr. In a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell, Russell describes Wildon Carr as 'a humble stockbroker who happens to be Secretary of the Aristotelian Society – a man rather like the host in one of Peacock's novels, but milder' (Russell 1992: 318). This humble stockbroker was to write the defence of Bergson which was in 1914 published alongside a reply by Russell and the original arti-

¹⁹ According to Russell, Bergson and the pragmatists are the 'chief representatives' of practical philosophies 'which regard action as the supreme good, considering happiness an effect and knowledge a mere instrument of successful activity' (Russell 1914a: 2). According to Russell, such philosophies 'would have been common among Western Europeans if philosophers had been average men' (Russell 1914a: 2).

²⁰ See e.g. Scheller 1972.

²¹ Cf. Schrift 2006: 20.

²² See e.g. Gordon 2010.

²³ See e.g. Gillies 1996: 78–106.

²⁴ Cf. Schuchard 2003.

²⁵ See Thacker 2006: 39–40.

²⁶ Hulme 1955: 28–63.

²⁷ Hulme 1960.

²⁸ Reprinted in Hulme 1936: 171–214.

²⁹ Hulme 1936: 141–170.

cle.³⁰

Bergson's association with philosophical amateurs (e.g. Hulme, Carr, Eliot, etc) was not an exclusively British phenomenon, and Bergson was generally criticised for being a populariser even in France.³¹ There were, nevertheless, at least some professional philosophers in the Anglophone world, such as William James, but also more importantly Russell's collaborator Alfred North Whitehead, whose positions were quite close to Bergson's and who had partly been influenced by him.³²

2.3 Bergson in England

Bergson's fame in Britain came to its peak in 1911, when Bergson visited the country for a number of lectures. On May 26-27 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Oxford, where he presented 'The Perception of Change',³³ followed after two days by the Huxley Lecture which he delivered at the University of Birmingham on 'Life and Consciousness'.³⁴ Later that year he returned in order to present a lecture series titled 'The Nature of the Soul' on 28 October at University College London.³⁵ Russell wrote of Bergson's lectures that they 'are reported in the daily newspapers – all England has gone mad about him for some reason' (Russell 1992: 318). Hundreds of articles discussing his philosophy followed.³⁶

Russell attended Bergson's London lecture, and the two philosophers met in person. Apparently Russell was seated next to Bergson. In his letters to Morrell, he describes Bergson as 'urbane, gentle, rather feeble physically, with an extraordinarily clever mouth, suggesting the adjective "fin" (I don't know any English equivalent)' (Russell 1992: 318). Later, he would note to Morrell that 'I don't hate Bergson. If I didn't have to read him I shouldn't be tempted to; when I met him I liked him.' (Russell 1992: 315).

Bergson had a different impression of Russell. Throughout his career, he did not respond to any of Russell's criticisms, and one of his few unofficial remarks on Russell were in reference to his visit to London. On 30 October 1911, two days after Bergson's lecture, Russell presented 'On the Relations of

Universals and Particulars' to the Aristotelian Society. Bergson attended the lecture,³⁷ and seems to have made some critical remarks at the end of Russell's presentation. Bergson believed that Russell had never forgiven him for refuting 'his completely materialistic presentation of Platonic forms' (Russell 1992: 319). In fact, Bergson told his biographer that Russell 'avenged himself' (Russell 1992: 319) in his polemics against Bergson, citing particularly his comment that instinct is more powerful in 'bees, ants and Bergson' (Russell 1992: 319).³⁸

Russell's objections to Bergsonism seem to have already arisen during their London encounter. From the start, Russell thought of Bergson's philosophy as imaginative but lacking in argument.³⁹ He thought Bergson was too set in his views to answer to objections, and disliked what he perceived in Bergsonism to be an aversion to science. Perhaps the latter, and possibly more powerful dislike, was not one directed towards Bergson in particular, but to a specific English *Zeitgeist* which Russell had chosen to relate to Bergsonism. In his comments on the event, he attributes this anti-scientism to the entire gathering, who he compared to 'naughty children when they think (mistakenly) that the governess is away – boasting of their power over matter, when matter might kill them at any moment' (Russell 1992: 318). Russell does not mention the large size of the audience. Bergson's popular appeal resulted in the tickets to the event being sold out; his lectures were turned into a gathering of high society.⁴⁰

3. Russell's review of Bergson's *Laughter*

Having met Bergson in 1911, Russell went on to read and write about him. His earliest commentary on his work was a critical review of *Laughter* for *The Cambridge Review*, mockingly titled 'The Professor's Guide to Laughter', and published on 18 January 1912. Beginning with a comparison of Bergson's book to the 'constant stream of etiquette books' (Russell 1992: 385), Russell's review amounts to little more than a caricature revolving around the notion of a professor writing a guide which will fulfil people's desires 'to have a faultless sense of humour' (Russell 1992: 385). Russell portrays Bergson more or less as the academic who takes his effort to theorise about laughter too seri-

³⁰ Russell 1914a: 26–32.

³¹ See Guerlac 2000: 197.

³² See e.g. Lowe 1949.

³³ Bergson 1911.

³⁴ Bergson 1920.

³⁵ Bergson 1966.

³⁶ See Gillies 1996: 28.

³⁷ See Russell 1992: 319.

³⁸ Cf. Russell 1914a: 3.

³⁹ See Russell 1992: 318.

⁴⁰ See Gillies 1996: 29.

ously.

Russell is right to begin by noting the lack of books on comedy, though unfortunately even in posing this he exaggerates: he claims that Bergson's book fills an 'extraordinary lacuna' (Russell 1992: 385) in instruction manuals and introductory books on joking. Bergson's book is indeed unique; not in attempting to teach one how to laugh, but rather in attempting to provide a philosophical treatment of a subject which has been understudied since the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, addressing comedy, was lost.

There was, nevertheless, one book to which Bergson's work was constantly compared to by most of its British reviewers.⁴¹ This was George Meredith's *Essay on Comedy*, published in 1877. In this book, Meredith takes comedy as 'one excellent test of the civilization of a country' (Meredith 1897: 82), proceeding to assign various types of comic traits to particular civilisations. Thus for example the Germans are said to laugh infrequently and monstrously, the Middle-Easterners (which are bundled together) are said to drive comedy to the 'gutters of grossness', while the highest forms of humour are diagnosed as either Attic or Anglo-Saxon.

Though Russell does not mention Meredith in comparison to Bergson, it is partly the idea of Parisian wit against the humour of Londoners which seems to underlie Russell's critique:

The truth seems to be that the comic differs with the individual, the country, and the age. Latin wit is different from Teutonic humour; the laughter of the Parisian is different from the laughter of the Londoner. For this reason it would seem to be impossible to find such a formula as M. Bergson seeks. Every formula treats what is living as if it were mechanical, and is therefore by his own rule itself a fitting object of laughter. (Russell 1992: 386).

Here Russell appears to have convinced himself of the truth of his own caricature, i.e. that Bergson indeed is attempting to offer a formula which captures the entirety of comedy in a way which might end up being used as a manual on how to 'acquire the finest flower of Parisian wit' (Russell 1992: 385). Though Russell's conviction in his own caricature seems at first almost like an innocent form of indulgence in his attempt to produce a comical re-

view of a book on comedy, there might nevertheless be a deeper and more troubling set of beliefs hiding behind it.

Russell's review, though comical, demonstrates at least partly what might have been the expected scholarly response to Bergson, insofar as it claims that certain limitations should be set for philosophical enquiry, and that a treatise on laughter obviously exceeds such bounds. Beside the various excessively satirical statements against Bergson, Russell poses some rudimentary objections to the content of Bergson's book. For example, he criticises his basic notion that laughter is connected to instances when human bodies resemble mere machines. As a counterexample to Bergson's, he produces an exaggerated version of the standard slapstick episode of slipping on fruit peel, where serious injury is involved. He further objects to Bergson's insistence on repetition, by pointing out that the repetition of a bad joke does not produce laughter. He rejects Bergson's association of comedy with comic types, by using the example of Balzac as a non-comic writer who uses types, and Falstaff as an individual who is a comical character. He mentions the British essayist Charles Lamb, giving an example in which the opposite of Bergson's 'formula' holds true, i.e. in which something mechanical is humanised to humorous effect. Finally, he remarks that Bergson's association of laughter with absence of feeling finds its negation in those cases where sympathy is the cause of laughter; he vaguely refers to Lamb, as well as to Hamlet's passionate wit which he thinks would be less likely outside its tragic context.

The above objections are serious, yet perhaps all too quick and superficial, though no less superficial than might be expected of a book review of less than two pages. What is troubling about Russell's review is its very early association of two elements which will become prominent in the rhetoric characteristic of the so-called divide between 'Analytic' and 'Continental' philosophy. One could read Russell's review in such a way as to suggest that there might be a vague link between the excesses of Bergson's attempt to philosophise about laughter and the kind of national cultural barriers which Russell accuses Bergson of failing to cross. Here we have the first steps toward the formation of the stereotypical 'Continental' philosopher who, taking himself too seriously, abuses his authority (derived through such seriousness) by overstepping his boundaries. Despite Bergson's philosophy being presented as 'largely a protest against the attempt to bind down living

⁴¹ See Connor 2008.

things by the fetters of cast-iron formulas' (Russell 1992: 385), it is overwhelmed by Bergson's 'Latin instinct for order' (Russell 1992: 385). Russell's implication is that by writing a book about laughter, which attempts to statically capture what laughter is, Bergson contradicts himself. Somehow this contradiction is vaguely implicated in some particularly 'Latin' character of philosophising.

