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DAS UNERTRÄGLICHE UND DIE ETHIK DER REVOLUTION

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The Unbearable and the Ethics of Revolution

Abstract

Marx tries to argue that revolution, or even Revolution, is a necessary phenomenon of capitalistic societies. He claims that there is something like a critical mass of suffering, the “unbearable’ power,” emerging from an overload of “alienation.” The article criticizes this idea with thoughts by Primo Levi, who experienced that extremely starving people tend not to rebel. If a revolution cannot begin from social necessity, the decision of Lenin that a revolution must be organized by activists, is a consequent correction of Marx. But if the revolution is a result of free praxis, revolution becomes a moral phenomenon. Therefore, the article tries to meditate upon

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Walter Benjamin's claim: "Ethics, applied to history, is the doctrine of the Revolution." (In this sense, Hannah Arendt's idea: "That the aim of revolution was, and always has been, freedom," is definitively influenced by Benjamin.)

Keywords: revolution, Marx, Žižek, Arendt, Benjamin.

Neznosno in etika revolucije

Povzetek

6 Marx skuša pokazati, da je revolucija – ali celo Revolucija – nujni fenomen kapitalističnih družb. Trdi, da obstaja nekakšna kritična masa trpljenja, »'neznosna' moč«, ki izhaja iz preobremenitve »alienacije«. Prispevek to idejo kritično osvetli s pomočjo misli Prima Levija, ki je izkusil, da se skrajno sestradani ljudje ne upirajo. Če se revolucija ne more pričeti zaradi družbene nujnosti, predstavlja Leninova odločitev, da jo morajo organizirati aktivisti, dosleden popravek Marxa. A revolucija, če je rezultat svobodne prakse, postane moralni fenomen. Zato prispevek skuša premisliti trditev Walterja Benjamina: »Etika, aplicirana na zgodovino, je doktrina Revolucije.« (V tem smislu je Benjamin zagotovo vplival na idejo Hanne Arendt: »Cilj revolucije je, in je vedno bil, svoboda.«)

Ključne besede: revolucija, Marx, Žižek, Arendt, Benjamin.

„That the aim of revolution was, and always has been, freedom“ (Arendt 1963, 2), schreibt Hannah Arendt in ihrem Vorwort zu *On Revolution* von 1963. Seitdem hat sich die Welt – was die Revolution betrifft – dramatisch verändert. Gerade hatte Castro Kuba von Batista befreit. 1949 war die Volksrepublik China von Mao Zedong ausgerufen worden. Er galt als ein großer Revolutionär, der seine fragwürdigen Fähigkeiten in der „Kulturrevolution“ noch einmal unter Beweis stellen sollte. Die Sowjetunion bildete den großen Widerpart zur USA. 1958 hatte Arendt selbst noch über *Die ungarische Revolution und den totalitären Imperialismus* (Arendt 1958) der Sowjetunion geschrieben. Der Kalte Krieg bestimmte die Weltpolitik. Salvador Allende sollte Chile noch in einen demokratischen Sozialismus zu führen versuchen. Wie in Ungarn und in der CSSR die Sowjetunion, so setzten dem die USA ein Ende. Für Arendt war die Revolution nicht nur ein theoretisches Problem. Sie, die Revolution, war auf die eine und andere Weise eine politische Realität.

Gewiss – Arendts Verbindung der Revolution und der Freiheit war bereits durch die Ereignisse der Geschichte nicht wenig erodiert. Die Sowjetunion hatte die Warschauer Pakt-Staaten – und damit u.a. die CSSR und die DDR – kompromisslos im Griff. Die Doktrin hatte den emanzipatorischen Gestus des Ahnherrn der Revolution – Marx – verdrängt. Ideologen der Partei wachten über die Revolution und lähmten das Denken. Das sollte sich ein paar Jahrzehnte später rächen. 1989 konstatierte Francis Fukuyama das Ende der Geschichte, nachdem die Berliner Mauer in der Übermacht der konsumatorischen Vorfreude der Ostdeutschen gefallen war. Der Kapitalismus oder der Liberalismus schien endgültig gesiegt zu haben.

Seitdem ist die Revolution Anathema. In den neunziger Jahren und nach der Jahrtausendwende spielte sie im philosophischen Diskurs kaum eine Rolle. Nun, nachdem der technisch-wissenschaftlich-ökonomische Apparat die Alternativlosigkeit eines überaus dynamischen Wirtschaftsliberalismus in globaler Dimension zu einem Dogma gemacht hat, melden sich hier und da Stimmen, die ein Bedürfnis nach einem anderen Leben verlauten lassen. Weil dieses andere Leben nur durch einen tiefen Eingriff in die Dynamik des technisch-wissenschaftlich-ökonomischen Apparats denkbar ist, wird die Revolution repolitisiert.

Ich möchte nur drei Beispiele nennen, die beinahe ikonisch auch das Problematische dieser Repolitisierung deutlich machen. 2007 erschien

der Essay *L'Insurrection qui vient* (Comité) der in Europa, vor allem in den avancierten Feuilletons der großen Zeitungen, diskutiert wurde – und eine hohe Auflage erhielt (die Revolution als Fetisch, als Ware). Man fordert da alle möglichen Formen des Widerstandes, ein gewaltsamer Aufstand wird nicht ausgeschlossen. 2010 erschien ein von Costas Douzinas und Slavoj Žižek herausgegebener Vortragsband als Frucht einer Tagung, die 2009 mit großem öffentlichem Erfolg in London veranstaltet wurde, *The Idea of Communism* (Douzinas und Žižek). Der Band versammelt alle Namen der neo-linken Vordenker: Alain Badiou, Terry Eagleton, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri und Žižek selbst. (Eigentlich fehlte aus der Althusser-Linie nur Etienne Balibar.) Ganz neu ist die Neuausgabe des „Manifests der Kommunistischen Partei“ (Engels, Marx und Žižek 2018) zum 200. Geburtstag von Karl Marx sowie eine Neuausgabe von Texten Lenins zum 100. Geburtstag der russischen Revolution, beide Texte mit einem langen Vorwort von Slavoj Žižek (2017).

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Ich werde mich im Folgenden einigen Marx'schen Aussagen zur Revolution, zu ihren „Bedingungen der Möglichkeit“, hätte ich beinahe gesagt, zuwenden. Danach werde ich meine Skepsis dieser Begründung der Revolution gegenüber formulieren. Zuletzt werde ich mich mit den Essays von Žižek beschäftigen, die er zur Neuausgabe des „Manifests der Kommunistischen Partei“ sowie der Lenin-Texte (unter dem Titel *Lenin 2017*) verfasst hat.

1.

Ich beginne meine Ausführungen zu den „Bedingungen der Möglichkeit“ der Revolution mit einem Rekurs auf Hegel und Feuerbach oder, besser, auf eine Denkbewegung, die Feuerbach und Marx von Hegel ausgehend beschäftigt hat. Hegel hatte in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes* nämlich gesagt, man müsse lernen, „auch einmal auf dem Kopfe zu gehen“ (Hegel 1970, 30). Diese scheinbar harmlose Bemerkung haben die Hegelianer, vor allem die Linkshegelianer, genau wahrgenommen.

Hegel will mit dieser Bemerkung das übliche Verhältnis zwischen „natürlichem Bewußtsein“ und „Wissenschaft“ umdrehen oder umkehren. „Der Zwang, diese ungewohnte Stellung anzunehmen und sich in ihr zu bewegen“, nämlich auf dem Kopf zu gehen, sei „eine so unvorbereitete als unnötig scheinende Gewalt, die ihm angemutet“ werde, „sich anzutun“. Die „Wissenschaft“ sei, was sie will, „zum unmittelbaren Selbstbewußtsein“ stelle sie sich „als ein Verkehrtes gegen dieses dar“. Hegel spricht über das Verhältnis von Vernunft und Wirklichkeit. Normalerweise geht der Mensch davon aus, dass er in der Wirklichkeit lebt und die Philosophie („Wissenschaft“) von dieser ausgeht, um zu ihren Erkenntnissen über sie zu kommen. Doch Hegel kehrt dieses Verhältnis um, weil er von einem Primat der Vernunft über die Wirklichkeit ausgeht.

Feuerbach hat diese Umkehrung sehr genau beobachtet. In seinen *Grundsätzen der Philosophie der Zukunft* heißt es daher:

Die Methode der reformatorischen Kritik der spekulativen Philosophie überhaupt unterscheidet sich nicht von der bereits in der Religionsphilosophie angewandten. Wir dürfen immer nur das *Prädikat* zum *Subjekt* ... machen – also die spekulative Philosophie nur *umkehren*, so haben wir die unverhüllte, die pure, die blanke Wahrheit. (Feuerbach 1983, 17)

Das ist nicht schwer zu verstehen. Ich nehme Hegels Primat: Die Vernunft ist wirklich. Das ist der Grundsatz der „spekulativen Philosophie“, wie wir sie aus der Vorrede zur „Rechtsphilosophie“ kennen: „Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig.“ Feuerbach kehrt das Verhältnis um: Die Wirklichkeit ist vernünftig, ohne dass eine Vernunft als organisatorisches Element vorausgesetzt werden muss.

Auch bei Marx gibt es eine solche Denkbewegung, die Hegels Denkbewegung, die bereits eine Umkehrung des Verhältnisses zwischen „natürlichem Bewußtsein“ und „Wissenschaft“ war, umkehrt. Im *Kapital* heißt es einmal:

Die Mystifikation, welche die Dialektik in Hegels Händen erleidet, verhindert in keiner Weise, dass er ihre allgemeineren Bewegungsformen zuerst in umfassender und bewußter Weise dargestellt hat. Sie steht bei ihm

auf dem Kopf. Man muß sie umstülpen, um den rationellen Kern in der mystischen Hülle zu entdecken. (Marx 1974, 27)

Wie vielleicht bemerkt, spreche ich bereits von der „Revolution“, allerdings von einer „theoretischen“. Marx selbst hat sowohl das Denken Hegels als auch das von Feuerbach als eine „theoretische Revolution“ bezeichnet.¹ Zunächst ist die Revolution als eine Bewegung des Denkens bekannt, eine Denk-Bewegung. Jahrtausende lang hatte die Philosophie tautologisch im Denken angefangen zu Denken. Im berühmten fünften Fragment des Parmenides wird zuerst das νοεῖν (Denken) genannt, dann das εἶναι (Sein), wobei εἶναι nicht einfach Wirklichkeit bedeutet. Dennoch ist das kein Zufall. Und – wie gesagt – Hegel macht darauf aufmerksam, dass diese Form des Gedankens bereits eine Revolution ist, nämlich eine des „natürlichen Bewußtseins“.

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Wenn Feuerbach und vor allem Marx diese Denk-Bewegung umdreht, dann wird damit gewiss nicht die Ausgangslage, nämlich, dass das „natürliche Bewußtsein“ bei sich selbst beginnt, wiederhergestellt. Marx nimmt die Hegel'sche Revolution in seine eigene auf. Auch für Marx ist klar, dass die Wirklichkeit vernünftig ist und dass diese Vernunft wissenschaftlich verstanden werden kann, doch die idealistische Vernunft ist nicht der Herr dieser Wirklichkeit. Sie ist vielmehr das Epiphänomen eines Moments der Vernunft, zu der die idealistische stets ein schwieriges Verhältnis hatte: es handelt sich um die Vernunft der ökonomisch-sozialen Verhältnisse, die Vernunft der von Engels sogenannten „realities of life“ (Engels 1973, 11). Die Denk-Bewegung muss in *dieser* Wirklichkeit beginnen. Denn diese Wirklichkeit ist mächtiger als das Denken, geht ihr voraus und nimmt sie für immer vorweg. Das ist eine erste Form der Revolution.

Damit ist schon die Richtung angezeigt. Marx verlegt die Macht, die Hegel der Idee zugesprochen hat, in die Wirklichkeit. Eine mögliche oder notwendige Veränderung der Wirklichkeit muss daher auch in dieser selbst beginnen. Sie kann nicht von einem außerhalb der Wirklichkeit sich befindenden philosophischen Bewusstsein ohne Berührung mit ihr initiiert werden. Und damit beginnen die Probleme der Marx'schen Auffassung der Revolution.

1 „Von Feuerbach datiert erst die *positive* humanistische und naturalistische Kritik. Je geräuschloser, desto sicherer, tiefer, umfangreicher und nachhaltiger ist die Wirkung der *Feuerbachischen* Schriften, die einzigen Schriften – seit Hegels Phänomenologie und Logik – worin eine wirkliche theoretische Revolution enthalten ist.“ (Marx 1982, 326)

Das erste Problem: Die Bewegung der Geschichte stammt aus einer Reihe von Klassenkämpfen. Das ist einer der entscheidenden Gedanken des „Manifests“. In diesen Klassen-Konstellationen war das philosophierende Bewusstsein stets ein reagierendes, antwortendes Bewusstsein, ein Echo der Basis. Nun aber, im Moment, in dem Marx und Engels auf den Gedanken kommen, eine Revolution nicht nur zu fordern, sondern auch aktiv (in der „revolutionären Praxis“) selber durchzuführen, kann das revolutionäre Bewusstsein kein bloßes Echo mehr sein. Im Augenblick der Verfassung eines „Manifests der Kommunistischen Partei“ verlässt das Bewusstsein seinen rezeptiven Zustand und proklamiert die Zukunft einer „kommunistischen Gesellschaft“. Wie kann es das tun, wenn es nach Marx stets als ein Moment des Überbaus ein Echo der Basis ist?

Man hat z.B. darauf hingewiesen, dass Marx in den „Pariser Manuskripten“ von einem „durchgeführten Naturalismus oder Humanismus“ (Marx 1982, 295) spricht. In der Tat: es gibt bei Marx eine Art von naturalistischem Humanismus. Ein naturalistischer Humanismus wäre ein Humanismus, der die naturalistische Bedingtheit des Menschen nicht leugnet, der anerkennt, dass die Schnittstelle zur Natur der Anfang eines Verständnisses des Menschen sein muss, eben weil an dieser Schnittstelle das beginnt, was Marx „Arbeit“ nennt. Dann würde die intrinsische Motivation zur Revolution nicht lediglich aus der Dynamik der Wirklichkeit stammen. Das allerdings behauptet Marx zuweilen.

So komme ich zum zweiten Problem: Marx meint, dass die Revolution, die letzte aller Revolutionen, die Revolution des Proletariats, die Zerstörung der Herrschaft der Bourgeoisie, gleichsam von selbst aus der Wirklichkeit hervorgeht. Zum Kontext dieses Gedankens gehört die „Geburtshelfer“-These: „Die Gewalt ist der Geburtshelfer jeder alten Gesellschaft, die mit einer neuen schwanger geht.“ (Marx 1974, 779) Man könnte das auch so sagen: Die Revolution ist der Geburtshelfer ... Dann müsste das revolutionäre Subjekt, der „Proletarier“, gleichsam natürlich, irgendwie von selbst, in die „revolutionäre Praxis“ hineingetrieben werden. Das „Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei“ wäre lediglich ein Streichholz, der die schon gelegte Lunte nur in Brand stecken

müsste, eine Art von Anstoß, um die gespannte Bewegung freizusetzen.

In der *Deutschen Ideologie* schreibt Marx daher:

Diese „*Entfremdung*“, um den Philosophen verständlich zu bleiben, kann natürlich nur unter zwei *praktischen* Voraussetzungen aufgehoben werden. Damit sie eine „unerträgliche“ Macht werde, d.h. eine Macht, gegen die man revolutionirt, dazu gehört, daß sie die Masse der Menschheit als durchaus „Eigentumslos“ erzeugt hat u. zugleich im Widerspruch zu einer vorhandnen Welt des Reichthums und der Bildung, was beides eine grosse Steigerung der Produktivkraft – einen hohen Grad ihrer Entwicklung voraussetzt. (Marx und Engels 2017, 37 f.)

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Es geht darum, dass die „Entfremdung“ – ich kann hier nicht ihre Bedeutung in all ihren Formen entfalten – eine „unerträgliche“ Macht“ werde, „gegen die man revolutionirt“. Dazu muss die Wirklichkeit oder die Gesellschaft in einen extremen Zustand geraten, nämlich in den, dass sie, die „unerträgliche“ Macht“, „die Masse der Menschheit als durchaus ‚Eigentumslos‘ erzeugt“, will sagen, dass es einen Gesellschafts-Zustand gibt, in dem wenige über ungeheuerlichen Reichtum und die allermeisten über nichts verfügen. Dieser Zustand wäre dann so „unerträglich“, dass eine Revolution mit Notwendigkeit geschehen müsste.

Das hat auf den ersten Blick etwas für sich: Erst das Unerträgliche sprengt die kritische Masse zur Aktion. Wird mir etwas unerträglich, ändere ich es. Stört mich der Nachbar mit seiner Musik zu sehr, klingele ich an, um ihn zu bitten, die Musik leiser zu machen. Werden meine Zahnschmerzen unerträglich, gehe ich zum Zahnarzt *etc.* Eine Wirklichkeit ändert sich autopoietisch, aus sich selbst heraus, notwendig.