4. Russell on *The Philosophy of Bergson*

4.1 *The presentation to The Heretics Society*

On 11 March 1912, around two months following the publication of his review of Bergson's *Essay on Laughter*, Russell presented a paper on Bergson to 'The Heretics Society' at Cambridge. The Heretics were founded in 1909 as a group of undergraduates who met primarily to 'discuss more or less religious matters' (Russell 1992: 313). They counted among their members C. K. Ogden, who was one of the society's founders and who also founded *The Cambridge Review* (where Russell published his review of Bergson), as well as F. P. Ramsey, among others.⁴² Their outlook on the religious matters they were discussing was more or less one of radical questioning, and to this end they enlisted the help of both famous atheists such as Russell, but also of some, like G. K. Chesterton, who were Christian apologists. On 25 February 1912, a week prior to Russell's presentation, T.E. Hulme had presented a paper titled 'Anti-Romanticism and Original Sin' to the society.⁴³

It is not clear whether the topic of Russell's presentation was chosen partly as a response to the fact that Hulme had recently presented.⁴⁴ In his letter to Morrell dated 12 October 1911, Russell says that Ogden 'wanted a paper out of me, and I more or less undertook to write about Bergson next term' (Russell 1992: 313). This seems to show that it was Rus-

sell's wish to write about Bergson. It is possible that this interest on Russell's behalf was partly due to curiosity about Bergson's rising popular appeal, which Russell refers to in his letters to Morrell at the time.⁴⁵

Russell had already begun reading Bergson prior to agreeing with Ogden to write his paper on him. Interestingly, Russell's earliest impressions from reading Bergson resulted in his very brief remarks to Morrell about Bergson's conception of nothingness:

In the intervals of my morning, I read Bergson on Nothing, which he thinks is nothing. This led me to a number of reflections on negation – a very puzzling topic. (Russell 1992: 313).

What precisely is intriguing about this all too brief and perhaps obscure comment by Russell is that it is here that the Russell-Bergson exchange comes closest to touching on the subsequent history of the 'Analytic'–'Continental' divide. Russell's (1905) criticism of Meinong is perhaps the first move in a long line of criticisms by philosophers deemed to be representatives of the 'Analytic' camp weighed against representative 'Continental' philosophers.⁴⁶ The paradigmatic case of such critique is Rudolf Carnap's (1931) attack against Heidegger's exclamation that 'Das Nichts nichtet' (the nothing nothings),⁴⁷ which was repeated by A. J. Ayer against both Heidegger (1936) and Sartre (1945); the same sentence by Heidegger is also the topic of various remarks by Wittgenstein and Quine.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Russell's commentary on Bergson's conception of nothingness consists of a quasi-tautology (i.e. the claim that nothing is thought by Bergson to be nothing), and an expression of puzzlement briefly stated in a letter to a lover; not much is to be made of this.

The sense of some radical gap between *two* and only *two* cultures of philosophising, one 'Continental' and the other 'Analytic', is wholly absent from Russell's criticism of Bergson. Of course Russell notoriously misunderstood Bergson, unquestionably due to reading him with a view to demolish what he thought was the imaginative anti-scientistic philosophy of a mystic. On particular issues Russell saw

⁴² Both Ogden and Ramsey were involved in the rising tide of 'analytic philosophy' and were responsible for the first translation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922).

⁴³ Hulme and Russell would later, in 1916, engage in a public controversy over the war. The controversy began with Hulme's response to Russell's lectures on 'The Principles of Social Reconstruction', published under the pseudonym 'North Staffs' in *The New Age* (North Staffs 1916; Russell 1916); the dispute continued for two months in the pages of *The Cambridge Review*.

⁴⁴ Russell may have targeted Hulme when he called Bergson irrationalist (Thacker 2006: 40).

⁴⁵ 'I have read a good deal of him and I can see why people like him' (Russell 1992: 313).

⁴⁶ See Oliver 1999: 63–69.

⁴⁷ Cf. Vrahimis 2009.

⁴⁸ Wittgenstein et al 2003: 69–77; Quine 1960: 133.

Bergson as his antithesis,⁴⁹ and thus to a certain extent he went on to construe in his work on Bergson something of what he thought to be antithetical to his own work.

Misunderstanding does not, however, prevail in Russell's interpretation of Bergson. Clearly Russell purposefully misconstrues some aspects of Bergson for comic effect. His presentation to a lay public at the Heretic Society perhaps drove Russell to exaggeration.⁵⁰ Russell himself afterwards described the paper as 'unduly flippant' (Russell 1992: 318) and regretted some of the jokes; nevertheless he did include a version of it in his *History of Western Philosophy* (1946).⁵¹

4.2 Criticism of Bergson's account of number and space

Despite all the jokes, Russell includes in his criticism at least one serious objection to Bergson, which he derives from his own work on the foundation of mathematics. This is the infamous critique of Bergson's conception of number, extended to his association of quantity with space. Russell's self-professed pedantry results in an argument which is based on distinguishing between three possible meanings of the term number which are confused in Bergson's use of the term.⁵² According to Russell, number can mean either (i) the general concept number, which can be applied to some particular numbers, (ii) particular numbers, or (iii) any collection to which particular numbers may be applicable. Bergson, Russell surmises, defines number as a collection of units, a definition which therefore excludes (i) and (ii). Yet to define number as (iii), would mean to confusedly imply that (iii) is either (ii) or (i), i.e. it would be to think that a collection, such as the twelve apostles, somehow is the particular number 12 or even number in general. The particular number 12 is something that collections of twelve, as opposed to collections of eleven, have in common. Thus, according to Russell,

the number 12 is neither a collection of twelve terms, nor is it something which all collections have in common ; and number in general is a property of 12 or 11 or any other number, but not of the various collections that have twelve terms or eleven terms. (Russell 1914: 14)

This is meant to undermine Bergson's idea of the primacy of geometry over logic, and particularly his claim that number is primarily spatial. According to Russell, number is not (iii) and thus is more abstract than any particular collection to which a number may be applied. It is impossible for (i) and (ii) to be pictured in space, whereas it is not for (iii).⁵³

Russell furthermore expands this criticism to the entirety of Bergson's 'contention that every plurality of separate units involves space' (Russell 1914: 15), by suggesting that Bergson's insistence on space is centred on vision. Bergson is, according to Russell, an individual in whom visual perception, rather than e.g. aural or tactile, is more acute: a 'visualiser'.⁵⁴ Thus, for example, a series of clock strikes may be counted (as a plurality of separate units) without being placed in an imaginary space. It is, according to Russell, a mere autobiographical fact about Bergson which leads him to reduce all forms of pluralities of separate units into spatially separable pluralities.

4.3 Bergson and the British Idealists

Though Russell passes over them too quickly, the above are two examples of objections which may have opened up a dialogue between Russell's and Bergson's positions, and indeed Wildon Carr who replied in place of Bergson did in fact undertake a reply to these theses. The more fundamentally problematic aspect of Russell's treatment of Bergson emerges when Russell associates him to a particular British strand of thought which he had once identified with and now seeks to oppose, namely the British Idealists.

Calling Bergson's philosophy 'anti-intellectualist', Russell accuses Bergson of thriving 'upon errors and confusions of the intellect' (Russell 1914: 16), preferring 'bad thinking to good' (Russell 1914: 16) in his attempt to show that intuition is preferable to intellect. According to Russell, Bergson's anti-

⁴⁹ See Russell 1992: 313.

⁵⁰ Though Chase and Reynolds (2010: 23) argue that both Russell and Bergson were already public figures at this time, Russell's speech at the Heretic Society was 'his first success as a public speaker' (Russell 1992: 317; cf. Monk 1996: 247).

⁵¹ Russell returned to Bergson in 1914, both in *Mysticism and Logic* where Bergson plays the role of the mystic (Russell 1917: 12–18), and in *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Russell, 1914b) where Bergson is often referred to.

⁵² Russell 1914a: 14–15.

⁵³ Wildon Carr's reply to this (Russell 1914a: 28–29) is rejected by Russell as a misunderstanding (Russell 1914a: 34).

⁵⁴ But see Wildon Carr's corrections (Russell 1914a: 27–28), which Russell accepted (Russell 1914a: 33–34).

intellectualism extends to his interpretations of science and mathematics, which Russell thinks are there as a rhetorical device for convincing careless readers.⁵⁵ Of course, Bergson's careless readers, ignorant of the aspects of science and mathematics Bergson interprets, are most likely equally ignorant of Russell's technical work in the foundations of arithmetic.⁵⁶

Russell avoids commenting on Bergson's views of biology and physiology, but focuses on his views of mathematics invoking his expertise of the subject.⁵⁷ His basic claim here is that Bergson 'has deliberately preferred traditional errors in interpretation to the more modern views which have prevailed among mathematicians for the last half century' (Russell 1914: 16). Russell attributes such traditional errors to Hegel and his followers, who had attempted to 'prove all mathematics self-contradictory' (Russell 1914: 17) based upon the 'fallacies and confusions' (Russell 1914: 17) which lay at the foundations of the infinitesimal calculus in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Russell believes that modern work on the foundations of mathematics had removed the obstacles which had caused these problems; of course his own work, together with Whitehead, was largely responsible for this. He therefore complains that following Hegel, philosophers have paid no heed to such achievements in the philosophy of mathematics, the foundations of arithmetic, the creation of modern logic, and all other relevant fields. Insofar as the latter is concerned, he is of course right, given that a large part of the innovative work done by philosophers on arithmetic was deemed too mathematical (and therefore extra-philosophical) by philosophers at the time.

However the justification Russell gives for philosophers' ignorance of new developments in mathematics is puzzling to say the least:

so long as the main object of philosophers is to show that nothing can be learned by patience and detailed thinking, but that we ought rather to worship the prejudices of the ignorant under the title of 'reason' if we are Hegelians, or of 'intuition' if we are Bergsonians, so long philosophers will take

care to remain ignorant of what mathematicians have done to remove the errors by which Hegel profited. (Russell 1914: 17).

Here Russell's indictment of Hegelian 'reason' and its grouping together with Bergsonian 'intuition' muddles the waters.⁵⁸ Of course the former part of the equation refers to his contemporaries in Britain, the older generation of philosophers (typically bundled together as 'British Idealists', to a large extent due to Russell's *en masse* rejection of their work) who paid little attention, Russell had felt, to the implications of advances in the foundations of arithmetic for philosophy. Whether this is absolutely true or not is not to be decided here.

What is, however, puzzling is this identification of one of Russell's enemies with another, which demolishes the substantial differences which exist between the two. It is rather unclear how the 'anti-intellectualism' which Russell attributes to Bergson can be equated with the absolute idealism of the Bradleyans. Russell's equation blurs the challenge that the new wave of British Bergsonism posed to any remnants of the old British academic establishment composed primarily of Neo-Hegelians, a challenge which might have resembled that which Bergsonism posed to the Neo-Kantian establishment in French academia, or later to the Germanophone Neo-Kantian academic establishment. If both Bergsonism and Hegelianism, following 'the example of most philosophers' (Russell 1914: 16) ignored the advances of modern logic, this clearly cannot be due to some common ground in their otherwise utterly opposed insistence on the one hand on 'reason', on the other on 'intuition'.

5. The 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide

The role that Russell's review played in the British reception of and reaction to Bergson, though important, should be placed within the context of the hundreds of articles, many critical, which were written on Bergson after 1911. British Bergsonism became a sort of fashion that soon came to be overshadowed by the Great War. Its demise perhaps owed more to the war than to Russell. Russell was quickly judged to have misunderstood Bergson,⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Compare with Sokal and Bricmont 1999.

⁵⁶ See e.g. Russell 1914a: 30.

⁵⁷ Though Bergson's mathematical prowess was not comparable to Russell's, in 1877 his original solution to a mathematical problem was awarded first prize at a congress; see Lacey 1989:59-60.

⁵⁸ Russell later claims that the distinction between reason and intuition is illusory; the latter, he thinks, is favoured by a quasi-theological romantic anti-scientism (1914b: 12-13).

⁵⁹ See e.g. Wildon Carr's reply to Russell (Russell 1914a: 28-29); Rostrevor 1821: 138-150.

and perhaps this impression was reinforced by Bergson's lack of a reply to Russell, other than his brief endorsement of Carr's defence.⁶⁰

Russell's critique of Bergson was directed as much towards the phenomenon of the import of the latest 'Continental' philosopher, as it was towards its native importers (e.g. Hulme, Carr). Russell characteristically wrote about M. Bergson, while Carr replied about Mr. Bergson. Russell furthermore insisted on forging a link, vague though it may be, between this import and prior imports, such as Hegelianism. Yet when Russell speaks of such foreigners, he is also addressing a particularly British scene.

The image of an 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide refers to an absence of interaction between two seemingly heterogeneous traditions. Thus, it would be inappropriate to talk of an 'Analytic'-'Continental' divide in 1912, at the peak of British Bergsonism. Nevertheless, Russell introduces a number of stereotypes in his discussion of Bergson, which will plant the seeds for future misconstrual of the divide: (i) Bergson is accused of being unaware of the advances in modern logic,⁶¹ (ii) Bergson is bundled together with Hegel (with the implication that they are both traditional pre-analytic philosophers), and finally (iii) Bergson's philosophical arguments are dismissed, and he is demoted to the status of a poet.⁶² Though these particular accusations do little harm when applied to a particular philosopher (who may dismiss them as Russell's personal grudge against him), and could possibly even be construed in such a manner as to contain a grain of truth, they are misleading when projected onto the idea of a 'Continental philosophy' in general. Thus, Russell's critique of Bergson's philosophy, far from being the product of some general split between two kinds of philosophy, is productive of a number of attributes associated with an image of contemporary Western philosophy as divided into two.

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⁶⁰ 'Je trouve excellente la réponse que Mr. Wildon Carr a déjà faite, et qui porte sur les points spéciaux visés par la critique de Mr. Russell.' (Russell 1914a, i).

⁶¹ Cf. Ryle 1971.

⁶² Cf. Carnap 1931.

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Discussions

MUCH ADO ABOUT DUCKSPEAK

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Abstract:

The so-called bifurcation between analytic and continental philosophies is discussed, from the perspective of Whiteheadian process thought, with the help of four questions: what is the scope and goal of philosophy? do philosophical debates require radical empiricism? could or should philosophy become an expertise? how does the analytical divide impacts the democratic ideal?

Key words: Analytic philosophy, Continental philosophy, Process thought, Metaphysics, Anthropology, Politics, Alfred North Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, William James, Pierre Hadot, George Orwell.

For nearly a century now, the ancient debate on the nature of the interplay between philosophy and science has been polarized (and sometimes paralyzed) by the so-called bifurcation between analytic and continental philosophies. The bone of contention is well-known. Does philosophy bring special issues to the front or does it treat only puzzles that are temporarily left out of the scope of mainstream scientific disputes? Is there a philosophical style of inquiry and of writing, with specific criteria of coherence and of adequacy, or should philosophy follow the scientific criteria alone? *Mutatis mutandis*, this is nothing but the old question of the *philosophia ancilla theologia*. Shouldn't philosophy be the mistress of her own house?

This short study argues that A. N. Whitehead's (1861–1947) works can help us to understand the stakes. Two important milestones with that regard are the *Principia Mathematica*'s logicism (1910) and the *Vienna Circle*'s logical empiricism (1929).¹

¹ Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, London, Cambridge University Press,

In the former, Whitehead shared the speculative burden with his previous student Russell,² and in the later Whitehead's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* (1919) and *Concept of Nature* (1920) were mentioned as important contributions to the narrow topics discussed. But when the analytic turn had generated various schools, each cruising at a steady speed with figures such as Wittgenstein and Ayer, Whitehead himself was publishing studies crisscrossing all fields and blurring all past and future fashionable distinctions: algebra, mereo-topology, epistemology, anthropology, speculative metaphysics and natural theology and so forth. If we discuss the matter from the perspective of

1910–1913 (the project was launched late in 1900 or early in 1901); *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung: Der Wiener Kreis*, Wien, Artur Wolf, 1929 (written by Rudolf Carnap, Hans Hahn and Otto Neurath but published anonymously).

² “Gertrude Stein and Doctor Whitehead walked endlessly around the country. They talked of philosophy and history, it was during these days that Gertrude Stein realised how completely it was Doctor Whitehead and not Russell who had had the ideas for their great book. Doctor Whitehead, the gentlest and most simply generous of human beings never claimed anything for himself and enormously admired anyone who was brilliant, and Russell undoubtedly was brilliant.” (Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* [New York, Harcourt Brace, 1933] in *Selected Writings*. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes by Carl Van Vechten, New York, Random House, 1946, p. 123. For a less enthusiastic report, see Russell's “Whitehead and Principia Mathematica,” *Mind*, Vol. LVII, N° 226, 1948, pp. 137–138. For an updated assessment of Whitehead's role, see Ronny Desmet's “A Refutation of Russell's Stereotype,” in Ronny Desmet and Michel Weber (edited by), *Whitehead. The Algebra of Metaphysics. Applied Process Metaphysics Summer Institute Memorandum*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Éditions Chromatika, 2010, pp. 127–210.

Whiteheadian process thought, it becomes manifest that the analytical and the continental streaks could work together: they have never been identified or opposed by Whitehead and even less separated in his later works. Let us show this with the help of four questions: what is the scope and goal of philosophy? is radical empiricism necessary? could or should philosophy become an expertise? how does the analytical divide affect the democratic ideal?

1. Is Philosophy Worth Living?

Philosophical disputes in general and this one in particular could be settled either by an *analysis* of the foundations and structure of knowledge or *pragmatically* by questioning the consequences of the categories at work. In more mundane terms: one could either compare the consistency and the coherence of the respective arguments or their applicability and matter-of-fact consequences. But whether we choose to follow the uphill path from the facts towards the source or principle (*archē*), or downhill from the facts towards their consequences, in order to do so, one always needs to simplify the thesis of the arch-enemies. We have to navigate between the Charybdis of a too narrow comparison (say between two contemporary books) and the Scylla of a too broad one (between two schools). As Whitehead wrote: we should “seek simplicity and distrust it.”³

Now, since the *ananke stenai* (“we have to stop”) envisioned by Aristotle in the context of a closed and strictly hierarchized world—a cosmos—, in order to prevent an infinite regress, has lost most of its relevance in a chaosmos that is so to speak infinite in all directions (spatial, temporal and consensual),⁴ it makes sense more than ever to treat any

feud pragmatically. (As James claims, pragmatism is but a new name for some old ways of thinking; to a certain extent, it is a return to Socrates.)