Die Frage ist jedoch, ob es auf dem Terrain der politisch-sozialen Zustände eine Unerträglichkeit gibt, das Phänomen des Unerträglichen, das einen Wandel dieser Zustände autopoietisch nach sich ziehen würde. Ich denke nicht: Es gibt hier jedenfalls keine kausale Notwendigkeit, das Unerträgliche ist nicht notwendig die Ursache von Veränderung, erst recht nicht von Aufstand oder Revolution.

Das zeigt uns Primo Levi vorlesen, indem er sich mit der Frage auseinandersetzt, warum die Insassen der Konzentrationslager nicht revoltiert haben. Zunächst macht er zurecht darauf aufmerksam, dass es sehr wohl Aufstände gegeben habe, nämlich in Treblinka, Sobibor und Birkenau. Dann aber in einem zweiten Schritt schreibt er Folgendes:

So wie die Verknüpfung von Gefangenschaft und Flucht entspricht auch die Verknüpfung von Unterdrückung und Rebellion einem Gemeinplatz. Ich will damit nicht sagen, daß sie niemals gültig ist, ich sage nur, sie ist nicht immer gültig. Die Geschichte der Revolten, genauer gesagt: der Aufstände von unten, der „zahlreichen Unterdrückten“ gegen die „wenigen Mächtigen“, ist so alt wie die Geschichte der Menschheit und ebenso verschiedenartig und tragisch. Es gab einige wenige siegreiche Rebellionen, viele sind niedergeschlagen worden, unzählige andere wurden, kaum daß sie ausgebrochen waren, im Keim erstickt, und zwar so frühzeitig, daß sie in den Chroniken keine Spuren hinterlassen haben. Die Variablen, die das Spiel bestimmen, sind vielgestaltig: die zahlenmäßige, militärische und ideelle Stärke der Rebellen einerseits, die jeweilige Zusammenschlüsse oder Risse im Inneren, die Hilfestellungen von außen für die einen und anderen, die Fähigkeit, das Charisma oder die Dämonie der Anführer, das Glück. Dennoch beobachtet man in jedem Fall, daß an der Spitze der Bewegung niemals die am meisten Unterdrückten stehen. Gewöhnlich werden Revolutionen ganz im Gegenteil von kühnen und bedenkenlosen Männern angeführt, die sich aus Großmut (oder auch aus Ehrgeiz) ins Schlachtengetümmel werfen, obwohl sie die Möglichkeit hätten, selber ein sicheres und ruhiges, vielleicht sogar privilegiertes Leben zu führen. Das in den Monumenten so oft wiedergegebene Bild vom Sklaven, der seine schweren Ketten zerreißt, ist Rhetorik: seine Ketten werden von den Gefährten zerrissen, deren Fesseln leichter und lockerer sind. (Levi 1990, 163)

Wenn die „Erschöpfung“ zu groß wird, wenn sie unerträglich wird, ist sie bereits jenseits der Möglichkeit eines Aufstandes. Das Unerträgliche kann nicht die Ursache einer Revolution sein; im Gegenteil: das Unerträgliche würde eher dazu beitragen, den unerträglichen Zustand zu stabilisieren. Und was gerade noch unerträglich war, ist, im Vergleich zur Möglichkeit des Todes

in der revolutionären Auseinandersetzung, schon erträglich geworden. (Zu diesem Thema gehört auch die Identifikation des Gefolterten mit dem Folterer [Stockholm-Syndrom]; man könnte darüber nachdenken, inwiefern es im Kapitalismus eine Identifikation dessen, der nichts hat, mit dem Reichen gibt.)

Jene „unerträgliche‘ Macht“ (ich konzidiere übrigens, dass Marx das Wort „unerträglich“ in Anführung schreibt), gegen die man notwendig eine Revolution ausruft, gibt es nicht; jedenfalls bildet sie keine notwendige Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Revolution. Dann aber muss man sich umso mehr fragen, wie eine Revolution zu begründen ist. Wenn die Revolution kein Ereignis natürlicher Kausalität ist, dann muss es eine andere Art von Kausalität geben, in der sie sich ereignet. Das ist die „Kausalität“ der Freiheit: die Revolution ist kein natürliches, sondern ein *moralisches* Ereignis.

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Marx hatte mit dem Materialismus der Revolution ein spezifisches Problem lösen wollen. Wenn das menschliche Bewusstsein und das, was ihm bewusst ist, Epiphänomen der „realities of life“ ist, dann kann es nicht *gegen* diese Wirklichkeit agieren. Sollte es das Vermögen haben, gegen seine Wirklichkeit zu handeln, dann musste es in einer gewissen Hinsicht schon über sie hinausgegangen sein. Diese Möglichkeit widerspricht jedoch der Voraussetzung, dass das Bewusstsein Echo der basalen ökonomischen Verhältnisse ist.

Diese Aporie konnte Marx nicht auflösen. Die Prämisse der Kausalität von Unter- und Überbau war zu elementar. Dabei ist es keineswegs unmöglich, an einem solchen Verhältnis festzuhalten, ohne es als eine quasi-natürliche Kausalität zu begreifen. Dass der Mensch in seinen politischen Ansichten und Aktionen dazu tendiert, seine soziale Herkunft zu bestätigen, wenn diese ihm Vorteile verspricht, ist auch dann wahr, wenn diese Bestätigung keiner quasi-natürlichen Determination entspringt. Gegen sich selbst zu denken fällt auch einem prinzipiell freien Lebewesen schwer. Gegen sich selbst denken zu können, dürfte vermutlich auch ein Merkmal des Revolutionärs sein...

Der Schritt zur Revolution ist keiner, der einer quasi-natürlichen Determination entspricht, der sich eines unerträglichen Zustands entledigt, er ist vielmehr ein moralischer und demnach freier: „Die Ethik, auf die Geschichte angewendet, ist die Lehre von der Revolution“ (Benjamin 1985, 91), schreibt Walter Benjamin. Ich nehme mein Arendt-Zitat vom Beginn hinzu: Die Ethik

der Geschichte ist die „Lehre von der Revolution“, weil ihr „Ziel“ die „Freiheit“ ist. – Es wäre eine *Ethik der Revolution* auszuarbeiten.

2.

Jetzt bin ich von der Frage nach der Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Revolution zu ihrer moralischen Rechtfertigung gelangt. Dieser Zusammenhang ist kein Zufall. Es hat den Anschein, dass die Behauptung, es gebe „unerträgliche“ Zustände des Menschen, die auf ökonomischen Entscheidungen basieren, weniger die Funktion hat, einer Natur der Revolution auf die Spur zu kommen, als eine moralische Legitimation zur Gewalt zu konstatieren. Diesen Verdacht möchte ich abschließend in einer partiellen Lektüre zweier Essays von Slavoj Žižek etwas verdeutlichen.

Wenn es undenkbar ist, dass die Unerträglichkeit einer politisch-sozialen Situation von selbst zu ihrer Auflösung neigt, dann wächst die Rolle des handelnden Subjekts, dann wächst die Bedeutung seiner subjektiven Freiheit. Mit anderen Worten: Die Frage nach der Revolution ist die nach dem „revolutionären Subjekt“. In jenem Vorwort zur Neuausgabe des „Manifests der Kommunistischen Partei“ schreibt Žižek: „Das Problem des westlichen Marxismus (und sogar des Marxismus überhaupt) war die Abwesenheit des revolutionären Subjekts: Warum vollzieht die Arbeiterklasse nicht den Übergang vom an-sich zum für-sich und konstituiert sich als revolutionärer Akteur?“ (Engels, Marx und Žižek 2018, 48) Die Frage ist im Grunde dieselbe wie jene, die ich im vorangegangenen Teil gestellt habe. Warum bleibt eine Revolution aus, wenn die Lebensbedingungen bestimmter Teile der Gesellschaft zu einer „unerträglichen‘ Macht“ werden?

Žižek scheint keinen Zweifel daran zu haben, dass heute Kandidaten für ein „revolutionäres Subjekt“ existieren. Nicht wenig seiner Rhetorik dient ihrem Aufweis. So heißt es einmal:

Man kann daher die Hypothese riskieren, dass heute mit der Epoche des globalen Kapitalismus, ebenfalls eine neue Ära der Sklaverei aufkommen wird. Auch wenn es keinen direkten legalen Status einer versklavten Person gibt, nimmt die Sklaverei eine Vielzahl von neuen

Formen an: Millionen von Immigranten auf der arabischen Halbinsel ohne grundlegende Bürgerrechte und Freiheiten; totale Überwachung von Millionen von Arbeitern in asiatischen Sweatshops (Ausbeutungsbetrieben), die oft wie Konzentrationslager organisiert sind; der massive Einsatz von Zwangsarbeit bei der Ausbeutung natürlicher Ressourcen in vielen afrikanischen Staaten (z.B. dem Kongo usw.). (Engels, Marx und Žižek 2018, 37)

Žižek räumt ein, dass es Sklaverei im eigentlichen Sinne, d.h. als öffentliche Institution, nicht mehr gibt. Es gibt keine Sklaven insofern, als ihre Arbeitskraft einem Eigentümer – der nicht der Sklave selbst ist – gehört. Dennoch – und damit hat er Recht – gibt es sklaverei-ähnliche Zustände. Haben wir es hier nicht mit einer Form des Unerträglichkeits-Diskurses zu tun? Sklaverei oder selbst sklaverei-ähnliche Arbeitsbedingungen sind „unerträglich“.

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Man hätte demnach einen Kandidaten fürs „revolutionäre Subjekt“. All jene Menschen, die in diesen unerträglichen Situationen leben, könnten das Heer der Revoltierenden ausmachen. Žižek fügt im Verlauf des Essays noch andere hinzu: „(Immigranten, Arbeitslose, prekär Beschäftigte, Opfer sexueller, rassistisch und religiös motivierter Unterdrückung, unzufriedene Studenten ...)“ (Engels, Marx und Žižek 2018, 53) Damit treten zu den gleichsam Versklavten noch Gruppen von potentiellen „revolutionären Subjekten“ hinzu. Würde man all diese Gruppen irgendwie zusammenfassen können, hätte man wahrlich eine revolutionäre Armee.

Doch es liegt auf der Hand, an diesem Punkt skeptisch zu bleiben. Auf der Suche nach dem „revolutionären Subjekt“ war schon Marx gescheitert. So ist es durchaus eine berechtigte Frage, ob es das „Proletariat“ überhaupt jemals gegeben hat (auch bei Marx selbst lassen sich Äußerungen finden, die zeigen, dass es stets mehr erst um die Bildung des „Proletariats“ gegangen ist als um sein bloßes Finden). Lukács hat an dieser Stelle die Wichtigkeit der „Partei“ betont. Sie musste die Aufgabe übernehmen, das „Klassenbewußtsein“ zu schaffen und zu erhalten. Doch dieser Weg hat sich als Irrweg herausgestellt; er führte geradewegs in die Abgründe der Indoktrination und mit ihr verbunden der Korruption.

Die Situation der Linken heute hat wie schon Marx das Problem, auf ein potentielles „revolutionäres Subjekt“ verweisen zu können. Obwohl es eine große Anzahl von möglichen Kandidaten gibt, obwohl es in der Tat „Unerträgliches“ in den gesellschaftlichen Zuständen gibt, scheint es keine politische Kraft zu geben, die aus diesen Zuständen eine Kraft zur Veränderung entwickeln könnte. Hat demnach Francis Fukuyama recht mit seinem Narrativ vom „Ende der Geschichte“? Gibt es wirklich keine Alternative mehr?

In seinem Vorwort zu den Lenin-Texten schreibt Žižek:

We have here two models, two incompatible logics, of revolution: either to wait for the teleological moment of the final crisis when the revolution will explode “at the proper time” by necessity of historical evolution; or to recognize that the revolution has no “proper time”, and see the revolutionary chance as something that emerges and has to be seized upon in the detours of “normal” historical development. Lenin was not a voluntarist “subjectivist” – what he insisted on was that the exception (an extraordinary set of circumstances, like those in Russia 1917) offered a way to undermine the norm itself. And is not this line of argumentation, thus fundamental stance, more relevant than ever today? Do we not also live in an era when the state and its apparatuses, inclusive of its political agents, are simply less and less able to articulate the key issues? The illusions of 1917 that the pressing problems facing Russia (peace, land distribution, etc.) could be solved through “legal” parliamentary means is the same as the contemporary illusion that, say, the ecological threat can be avoided by expanding the logic of the market to ecology (making the polluters pay the price for the damage they cause, etc.). (Žižek 2017, 60)³

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2 Zu Fukuyama vgl. Derrida 2004, 84 ff.

3 Vgl. auch Žižeks Gedanke: „Die radikalen kommunistischen Bewegungen waren immer auf eine Minderheiten-Avantgarde beschränkt, und um eine Vormachtstellung zu erreichen, mussten sie geduldig auf eine Krise warten (für gewöhnlich einen Krieg), die ihnen einen begrenzten Spielraum ermöglichte. In solchen Momenten kann eine authentische Avantgarde die Gelegenheit ergreifen und die Menschen mobilisieren (wenn auch nicht die aktuelle Mehrheit) und das Ruder übernehmen.“ (Engels, Marx und Žižek 2018, 47 f.)

Das „revolutionäre Subjekt“ ist hier entweder eine „Klasse“ oder ein Individuum. Zudem – und das ist wichtiger – gibt es implizit eine Verschiebung in der Ätiologie der Revolution. Zunächst zu Lenin.

Tatsächlich war sich Lenin bewusst, dass nur eine „Minderheiten-Avantgarde“ zur Revolution schreiten konnte. Wie schon Levi bemerkt, geschieht der ultimative Aufstand nicht ohne die, die ihn, wenn nicht schon organisieren, so doch riskieren. Diese Individuen, diese „Revolutionäre“ (Che, Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong), stammen häufig keineswegs aus jenen Umständen, die sie mit der Revolution verändern wollen (das gilt natürlich auch für Marx und Engels). Wie Lenin bringen sie das theoretische Handwerk mit, das in einer „revolutionären Praxis“ zur Anwendung kommt. Ob sie dann faktisch einen „unerträglichen“ Zustand aufheben, scheint zu einer „scholastischen Frage“ zu werden. *De facto*, könnte man sagen, schafft die Revolution einen „unerträglichen“ Zustand, nämlich den für die vorherigen legalen Machthaber. Auch hier, scheint mir, gilt, dass die Revolution ein moralisches Phänomen ist. Sie nimmt nicht nur das Leid der ehemals Vernachlässigten weg, sie schafft notwendig Leid.

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Zudem, und das ist hier bei Žižek vielleicht noch wichtiger, gibt es eine Verschiebung im Legitimationsdiskurs der Revolution. Denn er spricht in Bezug auf Lenin von „pressing problems facing Russia“. Das ist beinahe eine verobjektivierende politische Bemerkung. Es gibt große politische Probleme in Russland – wer ist in der Lage, sie zu lösen? Das überträgt Žižek auf unsere Situation. Tatsächlich: Wenn wir in Zeiten des *global warming* (samt der von ihm verursachten schon bekannten, dann aber noch kommenden Flüchtlingsströme) die kapitalistische Wirtschaftsform auf die Ökologie übertragen, um von ihr die Lösung des Problems zu erwarten, machen wir dann nicht einen großen Fehler? Ist das Problem, das noch gar nicht richtig eingetreten ist (jedenfalls nicht im Erfahrungshorizont des gewöhnlichen Konsumenten), nicht unlösbar für die bekannten Mittel? Wäre es nicht ein geradezu kluger Akt, die kapitalistische Wirtschaftsform mindestens zu unterbrechen, wenn nicht zu zerbrechen, um *dieses* Problem lösen zu können?

In diesem Blickwinkel erscheint die Revolution nicht als eine völlige Umkehrung aller politischen und sozialen Lebensverhältnisse, nicht als eine Umwälzung der ganzen intellektuellen Welt, sondern als eine vernünftig

begründete politische Aktion. Damit nähert sie sich der Form eines demokratischen spontanen Machtwechsels.

Ich komme zum Ende: Die Rede von einem „Ende der Geschichte“ ist naiv. Sie geht – wie Marx – von einer intrinsischen Motivation der Geschichte aus, oder von einer Form, die wie ein Gesetz wirkt. Abgesehen davon, dass das immer mit einem gewissen Naturalismus zusammenhängt (auch bei Fukuyama, vgl. den Sieg des konsumatorischen Bedürfnisses), rechnet es auch mit zu kleinen Zeitabständen. Die Aussage: Eine Revolution ist unmöglich – ist daher unsinnig.

Zugleich ist die Aussage: Eine Revolution ist möglich, weil diese oder jene Zustände unserer Welt „unerträglich“ sind, ebenfalls abwegig. Sie will den freien Schritt zur Revolution durch eine historische Notwendigkeit mindestens legitimieren, wenn nicht gleich determinieren. Dagegen muss betont werden, dass es eine solche Not der „Unerträglichkeit“ nicht gibt.