A pragmatic settlement involves two complementary stances: first, to acknowledge that there is no need to fuel the hostilities and that different philosophical arguments can co-exist in an open universe (cf. James’ *multiverse* or Blood’s *pluriverse*) and especially in an open society (cf. Popper’s right-wing polemic); whatever way you look at it, dogmatism is a tragic mistake and every thinker is fully entitled to follow her personal path. It seems reasonable thus to subscribe to James’ claim and to link difference in philosophical standpoints to temperamental differences: some readers feel at home with Wittgenstein and some with Heidegger; whatever the reasons, they have to be respected, normalization does not belong on these shores either and yet... Some, comparison is possible in light of the private and public consequences of the respective arguments.

The first criterion to discriminate pragmatically the two approaches is thus temperamental or existential: what kind of philosophical exercise makes sense in the life of a given individual? Which type of philosophy is worth living? The one that accepts all our experiences *prima facie* and attempts to curb the language to deal with all their consequences, speculative or otherwise? The one that renovate the old Greek imperative *athanatizein!* (“seek immortality!”)? Or the one that drastically filters both the experiences that could and should be accepted *and* their acceptable rationalization? Again, although all personal choices are to be respected, a strong argument can be made that, all things considered, the widest standpoint should be encouraged, not the narrowest one. When Hume, at the end of *The Treatise of Human Nature*’s Part I, bluntly confesses that (some of) his philosophical speculations are altogether foreign to his actual life as he lives it, does he not cast serious doubt on its applicability? Yet, the very fact that he continued to philosophize for another thirty years means that this *discipline* nurtured his life...

Moreover, in light of the fact that the philosophical chessboard is not equally occupied by the players, it makes sense to vindicate the besieged part: on the one hand, some analytic schools have taken over the center of the board (from where pieces can access most of the squares) and this was made possible by systematic attacks on other traditions; on the other, most continental schools have

³ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* [1920], Cambridge, 1964, p. 163 ; cf. his *Principles of Natural Knowledge* [1919/1925], Dover, 1982, p. 76.

⁴ The postmodern world is the product of three types of openings; they have been sketched in recent papers of mine: “Vision of Existence and Knowledge of Being,” in Yvanka B. Raynova & Vesselin Petrov (eds.), *Being and Knowledge in Postmetaphysical Context*, Wien, Institut für Axiologische Forschungen, 2008, pp. 13–29; “Pragmatic Anarchy in A. N. Whitehead,” in Peter Hare, Michel Weber, James K. Swindler, Oana-Maria Pastae, Cerasel Cuteanu (eds.), *International Perspectives on Pragmatism*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp. 118–147; “The Urizen of Whiteheadian Process Thought,” Mark Dibben and Rebecca Newton (eds.), *Applied Process Thought II: Following a Trail Ablaze*, Frankfurt / Lancaster, ontos verlag, 2009, pp. 61–73.

retreated and (more or less politely) ignore arguments foreign to their domain.

2. Radical rationalism or radical empiricism?

In order to understand better what is at stake, a short Jamesean digression is welcome. James' insistence on the difference between two basic type of philosophical thinking is well-known: on the one hand, rationalism and its monistic trend; on the other, empiricism and its pluralism. But the exact significance of his *radical* empiricism is often taken for granted. A close reading of rationalist and empiricist arguments reveals that both philosophical streams share the exact same substantialism. Accordingly, James' radical empiricism is designed to overcome *both* rationalism (with its innate general ideas formatted by *calculus*) and empiricism (with its acquired particular ideas put together by *association*). It claims that primitive experience is not equivalent to elementary experience: empiricists have mixed up the source or origin and the element. Experience *qua* experience —“pure experience” as James calls it— does not have at all the simplicity, the atomicity, the individuality that is presupposed by rationalists and empiricists alike: it is vague, confused (neither clear nor distinct, certainly not rational) and above all relational.⁵ Here is Russell's straightforward testimony with that regard:

I began to develop a philosophy of my own

⁵ “Our original sensible totals are, on the one hand, subdivided by discriminative attention, and, on the other, united with other totals, —either through the agency of our own movements, carrying our senses from one part of space to another, or because new objects come successively and replace those by which we were at first impressed. The 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience. Experience, from the very first, presents us with concentered objects, vaguely continuous with the rest of the world which envelops them in space and time, and potentially divisible into inward elements and parts. These objects we break asunder and reunite. We must treat them in both ways for our knowledge of them to grow; and it is hard to say, on the whole, which way preponderates. But since the elements with which the traditional associationism performs its constructions —'simple sensations,' namely— are all products of discrimination carried to a high pitch, it seems as if we ought to discuss the subject of analytic attention and discrimination first. The noticing of any part whatever of our object is an act of discrimination.” (William James, *The Principles of Psychology* [1890]. Authorized Edition in two volumes, New York, Dover Publications, 1950, I, p. 487.)

during the year 1898 [...]. It was Whitehead who was the serpent in this paradise of Mediterranean beauty. He said to me once : “You think the world is what it looks in fine weather at noon day ; I think it is what it seems like in the early morning when one first wakes from deep sleep.” I thought this remark horrid, but could not see how to prove that my bias was any better than his. At last he showed me how to apply the technique of mathematical logic to his vague and higgledy-piggledy world, and dress it up in Sunday clothes that the mathematician could view without being shocked.⁶

All experiences have to be taken into account and the most significant of them are *not* the ones occurring in the normal state of consciousness (or consciousness-zero).⁷ This double mistake is typical of Modernity and prevalent in most contemporary philosophical schools: it is true that some scholars try to cure this blindness but the nosology they invoke is usually psychoanalytical and the patient dies... In the same way that Locke improperly imported into psychology Boyle's corpuscular paradigm, Spencer wrongly used Laplace's cosmogenetic model of the solar system to understand psychogenesis. In the West, it is only in the process-pragmatic “school” that, thanks to the underground legacy of Myers and Ward, prophylaxis has substituted for the *analytical* cure.

The argument framed by process philosophers does not however amount to a complete rejection of substantialism: substantialism and subject-predicate grammar carve a worldview that is adequate to everyday life —but not to all possible experiences. Substantialism has only a very limited scope and it can be reconstructed from a wider process perspective. We do notprehend parts but the Whole in its complex opacity (what Whitehead calls our “actual world,” which is akin to von Uexküll and von Baer's *Umwelt*). From that prehended Whole, we discriminate parts that are eventually organized by a triple

⁶ Bertrand Russell, *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1956, p. 39.

⁷ “Consciousness and Rationality from a Process Perspective” in Michel Weber and Anderson Weekes (eds.), *Process Approaches to Consciousness in Psychology, Neuroscience, and Philosophy of Mind*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 2009, pp. 345–384.

genesis (onto-, phylo- and koino-genesis).⁸ To put it in another way: our conscious experience emerges progressively as the process of individuation takes place (ontogenesis), together with socialization (koinogenesis) and after a long biological evolution (phylogenesis).

In brief: experience is not *amalgamated* by calculus or by association from simple to complex, but *emerges* progressively from complex to simple. This standpoint opens two new process perspectives: the neutral monism of the pure flux (cf. James' *Principles of Psychology* or Whitehead's *Concept of Nature*) and the neutral pluralism of the bud-like eventfulness (James' *Some Problems of Philosophy* and Whitehead's "epochal theory" in *Process and Reality*). In both cases the pure experience thesis holds: "we" have a direct, indiscriminate experience of "the world" —better: discriminations between perceiving "subject" and perceived "objects" and between "objects" themselves have yet to be made, the silent awareness or acquaintance is first.⁹ The bottom difference between monism and pluralism lies in the assessment of the question of novelty: if processes are continuous, no genuine novelty is possible and we remain in a neutral monism that nevertheless offers the solution to most epistemological puzzles (such as the mind-body problem).

What is the cash value of all this for the question under debate? Continental philosophy could be said to necessarily aim at a radical empiricism of sorts (remember that we have to deal with broad generalizations of the two camps) while analytical philosophy willingly adopts a radical rationalism.

Radical empiricism postulates that all experiences —and only experiences— have to be taken into account in philosophy. In Whitehead's words:

In order to discover some of the major categories under which we can classify the infinitely various components of experi-

ence, we must appeal to evidence relating to every variety of occasion. Nothing can be omitted, experience drunk and experience sober, experience sleeping and experience waking, experience drowsy and experience wide-awake, experience self-conscious and experience self-forgetful, experience intellectual and experience physical [...].¹⁰

We can relativize some exceptional mental states, but we cannot deny that they were experienced in the first place, and this evidence has to be acknowledged and systematized. Interestingly enough, Whitehead links this question with the temperamental conundrum evoked at the outset of our discussion:

The chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence. This narrowness arises from the idiosyncrasies and timidities of particular authors, of particular social groups, of particular schools of thought, of particular epochs in the history of civilization. The evidence relied upon is arbitrarily biased by the temperaments of individuals, by the provincialities of groups, and by the limitations of schemes of thought.¹¹

Hence, the task of philosophy is *to recover the totality obscured by the selection*¹²—never ever to add an extra process of selection.