Es bleibt eigentlich nur noch zu sagen, dass die Revolution eine politisch-soziale Möglichkeit oder Un-möglichkeit (im Sinne Derridas) darstellt, die sich verwirklichen wird, wenn sie sich verwirklichen wird. Vermutlich wird es eine moralische Legitimation geben, die das Geschehnis „verständlich“ macht. Doch dass es eine naturgemäße Ursache zu ihm gegeben hätte, wird man nicht sagen können. Damit fällt die Revolution tatsächlich zurück in die Hand eines freien Individuums, das sie riskiert haben wird.

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ARENDT IN JERUSALEM

A REPORT ON THE RELEVANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract

The paper analyzes Hannah Arendt's report of the trial in which Adolf Eichmann was condemned for his responsibility in the Shoah. From the observation of the phenomenon and the phenomenology of the "Eichmann case" two problems, above all, emerge requiring philosophical investigation of a specifically moral nature. These problems concern, on the one hand, the banality of evil and, on the other hand, the relevance of human responsibility. Finally, the paper develops the idea of responsibility even for what we are not directly responsible, and justifies the ethical character of this attitude.

Keywords: Arendt, Eichmann, evil, responsibility, Shoah.

Arendtova v Jeruzalemu. Poročilo o pomembnosti odgovornosti

Povzetek

Članek analizira poročilo Hannah Arendt o procesu, na katerem je bil Adolf Eichmann obsojen za svojo odgovornost pri holokavstu. Na podlagi obravnave fenomena in fenomenologije »primera Eichmann« se predvsem zastavljata dva problema, ki zahtevata filozofsko raziskavo specifično moralne narave. Zadevata, na eni strani, banalnost zla in, na drugi strani, pomembnost človeške odgovornosti. Nazadnje članek razvije idejo odgovornosti tudi za tisto, za kar nismo neposredno odgovorni, in skuša upravičiti etični značaj takšne države.

Ključne besede: Arendt, Eichmann, zlo, odgovornost, holokavst.

1. Arendt in Jerusalem

I will start with one of the most famous trials of the twentieth century: that of the Nazi SS officer, Adolf Eichmann. This trial was held in Jerusalem in 1961, following Eichmann's capture the previous year in Buenos Aires. As it is well known, the trial was covered by the philosopher Hannah Arendt, who went to Jerusalem as a correspondent for *The New Yorker*. The articles and the book that Arendt brought forth from this experience in 1963—*Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Arendt 1977)—created a real stir, and gave rise to a great deal of debate, which remains unabated even to this day.

Why did Arendt's writings create such a stir? Why do the "Eichmann case" and the "banality of evil" continue to be debated? What do we stand to gain from these reflections today? My paper will attempt to answer these questions.

First of all, the stir was created by the fact that Arendt's report did not take the approach everyone expected. Arendt did not abide by Ben Gurion's instructions, for whom Eichmann's trial was to have been an exemplary case brought before the attention of the world. Unlike the public prosecutor, Arendt did not portray Eichmann as a monster, that is, as a person who deliberately and consciously set about creating evil; nor did she extol the virtues of the Israeli court judging Eichmann, but rather criticized its performance in several instances. In other words, on the political level, Arendt took a maverick approach and, on the philosophical one, she turned the Eichmann trial into an opportunity to explore two important themes: that of evil and that of responsibility. In order to do this, it was crucial to avoid transforming philosophy into an ideology.

Instead, Ben Gurion, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, had a different conception of the trial: "It is not an individual that is in the dock at this historic trial, and not the Nazi regime alone, but anti-Semitism throughout history." (Arendt 1977, 17) The purpose of the trial was to condemn anti-Semitism in general. To this end Eichmann would have to be transformed into a symbol: a symbol of anti-Semitism as the manifestation of evil. Only in this way could the trial bring about a strengthening of "Jewish Consciousness", and highlight the role that Jews could play on the world stage.

Once in Jerusalem, Arendt rebelled against this ideological reading of the "Eichmann case", above all for philosophical reasons. In fact, this reading

did not correspond to the facts as they presented themselves before her eyes, or to the phenomena that, as a reporter, she had to describe. “Zu die Sache selbst!” was the motto of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. “Zu die Sache selbst!” was what the young Martin Heidegger, although with a different idea of what constituted philosophy, had repeated during the 1920s and taught to his students. Among these students, as we know, was Hannah Arendt (Young-Bruehl 2004, 42–76).

But if one wants to get to “the things themselves”, if the phenomena are to be respected just as they present themselves, and within the limits in which they are presented, if—in other words—philosophy is to be approached as phenomenology, then there can be no place for ideology. It is sufficient to look, and look well. If one looks at the defendant, Otto Adolf Eichmann, it does not seem as if one is looking at a monster. Eichmann comes across as an ordinary man. He seems to be obtuse; he does not seem to realize what he has done. He declares himself to be “Not guilty in the sense of the indictment” (Arendt 1977, 19). It follows that if he is not guilty, then he cannot acknowledge his own responsibility for being on trial.

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This is certainly the way that Eichmann appears in Arendt’s eyes. Since then, however, further information, compared to what was presented about him at the time of the trial in Jerusalem, has reached us, above all concerning the period of his stay in Argentina after the war (Stangneth 2014). From these documents, it emerges that Eichmann may well have been a morally obtuse man, but he was nevertheless aware of having made certain choices and continued unhesitatingly to defend them. The person who emerges is convinced of his actions: a person aware that he might be called on to account for them.

In other words, from the observation of phenomena and the phenomenology of the “Eichmann case”, two problems above all emerge requiring philosophical investigation of a specifically moral nature. These problems concern, on the one hand, the banality of evil and, on the other, the relevance of human responsibility.

2. The banality of Evil

How can evil possibly be “banal”? Isn’t evil actually the opposite of this—something remarkable, out of the ordinary, unlike anything we experience or seek from day to day, namely a measure of peace and quiet? But first of all, what exactly does “banality” mean?

“Banal”, in the most usual sense of the word, refers to something ordinary, unremarkable and commonplace in our lives: something we have got used to. Whatever fails to stand out with respect to our habits is banal. It is generally accepted that the everyday is banal.

In the 1920s Martin Heidegger dedicated several university courses, as well as all of the first part of *Being and Time*, to an analysis of the everydayness in our lives (Heidegger 1979, 126–130). However, for Heidegger the everyday is not always the same and unchanging. Rather, is it characterized by a destructive dynamic that leads human beings to ruination and decay. Banality is therefore something negative. Philosophy’s task, as Heidegger was already demonstrating in his courses at the beginning of the 1920s, is that of confronting the decay of life and allowing *Dasein* to choose its own level of authenticity: whatever derives from the realization of one’s finiteness and the acceptance of one’s mortal condition. In other words, life is the terrain in which the battle takes place against the banality of daily decadence in favor of the exceptionality of opting for one’s deepest and truest self, which is marked by death.

But when Arendt speaks of the “banality of evil”, she means something different, something unlike the commonly accepted meaning, which Heidegger failed to perceive in his analysis. Arendt means above all one thing: that the cause of evil is an underlying stupidity, that there are, in other words, certain people—in this case Germans—who fail to grasp the meaning of situations, who cannot manage to put themselves in other people’s shoes, or even open up to them. In other words, whatever is different to me is a matter of indifference since only I have any value, only I am a real human being. And so, evil that derives from this indifference, which is truly evil for whoever falls victim to it, is not such—nor is it recognized as such—by those who carry it out. It is in fact

something quite banal.¹

Once again, Arendt asserts that, in the case of Eichmann and many other Nazis, good itself was a temptation to which they did not want to give in. Good—not evil. To take this even further, it means that evil can no longer be distinguished from good, that at this stage the confines between good and evil have been blurred. This has occurred because their radical difference has disappeared. The inter-changeability of good and evil in daily life; evil blending with good: this, basically, is the banality of evil; this is what happens in the age of nihilism.

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A hypothesis such as this could not fail to cause a scandal, in an era in which there was a need for a clear division between those who were good and those who were bad, as well as in a context in which the guilty—in this case Eichmann—had to be seen to be judged and condemned. It might have been dangerous to maintain that good and evil were inter-changeable, at the very moment, that is, when, on the rubble of the Second World War, a moral foundation needed to be rebuilt. Instead, as Ben Gurion wished, it had to be said that good had triumphed, and that it was now sitting in judgment on evil. It was necessary for everyone to accept his or her own responsibilities. If, in fact, evil is banal, if it is, in fact, inter-changeable with good, the risk is that Eichmann himself could be justified, or even partly excused from his part of responsibility. This is why there was such a backlash against Arendt's book.

From a philosophical point of view, however, this approach was too facile. It was necessary instead to get to the things in themselves, necessary to be faithful to the phenomenological method, in order to get to the bottom of the question. This is what Arendt does in her interpretation of the banality of evil, and she does it by confronting two aspects. The first is what we might call the experience of active indifference, which is capable of making all those affected by it obtuse, morally obtuse; the second is what transforms every action into a simple procedure.

The inter-changeability of good and evil, for the Germans, but not only for this people, during the Nazi era is a given. It was purely on account of this generalized

1 See what Arendt says very clearly in this regard in the radio interview with Joachim Fest on November 9, 1964, now in: Arendt and Fest 2011.

inter-changeability, for instance, that the officers in charge of surveillance in the concentration camps were able to return in the evenings to their houses situated close to the barbed wire perimeter fences, hug their wives and children—women and children who were in every way the same as those who had been sent to the gas chambers—, and unwind by listening to a Beethoven symphony conducted by Furtwängler on the radio. This blurring, however, was built up bit by bit. It is the result of a series of well-defined actions. It is an *active* indifference, as I have already said, the purpose of which is the elimination of the differences between certain categories of human beings with respect to animals and things. This is what the Nazis did towards the Jew when they reduced him to a being that was not quite human, or to what Primo Levi calls a “muslim”: someone who has been subjugated (Levi 2014). Therefore, if it is no longer necessary to acknowledge the Jews as fellow human beings, they can be eliminated. In a very banal way, without hatred—like animals led to the slaughterhouse.

All this may be connected to the second aspect, which Arendt investigates by describing Eichmann’s behavior. I have mentioned that Eichmann declared that he was “Not guilty in the sense of the indictment”. Why? The figure that comes closest to Eichmann is, in Arendt’s opinion, Pontius Pilate. But this is not so because Eichmann, like Pilate, washes his hands: that is, because he has no interest in the consequences of his actions. Eichmann does not actually want to be irresponsible. On the contrary: his choice is to want what his own people want. His choice is to adhere, like his people, like the German people, to the will of the *Führer*.²

In other words, Eichmann is not an irresponsible person because he does not want to act. Eichmann’s error lies precisely with the idea of responsibility he adopts. He believes he is acting correctly because he is obeying orders from above. And it is this very obedience that he believes exonerates him from anything he is charged with.

Here is what Arendt very clearly says about this: “So Eichmann’s opportunities for feeling like Pontius Pilate were many, and as the months and

² Even if, during the course of the trial, and a propos of nothing, Eichmann declares that he has always lived according to the dictates of Kantian morality. But he has confused subordination to an arbitrary order with the choice of acting in keeping with a universal principle.

the years went by, he lost the need to feel anything at all. This was the way things were, this was the new law of the land, based on the Führer's order; whatever he did he did, as far as he could see, as a law-abiding citizen. He did his *duty*, as he told the police and the court over and over again; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*." (Arendt 1977, 133) This is why Eichmann continued to maintain that he was "Not guilty in the sense of the indictment": that is, in the sense of the law.

But how can any of this be possible? This happens because a transformation takes place in the way actions are perceived. Here, there is no question of the indifferent kinds of action I have mentioned, in which good and evil are blurred. This indifference is also a consequence of the fact that actions involve the application of a procedure, they require rules to be observed and orders to be obeyed. It is *precisely this*, all this, that came to be considered moral. Instead, however, it is not moral in the slightest, since this way of interpreting action leaves no room for the exercise of free will. Or rather, it leaves the possibility at least of deciding whether to disobey or not.

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3. The Relevance of Responsibility

The question of responsibility, and above all the way in which we may be responsible within contexts in which collective actions are carried out, is, therefore, the nature of the ethical problem facing us. Indeed, it is the prerequisite for giving rise to ethics. Otherwise, as I have said, everything becomes inter-changeable, and evil blurs with good.

The problem, then, is that of recuperating a sense of responsibility. Or, at least, managing to avoid losing it. We have seen how Eichmann lost his: by transforming himself into a cog in a mechanism that was bigger than him, and choosing to voluntarily subject himself to another's will. And he paid precisely for this choice: that is, for not having come to terms with the necessity of facing up to his own responsibilities.

Others, many others, have acted and continue to act as he did. Still others, however, arrived and continue to arrive at a different decision. As a way of concluding my reflections, I would like to analyze the behavior of one of these people, in whom a sense of responsibility was alive and well. This person did not

say no to what he was ordered to do, unlike Bartleby, the scrivener, protagonist of the novel of the same name by Herman Melville (1835: see Melville 2014). Rather, he did live his whole life feeling guilty about what he had contributed to making. I refer to the American, Maj. Claude Eatherly, who participated in the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima.

Eatherly played a limited part in the bombing of Hiroshima, involving aerial reconnaissance. Nevertheless, he felt guilty for all the deaths provoked by the atomic bomb. He faced up to his responsibilities for them, unlike, for example, Stiborik, the radar operator on *Enola Gay*, the plane that dropped the bomb; or Tibbets, who piloted the same plane; or Olivi, the co-pilot involved in the bombing of Nagasaki. In some interviews they gave, these men said they had no problems of conscience. They stated that they had only been obeying orders. Just like Eichmann.

Instead, as I have said, Eatherly felt guilty for what he had contributed to doing. He shouldered the responsibility for it, unlike his fellow pilots, and unlike Harry Truman, President of the United States, who decided to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and continued to defend this decision right to the end, saying that it had been taken in order to speed up the end of the war. On the contrary, Eatherly never managed to overcome his sense of remorse for having contributed not only to the death of millions of people, but above all for having set in motion a mechanism of destruction, whose consequences could not be controlled. This is why he had to be taken into a psychiatric hospital on several occasions. And it was there that a letter arrived for him from Günther Anders.

Günther Stern (aka Anders = different) was well known to Hannah Arendt. Like Arendt, he too was Jewish and a pupil of Husserl and Heidegger in the 1920s. But most importantly, Anders was Arendt's partner who in 1929 also became her husband. He fled with her to Paris when Nazism came to power, divorced from her in 1937, and moved to the United States.³

In the research he carried out in the United States, Anders concentrated on the human being's responsibility with regard to technology. More specifically, towards those types of technology that have become increasingly autonomous

3 About this matter we can read now in: Arendt and Anders 2016.

and self-sufficient, that act even without any input from human beings, and the consequences of which cannot be controlled by them. But this does not mean that human beings are simply enslaved by these technologies, nor can they hold themselves absolved of the consequences of what they do. This can be seen precisely in Eatherly's case.

The principal theme of the letters exchanged between Anders and Eatherly is in fact the pilot's responsibility, and the way in which he can come to terms with it (Anders 1995). In actual fact, for Anders, Eatherly is a "precursor": that is, he is an example of the type of destiny facing the whole of humanity: that of being "guiltlessly guilty" for the consequences of the use of these new technologies. In fact, Eatherly acted like a cog in a mechanism that did not depend on him, without being able to fully conceive of the effects that would derive from his actions: actions that were important in order for a result to be achieved, even if not to such an extent as to completely determine its outcome.

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Yet, Eatherly—despite having made only one of a number of contributions that brought about the result—still feels responsible. And rightly so. Above all because, as Anders states, it is by means of his behavior and this acceptance of responsibility that he can lay claim to his dignity as a human being. A human being may be considered such insofar as he is in a position to choose, and not insofar as he abdicates this opportunity to choose, resigning himself to being a part of a mechanism. In other words, facing up to one's responsibilities and embracing an ethical vocation is precisely what defines the human condition.

This, then, is what Eichmann was not capable of doing, or simply did not want to do. It is this fact that explains his "obtuseness", which is underlined by Arendt. By adhering to the Nazi mechanism and limiting himself to obeying the logic of the procedures, Eichmann thereby foregoes his humanity. Therefore, it was not just the victims who, through this mechanism, lost the characteristics denoting their humanity; they were lost also by their persecutors.

Eatherly shows that there is an alternative. But how can it be chosen? How can one be responsible when one does not have control over all the consequences of the actions one contributes to making? The answer is simple, despite the apparent paradox. In an era of mechanical procedures, in an era of the power of dictatorship, in an era of technological dominion, we can still lay claim to our humanity, first of all if we take *responsibility even for what we are*

not directly responsible. Just as Eatherly did. Because, in actual fact we cannot determine and control the consequences of what the procedures or orders of a dictator have established. But we can say no, insofar as it is in our power to do so, like Bartleby, the scrivener. In this way, in those areas over which we have a measure of control, we may manage to block the setting in motion of some deleterious process.

There may be other people to take our place; or there may not. There might, instead, be others who will follow our example. In any case, we will be able to say that whatever happened, it was “not in my name”. Otherwise, we will be fully guilty: whether we recognize it, like Eatherly, or not. And in that case we will come up against death, yet fail to grasp why. Just like Eichmann.