Analytic philosophy tends to foster a radical rationalism that makes a virtue of its two main vices. On the one hand, it chooses to ignore most of the experiential spectrum; on the other, it seeks to embrace all phenomena with a dogmatic rationalism. Only consciousness-zero phenomena understood from the perspective of techno-scientific rationalism are meaningful. The rationalism involved is dogmatic in so far as it defines a priori what is a fact and what is a *rational* fact. Experience drunk or drowsy is not a fact —and if it becomes a fact, it is screened through the categories that made the success of Western technoscience: *in illo tempore*, it was the

⁸ Cf. James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism* [Posthumously published by Ralph Barton Perry], New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912, p. 145 and my "Consciousness and Rationality from a Process Perspective", op. cit.

⁹ "Through feelings we become acquainted with things, but only by our thoughts do we know about them. Feelings are the germ and starting point of cognition, thoughts the developed tree. The minimum of grammatical subject, of objective presence, of reality known about, the mere beginning of knowledge, must be named by the word that says the least. Such a word is the interjection, as lo! there! ecco! voilà! or the article or demonstrative pronoun introducing the sentence, as the, it, that." (*The Principles of Psychology*, op. cit., I, p. 222)

¹⁰ *Adventures of Ideas*, [1933], Free Press, 1967, p. 226; cf. p. 222. Accordingly, he defines adequacy as "everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme." (*Process and Reality* [1929]. Corr. Edition, Free Press, 1978, p. 3)

¹¹ *Process and Reality*, p. 337.

¹² *Process and Reality*, p. 15.

substantialism that is correlated to the subject-predicate linguistic pattern; now technoscience works with an uncritical process slant. Neither are all facts acceptable nor are all rationalities, all systems of thought. The logical clarification of thought presupposes the existence of simple constituents, not their emergence from an organic tissue. James' and Whitehead's warnings are totally ignored and philosophy runs its circular arguments in a pre-Copernican way. (*In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni.*)

3. Living ideas versus dead expertise

If we emphasize this new contrast, we find two very different philosophical gestures.

Embracing all experiences goes hand in hand with the ideal of philosophy *qua* living wisdom or spiritual exercise. A living philosophy is the outgrowth rather than the outcome of a living philosopher. The process of individuation requires that the *cosmopolites*, the citizen of the world, emerges out of the innumerable links, made and in the making, that anchors him in a given spatio-temporal spot. *Experiential philosophy* cannot be taught, it can only be practiced or exercised: this is nothing but the etymological root of asceticism (*askêsis* or exercise). The role of philosophy is to create an *ekstasis*: a standing outside one's self to give individual life perspective and meaning. Pierre Hadot has, for instance, reactualized the spiritual power of the philosophical exercises that haunted the entire history of philosophy until the second Renaissance, when the urgent task for Mersenne (1623), Descartes (1628) and Gassendi (1655) was to crush the social and political reformism of the first Renaissance (say from Ficinus, 1482, to Andreae, 1619) and to provide a new —scientific— foundation to Christian supernaturalism.¹³

Seeking the clarification of propositions (that

common sense has most of the time no problem whatsoever to deal with) leads to a completely different philosophical ideal. The same holds for the definition of philosophy by the practice of thought-experiments and other armchair challenges. *Experimental philosophy* should be taught and leads indeed to the creation of more or less successful schools (where nobody of course ever reads Illich), academic degrees, awards and grants. Philosophy is here far less adventurous: it is only a matter of acquiring by training the proper qualification in pedestrian affairs: decision aids, problem-solving tools and other forms of expertise that are consensual enough not to see the flaws in market democracy and adequate enough to smoothen the production processes and that are thus valued by firms. Let us take an example of such a *useful* skill.

The "brain in a vat" thought *experiment* has become quite trendy. It was first imagined in 1954 by Philip K. Dick (1928–1982) in the context of his staggering science-fiction novels (always outstandingly visionary but sometimes poorly written), then theatricalized by Robert Nozick (1974) and especially by Daniel Dennett (1978) and later conceptualized by Hilary Putnam (1981) and by John L. Pollock (1986). When you boil it down, the question is: do we have an experience of *What is it Like to Be (in) a Vat?* In the eighties, scientists puzzled by the nature of computer processes used to claim "they're just like big brains;" nowadays, it is the other way around and cognitivists argue that we will soon discover the exact mechanics of brain because it is nothing else than a "big computer" and, of course, we know *exactly* how the computer works (compare Vico with Kevin Kelly). Sadly enough, this is simply the behaviouristic fallacy pushed to the hilt. But what is the use of envisaging absurd scenarios invoking *non-intuitive* experiences in order to be able to clarify features of our everyday, *intuitive*, experiences such as consciousness-zero? The usefulness of such a train of thought is obviously its uselessness. The intellectual gymnast shows strong evidence of her ability to analyze complex matters and to synthesize the immediate stakes (the ones that have not been filtered). The broad-sweeping judgement that is obtained might even sometimes pilot the R&D of a new commercial product or, more likely, of a new weaponry. And even if the discursive efforts lead to no application at all, they still serve the purpose to nurture the image of the independent scholar pursuing totally objective scientific research with no pertinence, for instance, for the current global systemic

¹³ Cf., e.g., Hadot's *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* [1995]. Translated by Michael Chase, Harvard University Press, 2002. Hadot does not treat the question of the two Renaissances; my point here is twofold: one, it is important to discriminate the first Renaissance, that was close enough to worship nature, and the second Renaissance, that condemned the spirituality of immanence and re-established the hierarchical power in society and Church by linking it to a god understood as a Babylonian despot. Two, the turning point between the two schools is neither scientific nor philosophical but political: the new ideas had to be stopped when they started to lead more and more to communist utopias.

crisis. In a nutshell, philosophical training amounts (for only a small fee) to deliberate exercises in *doubtthink*.

4. Participatory democracy and totalitarian technocracy

If we dig even further, we discover the political relevance of this debate. Embracing all experiences also means adopting, *protego horribilis*, a left-ish political perspective —let us say a communist one to hammer the nail home: the experience of *hoi polloi*, the experiences of the multitude, the experience of the proles, the alienated, ostracized, tortured and assassinated *also* need to be taken into account.

There are actually two basic understandings of language involved in the feud: on the one hand, so-called continental philosophers are likely to use all the resources of their linguistic sphere and even to shamelessly create new concepts (which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is supposed to be their *fatum*). Thinkers such as James and Whitehead furthermore acknowledge the necessity to satisfy common sense and to reconstruct the basic substantialism of everyday experience. On the other hand, so-called analytic philosophers seek to create an ideal language for philosophical analysis to avoid the use of ordinary language that is so prone to lead thought into contradictions and paradoxes (Russell and Wittgenstein). The parallelism with Orwell is striking:

‘The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,’ [Syme] said. ‘We’re getting the language into its final shape — the shape it’s going to have when nobody speaks anything else. [...] You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We’re destroying words — scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We’re cutting the language down to the bone.’ [...] ‘Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it.’¹⁴

From that perspective, the scenarii evoked earlier seek not only to provide orthodox judgements, they are likely to foster a language in which politics will

be unthinkable.

The testimony of Victor Klemperer, published just before *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, shed some important light on the Newspeak cultural cleansing.¹⁵ Klemperer, a German Jew who survived the Nazi regime because of his marriage with an Aryan German, has described in details how the German people has been lured into Nazi totalitarianism by the manipulation of words, propositions, symbols, patterns of thought and the like. In a nutshell, his interpretation is quite straightforward: on the one hand, he is full of commiseration for the suffering of the German *people* and does not condemn them; on the other hand, he has a deep grudge against the German *intelligentsia*, that had all the data in hand and all the tools to understand the storm ahead... If often they simply did nothing, sometimes they welcomed it warmly. According to his experience, academics, scholars and other intellectuals are the real responsible of the cultural collapse orchestrated by Goebbels.¹⁶

I have shown elsewhere that there are, at the level of the individuals, three conditions of possibility of authentic life (echoing the three functors of the late Whitehead’s creative advance as well as Arendt’s interpretation of classical Greece): individuation (creativity, *archein*, action), solidarity (efficacy, *prattein*, work) and culture (vision, *theorein*, thought). In order to create themselves, individuals have to have some elbow room, some independence, but such a spontaneity never occurs outside of a community providing support and interdependence, and without the fine-tuning of a big narrative (*paideia* or *Bildung*). “Advanced” capitalist societies, that are the necessary precursor of totalitarianism (this is basically Arendt’s argument), are characterized by the negation of these three conditions: conformism has replaced individuation, atomism, solidarity, and terror is now the common narrative.

¹⁵ Victor Klemperer, *LTI—Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, Leipzig, Reclam Verlag, 1947.