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DIESSEITS UND JENSEITS

SLOWENISCHE KUNST NACH DEN POLITISCHEN UMBRÜCHEN

1945 UND 1991. EINE REFLEXION

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On This and on the Other Side. Slovenian Art after the Political Turns in 1945 and 1991. A Reflection

Abstract

Whereas the first, revolutionary turn in 1945 brought a “twilight of democracy” in the form of a longstanding monopoly of the communist party over the “authentic interests” of the population in today’s territory of Slovenia, the second, democratic turn in 1991 opened the dawn of democracy and brought forth the independent country of Slovenia. In the effectuation of the first turn, art was used mainly in the manner of agitation or propaganda. By contrast, art played an active, implicit, and explicitly subversive role in the democratic transition. The analysis of Slovenian art during the

Cold War (after 1948) shows that under the influence of interaction with Western art, significant transformations of formal and semantic types occurred. That happened in two directions. First, in the direction of the obvious “Westernization”, the agents of which were the informel and the new expressive figuration with its form-forming inventions. And, second, in the direction of a less noticeable increase in semantic relevance, that is, in the direction of a descent from the ideologically stylized semantics of the young socialism into the archetypal semantics of the life reality of the people on the Slovenian side of the Iron Curtain. This resulted in the thematization of the human tragedy of war in a nontoxic manner (Zoran Mušič with the cycle *We are not the last*) and a discussion of the Slovene “genocide trauma” of the postwar period, which was taboo in public discourse, but became manifest through a difficult-to-understand “discourse” of forms and colors that occurred spontaneously in the form of the so-called “dark modernism” in the case of various authors (M. Pregelj, J. Tisnikar, J. Bernik, A. Jemec). In contrast, art played an active role in the second turn of 1991. Among other things, in the dissident form of the (third) avant-garde or *the retro avant-garde*, which coagulated after 1980 in the movement *Neue slowenische Kunst – NSK*. Instead of new art forms, as invented by previous avant-gardes, the retro-vanguard NSK palimpsestically used traditional templates. For example, a Nazi poster, which was supposed to celebrate the communist “Youth Day” in 1987, but in its ambiguous cynical symbiosis showed how despite the diametrically contrary ideological “jargons of authenticity” different totalitarianisms demonstrate the same aesthetic fascinations and *a fortiori* almost identical authoritative aspirations. In the second part of the paper, the author attempts to follow the footsteps of the third Slovenian (retro) avant-garde and describe its forms, ideological concepts, and influences in the time before the second political turn. In the context of Slovenian social development and the implicit processes of globalization, he emphasizes the transformation of the retro-vanguard movements after the Second Turn. This transformation caused the change from “the culture of presence” to “the culture of meaning” in Slovenian art as well, that is, the (quantitative) dominance of the visual in the fine arts.

Key words: iron curtain, political turn, „westerization“, Kominform, informel, newspeak, retroavantgarde, overidentification.

Tostran in onstran. Slovenska umetnost po političnih prelomih v letih 1945 in 1991. Refleksija

Povzetek

Medtem ko je prvi, revolucionarni prelom v letu 1945 prinesel »zaton demokracije« v obliki dolgotrajnega monopola komunistične partije nad »avtentičnimi interesi« prebivalstva na območju današnje Slovenije, je drugi, demokratični prelom v letu 1991 razprl zoro demokracije in omogočil nastanek samostojne slovenske države. Pri prvem prelomu je bila umetnost uporabljana predvsem na način agitacije ali propagande. V nasprotju s tem je pri demokratičnem prehodu umetnost igrala aktivno, implicitno in eksplicitno subverzivno vlogo. Analiza slovenske umetnosti med hladno vojno (po letu 1948) kaže, da so se pod vplivom stikov z zahodno umetnostjo dogodile pomembne, formalne in semantične transformacije. In sicer v dveh smereh. Najprej, v smeri očitnega »pozahodenja«, kakršnega predstavljata informel in nova ekspresivna figurativnost z njunimi oblikotvornimi invencijami. In, nato, v smeri manj opaznega povečanja semantične relevance, tj. v smeri sestopa od ideološko stilizirane semantike mladega socializma k arhetipski semantiki življenjske resničnosti ljudi na slovenski strani železne zavese. Slednje je za posledico imelo tematizacijo človeške tragedije v vojni na netoksičen način (cikel *Nismo poslednji* Zorana Mušiča) in obravnavo slovenske »genocidne travme« povojnega obdobja, ki je bila tabuizirana v javnem diskurzu, a je prihajala na površje s težko razumljivim »diskurzom« oblik in barv, ki se spontano pojavil v podobi t. i. »temnega modernizma« pri različnih avtorjih (M. Pregelj, J. Tisnikar, J. Bernik, A. Jemec). V nasprotju s tem je umetnost igrala aktivno vlogo pri drugem prelomu v letu 1991. Med drugim, denimo, v disidentski obliki (tretje) avantgarde oziroma *retroavantgarde*, ki se je po letu 1980 pretopila v gibanje *Neue slowenische Kunst – NSK*. Namesto novih umetniških oblik, kakršne so iznašle predhodne avantgarde, je retroavantgardna

NSK palimpsestno uporabljala tradicionalne predloge. Na primer, nacistični plakat ob praznovanju komunističnega »dneva mladosti« leta 1987, ki je s svojo dvoumno cinično simbiozo pokazal, da različni totalitarizmi, kljub diametralno nasprotnemu »žargonu pravšnjosti«, izpričujejo podobne estetske ambicije in *a fortiori* skoraj identične avtoritativne aspiracije. V drugem delu razprave avtor skuša slediti stopinjam tretje slovenske (retro-)avantgarde in opisati njene oblike, ideološke koncepte in vplive v času pred drugim političnim prelomom. V kontekstu slovenskega družbenega razvoja in implicitnega procesa globalizacije poudari transformacijo retroavantgardnih gibanj po drugem prelomu, ki je obenem povzročila prehod od »kulture prisotnosti« h »kulturi pomena«, tj. (kvantitativno) prevladanje vizualnega znotraj likovne umetnosti.

Ključne besede: železna zavesa, politični prelom, učinki pozahodnjenja, Kominform, informel, novorek, retroavantgarda, nadidentifikacija.

Exposition: Membranen, Kulturen, Osmose

Als Voraussetzung für eine Osmose muss eine Membran vorhanden sein, und es muss einen Unterschied zwischen den Zuständen auf beiden Seiten der Membran geben, der das Wesen der osmotischen Kraft ausmacht. Wenn ich bezüglich der slowenischen Kunst nach 1945 und 1991 – metaphorisch – von Membranen spreche, habe ich zunächst den „Eisernen Vorhang“ und danach die Membrane der politischen (Nicht-)Demokratie im Sinn. Mit der osmotischen Kraft der Kultur meine ich die Interaktionen, die in der an der Membran bestehenden Realität früher oder später von der Differenz zwischen der „existenziellen Konzentration“ bzw. der Vitalität des Zeitgeistes auf der einen und auf der anderen Seite erzwungen werden, wobei die Seite mit der höheren Vitalitätsbewertung immer den Ausgangspunkt und die primäre Richtung der geschichtsmachenden Osmose darstellt.

Da ich im ersten Textteil das Geschehen am „Eisernen Kontakt“ zwischen der westlichen und östlichen Kunst in der Zeit des Kalten Krieges in Jugoslawien betrachten möchte, muss ich zuerst das „Aktionspotential“ (Konzepte, Produktionsarten, Innovationen, Realisierungen) der westlichen und östlichen kulturpolitischen Hemisphäre möglichst sachlich beschreiben, da das Verständnis dieser Ereignisse wesentlich von einer richtigen Einschätzung des Spannungsfeldes zwischen ihnen abhängt. Wenden wir unseren Blick daher zunächst zum Westen.

I.***Eiserner Vorhang und osmotische Kraft der Kultur. Verwestlichungseffekte in der slowenischen Kunst nach 1945 und ihre tiefgründigen Folgen******Der Zeitgeist auf der westlichen Seite des Eisernen Vorhangs******Das Lebensgefühl***

40 Im düsteren Jahrzehnt nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs war das Leben in der westlichen Hemisphäre gekennzeichnet von Tragik und Prosaik. Der plötzliche „Ausfall“ von vierzig Millionen Menschenleben wandelte die Atmosphäre der Zeit in ein existenzielles Vibrieren hoher Instabilität, das in sensiblen Menschen das Gefühl intensivierte, dass die Zeit des menschlichen Lebens lediglich ein „bei der unerbittlichen Bank der Vergänglichkeit aufgenommenen Kredit“ ist (Sloterdijk 2007, 320). Der Mensch fühlte eine Ungewissheit und Leere, da er spürte, dass das Leben im permanenten Sterben sinnlos ist. Und dieser Widersinn, der damals *Absurdität* genannt wurde, war nicht mehr zu ertragen.

Die Reaktion hierauf war eine zweifache. Einerseits mündete sie in Verzagtheit. Wenn das Leben nichts anderes als ein sinnloses Gewimmel von Ungeziefer ist, das sich gegenseitig frisst und tötet, dann ist eben alles erlaubt. Andererseits nahm die Reaktion eine konstruktive und aktivistische Note an. Und dies aus gutem Grund. In seinem Essay, den er zu Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs verfasste, sorgt sich Czesław Miłosz nicht so sehr um die Vielzahl der Opfer, die das globale Schlachten verursachen wird, als vielmehr um die Mentalität der Nachkriegsgeneration, die die Trümmer um sich herum als authentisches Weltbild – im Grunde als Kriterium, wie die Welt aussehen muss – akzeptieren wird. Die Künstler, die sich dessen bewusst waren, als die urbanen und menschlichen Trümmer bereits da waren, konnten sich keinem Defätismus überlassen.

Erst die späten 1950er Jahre konnten die Baupotentiale in größerem Maße aktivieren, da sie eine neue Solidität boten, die sich aus dem allmählichen Vergessen des Kriegsmordens und des stufenweisen Wiederaufbaus der

in Trümmern liegenden Welt verdichtete. In den 1960er Jahren zogen ein neues Sattsein und eine neue Selbstzufriedenheit ihre Fahne über dem sich erneuernden Westen auf und schufen die Grundlage für Demokratie und Wirtschaftswachstum.

Die Kunst

Die Kunst zwischen beiden Weltkriegen verfolgte das Ziel, die Welt des Scheins und Anscheins zu überwinden. Mit Abstraktionsverfahren wollte sich die modernistische Kunst von der aufdringlichen, konfusen und turbulenten Oberfläche der Dinge abwenden und auf den Flügeln eines aufklärerischen Optimismus das „Wesen“ der Dinge betrachten – deren „reine“ Formwerte, Strukturen und Beziehungen (geometrische Abstraktion, *de Stijl* usw.). All dies war das Werk von Künstlern, die noch an die Werte des klassischen europäischen Humanismus glaubten und versuchten, die „Ästhetik der Renaissance“ mit all ihrem Glauben an die Gesetzmäßigkeit der Welt und an die Wissenschaft, in die immanente Logik der bildnerischen Ausdrucksmittel, in die kreativen und metaphysischen Potentiale des Menschen lediglich in die nichtfigurative Kunst zu übertragen (näheres vgl. Muhovič 2014, 56–58).

Die Kunst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg stieß hingegen einen Dorn des radikalen Zweifels in das Fleisch der westlichen Kultur – dass es überhaupt möglich wäre, diese auf ihren alten Fundamenten zu erneuern. Nachdem der Mensch unter das Niveau der Animalität abgesunken war, schien die Berufung auf seine Vernunft, seine Absoluta und seine Humanität einfach abwegig. Ebenso unglaublich erschienen unter den neuen Umständen auch die Formen, die von der Kunst vor dem Kriegskataklysmus geschaffen worden waren. Das primäre Problem lag nicht darin, dass sich menschliche geopolitische Interessen in diesem Krieg von globalem Ausmaß verselbstständigt und von den humanistischen Idealen getrennt hatten, sondern darin, dass der Mensch selbst sich von seiner humanen Grundlage getrennt hatte. Dies aber bedeutet, dass die Glaubwürdigkeit des Menschen in der Nachkriegszeit nicht in erster Linie ein Thema der politischen Ethik sein konnte, sondern ein Problem einer neuen Anthropologie war.

In den späten 1940er und den 1950er Jahren begann die zweite Phase der abstrakten Kunst, d. h. die Kunst des *Informel* durch ihr radikales Abrücken von den schöpferischen Standards der Vorkriegszeit – Narrativität, rational kontrollierte Komposition, Farb- und Tonharmonie sowie übersichtliche und fokussierte Strukturiertheit – der neuen Anthropologie auf dem Gebiet der Kultur und Kunst den Weg zu bahnen. Der Begriff „Informel“ bezeichnet bekanntlich keinen einheitlichen Stil, sondern eher eine einheitliche formbildende Haltung, deren konstitutives Prinzip das Wirken im Spannungsfeld zwischen Auflösung der (alten) Form und Entstehung der (neuen) Form ist, also ein Prinzip, das gemäß der Derrida-Diktion auch als *Prinzip der Dekonstruktion* bezeichnet werden könnte. Der erkenntliche äußere Ausdruck dieser Haltung sind Gestualität und Texturologie, also Verwendung betonter Stofflichkeit und Tastbarkeit.

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Zwei Aufgaben

Beide Ausgangspunkte kamen wie gerufen zum Eintritt in die Bedingungen der Nachkriegszeit, die den Künstler zwei Aufgaben stellten: die *kurzfristige* Aufgabe der erneuten Humanisierung der im Krieg zerstörten Materialität sowie die *langfristige* Aufgabe der Konsolidierung der menschlichen Individualität in postsozialistischen und postindustriellen Bedingungen.

1. *Die Re-humanisierung der weltweiten Materialität.* Im Zweiten Weltkrieg wurde der europäische urbane Raum zu einem ungeordneten und unartikulierten Stoff zertrümmert (Abb. 1).



Abb. 1: Die Stadt Dresden nach dem fast zwei Tage dauernden Bombeneinsatz; Photo: März 1945.

In den Konzentrationslagern der drei großen Totalitarismen wurde sogar der Mensch selbst zu einem „lebenden Stoff“ degradiert. Die erste Aufgabe beim Wiederaufbau des zerstörten Raums bestand darin, ihn wieder sinnvoll zu ordnen. Die bildenden Künstler entnahmen den Ruinen daher einzelne Teile (als bloße Substanz) und integrierten sie in ihre Kompositionen, in denen diese Teile der zerstörten Welt ihre Blöße verloren und eine neue, geistige Bedeutung bekamen, da sie in den künstlerischen Artefakten nach Maß des Menschen, nach Maß seines Körpers, seiner Gefühle, seines Geistes und seiner Kultur geordnet waren (Abb. 2).

Kunstbewegungen wie das Informel, die *Arte Povera*, der *Nouveau Réalisme* u. a. schufen aus dem Chaos der Ruinen und aus dem zertrümmerten Stoff eine neue, geistigen Sinngehalt tragende und daher humane Ordnung. Mit denselben seh- und fühlbaren Werten, die in den Kriegsrüinen Leid und Not verursachten, half die bildende Kunst ein neues Gefühl der innerlichen Verbundenheit zwischen Menschen und Materie zu schaffen.



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Abb. 2: Alberto Burri, *Sacktuh und Rot*, 1954, Akril und Collage auf Leinwand, 86, 4 x 100, 3 cm; Perugia: Fondazione Pallazzo Albizzini, Collezione Burri.

2. *Die Konsolidierung der Individualität.* Parallel zu den beiden Humanisierungen kam auch der Bedarf an einer Emanzipation der Individualität des Menschen auf. Diese war unter den totalitären Regimen Opfer der Dominanz der Prinzipien über die Verhältnisse, da dort das ideologische Prinzip seine Inkarnation auf Kosten eines Verzichts auf jede Besonderheit und Individualität der Person diktierte; in der Zeit der Globalisierung hingegen ist sie der Dominanz der Verhältnisse über die Prinzipien zum Opfer gefallen, in denen die Individualität zwar eine Form von „persönlicher Wahl“ vermag, doch versinken diese Wahlmöglichkeiten stets in den Optionen, die dem Subjekt von anderen erstellt und vorgeschlagen werden (frei nach Sloterdijk 1989, 234–235).

Der Zeitgeist auf der slowenischen Seite des Eisernen Vorhangs

Aus anthropologischer Sicht war die Situation in Slowenien in vielen Aspekten ähnlich, denn sie entstand aus einer ähnlichen existenziellen Krise, die durch das Kriegsmorden und die Zerstörung verursacht wurde, in sozialer und politischer Hinsicht war sie jedoch völlig anders. Erstens deshalb, weil die in Trümmern liegende Welt auf der slowenischen Seite nicht nur wieder aufzubauen war, sondern dies auf eine radikal diskontinuierliche Weise geschehen musste, da der Krieg mit dem Sieg der sozialistischen Revolution endete, d. h. mit einer fundamentalen Änderung des vorigen politischen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Systems und mit der Einführung eines langjährigen Monopols der kommunistischen Partei über die „authentischen Interessen“ der Bevölkerung. Zweitens deshalb, weil der Preis für die Herstellung und Festigung dieses Monopols mit Tränen und Blut in Mega-Einheiten bezahlt wurde – allein in Slowenien mit der Ermordung von mehr als 100.000 angeblichen Gegnern des Kommunismus. Junge Männer, Frauen und auch Kinder wurden nach Kriegsende ohne Gerichtsverfahren an mehr als 600 Hinrichtungsstätten, weit entfernt von den Augen der Öffentlichkeit und häufig auf bestialische Art getötet. Zur Illustration (Abb. 3): Im Jahre 2009 wurden in einem aufgegebenen Bergwerk in der Nähe von Celje mehrere hundert mumifizierte Leichen von Männern und Frauen gefunden, die in dem Stollen teils lebendig hinter 11 Betonmauern verschlossen wurden.

Die Änderung der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung geschah dabei im Zeichen eines befohlenen ideologischen Optimismus, der die Menschen auf Biegen und Brechen in den Aufbau einer „neuen Welt“ und eines „neuen sozialistischen Menschen“ eingliedern sollte, wobei der Nachkriegs-Holocaust bis heute im Zeichen eines Verschweigens, Schreckens und Traumas geblieben ist.

Die Einführung der sozialistischen Ordnung erfolgte nach der Partitur der sowjetischen Politik. Alles sah wie eine Mini-Reprise der Oktoberrevolution mit „roter“ und „weißer“ Garde aus, mit der führenden Rolle der unfehlbaren kommunistischen Partei, der „avantgardistischen Arbeiterklasse“ bäuerlicher Herkunft, mit Industrialisierung, Elektrifizierung, Kollektivierung und auch einer mächtigen politischen Polizei, Repressionen, Dissidenten, Arbeitslagern usw.



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Abb. 3: Das Bergwerk in der Nähe von Celje, in dem mehrere hundert mumifizierte Leichen von Männern und Frauen hinter 11 Betonmauern gefunden wurden.

Die Intelligenzschicht, diese „opponierende Klasse“, wurde mit der neuen sozialistischen Moral, die Loyalität weit höher als Bildung schätzte, völlig zur Seite gedrängt, während das öffentliche Leben von vitalen Simulanten beherrscht wurde, die sich mit den Werten der neuen „wissenschaftlichen Weltanschauung“ zu direkten Bevollmächtigten der „historischen Notwendigkeit“ aufbliesen (frei nach Sloterdijk 1989, 230). Es schien, dass die Entwicklung geradlinig in diese Richtung gehen würde. Doch geschah dies nicht, da das sowjetische Patronat damals weder imstande noch bereit war, auch nur die geringste politische Eigenmächtigkeit zu tolerieren, die sich – zumindest was die Politik auf dem Balkan betrifft – Josip Broz an der Spitze der damaligen jugoslawischen kommunistischen Partei zu erlauben versuchte. Die Reaktion aus Moskau war heftig. Heute ist sie unter dem Namen „Kominform-Resolution“ bekannt, einer öffentlichen Erklärung des Kommunistischen

Informationsbüros¹ über die marxistisch-leninistische Deviation der Kommunistischen Partei Jugoslawiens und über ihren Ausschluss aus dieser Organisation. Die Resolution vom 28. Juni 1948 löste eine starke Erschütterung aus, da sogar eine Militärintervention der Ostblockstaaten in Jugoslawien nicht auszuschließen war (was 1956 in Ungarn und 1968 in der Tschechoslowakei geschah). Da einige jugoslawische Kommunisten Stalin unterstützten, begann die jugoslawische kommunistische Partei mit Festnahmen, Liquidationen und Internierungen sogenannter „Kominformisten“. Der Konflikt endete offiziell im Jahre 1955 mit der Unterzeichnung der Belgrader Deklaration zwischen Tito und dem damaligen Ministerpräsidenten der Sowjetunion Nikolai Alexandrowitsch Bulganin.

Hierbei ist hervorzuheben, dass es beim Konflikt zwischen Stalin und Tito nicht um eine kommunistische Häresie ging, die auf einen besonderen titoistischen „dritten Weg“ eines demokratischen Sozialismus (was immer dies auch bedeutet!) führen sollte, obwohl sich die Kommunisten sehr bemühten, dies so darzustellen und es auch vom Westen eine Zeit lang so aufgefasst wurde. Es handelte sich um einen wesentlich simpleren, harten und gefährlichen Streit um politische Überlegenheit und Dominanz zwischen zwei ungleichen, jedoch gleichermaßen kompromisslosen Diktatoren. Die Härte dieses Konflikts zwang Tito mit der Zeit dazu, kosmetische Änderungen des Parteiregimes (und seines eigenen politischen Marketings) vorzunehmen, was ihm angesichts der Isolation seitens der Ostblockstaaten eine lebenswichtige wirtschaftliche und finanzielle Anlehnung an den kapitalistischen Westen ermöglichte.

1 Das *Kominform* (Abkürzung für „Kommunistisches Informationsbüro“), das an die Stelle der 1943 aufgelösten Komintern treten sollte, wurde teils als sowjetische Reaktion auf den Marshallplan gegründet. Seine offizielle Aufgabe bestand darin, gegenseitige Fragen der kommunistischen Parteien zu lösen, in der Welt einheitlich im Namen des Kommunismus aufzutreten und die Öffentlichkeit über den Stand der kommunistischen Parteien zu informieren, insbesondere in Bezug auf grundsätzliche Fragen. Die Organisation stand unter unmittelbarer Führung Stalins.

Verwestlichungseffekte und ihre Folgen

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Im Unterschied zur Situation im Westen erwartete die kommunistische Führung in Slowenien bzw. Jugoslawien von der Kunst nicht, „der Welt Sinn zu geben“, da diese Welt für sie bereits einen ideologischen Sinn bekommen hatte. Lieber war ihr und notwendiger erschien ihr eine Instrumentalisierung der Kunst, d. h. die Ausnutzung derjenigen Potenziale der Kunst, die eine Verbreitung und Festigung ihrer Ideologie ermöglichten. Und natürlich ihrer Macht. Die Kommunisten behaupteten zwar die ganze Zeit, dass sie „alles neu machen“, auch eine neue Kunst, doch meinten sie dies nicht ernsthaft. Ihre Vorstellungen von Kunst waren konservativ (der Sozialistische Realismus war lediglich eine motivisch und thematisch modifizierte Form des Bürgerlichen Realismus des 19. Jahrhunderts), neue Kunstformen waren ihnen gelinde gesagt fremd. Dies zeigte sich schon gleich nach der Oktoberrevolution, als einige Künstler (Majakowski, Malewitsch, El Lissitzky, Tatlin, Rodtschenko) den Appell zum Avantgardismus ernst nahmen und in ihren Bemühungen unverzüglich gestoppt wurden.

Die Bindungen der slowenischen und jugoslawischen Kunst zu ihrem natürlichen westlichen *Biotop* waren bis Anfang der 1960er Jahre unterbrochen, worauf es wegen der bitteren Erfahrung der Parteifunktionäre mit dem Kominform zu einem Wandel der Parteipolitik zur Realpolitik kam. Der erste äußere Vorbote pragmatischer Änderungen auf dem Gebiet der Kultur war die Grafikbiennale in Ljubljana, die im Jahr 1954 mit Zustimmung des Regimes ihre in die Welt gerichtete Sinuskurve nach oben lenkte und eine etwas „kosmopolitischere“ Kulturpolitik ankündigte, mit der auch die Welt des „neuen“, „sozialistischen Menschen“ ihre „Modernität“ zeigen und sich in ihr durchsetzen könnte.

Wie bereits erwähnt war mit der Kunst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg die Hoffnung zu Ende, dass eine Erneuerung der westlichen Kultur auf alten Fundamenten möglich ist. Man muss sie neu suchen und erforschen. Zur Welt und zum Menschen muss ein „realeres Verhältnis“ entwickelt werden, in dem – dies wird das Vorzeichen einer erträglichen künftigen Welt sein – das Urgente niemals mehr im Grundsätzlichen verschwindet (Sloterdijk 1989, 239). Informel war ein formbildender „Suchoperator“ solcher Bemühungen. Insbesondere der Bemühungen des westlichen „urbanen“ Menschen.

Kominform, Informel und die Slowenen

Als dieser „Operator“ die Küste Sloweniens erreichte, kam er nicht auf ein „urbanes“ Gelände, für das er entwickelt wurde, sondern auf das Gelände eines „sich erst urbanisierenden“ Menschen. Künstler empfanden seine von offizieller Seite genehmigte Ankunft als Segen,² obwohl er bei einigen kommunistischen „Kulturpolitikern“ offenen Widerstand des Typs „entartete bürgerliche Kunst“ hervorrief, doch gab ihnen die Spitze der kommunistischen Staatsmacht nicht nach. Nicht zuletzt war die Öffnung zum Westen sowohl auf außen- als auch innenpolitischem Gebiet für sie von Vorteil. Die Schwere des Alltags schliff mit der Zeit eben auch die scharfen Kanten des ideologischen Radikalismus und Exklusivismus ab.

Das „Hochdruckgebiet“ des Informel traf auf der slowenischen Kunstszene auf ein unterdrücktes Gefühl, „Nachzügler zu sein“, und ein, unter dem sozrealistischen Imaginarium sprudelnden Vitalismus der Künstler. Den Künstlern eröffneten sich viele neue Horizonte. Doch - analog zum slowenischen Impressionismus an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert³ auf der Ebene der formbildenden „Technik“ anfangs ungleich intensiver als auf der Ebene der Ideen und Inhalte. Von diesem Standpunkt betrachtet ist zu bemerken, dass die slowenische Applikation des Informel „technisch“ stellenweise sogar „perfektionierter“ und sophistizierter als die westlichen Originale ist, mit einem – wie soll ich sagen – kultivierten Gefühl für Maß, Ordnung und innere Konsistenz der Komposition, doch mit einem ungleich weniger vehementen, offenen und gewagten formbildenden Forschen, das seinen Ursprung stets im intensivierten Gefühl des Künstlers, dass er selbst einmalig ist, hat. Deshalb ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass das formbildende „Messen des Unermesslichen“ in Slowenien sehr häufig ästhetisierter und kultivierter als im Westen endet, „respektvoller“, mehr „in Furcht und Zittern“, „zaghafter“. Was aber auch seine Vorteile haben kann.

2 Denn die westliche Kunst war von jeher das natürliche „Biotop“ der jugoslawischen und slowenischen Kunst.

3 Der im Grunde nur ein in expressionistische Technik gehüllter expressiver Symbolismus war.

Das Informel ist nach Slowenien zunächst in drei Formen aufgetreten. In Form der dubuffetschen *Art brut*, in Form der tapiesschen *Texturologie* (Wedewer 2007, 10) und in Form einer spontanen Gestualität.

Die dubuffetsche *Art brut* griff der Malerei-Protagonist jener Zeit Gabrijel Stupica (1913–1990) Ende der 1950er Jahre auf seine – auf den ersten Blick völlig Paradoxe – kontemplierende und intimistische Weise auf. Er fühlte sich vom Primären und Elementaren angezogen, die das Milieu der „rohen Kunst“ mit seinem betonten und schwierigen Verlangen nach Schönheit und Kultiviertheit „zweiten Grades“ bot. Zu derartigen Bemühungen Stupicas zählen Werke wie zum Beispiel *Flora* aus dem Jahre 1958 und aus dem Jahre 1961 (Abb. 4), *Triumph der Flora* von 1965, der Zyklus der sogenannten *Bräute* aus den 1960er und 1970er Jahren usw.

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Abb. 4: Gabrijel Stupica, *Flora*, 1962, Tempera und Collage auf Leinwand, 72, 5 x 102 cm, Ljubljana: Kunstsammlung der Nova Ljubljanska banka.



Abb. 5: Gabrijel Stupica, *Mädchen beim Tisch mit dem Spielzeug*, Detailansicht.

Von der tàpiesschen Texturologie angesprochen fühlten sich Lojze Spacal (1907–2000), der versengtes Holz und Texturen verschiedener Materialien auf seine Bilder zu applizieren begann, sowie der „malerischer Existenzialist“ Marij Pregelj (1913–1967) in Werken wie *Kreuzigung* (1958), *Unbekannter Held* (1966) und *Diptychon* (1967; Abb. 6).



52 Abb. 6: Marij Pregelj, *Dyptichon I, II*, 1967, Öl auf Leinwand, 2 (176 x 150 cm), Berograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti.

Am direktesten und ergebnstesten griff der damals junge Janez Bernik (1933–2017) die tàpiessche Texturologie auf; nach allgemeiner Überzeugung gilt er überhaupt als zentraler Vertreter des Informel in Slowenien. Seine Ausstellung in der Kleinen Galerie in Ljubljana 1960 war die erste Ausstellung des slowenischen Informel. Charakteristisch für die vom Informel geprägte Zeit seines Schaffens waren Werke aus den Jahren 1960 bis 1980, zum Beispiel *Bild XXIII* (1962), *Das Magma* (1962; Abb. 7), *Niederschrift 92b* (1965), *Harakiri* (1972), *Stein statt Brot* (1975), *Brot* (1971-1987) u. a. Die tàpiesschen formbildenden Horizonte verliehen Berniks Artikulation Flügel und Vehemenz, in dem noch nicht ganz reifen Umfeld ermutigten sie sie „in europäischem Sinne“ und setzten sie in Bewegung. Bernik brachte – ähnlich wie Stupica auf seine Weise – sozusagen das „typisch slowenische“ Gefühl für Maß, Ordnung, subtile Kultivierung und intensive Vertiefung in sie ein, was aus der heutigen Zeitperspektive gut erkennbar ist.



Abb. 7: Janez Bernik, *Das Magma*, 1962, Mischtechnik auf Leinwand, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija.

Spontane Gestualität, dieser initiale Auslöser der informellen Artikulation, trat als Begleitung der betonten Textuierung bereits in die Umgebung von Berniks – insbesondere graphischer – Kreativität und in direkter Form gewiss in das Opus keines slowenischen Malers stärker als in die schöpferischen Anstrengungen des Andrej Jemec (geb. 1934) ein. Und zwar von seinen frühen abstrakt-gestischen „Landschaften“, die in den Jahren 1960 bis

1965 Aufmerksamkeit im In- und Ausland erregten, sowie erneut nach 1984, als die gestische Energie und gestische Aussagekraft bei ihm zurückkehrten, wiedergeboren in einer reifen Seismografie existenzieller „Erschütterungen“, die im Autor von der Welt, in der er lebt, hervorgerufen werden: Vibrationen des Mittelmeerraums, wenn sie von mediterraner Hitze und mediterranem Kolorit ausgelöst werden, Vibrationen des blauen Himmels, der Nacht, der Heimat, aber auch Vibrationen des „Tages, als Menschen vom Himmel fielen“, Vibrationen der „unschuldigen, doch wirklichen Welt“, Vibrationen des „blutigen XX. Jahrhunderts“ (Abb. 8) usw., wie die Titel seiner Werke lauten.

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Abb. 8: Andrej Jemec, *Das blutige XX. Jahrhundert*, 2011, Akril auf Leinwand, 220 x 300 cm.

Slowenische Traumen und der slowenische „dunkle Modernismus“

Die informelschen Anregungen – Spontaneität, Expression, Experiment und Improvisation – haben in der slowenischen Kunst nach 1955 nicht nur die formbildende Technik modernisiert und das Gefühl für die *Einmaligkeit und Unwiederholbarkeit des Künstlers* verstärkt, das vom kollektivistischen Geist des jungen Sozialismus schlechtgemacht und unterdrückt wurde. Durch das Interesse für das Primäre, Elementare und Faktische der Welt haben diese Anregungen immer mehr auch die den Künstlern angeborene persönliche Beziehung zur Welt – eine Beziehung, die wie ein Nachbar der Dinge ihrem Flüstern lauschen und es berücksichtigen kann – aus dem Käfig der ideologisch stilisierten Welteinstellung in die Freiheit geführt (vgl. Sloterdijk 1983/I, 267–270). *Die Künstler wurden unmerklich, ohne sich dessen selbst richtig bewusst zu sein, erneut zu für die unstilisierte Realität „empfindlichen Menschen“.* Dies aber hat den Inhalt ihrer Artikulationen im Kern verändert.

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Unter informelschen Artikulation begannen nämlich unmerklich auch unstilisierte „Sedimente“ der ideologisch stilisierten Welt an den Tag zu dringen und sie diskret zu ergänzen. Mit anderen Worten: Verschiedene Autoren nahmen die existenzielle Not der Kriegszeit, die zumindest teilweise bereits der Vergangenheit angehörte, aber auch das streng verheimlichte Trauma des Nachkriegsholocaust, die auf ausgesprochen tiefer Ebene die „jetzige Zeit“ der damaligen und auch der heutigen Slowenen betraf, wahr und drückten sie in ihren Werken spontan aus.⁴ Dies verlieh der slowenischen Kunst in den 1960er, 1970er und noch in späteren Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts eine besondere Prägung, die der Kunsthistoriker Tomaž Brejc im Titel einer Monographie über diesen Zeitraum der slowenischen Malerei spontan mit dem bedeutungsträchtigen, jedoch nicht explizierten Syntagma „dunkler Modernismus“ ausdrückte (vgl. Brejc 1991).