¹⁶ Klemperer wrote in his August 16, 1936 Tagebücher’s entry: “If one day the situation were reversed and the fate of the vanquished lay in my hands, then I would let all the ordinary folk go and even some of the leaders, who might perhaps after all have had honourable intentions and not known what they were doing. But I would have all the intellectuals strung up, and the professors three feet higher than the rest; they would be left hanging from the lamp posts for as long as was compatible with hygiene.” (Ich Will Zeugnis Ablegen Bis Zum Letzten: Tagebücher 1933–1941, Berlin, Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995, quoted by Omer Bartov in Germany’s War and the Holocaust, Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 201)

¹⁴ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [London, Martin Secker & Warburg, 1949]. Introduction by Thomas Pynchon, London, Penguin Books, 2003, pp. 59–60

When a philosophical school demands renunciation of common sense, it undermines solidarity; when it doubts sense-perception, it puts a damper on individuation; and when it claims scientificity by rejecting all forms of political concern, it paves the way to the unquestioned acceptance of a big narrative that is not worthy of that name anymore. Taken together, the three requirements seal the divorce between philosophy and life and lead the philosopher to compartmentalize his professional activities. With that regard, it is worth remembering Orwell's definition of *doublethink*:

It is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. [...] The prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity.¹⁷

Conclusion

Natural language is intrinsically ambiguous, intentional and even emotional; it is far from being a pure logical entity, and its countless equivocations have indeed been very often disparaged. My interpretation of Whitehead has made use of three main categories that can be mobilized to discriminate the philosophical temperaments evoked here: polysemiality, interanimation and style.¹⁸

Some philosophers are not bothered at all by polysemiality—they even actively use it—, whereas others urge the logical destruction of every possible ambiguity. To the question “how to read texts that champion polysemiality?,” they answer that these texts—if they mean anything at all— will *speak* only when straightened by logical analysis. The interanimation of sentences is equally problematic and the philosopher's goal should be the rigid articulation of purely transparent concepts. With regard to style: circumambulation is replaced by linearization, and constructive discrimination by destructive discrimination. Uphill, radical empiricism becomes pure empiricism; and non dogmatism, normative imperialism. Accordingly, nonrationality is forgotten to the profit of irrationality on the point of rationalization.

The function of language is not only semantic, it is also apophantic, power of manifestation of total

anthropo-cosmic experiences.¹⁹ Its multifarious semantic potential is directly correlated with the stylistic managing of polysemiality and interanimation. Only style can make the reader fall under the author's spell and thereby lead him/her at the outskirts of an intuitive vision that is nevertheless bound to remain private. The intentionality opening the propositional entanglement to the world shields language from the danger of barren coherence. For instance, a dictionary does not, properly speaking, define anything; it is just a tissue of mutual cross-references. To the contrary, the efficacy of language comes from its self-effacing ability in front of the vision it lures. The organization of a conceptual network revealing the ontological surplus asks a peculiar gesture made of invocatory repetitions and daring cross-checkings; eventually, it is an art of the *void* that is requested. That evocative capacity is a sort of implosive capacity: language has to die to give birth to meaning. If it remains in-between, like a screen, meaning has not been conveyed. The intuitive grasping of the power of language is a nocturnal experience that sees the revelation of its faculty of making things rise from their absence.

To sum up. Experience teaches us that all forms of philosophical commitments are acceptable if and only if they provide room for *other* forms of commitment. Orthodoxy and dogmatism are speculative constraints that are applicable only to one single individual and that have to be self-inflicted. Unfortunately, most of the philosophers choosing a very narrow cognitive territory promptly lose their sense of community and proudly become sectarian, i.e., philosophers *in paribus infidelium*.

The history of philosophy offers many examples of important conceptual breakthrough in analytical as well as in continental modes of thought. The bracketing of most experiences by all blends of “analytical” philosophy can allow for instance the formalization of the major traits of the “objective” world. The introspective inquiry that fuels “continental” publications brings into the picture experiences that would be otherwise ignored in public.

What really matters is the possible synergy between these two streams—or better: the obliteration once and for all of a polarization that is so clumsy that nobody, certainly not the author of this paper, even bothers to define it straightforwardly. Philosophy is neither the *ancilla domini* nor the subservient servant of technoscience. The philosopher defines

¹⁷ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, op. cit., p. 246.

¹⁸ Michel Weber, *Whitehead's Pancreativism. The Basics*. Foreword by Nicholas Rescher, Frankfurt / Paris, ontos verlag, 2006.

¹⁹ On the concept of “apophansis,” see, e.g., Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1927, p. 33.

for herself the horizon of her questioning and it seems plain straightforward that the wider the horizon the more inclusive the thought. But this shouldn't prevent the philosopher to narrow the scope of his inquiry —provided that the initial horizon is somehow kept in the background.

Whitehead's philosophy is very instructive from that regard. Granted, neither his polymathy nor his complex intellectual development facilitates the work of the interpreter, but perusing *Process and Reality* gives a good idea of his broad gesture. I argue that *Process and Reality* constitutes the acme of Whitehead's speculative philosophy and that the palpitating core of his *Essay in Cosmology* is to be found in the intimate relationship that exists between the systolic Part III, rather "continental," and the diastolic Part IV, rather "analytic." The simplest way to understand this complementarity is to remember that although all events are holistic occurrences that grow by buds or drops (either nothing is coming at all or something bursting into existence "at a stroke," as the late James writes), they can be analyzed in various ways: from the perspective of the contraction of their actual world into a private domain, the concrescence, genetically analyzed in Part III; or from the perspective of the pre-existing world that projects the concrescence and that welcomes its satisfaction: the morphological analysis of Part IV.

My argument against dogmatism and narrow-mindedness has especially targetted analytical schools because of their own conflictual tropisms. It is equally valid for the blends of thomism, phe-

nomenology, cognitive philosophy and the like that reject radical empiricism.

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Book reviews and letters

**Sabin Totu. *About Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics*
[for: Vlăduțescu, Gheorghe. *Greek Fundamentals of Modern Metaphysics*, București:
Editura Academiei Române, 2009 (in Romanian)]**

**[Reviewed by Prof. Sabin Totu from Faculty of Philosophy of Bucharest University.
The bookreview is about "Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics" by Academician
Gheorghe Vladutescu, member of ours Section of Philosophy from Romanian Academy]**

This article is about one of Academician Professor Gheorghe Vlăduțescu's favorite themes, namely, the problem of Greek philosophy as ontology and metaphysics, resumed in a work recently published by the Romanian Academy Publishing House, entitled *Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics*. The two words "ontology" and "metaphysics", with new meanings coming from a hermeneutical firmly embedded in Greek philosophical thought, here, are all witnesses of European metaphysics "history". Also, what must be pointed out is the impulse to a reflexive approach of the "whys" of Greek philosophy configured by the connection between One and Plurality (which crosses over the entire spectrum of Greek philosophy), reflecting more closely the metaphysical foundations of the modern construction. Also, taking into account more carefully the "programs" of Greek philosophy, when not (re) known as a foundation of philosophical thinking, can be received at least as "reasons" of it. Thus, it's something to think about!

Greek philosophy is more than the early *history* of European philosophical thought. It is its *beginning*. *Arkhe*, that is! Of course, such a statement is not easily proven, but also not that impossible to sustain. Moreover, philosophy is itself an exercise of pro and con arguments. Professor Vlă-

duțescu has the courage to propose a response, and not a dogmatic one, but rather, one of philosophical openness. A response that provokes or converts! However, it is unavoidable!? Phrase better, reads badly.

Professor Vlăduțescu's book on the *Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics* can be read in several key readings. The most interesting reading is obviously one that each of those who dare to meet the challenge launched by the "Closing Word" will make and they will make it in their own hearts? Rephrase as reads badly. Other readings, however, intended for the dialogue with the reader, reveal some of the "reasons" for Greek philosophy and they need to be reconsidered in several ways. Two levels of book's exegesis are therefore envisaged: firstly, the literal level which will guide a search for bases of interpreting Greek philosophy as both "ontological and metaphysical", and secondly, the symbolic level, which will be an illustration of deep metaphysical approaches aimed at understanding the philosophy as a "lifestyle".

The first, reminding the "elements" of the

challenge which has been spoken about sets an itinerary for lectures in accordance with a first reading key? Rephrase, reads badly., as a matter of fact, the author's claim that Greek philosophy is not "history" and therefore belonging only to its past and which is founded in the pages of "historical textbooks" (pure description)?. Contrarily, although the identity of the Greek contribution to the development of modern philosophy is sometimes difficult to recognize and sometimes even depersonalized (for various reasons), however, "Greek philosophy lives more authentically"¹ in and through it². What we call the "fundamentals" of Greek philosophy must not be understood as the "ideal entities in act", as the author himself names them, but rather as "personant?" something that suddenly *became* in the context of new philosophy, with a new reassessment of thought in its relation with the Absolute. For philosophy is not something reducible to a mode of thinking put in a building of its own, trapped in the pages of a manuscript, but a continuous movement to a meaning that makes you always wonder where "it is going". What matters is the "going", that "program" that guides its progress. Therefore, philosophy can be said to always be the man searching for himself, who wonders about the meaning of the world and at the same time about his purpose in it, in the process gaining an understanding of himself through the questions that are thus revealed in the diversity of responses³. The history of philosophy is a her-

meneutics of philosophical thinking or "steps", which become, by a permanent self query, "traces" that guide to that "*topos atopos*" of a philosophical reality. Then, gaining "step by step" a territory that was initially hostile to us just because it was unknown to us, *conceiving* a world where life always has a higher purpose compared with the one we find in our worldly dreams? Badly phrased/reads badly, the philosopher seeks to be close to the Truth! Or, if one is is not near to understanding Being, how then, can he be near to understanding the Truth? Plato still causes wonder and does not deliver a ready-response to us and somehow cancels out the personal search of every one of us. "Philosophizing" is always a state of continuous reflection. Truth will spring to mind as a light that will feed itself as Plato reminds us in a letter, written with the thought to make us understand that philosophy is, actually, a divine way through which we return to the true "homeland". Plotinus will say it later, more depressed although, perhaps less clear!