4 Schlicht deshalb, weil wir Slowenen uns mit dem „Kambodscha unter slowenischem Boden“ bis in die heutige Zeit leider nicht offen und gründlich auseinanderzusetzen wussten.

Verständlicherweise war die Thematisierung des slowenischen „Genozid-Traumas“ der Nachkriegszeit im öffentlichen Diskurs streng tabuisiert („feindliche Propaganda“) und sanktioniert. Durch einen schwerer zu verstehenden „Diskurs“ von Formen und Farben jedoch konnten und durften die slowenischen „Schatten auf der Seele“ an den Tag kommen. Dies *durften* sie, weil sie im Diskurs der Kunst nicht allen ersichtlich waren, und dies *konnten* sie, weil die Kunst den edlen Wein der Katharsis auch aus dem zu pressen vermag, was der Mensch verwirft, was er fürchtet und was ihn außen und innen gefährdet. Die Folge der ersten Tatsache ist, dass künstlerische Thematisierungen traumatischer Inhalte in Kunstwerken bis zur heutigen Zeit mehr am Rande der Aufmerksamkeit der breiten wie auch der Fachöffentlichkeit geblieben sind. Die Folge der zweiten Tatsache ist, dass bereits ein flüchtiger Überblick über den Kunstfonds des „dunklen Modernismus“ einige Autorennamen anschwemmt, deren Werke explizit oder implizit das Blutbad der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit sowie das damit verbundene tragische bzw. zynische Lebensgefühl seismografieren. Solche Namen sind zum Beispiel Zoran Mušič, Marij Pregelj, Stane Kregar, Janez Bernik, Bogdan Borčič, Jože Tisnikar, Andrej Jemec und Marijan Tršar. Wie eine Ausstellung in den einstigen Gefängniszellen der kommunistischen Geheimpolizei (UDBA) in Ljubljana unter dem Titel „*Worüber denkst du nach, Antigone?*“ von meist jüngeren Künstlern gezeigt hat, sind dies noch lange nicht alle Namen, die in diesem Zusammenhang zu erwähnen wären.

Die Matrix des „dunklen Modernismus“ sei kurz an drei Beispielen illustriert:

Zoran Mušič (1909–2005) – Wir sind nicht die Letzten

Zu den bekanntesten slowenischen Künstlern, in deren Werken explizit ein Echo des Kriegsgrausens und des mit ihm verbundenen Traumas zu erkennen ist, zählt zweifellos Zoran Mušič mit seinem erschütternden und verblüffend prophetischen Zyklus *Wir sind nicht die Letzten* (Abb. 9).

Dieser Zyklus von Zeichnungen, Gemälden und Graphiken entstand Mitte der 1980er Jahre. Er basiert auf dem persönlichen Erlebnis und einigen Originalskizzen aus der Hölle von Dachau. Doch ist er in erster Linie nicht eine Darstellung der Dachauer Realität und auch nicht eine Erinnerung an sie,

sondern eher eine *Ab-erinnerung* im Sinne einer kathartischen Verinnerlichung, die sich nach außen als Artikulation eines Urbilds jedes gewaltsamen und tragischen Todes zeigt. Es geht um das Gedächtnis des Malers, das eine Form von *Gemahnung* an alles Böse, jede Vernichtung im Schrecken des Leidens und Todes ist. Der Maler selbst sagte einmal, dass er dieses Thema ein viertel Jahrhundert lang aufschob, weil er wegen dessen Traumatik nicht genug „Energie“ für die Artikulation vermochte. Obwohl er das Bedürfnis verspürte, durch Malerei nicht nur sein persönliches Trauma abzulegen, sondern auch *zu zeigen*, wie jedes Böse sichtbare Folgen hat und dass gerade die suggestive Darstellung solcher Folgen die Humanität des Menschen wachrütteln und seine Starre überwinden kann. Selbst wenn sie in Form von Leichenstapeln auftritt.



Abb 9: Zoran Mušič, aus dem Zyklus *Wir sind nicht die Letzten*, 1987, Akрил auf Leinwand, 114 x 145, 5 cm.

Marij Pregelj (1913–1967) – Zusammengespresster Mensch

Von einem ähnlichen KZ-Golgota wie Mušič war auch Marij Pregelj gezeichnet, doch kommen das „Lebensgefühl“ und der Kontakt mit dem verheimlichten Grauen in seinem Opus auf völlig andere Weise zum Ausdruck. Bis 1958 herrschten in seiner Malerei Landschaften, idealisierte Genrebilder (Wäscherinnen, 1958) und Illustrationen (Ilias 1949–1950, Odyssee 1951) vor. Alles änderte sich aber, als er in seiner eigenen Familie mit Todesahnung und drohendem Tod konfrontiert war. Sein Vater, der Schriftsteller Ivan Pregelj, erkrankte im Jahre 1957 unheilbar. Diese indirekte „Berührung des Todes“ riss nach eineinhalb Jahrzehnten die Barrieren der Idealisierungen und Illustrierungen im Opus des Malers ein und ließ Bilder mit ganz anderem spezifischem Gewicht auf seine Leinwände kommen, denen die Betrachter und Kritiker damals als „grauenerregend“ bezeichneten (vgl. Zgonik 2010,

54–67). Es handelt sich um figurale Kompositionen, die von den üblichen Vorstellungen von figuraler Kunst ungeniert abweichen. Die Konkretheit der Figur siedelt über in die betonte Konkretheit der Malermaterie (alla prima, impasto), so auch die Materie der figuralen Körperlichkeit in die farbliche „Fleischlichkeit“, die sich unmittelbar vor dem Betrachter entfaltet und vor ihm abläuft. Die Transposition dieses Typs ist auf dem Bild *Zusammengepresster Mensch* aus dem Jahre 1966 (Abb. 10) und noch potenziert auf dem Bild *Der unbekannte Held* aus demselben Jahr zu sehen, bei dem man das Gefühl hat, dass hier ein „Drama, ähnlich wie in einer Metzgereidem bei der Kreuzigung“ abläuft (Sylvester 1985, 47; Abb. 11).



Abb. 10: Marij Pregelj, *Der zusammengesetzte Mensch*, 1966, Öl auf Leinwand, 133 x 184 cm, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija.



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Abb. 11: Marij Pregelj, *Der unbekannte Held*, 1966, Mischtechnik auf Leinwand, 149, 5 x 179, 5 cm, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija.

Die Brutalität der bildlichen Tatsachen war ein äußerer Ausdruck des Gefühls der Brutalität des menschlichen Lebens unter verschärften Bedingungen von Not und Gewalt; ein Ausdruck des Gefühls der Zerbrechlichkeit des Menschen, die sich manchmal auch in „Macht“ kleidet, und der unerträglichen Vergänglichkeit, von der am Ende nur 7 Kilogramm Knochen übrig bleiben. Es ist dies ein Ausdruck dessen, was der Mensch instinktiv ablehnt, obwohl es unausweichlich ist. In dieser Hinsicht ist schwer zu glauben, dass Pregeljs *Zusammengepresster Mensch* und *Unbekannter Held* in ihrer fleischlichen Eschatologie in keinem Zusammenhang mit der überindividuellen Realität der „slowenischen Unterwelt der Nachkriegszeit“ stehen, die der Autor zweifellos ahnte, wenn er schon nicht explizit von ihr wusste oder wissen wollte. Beide Werke lassen den Betrachter innehalten. Nicht wegen dessen, was sie offenbaren, sondern weil beide aus

dem „Schimmel“ des Immanentismus und Defätismus auf wirksame Weise ein Penizillin des (Selbst-)Bewusstseins und einer besonderen Selbstgewissheit synthetisieren, das entsteht, wenn ein existenziell „zusammengepresster Mensch“ mithilfe von Formen, die der Maler schafft, seine Lebensrealität erfahrungsmäßig und emotional akzeptieren und ihr durch das Bild, sozusagen „in zweiter Lesung“, offen in die Augen schauen kann.

Wenn Pregeljs erwähnte Werke die Zeit der späten 1950er und frühen 1960er in Slowenien schon nicht in einen Begriff umgesetzt haben, so doch gewiss deren „Atmosphäre“, d. h. das subliminale Gefühl von Bodenlosigkeit, das durch die Dominanz ideologischer Prinzipien über die Verhältnisse und noch stärker durch das absurde und verheimlichte Sterben von mythischen Ausmaßen generiert wurde.

Janez Bernik (geb. 1933) – Schatten auf der Seele⁵

Eine Resonanz auf die slowenische traumatische Geschichte offenbart auch das Opus des Zeichners, Malers, Graphikers und Dichters Janez Bernik. Und zwar nach 1980, als er sich in seinen Gemälden allmählich von seiner informelschen „Star-Vergangenheit“ verabschiedet und selbstständige schöpferische Wege einschlägt. In dieser Hinsicht stellen der Zyklus mit dem mehrdeutigen Titel *Schatten auf der Seele* aus dem Jahre 1980 sowie als Fortsetzung und Vertiefung der Zyklus *Anagoge* (gr. *anagogos* – ungebildet, ungeübt; ungewohnt) die Markierung eines Umbruchs dar. Ersterer ist noch in der expressiven geometrischen Abstraktion verankert, wenn man dieses ungeschickte, jedoch adäquate Syntagma verwenden will, Letzterer ist in gewisser Weise die Eröffnungsfigur einer neuen figuralen Kunst Berniks; beide Zyklen stellen eine offensichtliche Beugung der früheren einwandfreien Ästhetisiertheit hin zu einer verinnerlichten künstlerischen Essenzialität und Ernsthaftigkeit dar, die auf die Archetypik der Welt und des Menschen lauschen.

Es scheint, als seien sie ein spätes, keinesfalls aber zu spätes Echo von den slowenischen Hinrichtungsstätten und Massengräbern. Davon, dass dies keine motivierte Interpretation ist, zeugen die aussagestarken Wachslasierungen und

5 Vgl. Mikuž 1985, 11–17.

„Zeichen“ in Form eines Kreuzes in den Zeichnungen des Zyklus *Schatten auf der Seele*, hiervon sprechen auch die leichenähnlichen figuralen Diagonalen im Zyklus *Anagoge* (Abb. 12), die überhaupt nicht „ungeschickt“, sondern dank der unaufdringlichen Ästhetisiertheit in ihrer verblüffenden Schönheit „jenseits des Grabes“ archätypisch bedeutungsträchtig sind.

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Abb. 12: Janez Bernik, *11. VI. 1982, 1982*, olje na platnu, 150 x 190 cm, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija.

Kurzum: Durch den slowenischen „dunklen Modernismus“ werden auch die Vergänglichkeit und das „tragische Lebensgefühl“ (Unamuno) zu Bestandteilen der vollen Realität des Menschen, welcher der existenziell „zusammengepresste Mensch“ in der künstlerischen „zweiten Lesung“ offen in die Augen sehen kann. Oder wie der Dichter sagt: „Aus den Schatten auf der Seele spülen junge Gewitter riesige Weiten der Inbrunst und des Grauens

heraus, so dass reine Tropfen in die Augen und ins Herz schlagen.“ (Bernik 2008, 43)

Und tun, wozu sie gesandt wurden.

Coda

Eine Analyse der slowenischen Kunst in Zeiten des Kalten Krieges zeigt, dass sich unter dem Einfluss der Interaktion mit der westlichen Kunst erhebliche Transformationen formalen und semantischen Typs in ihr ereigneten. Und zwar in zwei Richtungen. In Richtung der augenfälligen „Verwestlichung“ der slowenischen bildenden Kunst, deren Agenzien das Informel und die neue expressive Figuration mit ihren formbildenden Inventionen waren. Und zweitens in Richtung einer weniger bemerkbaren Steigerung der semantischen Relevanz, das heißt in Richtung eines Abstiegs von der ideologisch stilisierten Semantik des jungen Sozialismus in die archetypische Semantik der Lebensrealität der Menschen auf der slowenischen Seite des Eisernen Vorhangs, was zur Thematisierung der menschlichen Tragik der Kriegszeit in unpathetischer Ausgabe (Zoran Mušič mit dem Zyklus *Wir sind nicht die Letzten*) und zur Thematisierung des slowenischen „Genozid-Traumas“ der Nachkriegszeit führte, das im öffentlichen Diskurs tabuisiert war, jedoch durch einen schwerer verständlichen „Diskurs“ von Formen und Farben bei verschiedenen Autoren (Marij Pregelj, Jože Tisnikar, Janez Bernik, Andrej Jemec, Marijan Tršar) spontan in Form des sogenannten „dunklen Modernismus“ an den Tag trat.

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II.

Diesseits und jenseits der Demokratie. Slowenische Kunst kurz vor der zweiten Wende 1991 und danach

Wenn die erste, revolutionäre Wende im Jahre 1945 eine „Abenddämmerung der Demokratie“ in Form langjährigen Monopols der kommunistischen Partei über die „authentischen Interessen“ der Bevölkerung in das heutige Gebiet Sloweniens brachte, so eröffnete die zweite, demokratische Wende im Jahre 1991 das Morgenrot der Demokratie und brachte den unabhängigen Staat

Slowenien hervor.⁶ Bei der Durchführung der ersten Wende wurde der Kunst von offizieller Seite ausschließlich eine Agitations- und Propagandafunktion zugedacht. Demgegenüber spielte die Kunst bei der demokratischen Wende eine aktive, implizit und explizit subversive Rolle. Um zu veranschaulichen, wie die Umsetzung dieser Rolle verlief und in was sie sich in der slowenischen Kultur entfaltete, muss zunächst der „Zeitgeist“ nach dem Jahr 1980 erläutert werden. Zuerst aus der westlichen Makro- und dann aus der slowenischen Mikroperspektive.

Die Spektralanalyse des Zeitgeistes nach dem Jahr 1980

Die westliche Makroperspektive

In den 1960er Jahren zogen ein neues Sattsein und eine neue Selbstzufriedenheit ihre Fahne über dem sich erneuernden Westen auf. Beides verdichtete sich aus dem allmählichen Vergessen des Kriegsmordens und schuf mit der Zeit die existenzielle Grundlage für Demokratie und Wirtschaftswachstum. Durch die Demokratie und den Wachstumsoptimismus wurde allerdings der Neoutopismus und die moralische Ungeduld der westlichen Studenten beunruhigt, bis diese Irritation im Mai 1968 in einem Vulkan studentischer Unzufriedenheit ausbrach und ihre Lava auch auf den kommunistischen Osten überschwappte (Prager Frühling, Studentendemonstrationen in Belgrad u. Ä.).

Als sich die Dinge beruhigten, tauchte in den 1980ern ein neuer Begriff am Horizont des Westens auf – *quality of life*, Lebensqualität. Dieser Begriff, so Peter Sloterdijk, schwebte wie eine riesige Werbung über dem politischen Raum und einen Moment lang schien es, als hätten die Politiker damit ihre Siegesformel für die Wahlen gefunden. So wie der Vulkan der Studentenunruhen schwappte auch das Phänomen „Lebensqualität“ nach Osten und ließ allmählich beiderseits des Eisernen Vorhangs eine neue Einstellung zur Vergangenheit und zur Welt aufkommen (vgl. Sloterdijk 2007, 320–321).

6 Selbstverständlich wurde die Wiedergeburt der Demokratie in Slowenien von verschiedenen postkommunistischen Idealisierungen, Rationalisierungen und Sophismen begleitet.

Der Bruch mit der Vergangenheit ist in etwa so, als wäre Herbert Marcuse plötzlich ein Zeitgenosse von Platon, Paulus und Spartakus; als würden Simone de Beauvoir und Galla Placidia gegenseitige Sympathien entdecken und als würde Mark Rothko regelmäßig Andrei Rubljow im Atelier besuchen (vgl. Sloterdijk 2007, 321). Es handelt sich um eine Geste der „traumhaften Gleichzeitigkeit“, mit der die Vergangenheit dimensionslos wurde und die Geschichte „ohne Fahrplan“ blieb; als ob beide in einen Punkt stürzen würden, den Punkt der Allgegenwart (Sloterdijk 1989, 266). Kurzum: Ein neuer Zeitgeist begann Form anzunehmen, ein „Zeitvernichtungsgeist“, den man in den 1970er Jahren vielleicht errahnen konnte und der in den 80er und 90er Jahren sozusagen greifbar wurde. Auch dieser Geist ist mit einer Bodenlosigkeit imprägniert, jedoch nicht mit der Bodenlosigkeit der Absurdität, sondern mit der Bodenlosigkeit, die die Absurdität mit der des Konsums überspielt hat.

Das Schlüsselwort der Zeit heißt nicht mehr „Entscheidung“ (Wille), sondern „Erlebnis“ (Empfindung, *aísthesis*). Die Welt fordert uns heute zum Konsum auf, nicht etwa zum Zweifel – und hierin liegt unsere *conditio postmoderna*. Man hat nur ein Leben, fülle also deinen Teller und lebe, konsumiere, lass dir nichts entgehen, die Reste landen ohnehin nur noch in einem schwarzen Plastikbeutel. Im Ozean der Appetite und der allgemeinen Bereitschaft zu neuen Erlebnissen ist die Welt grenzenlos und auch fundamentlos geworden. Es verbleiben zwar einige letzte Konservative, Stoiker, wie es z. B. die Christen sind, die im Glauben an den Geist noch Reste von ernsthaften Missionen und objektiven Aufgaben bewahrt haben, doch selbst ein Großteil von diesen ist zu einer breiten Internationale ungläubiger Verbraucher konvertiert. Der Mensch des neuen Jahrtausends erlebt seine Fundamentlosigkeit als Verbraucher. Er ist nicht mehr zur Freiheit, sondern zur *Frivolität* verdammt. Frivol ist, wer sich ohne wahren Grund für das eine oder das andere entscheiden muss. Die neue Entscheidung und die neue Entschiedenheit, so Sloterdijk, entspringt nicht so sehr – wie die Vitalisten nach Nietzsche dachten – aus einem energiegeladenen Willen zur Macht, sondern wächst aus kleinen, instabilen Unterschieden in der Erlebnisspannung. Das regulative Entscheidungsprinzip ist eher ein „Wille zum Vergnügen“ als ein „Wille zur Macht“. Und was in diesem Zusammenhang *Wille* genannt wird, ist nicht mehr Wille im konventionellen Sinn, da in der Kultur des Vergnügens das Bild des Menschen, der tatsächlich noch etwas

zu wollen vermag und nicht nur zwischen dem Angebotenen wählt, einfach verschwunden ist. Wenn aber die Welt zu einer Verkörperung von Optionen wird, bedeutet dies für ihre Bewohner stets, dass sie ihre Entscheidungen auf der Basis der *vorliegenden* Angebote und ihr Verhalten auf der Basis schwacher, frivoler Entscheidungsgründe formen müssen (frei nach Sloterdijk 2007, 323–324).

Diese Überlegungen können eine Grundlage für die Thematisierung einer gewissen Verlegenheit der heutigen Zeit sein, einer Verlegenheit, die sich nach außen im grotesken Binom Kosmetik-Ökologie kundtut. Kosmetik ist – mit allem, was zur heutigen Industrie der Ästhetisierung gehört – ein Phänomen einer *Welt der schwachen Gründe*. Dementgegen ist Ökologie in der Form der ökologischen Krise zweifelsohne eine Repräsentantin eines *Systems ernsthafter Gründe*, welches im Hintergrund einer optionalen Gestaltung der Wirklichkeit steht. Auf diese Weise verbindet sich das Leichte unmittelbar mit dem Ernstesten. Und gerade das ist es, was auf normalem Wege nicht erreichbar ist (Sloterdijk 2007, 323–324).

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Die slowenische Mikroperspektive

Ein wesentliches Merkmal des jugoslawischen Kommunismus nach dem Jahr 1980, d. h. nach dem Tod seiner Führer (J. Broz, E. Kardelj) bestand darin, dass er auf die Situationen in einem System immer schwerwiegenderer Gründe (Wirtschaftskrise, Überschuldung, niedrige Wertschöpfung u. a.) weiterhin mit schwachen, heroisch gefälschten Gründen aus der Schatzkammer der ideologischen Romantik (apriorische führende Rolle der Partei, Volksdemokratie, Gesellschaftseigentum, Selbstverwaltung usw.) antworten wollte. Unter diesen Umständen begann der Aufstieg der Wörter „Alternative“ und „Praxis der Alternative“, da von Tag zu Tag klarer wurde, dass dort, wo die „Fiktion an Tatsachen scheitert“, die Verteidigung der Identität nirgendwohin führt (Sloterdijk 2006, 292).

Kurzum: Das Verlangen der Menschen nach etwas Anderem begann mehr oder weniger offensichtlich seinen eigensinnigen Kopf zu heben. Und was früher, in der befehlerischen Praxis der autokratischen Ideologie, als „unumstritten“ und „fortschrittlich“ galt, begann sich in der Supervision der Alternative nur noch als ein verfehltes Verhältnis zur Sache zu enthüllen (Jerovšek 2017, 44–49).

Widmete sich die Parteipolitik nach 1985 auf der expliziten Ebene intensiv der Aufgabe, den Kollaps des sozialistischen Systems so lang wie möglich hinauszuzögern, und befasste sie sich auf impliziter Ebene der Geheimdienste mit dem frühzeitigen Durchspielen der Möglichkeiten einer programmierten Machtübergabe („Abstieg von der Macht“, wie dies damals genannt wurde), so analysierte die Alternative „vollzeitlich“ den Stand der Dinge und suchte Spielraum für Erwägungen, Konzepte und mögliche Welten, die über die Horizonte sozialistischer Fiktionen weisen sollten.

In all den Jahren nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg war die einzige wirkliche Alternative zum Regime, die auch vom Regime selbst als solche empfunden wurde, in der Katholischen Kirche konzentriert. Eine konkrete öffentliche Form dieser Alternative in Slowenien waren die berühmten „Theologiekurse“ in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren mit aktuellen Themen, die außerordentlich stark besucht waren und eine alternative intellektuelle Tribüne darstellten, deren Einfluss zu groß und zu breit war, als dass das Regime sie hätte verbieten können. Einen Quantensprung der „zivilen Alternative“ stellt zweifellos die Nummer 57 der *Nova revija* (*Neue Zeitschrift*) mit dem Untertitel „Beiträge zum slowenischen Nationalprogramm“ dar, die im Februar 1987 erschien. In ihr analysierten 16 Autoren mit zukunftsgerichtetem Blick die aktuelle politisch-kulturellen Lage der Slowenen in der jugoslawischen Föderation, legitimierten erneut das Recht des slowenischen Volkes auf Selbstbestimmung und konzeptualisierten die Programmleitlinien zur Unabhängigkeit Sloweniens. Die Reaktion der Partei auf diese häretischen Thesen war erwartungsgemäß scharf. Auch Festnahmen der Autoren waren wahrscheinlich, doch kam es dazu nicht, weil die slowenische Partielite in den damaligen unsicheren, von ideologisch-wirtschaftlicher Agonie geprägten Zeiten sehr vorsichtig sein musste. Einerseits traute sie sich nicht mehr, einen offenen Frontalangriff gegen den Zorn der slowenischen Öffentlichkeit zu wagen, die den Ansichten in diesen „Thesen“ mehrheitlich gewogen war (mehr slowenische Selbstständigkeit; auch ein unabhängiger slowenischer Staat außerhalb Jugoslawiens sollte zulässig sein), andererseits durfte sie nicht das Zentrum der Parteibürokratie in Belgrad verärgern, das in dieser Situation selbst die kleinste politische Konkurrenz verhindern wollte und herrschsüchtig sogar eine Unitarisierung des Staates (die Umwandlung des Bundesstaates in einen einheitlichen Staat ohne föderale Glieder) verlangte.

Obwohl es unglaublich scheint, dass eine einzige Ausgabe einer „Monatsschrift für Kultur“ überhaupt irgendwelchereale gesellschaftlichen Konsequenzen haben könnte, ist gerade aus ihr die konzeptuelle Plattform hervorgegangen, die sich verhältnismäßig schnell zu einer realen Unabhängigkeitsplattform entwickelte,⁷ auf deren Grundlage sich in gut drei Jahren der unabhängige Staat Slowenien bildete, der im Jahr 2004 EU-Mitglied wurde.

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Mit dem neuen *after*-Staat wendete sich vieles in Slowenien. Jedoch nicht so stark, wie es nach außen schien bzw. noch heute scheint. Die wesentlichste Änderung im funktionellen Sinn war die Ersetzung des *Mediums Ideologie* durch das *Medium Kapital*. Die Umwandlung ereignete sich allerdings nicht einfach durch Umwandlung des Systems der gescheiterten Planwirtschaft in ein System der kompetitiven Marktwirtschaft. Auf dem rivalisierenden politischen Parkett der jungen und noch ungelenten Demokratie eignete sich die „neue Klasse“ (Đilas 1957), die gezwungenermaßen auf Marx' *Kapital* verzichten musste, listig dessen „Zinsen“ an, das heißt das reale Kapital – nämlich das ehemals „gesellschaftliche Eigentum“, das schon die ganze Zeit unter ihrer Kontrolle stand. Dieser Prozess wurde „Privatisierung“ genannt. In ihm gingen gewöhnliche Menschen, die sich in Bezug auf Finanztransaktionen mit den sogenannten „Eigentumszertifikaten“ nicht auskannten,⁸ größtenteils leer aus, während viele ehemalige Mitglieder der kommunistischen Partei mithilfe von Insiderinformationen, durch Kauf von staatlichen Unternehmen mit ungedeckten Krediten staatlicher Banken und durch betrügerisch geplante Konkurse zu Kapitaleignern konvertierten – zur neuen postsozialistischen „Elite der Gier“, um an dieser Stelle Sloterdijks Syntagma zu verwenden (Sloterdijk 2006, 310). Diese Elite benötigte die sozialistische Vergangenheit im Grunde nur noch dazu, sie hinter sich zu lassen. „Man muss nach vorn, nicht nach hinten schauen“, lautete der damalige Slogan, bis die „späten Sozialisten“ mit dem

7 Damit sind die im Plebiszit getroffene Entscheidung der Slowenen für die Unabhängigkeit, die Annahme der neuen Verfassung, die Übernahme der effektiven Herrschaft über die Grenzen und das Territorium u. Ä. gemeint.

8 In dieser Form begann der Staat Slowenien im Jahr 1993 das ehemals „gesellschaftliche Vermögen“ an seine Bewohner zu verteilen.

erfolgreich privatisierten (das heißt: bei sich behaltenen) Kapital, mit dem sie Medien und Menschen beherrschten, die Opposition völlig geschwächt und erneut – diesmal mit demokratischer Form – die Macht übernahmen.

Die Kultur in der Zeit des auslaufenden Sozialismus

Die Absurdität und Verdorbenheit des „Realsozialismus“ waren für einen aufmerksameren Beobachter schon seit Erscheinen des Buches *Die neue Klasse* von Milovan Djilas im Jahre 1957 kein Geheimnis mehr. Doch war im Zeitraum, in dem der verdorbene und absurde Komplex dauerte, bei vielen Menschen noch die Vorstellung lebendig, dass für seine gerechtfertigten Motive dennoch eine nicht absurde und nicht perverse Verwirklichung zu finden sei. Die Vorstellung, dass „auch eine andere Welt möglich ist“, musste damals natürlich tief im illegalen Verborgenen bleiben. Was sich nach 1960 allmählich den Weg ins Licht bahnte, war die Forderung nach – wenigstens – einer „anderen Gleichheit“, wenn schon eine „andere Andersheit“ lebensgefährlich war. Eine der Grundlektionen der 1970er und 1980er Jahre bestand darin, dass der messianische „Universalismus von oben“ verfällt und dass man dieser Evidenz praktisch nicht mehr entkommen kann. Die daraus hervorgegangenen Änderungen nagten nach und nach an den moralischen, rhetorischen und doktrinen Grundlagen der kommunistischen Linken. Mit der Änderung der alltäglichen Evidenzen wurden sogar ihre früher sehr erfolgreichen rhetorischen Figuren (Fortschrittlichkeit, Selbstverwaltung, assoziierte Arbeit) unplausibel.

69

Der kommunistische Neusprech und seine poetischen Sprachspiele

Eine ungewöhnliche Koinzidenz und Interferenz von Ideologie und Kunst ereignete sich 1960 auf einem überraschenden Terrain: im Spannungsfeld zwischen ideologischen Sprachtricks der Partei und poetischen Sprachspielen.

Wie aus den Erfahrungen der Menschen jener Zeit und aus Djilas' Buch *Die neue Klasse* hervorgeht, war die damalige gesellschaftliche Realität sprachlich auf vielerlei Weise durch den ideologischen *Neusprech* der

Partei verschlüsselt (Young 1991). *Gesellschaftliches Kapital* war z. B. ein Deckwort für die tatsächliche Eigentümerschaft des Kapitals seitens der kommunistischen Partei; *sozialistische Moral* war das Deckwort für die völlige Hingabe an die Amoral des Typs „der Zweck heiligt die Mittel“; *Selbstverwaltung* war das Deckwort für die vollkommene Beherrschung der Arbeiterschaft und die ungehinderte Ausbeutung der Wirtschaft seitens der privilegierten Bürokratie und der politischen Geheimpolizei; *Sozialismus* war das Deckwort für eine Bewegung, deren Ziel die Umwandlung der Gesellschaft durch Tyrannei seitens einer politischen Kaste war; *ein schöneres Leben im Kommunismus* war das Deckwort für eine permanente Hinausschiebung der Verwirklichung unrealistischer ideologischer Verheißungen; *Wahlen* waren das Deckwort für eine deklaratorische Bestätigung der Parteikader auf deren Führungspositionen; *gesellschaftlich nützliche Arbeit* war das Deckwort für Gefängnis und ideologische Umerziehung u. Ä. Da es nicht erlaubt, vor allem aber auch nicht opportun war, die Realität mit den richtigen Worten zu benennen, produzierte der Kommunismus die ganze Zeit Lügen⁹ und Halbwahrheiten und versuchte, sie in einer akzeptablen Form des perversen Neusprechs zu platzieren. Dies besonders nach 1960, weil ihm auf der Ebene der Tatsachen so manches nicht gelang und weil revolutionäre Skrupellosigkeit und Gehirnwäsche für die Partei unter den Bedingungen des „Sozialismus mit menschlichem Antlitz“ in der Öffentlichkeit, auf die sie in jener Zeit schon etwas Rücksicht nehmen musste, nicht mehr nützlich waren.

Die Menschen fanden sich so in einem Feld terminologischer Täuschungen, listiger Begriffswechsel, sophistischer „politischer Korrektheit“ und einer allgemeinen sprachlichen Krypto-Expression vor. Eine ironische Wiedergabe dieses Zustands artikulierte auf Ebene der poetischen Alternative der Dichter Tomaž Šalamun (1941–2014), indem er dem Wort im dichterischen Gebrauch absichtlich jegliche Benennungsfunktion entzog, es von jeder Verbindung mit der Realität befreite und es zu einem autarken und beliebig austauschbaren Faktor

9 Leszek Kołakowski: „Lying is the immortal soul of Communism“ (zit. nach Hannes 2017).

unendlicher Sprachspiele machte. Šalamuns erste Gedichtsammlung *Poker* aus dem Jahre 1966 hatte in den Anfangsgedichten noch einen Bezug zur Poesie vorangegangener Dichter, besonders zur ekstatischen Vision von Dane Zajc (1929–2005), die das tragische Schicksal des Menschen in der Zeit der Revolution und die Verdüsterung der Welt in der Zeit des Nihilismus behandelt. Doch schon im mittleren Teil der Gedichtsammlung befreit sich Šalamuns Poesie von diesen Bindungen und wandelt sich zu einer spielerischen, humorvollen, legeren, stellenweise ironischen und sogar zynischen Stimmung, die bereit ist, Wortbeziehungen aufzunehmen, die völlig unabhängig von den alltäglichen Relationen zwischen Sprache und Realität sind. Die Reaktion auf die perverse und performative Rolle der Sprache, die diese in der Praxis der kommunistischen Ideologie hatte, bekam in Šalamuns Poesie die Form einer neuen, zugleich einfallsreichen und subversiven Poetik. Und obwohl sich diese Poesie später in eine Perpetuierung ein und derselben Geste verschloss, was sie an einem Übergang in neue poetische Welten und auf andere poetische Ebenen hinderte, wies sie mit ihrer ludistischen Poetik die Menschen dennoch auf die tatsächliche *Derealität* und *Manipulativität* des Neusprechs der Partei hin, von dem die Lebensrealität und „Zuverlässigkeit“ gewöhnlicher Leute jedoch sehr wohl abhängig war.

Dies war auch die letzte Stufe des geistigen Aufschwungs, den die slowenische freidenkende Nachkriegsliteratur vermochte. Ihre Kraft erschöpfte sich um 1980, als sie in sich selbst zurückzog und ihr kritisches Verhältnis zur gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit verlor.

Im Spannungsfeld zwischen politischem und künstlerischem Avantgardismus

Die kommunistische Partei fasste sich selbst von Anfang an als *Avantgarde* „mit höherem Bewusstsein“ auf, als Vorreiter der Arbeiterklasse und *ipso facto* der ganzen „fortschrittlichen“ Welt, wie sie zu verkünden pflegte. Daher ist es in gewisser Weise ironisch, dass ihre tiefgründige Natur im Sinne von „vorausgehen“ in der Endphase des jugo-slowenischen Sozialismus am exemplarischsten und schmerzlichsten gerade durch eine

Avantgarde, nämlich eine künstlerische, demaskiert wurde.