However, returning to the key reading written of earlier, the *Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics* is a plea for philosophical hermeneutics in relation to crucial issues in philosophy. Considering Greek philosophy as *a universal answer*, we will learn through overcoming or better saying through leaving the attractive field of Greek culture, *the question* about the meaning of our existence, of our understanding as rational beings, that philosophy in a technical language, says: how to understand the transition from "the One" to "Plurality"? What is the meaning of "being"? What is the meaning of "existing"? How can we think freely from any contradiction the "Plurality", as something that "was, is and will be"? World, therefore? Rephrase/reads badly In other words,

from the perspective of the "facts" interpretation, that is to say the philosophical constructions of one or another philosopher, by transform them in philosophical "arguments" belonging to the universality of the philosophical act. Seeing the ontology as "morphology" of philosophical thinking, and the metaphysics as her "syntax", it is easily understand why the "history of philosophy" cannot be more than a hermeneutics of the types of philosophical engagement, in one or another philosophical program.

¹ Gh. Vlăduțescu, „Cuvânt de încheiere” (Closing Word) la Fundamentele grecești ale metafizicii moderne (Greek Fundamentals of Modern Metaphysics), București: Editura Academiei Române, 2009

² By "modern" we mean what is opposite to "antique". Moreover, Professor Vladutescu avoids the historic periodization based on a relative and relativizational chronology, preferring a "structural" one. Therefore, the history of philosophy is nothing but a dialogue between antiquitas and modernitas as philosophical programs past in a historical philosophy or another (custom, that is).

³ This important issue, the "history" of philosophy as interpretation of philosophical "behavior" in different cultural spaces and times, is treated in another relatively recently book of Professor Vladutescu, released at the Romanian Academy Publishing House too, in 2007, namely History of Philosophy as Hermeneutics. Here the author plea for an understanding of the history of philosophy

the “answers” that we believe we have. No need for all this. Philosophical language, although less dry than common language? What is that? is, in fact, more precise in its ability to express existential “reasons”. As a matter of fact, philosophy as *ontology* appears in opposition to the common mentality, it is *paradoxical*, against the opinion, of common sense. Philosophy as *metaphysics*, considers Professor Vlăduțescu, is *aporetical*, that is to say a number of thinking difficulties which it finds them “in the stuff”?, hence the world as we know. “Ontology, therefore, above all, has to be an antropodicee, and not in just anyway, but as a justification of our being in language and in thought”⁴. The paradoxical logic of ontology is not the only logic of this philosophical discourse. The paradoxical status in which the thought finds itself that seeks to understand “what-is-what-it-is”, that is to say, Beings, implies necessarily its overcoming. “Therefore, even during the primordial time the aporetical logic was involved”⁵. Metaphysics was, therefore, in ontology as syntax is for morphology⁶. Such an understanding of the logics of the two ways of relating to the world, is specific to the research undertaken by Professor Vlăduțescu⁷.

Considering the given meanings of “ontology” and “metaphysics”, we must show that, although concepts with different histories and meanings, in certain cases, differently, however, could be understood as complementary, even by putting them in agreement. And this is because we must look beyond the technical expression of philosophical thinking. Two levels which allow the understand-

ing of Greek philosophy as the *foundation*⁸ of the modern one. The first one would come from the *universality* search for the answer to the question “What it is to be?”, saying What is “being”. Or, in other words, what “is” what it is *saying* that “is”? Therefore, firstly, a research of the saying is needed, of the word that names, that is to say that *logos* which is understood to be both word *and* reason *in the same time*⁹. Or, it is precisely this *way of asking* what is “being”, that cannot be avoided! As long as we admit to a tradition of this way of asking such questions on such subjects! The second, in close correlation with the first one, would be given by reconsideration of philosophical reflection by understanding it as a permanently open reflection. The lesson of skepticism has been too easily forgotten!

In the first instance, Professor Vlăduțescu's book is a plea for a reevaluation of Greek philosophy from the perspective of universality by the way of asking what is “being”. From this perspective, the first chapter of the book entitled “Paradoxal and Aporitical” is, in fact, the heart of the author's whole approach. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, in this chapter we have a reception of Greek philosophy in terms of a lengthy investigation. I'll quote only few titles of chapters from books already mentioned just to illustrate the continuity of the research but, above all, confirming its results by constantly opening reflection of philosophical interrogations. For example, in *Onthol-*

⁴ Gh. Vlăduțescu, op. cit., p. 10.

⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶ Ibid., „Preliminarii”

⁷ Moreover, Professor Vladutescu has written in the same key other two books, *Ontology and Metaphysics at Greeks.Presocratics*, and, *Ontology and Metaphysics at Greeks.Plato*; the first one published in 2004 at Paideia Publishing House and the second one [ublishe in 2005 at the Romanian Academy Publishing House. At the Romanian Academy Publishing House also appeared in 2008 the book *Heraclit from Ephes*, *Cratylos form Athena*. *Antisthenes Herculit – Testimonials and Fragments*, in which the interpretations of the fragments translated from ancient Greek, are of great ingenuity.

⁸ As has been stated, it would be about understanding the philosophy beyond considering it just an answer given in a time or another, in cultural space or another to certain questions. Meaning that its assertions as a permanent research of a certain type, of the world inhabited by the rational beings called “human”. Moreover, the Platos' etymology of the term “anthropos” (“he who that examines what he has seen”) is not even made in terms of gratuitous game.

⁹ Is not the semantic richness of this term makes the Greek language a “privileged” language for the philosophical thinking, but the way the word names “something”. Subtle analyses of the linguists have not been able to explain much in the transition from the common language to the philosophical one. Besides, it could not do it, since philosophy, even though, paradoxically, is a phenomenon of a language, it is, in essence beyond speech.

ogy and Metaphysics at Greeks. Presocratics, the first chapter is entitled “From Archaeology to Ontology” (in essence, the entire book is a evaluation of what “the first beginning of philosophy” means, in other words, understanding philosophy as ontology); in *Ontology and Metaphysics at Greeks. Plato* the book structure is: A. “Philosophy as Ontology and Metaphysics. Preliminary accounts?” and B. “From Ontology to Metaphysics” (this clearly shows how philosophy should be understood as ontology and metaphysics, in the light of “the second beginning”, that of Platonism as “open work”); and in *A History of Philosophy as Hermeneutics*, the first chapter entitled “Metaphysics and Aporetics” explains the purpose of the whole research on the status of the “history of philosophy” from the perspective of a philosophical exercise.

The structure of the book the *Greek Foundations of Modern Philosophy*, reveals, first, a tissue of philosophical issues whose formulation seeks to question the configuration of any field of philosophical interrogation. A simple listing of the book content will reveal the fact that some problems of Greek philosophy are not “Greek” only in a cultural order, but in a universal philosophical order. Problems, if accepted as *philosophical*, are *ours* (at least in Europe). There’s the table of content: “Paradoxical and Aporetic”, “Being and Not-Being” “Principal and Cause”, “Act and Possibility”, “Necessity and Chance”, “Universal and Individual”, “Eternity and Time”, “Absolute and Relative” (where we have the subsections: “Truth and False”, “Good and Evil”, “Beautiful and Ugly”), “Being and Movement”, “Body and Soul. Along “Preliminaries” and the “Word of Closing”, which guides the reader on the optimal course of reading, we also have some “Additional Notes”, namely: “Theology and Metaphysics” (in the chapter I), “Evil and Impiety”, Brief Comment on “Laws”, 907d-910c (chapter VIII) and “Irreducibles and Philosophy” (chapter IX).

Its apparently, as I said, an attempt to reconstitute a philosophical “program” which Greek philosophers have done for us too, on one hand, because from the *historical point of view* they are

ahead us and on the other hand, because *systematically* we are in the same paradigm of thinking with them. In other words, we become what we are! The way Greek philosophers have configured the fundamental questions is that they are *?of our minds!* Professor Vlăduțescu shows in abundance as from the first philosophical interrogations of the Presocratics till the *historical end*, in year 529, of Greek philosophy, the problems we mentioned have nurtured the need *to know* concerning philosophical thinking. Each chapter demonstrates the *continuity* of philosophical interrogation through various answers which, from Thales to Damascius, only shades the questions. Moreover, each chapter “ends” through an opening: from a particular philosophy to another (from Presocratics to Damascius), the “problems” that are, at first, “reviewed” (turning into new “experiences”), and/or acquiring new connotations, they extend the “territory” of philosophical interrogation. “Plato’s aporetics was the first program of metaphysics having to answer to the question of all questions: how in no contradictions we think of The One as the ground and the paradigm for Plurality as a principal of specification and, equally, of individuation”¹⁰. That is, in fact, also the whole approach in the entire research. Subtle distinguishing between *types* of applications of our mind in accordance to the need for reconfiguration and reorienting of the philosophical traditional message, that each age receives it under the pressure of “the unknown” of new challenges, the author fully succeeds in showing that Plato’s metaphysical “program” spans the entirety of European Metaphysics, both ancient and modern. Centered in issues from “Parmenides” and “The Sophist” dialogues, and also from the particular problem of “theology”, founded also in “Timaios” and “Philebos”, the elegant demonstration from Professor Vlăduțescu is not just one for an academic commitment, but also one that seeks to understand philosophy as a “lifestyle”. I must reaffirm that there are two levels of exegesis in this book: the first, the literal that will guide the search for the foundations of Greek philosophy interpretations as “ontology and metaphysics”; the second, the symbolic, which will be a illustration of the profound metaphysical approaches aimed at under-

¹⁰ Gh. Vlăduțescu, op. cit., p. 18.

standing philosophy as “lifestyle”. Obviously the two levels cannot be mechanically disjoined, they are, in fact, intertwined. The second level is accompanied by the “Additional Note” to this first chapter that we have spoken about, namely “Theology and metaphysics”. Reconstructing the “why” of understanding metaphysics as theology by discovering a “same metaphysics program” shared by Plato and Aristotle, but, especially, in direct descent, Plotinus and Proclus, from the other “point of view”, namely the Christian one whose representative, PS Dionysius the Areopagite, fully proved the knowledge of Greek metaphysics, Professor Vlăduțescu calls to the question the relations between metaphysics and theology by rebuilding a common question to both types of exercise of thinking. Was this point needed? Arguing for a complementary of metaphysics and Christian theology understanding, the author, has, as supporter of the unity of the “metaphysical program” of both philosophers and theologians, at least, felt the need to repeat it, as the rationality is exercised as it was constituted along Greek metaphysical history. Even if Proclus’ project was an “exit” from the philosophical tradition the need to call the dialogue of philosophy as onto-metaphysics with Christian theology should not be just an academic goal, but a fact of life. I dare to say that Professor Vlăduțescu’s intention is to reopen *today* the “file” of self retrievals that need to be consistent with the impression over what we have gained through the exacerbation of a rationality that seems to no longer “reflect” only in “scientific achievements” but more and more apart from the human somewhat “more rational” ones.

The other chapters, taking again the *issues* of the first chapter, but, attention, in a different configuration according to the thematic arrangement of each philosophical issue, are of great complexity of argumentation. Each itself is an elegant demonstration of what the author aimed to prove by appealing to the philosophical works, first by clarifying the terms (such a dictionary of philosophical terms), and then by interpreting the issue

announced as the chapter’s title both in a historical and systematic order (considering the “structures” of philosophical argumentation.).

In the chapter “Being and Not-Being” this continues in subtle way the problematization in onto-metaphysical keys of the thought-reality connection. What is one and the other as long as our mind has only one “way” of reason about being? Then, without a fine distinction, based also on that between ontology and metaphysics, between “principal” and “cause”, how can we understand what we call “what is what is”? How can we understand the transition from The One to Plurality, from Being to existence, if we do not distinguish between “doing” and “possible”? but what is “necessary” and what is “chance” in understanding the world? How can we “know” what “Being” is if we can not distinguish between both “universal” and “individual”? What is “eternity” and what is “time” unless we learn to become what we are? How can we understand what is “Absolute” and what is “relative”? What is the relation between “Being” and “movement”? What we can we learn about the connection between the “body” and the “soul”?... There are so many questions converging to an infinity series of responses! The last issue, presented in the chapter “Body and Soul” seems to be the “circle” of a coil which, seen from above, on a vertical vision of philosophical thinking, of the “philosophic” (in eternities size, therefore) is not different from the first, the one from “the beginning” of the philosophy but, *on a horizontal* vision of historical time, of individual philosophies, this is an “end” with an infinite openness and another beginning!

In conclusion, the *Greek Foundations of Modern Metaphysics*, is a book of high academic status, which guides modern philosophical research by direct reading of the proposals in “the reading key” of Greek metaphysics being also a plea for understanding the philosophical exercise as a continuous reflection over the fundamental philosophical issues, that the Greeks set up first, not only through their anteriority in time, but especially through the necessity of a structural type of

interrogation. Far from denying other ways of doing philosophy *today*, the author explains why, in order to better understand (us), let us not forget the *foundations* of our modernity.

LETTER BY LESTER EMBREE

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ANAL/CONT

Dear Lilia Gurova¹,

Your concise characterization of the situation of the two camps of analytical philosophy and so-called continental philosophy is well stated, but I must say that your hope of bridging the gap is overly optimistic. Let me try to explain why.

I am a student of Dorion Cairns and Aron Gurwitsch, who were direct disciples of the mature Husserl and think I know something about phenomenology. I am the one who reconceived of 'continental philosophy' in the contemporary signification, something I now greatly regret.² I regret it because, while all source figures considered 'continental' in the USA, e.g., Jacques Lacan, share having struggled early on with the positions of Heidegger, Husserl, and usually also Scheler and went on thereafter to interact with one another, while Rudolf Carnap (who also started that way) did not—the result is a *political alliance* against the dominant analytical philosophy here that actually has no intellectual coherence and forgets its origin. Moreover, it seems that continental philosophy is similarly structured in the rest of the former British Empire except that it has been extended in the UK not just back to Husserl

but beyond him to Descartes, Hegel, and Kant and perhaps by now also to Thales. How much 'analytical' philosophy—to use its original name from 1945 in British English—is more than another political alliance I do not know.

I consider your project overly optimistic for many reasons some of which I will try to sketch. To begin with, I have had many discouraging experiences in the past 40 years. In the first that I recall I was chatting with a guy at a convention who said I really should read Carnap, I said in return that he really should read Scheler, and he sneered "Who is Scheler?" Probably that was mostly due to ignorance, but now there is the book, *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind*,³ which cannot have that excuse. The way in which its chapters ignore literally hundreds of items of previous critical literature in English, not to speak of those in French, German, Spanish, etc. on Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, etc. by actual phenomenologists reminds me of how the British explorers came Australia and declared it uninhabited by humans. Do you really want me to overlook such disrespect? By the way, most who call for building bridges are in weak minorities within departments and societies dominated by analysts and any bridges they succeed in building tend to carry one-way traffic.

Over the years I have come to enjoy on occasion offering a couple of conversation-stopping remarks. One is that "Of course, the cultural sciences have priority over the naturalistic sciences." Sometimes my interlocutors seem able and willing to try

¹ Lilia Gurova is Assoc. Prof. in the New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria and a member of the Editorial Board of *Balkan Journal of Philosophy*. She was so kind to give the permission to publish this letter, because of its importance for the topic of the present issue.

² Lester Embree, "Husserl as Trunk of the American Continental Tree," in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 11 (2), 2002, 177-190.

³ David Woodruff Smith and Amie L. Thomason (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2005)

to understand clarification, in which case I go on to tell how the cultural sciences address the concrete socio-cultural world, while the naturalistic sciences begin with the substratum of nature within that world, which is to say with an abstraction, and suggest that the concrete has priority over the abstract. Sometimes this is understood but usually not. For many outside phenomenology in at least my country 'science' is just naturalistic science and the rest story telling or worse.

My other conversation stopper is "Of course, phenomenology is a descriptive approach and hardly ever offers arguments." Incredulity follows. Few can even begin to comprehend the idea of a philosophy not constantly making assumptions, drawing inferences, and stating conclusions, i.e., developed argumentatively. When I observe somebody expressing assumptions and then grinding out strings of consequences, I know for sure that s/he is an analyst. I cannot account for the ignorance of this difference of phenomenology, which is multidisciplinary, over a century old and currently supported by over 3,500 colleagues across the planet.⁴

Because continental philosophy is, in my opinion, incoherent, let me just mention some differences between analytical and phenomenological approaches. (I won't get into the usual scary talk about universal essences and transcendentalism.) Where subject matters and basic methods are concerned, one school of thought is about sentences and relies on logic to analyze them, while the other is about mental processes, attitudes, and things-as-intended-to and relies on reflective observation and description, which the early William James in 1890 called 'introspection' before that became a pejorative word in the 1920s. Phenomenology has included much reflection on thinking and sentences, but there is little reflective description of mental processes in analytical philosophy, which is quite unreflective, at least as far as I have seen.

Besides the typically 'unreflective argumentalism,' as it might be called, analytical philosophy and the related positivistic social science tend as intimated to be naturalistic. In contrast, reflection on things-as-intended-to in attitudes and mental processes discloses that things—in the broad signification whereby anything is a thing—always already have positive and negative intrinsic and extrinsic values and uses and thus philosophy needs to include axiology and praxiology as much as epistemology. Moreover, the reflective investigation of such values and uses and the correlative components of mental processes best called valuings and willings shows that they change over time and are learned in habit and tradition, i.e., are cultural and historical. Naturalism tries to overlook such things that make the world originally cultural. If that is to avoid relativism, it is done too cheaply.

Interestingly, all the phenomenologists in my country in 1950 could sit in one parlor, but today are many hundreds in dozens of disciplines. This seems easiest explained in part by how college students have electives and find phenomenology and other continental tendencies much less boring. At the same time, one can wonder if the current increase in the historiography of analytical philosophy indicates the exhaustion of a paradigm. Time will tell.

I could go on, but perhaps this is enough. It is urged in the Rogers and Hammerstein musical, "Oklahoma," of 1943 that the cowboy and farmer should be friends. Since one wants an open range and free access to water and the other wants fences to keep cattle out of crops and to control water for irrigation, that call for friendship is similarly overly optimistic. The histories of all forms of high culture have had competing schools of thought; look at how long it took for Aristolian physics to be superseded. Why expect anything different in philosophy?

Sincerely,
Lester EMBREE

⁴ Cf. *The Encyclopedia of Phenomenology*, edited by Lester Embree et al. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997, The Organization of Phenomenological Organizations <http://www.o-p-o.net/> and The Newsletter of Phenomenology <http://www.phenomenology.ro/newsletter/>