Der Glaube der ersten „historischen“ künstlerischen Avantgarden, das gesellschaftliche Leben durch eine Kunstrevolution verändern zu können, war von vornherein schwach, daher versuchten sie sich mit der politischen Avantgarde zu verbinden. Der Futurismus in Italien näherte sich dem Faschismus, die russische Avantgarde dem Bolschewismus, der Surrealismus in den 1930er Jahren den französischen Kommunisten u. Ä. Diese Verbindungen waren unsicher, manchmal freundschaftlich, manchmal abstoßend. Sowohl der Faschismus als auch der Kommunismus stellten mit ihrer autokratischen Ordnung einen Gegensatz zur anarchischen Art dar, mit der die künstlerischen Avantgarden die Kunst und Realität verändern wollten. Trotz allem war die politische Avantgarde eine willkommene Stütze für sie. Als der italienische Faschismus zusammenbrach, war dies das Ende des Futurismus; als der kommunistische Sozialismus scheiterte, verloren die „linken“ künstlerischen Avantgarden den Boden unter den Füßen (Kos 2015, 9).

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All dies gilt auch für das slowenische Umfeld. Die ersten künstlerischen Avantgarden entstanden in den 1920er Jahren mit Anton Podbevšek, Ferdo Delak und Avgust Černigoj. Sie suchten nach Unterstützung im Anarchismus und Kommunismus, waren unsicher und verschwanden bald. In den 1960er Jahren kam mit der Gruppe OHO (1966–1971) eine »Neo-Avantgarde« auf, für die der Einsatz von Readymade-Objekten charakteristisch war. Ähnlich wie alle anderen Avantgarden formte sie sich aus einem Widerstand gegen die etablierte Realität, allerdings mehr gegen den „Geist“ der mittleren Schichten, die unter der kommunistischen Herrschaft entstanden, als gegen den Sozialismus selbst. Dieser war ideologisch entleert, weshalb es keine richtige Grundlage für eine künstlerische Avantgarde gab. OHO war nur noch eine „demütig ästhetische“ Bewegung (Kos *ibidem*).

Die „Neue slowenische Kunst“ (NSK)¹⁰ entstand nach 1980, als das Ende des jugoslawischen Kommunismus nahte. Statt als Avantgarde bezeichnet

10 Die Originalbezeichnung in deutscher Sprache war provokativ, da sich der jugoslawische – internationale – Sozialismus seit dem Scheitern des Paktes Ribbentrop-Molotow (22. Juni 1941) symbolisch in strengem Antagonismus zur Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus konstituierte.

zu werden, nannte sie sich lieber *Retro-Avantgarde* bzw. *Retrogarde*, sah sich also nicht mehr als Vorreiterin von etwas Fortschrittlichem, sondern als „Nachhut“ von etwas Vergehendem. Hier entspringt der trübselig trauernde, drohend pathetische Ton ihrer Auftritte, der gerade darum ästhetisch gefällig war. Anstelle neuer Kunstformen, wie sie von historischen Avantgarden erfunden wurden, nutzte die retroavantgardistische NSK traditionelle Formen und bereits bestehende Artikulationen palimpsestisch aus. Ein Beispiel dieser Strategie zeigt sich in der Abwandlung des nationalsozialistischen Plakats „*Das dritte Reich*“¹¹ (*Lichtbringer*, 1938) von Richard Klein (1890–1967) zu einem „sozialistischen“ Plakat, das ein halbes Jahrhundert später, nämlich 1987, den kommunistischen Feiertag „Tag der Jugend“ (25. Mai, der einstige deklarierte Geburtstag Titos) verherrlichen sollte.

Die Tradition des „Staffellaufs der Jugend“ und der abschließenden Parade- und Sportveranstaltung mit Tausenden Mitwirkender im Zentralstadion von Belgrad wurde auch nach Titos Tod weitergeführt. Den Staffelstab übernahm anstelle von Josip Broz Tito der Vorsitzende des Bundes der sozialistischen Jugend Jugoslawiens. Auf der öffentlichen Ausschreibung für die Gestaltung des Plakates und des Staffelstabes im Februar 1987 wurde der Entwurf des Studios *Neuer Kollektivismus* (NSK) ausgewählt (Abb. 13).

11 Richard Klein, *Das Dritte Reich* (*Lichtbringer*), Titelbild der Zeitschrift *Jugend*, 1. Juli 1938.



Abb. 13: Studio Neuer Kollektivismus, *Tag der Jugend*, 1987, Plakat.

Eine gemischte politisch-künstlerische Kommission wählte, ohne (genau) zu wissen, worum es sich handelt, eine Variation von Kleins NS-Plakat aus, die sich nur in einigen Details vom Original unterschied (Abb. 14):

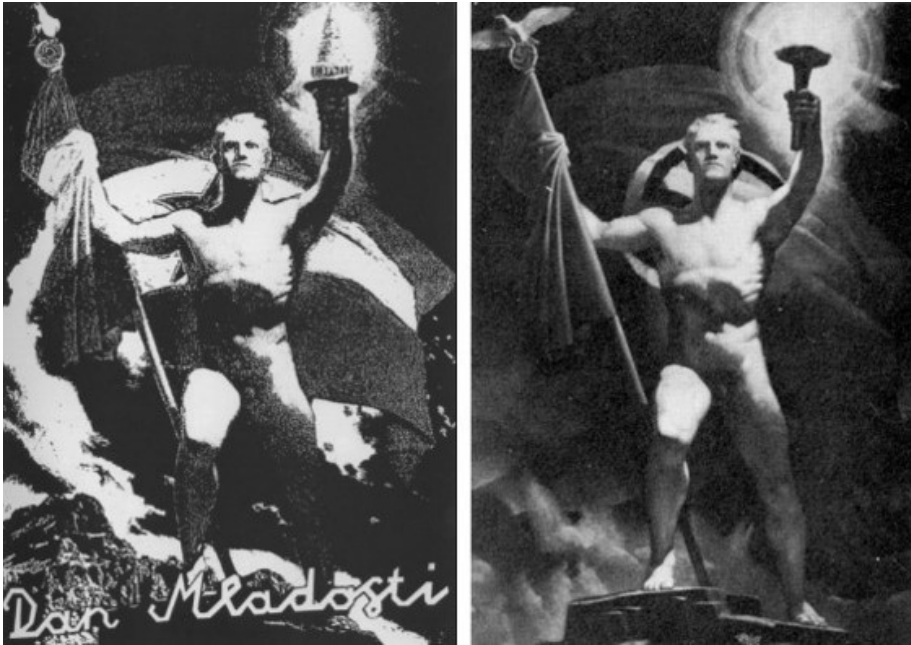


Abb. 14: Links: Studio Neuer Kollektivismus, *Tag der Jugend*, 1987; rechts: Richard Klein (1890–1967), *Lichtbringer*, 1938.

Die NS-Flagge wurde durch die jugoslawische ausgetauscht, der deutsche Adler durch die Friedenstaube und die Fackel durch einen Staffelnstab mit einem Miniaturbild von Jože Plečniks „Kathedrale der Freiheit“ auf der Spitze.¹² Nach der Enthüllung brach ein Skandal von gesamtjugoslawischem Ausmaß aus. Gegen die Autoren des strittigen Plakats wurde Anzeige erstattet. Außer den Mitgliedern des Neuen Kollektivismus wurden auch die slowenischen Mitglieder der Ausschreibungskommission zu Polizeiverhören

¹² Die „Kathedrale der Freiheit“ (1947) ist einer von zwei Entwürfen des Architekten Jože Plečnik für das slowenische Parlament.

geladen. Einen gerichtlichen Epilog gab es nicht, da die Autoren und die Kommissionsmitglieder „bewiesen“, dass es sich lediglich um eine „künstlerische Ausdrucksform“ handelte, ein Jahr später stimmte das Gericht dem zu. Vor allem deswegen, weil die Regierenden nicht an einer Fortsetzung der Affäre interessiert waren. Die Auswahl des Plakates im Rahmen einer öffentlichen Ausschreibung – der Entwurf ging *glatt* durch alle offiziellen Entscheidungsstufen – enthüllte nämlich in dessen zweideutig-parodischen Symbiose auf absolut allzu direkte Weise die unangenehme Wahrheit. Nämlich, dass unter dem diametralen ideologischen *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* im Jugo-Internationalsozialismus dieselben ästhetischen Faszinationen zum Vorschein kommen wie im Nationalsozialismus und dass diese Faszinationen in ihrem Kern nichts anderes sind als ein äußerer Ausdruck sozusagen identischer innerer – totalitärer – Aspirationen und Verhaltensweisen.

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Grundlage dieser künstlerischen Strategie war der Begriff der Über-Identifikation (Butler 1995, 166).¹³ Also eine Form der politischen Kommunikation, die durch „subversive Affirmation“ dem Regime den Spiegel derart hinhält, dass sie mit übertriebenem Konformismus das „Ernstnehmen“ seiner Postulate und Konventionen simuliert, was zur Enthüllung seiner sonst sorgsam verschleierte totalitären und autokratischen Natur führt. Neben dem abgewandelten Plakat des Neuen Kollektivismus ist als weitere anschauliche Illustration dieser Methode Slavoj Žižeks Beschreibung – eines angeblich wahren – Ereignisses zu erwähnen, wonach die Opposition in den 1980er Jahren am Vorabend der Wahlen eine Zeitung herausgab, die auf ihrer Titelseite den Sieg des Bundes der Kommunisten Sloweniens *ankündigte* (es gelang mir nicht, die Zeitung und die primäre Quelle zu finden).¹⁴ Žižek und seine Kollegen wurden angeblich zu einer Polizeivernehmung vorgeführt. Dies obwohl sie nichts Rechtswidriges getan hatten. Die Geste, mit der sie öffentlich

13 „Wo die Einheitlichkeit des Subjekts erwartet wird, wo die Verhaltenskonformität des Subjekts befohlen wird, könnte die Ablehnung des Gesetzes in Form einer parodistischen Ausfüllung der Konformität erzeugt werden, die die Legitimität des Befehls subtil fragwürdig macht, eine Wiederholung, die das Gesetz in die Übertreibung hineinzieht, eine Neuformulierung des Gesetzes gegen die Autorität desjenigen, der es hervorbringt.“

14 Vgl. Parker 2004.

auf die jedermann bekannte Tatsache aufmerksam machten, das heißt die *implizite* Wahrheit *explizierten*, dass es im kommunistischen Wahlsystem nicht möglich ist, dass die Kommunisten die Wahlen nicht gewinnen, schien der Polizei nämlich gefährlich.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Strategie der Überidentifikation und Kunst ist relevant zweierlei zu bemerken, was sich auch durch die Kunst der NSK bestätigt.

Erstens, dass eine Kunst, die die Logik der Überidentifikation verwendet, hervorragend gedeiht, solange das autoritäre System zu stark ist, um sich gefahrlos in Form eines offenen Opponierens mit ihm zu konfrontieren. Nicht zuletzt wurde die Methode der Überidentifikation genau für solche Umstände entwickelt. Gewiss aber verliert eine Kunst, die in erster Linie auf Überidentifikation setzt, logischerweise viel von ihrer Aktualität, wenn die Wirkungen dieser Haltung nicht mehr erforderlich sind. Wenn sie nichts „anderes“ enthält, das überleben könnte, gerät sie früher oder später in Vergessenheit. Ein solches Beispiel ist das „NS-Plakat“ aus der Plakataffäre, das noch heute als kulturell-politische Geste *etwas Besonderes* ist, im Sinne der formativen Invention und der künstlerischen Intensität hingegen *nichts Besonderes*.

Und zweitens, das Perpetuieren ein und derselben Haltung unter posttotalitären Umständen läuft ständig Gefahr, aus der Pose der Überidentifikation in die Realität der *Identifikation*, d. h. in die Fortsetzung der Machtstrategien und Präntionen mit anderen Mitteln abzugleiten bzw. herabzusteigen. Ein Künstler rückt dabei vom „Staatsfeind“ sehr leicht zum „Staatskünstler“ auf (im übertragenen und wortwörtlichen Sinne), wie Slavoj Žižek die Protagonisten der NSK-Bewegung charakterisierte.¹⁵ Das Ergebnis dieses Abstiegs erweckt den Eindruck, dass es sich um eine ästhetische Simulation und postmodernistische Verspieltheit handelt, denen

15 „Laut *Spiegel* galt Laibach im Jahr 1983 als staatsfeindlich, während Slavoj Žižek sie heute als Staatskünstler bezeichnet und sie in einer gewissen Borat-Weise völlig mit Kim Jong-un übereinstimmen, der in Nordkorea des Jahres 2015 ebenfalls seinen Disney-Totalitarismus hegt. Laibach soll begonnen haben, sich mit seiner eigenen Pose zu verwechseln, und soll seinen eigenen Tod überlebt haben, was für Künstler insbesondere tragisch ist.“ (STA 2017)

nichts mehr „heilig“ und nichts mehr „wahr“ ist. So mündet die (Retro-) Avantgarde in eine galeristische Sehenswürdigkeit für seltene feinere Kenner oder in Estradenshows für ein Publikum, das nach avantgardistischen Aufputzmitteln in einer politisch und kulturell entleerten Zeit dürstet. In beiden Fällen soll der Staat sie mit Geldern der Steuerzahler unterstützen (Kos 2015, 9).

Slowenische Kunst in der Post-Zeit

Mit der Beschreibung der De-Überidentifikation und ihrer Folgen sind wir unbemerkt in die Zeit nach der Unabhängigkeitserklärung Sloweniens (1991–2017) übergegangen.

Der unüberschreitbare Horizont der Gegenwart ...

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Die Kunst der Avantgardisten und Retroavantgardisten konnte nie massenweise in die Lebenspraxis der Menschen eindringen, sie blieb im engen Kreis der Avantgardisten und ihrer Anhänger. Wirklich entscheidend wirkten sich Wissenschaft und Technologie auf das Alltagsleben in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. und besonders intensiv im 21. Jahrhundert aus. Anstelle von visionären Dichtern, von denen Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) erwartete, dass sie das Leben verändern würden, wird diese Aufgabe effizient von Technologen verrichtet, gestützt auf Naturwissenschaft und Mathematik. Ihre Überlegenheit über die kommunistische Politik und die künstlerische Avantgarde zeigte sich, als der kommunistische Sozialismus im Wettbewerb mit der westlichen Welt der Wissenschaft und Technologie scheiterte. Ganz besonders aber, als die Kunst Zuflucht zur wissenschaftlichen Technologie nahm, um mit ihrer Hilfe eine Art „wissenschaftliche“ Erforschung von Wörtern, Bewegungen und Tönen, Raum und Zeit, Materie und Weltall in Form von multimedialen Konzepten, Experimenten und Projekten zu unternehmen. „Indem sie vergeblich versucht zur Wissenschaft zu werden, hört sie auf, Kunst zu sein.“ (Kos 2015, 9)

Für die Kultur in der Zeit nach der Unabhängigkeitserklärung Sloweniens ist – ähnlich wie für die etwas ältere Dekonstruktion – diese „diensthabende Statthalterin der radikalen Kritik“ (Sloterdijk 2006, 291) – charakteristisch, dass sie nicht mehr erwägt, sich in die äußersten Tiefen existenzieller

Situationen und gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse, bestehender Institutionen und Zeichenartikulationen herabzulassen sowie an deren Fundamenten kritischen „Sprengstoff“ anzubringen. Sie bevorzugt, sorgsam und haarspalterisch auf die Labilität und Unschärfe der festesten binären Gegensätze hinzuweisen (Text – Kontext, Autor – Publikum, Mann – Frau, Wirklichkeit – Fiktion, Ideologie – Demokratie, Hochkultur – Popkultur usw.). Kurzum: Mit großer Geste widmet sie sich der Aufgabe, „vorläufig alles zu lassen, wie es ist“. Übrigens, so Sloterdijk, kann man hieraus auf ein verborgenes Bündnis mit der amerikanischen Massenkultur und der Globalisierungskultur schließen, die ebenfalls der „Mission“ verpflichtet sind, „das Bestehende nicht anzutasten“ (Sloterdijk 2006, 292).

... und seine kulturliberalistischen Folgen

In einer Welt, in welcher alles käuflich ist, in welcher der Wert der Preis ist und der Preis der Wert ist, in der die Gefühle austauschbar und sentimentale Nachbildungen nicht mehr von echter Ware zu unterscheiden sind (Scruton 2000, 68), treten Künstler in eine Zeit des globalisierten Kulturliberalismus. In ihm sind ernsthafte Missionen, objektive Aufgaben, eine kritische Einstellung gegenüber den Dingen und Radikalität – im Unterschied zur Zeit vor der Unabhängigkeitserklärung – nur noch als ästhetische Haltungen oder philosophische Habitus erwähnenswert, nicht aber mehr als operative politische und kreative Ausrichtung (frei nach Sloterdijk 2006, 284).

Der Kulturliberalismus ist der Grundidee des Liberalismus treu, einer Idee, die völlige Schaffensfreiheit in Kultur, Kunst und Wissenschaft fordert, frei von allen externen – ideologischen, religiösen, moralischen oder nationalen – Einflüssen. Die Kultur ist somit in einen freien Wettbewerb um Erfolg auf einem von Angebot und Nachfrage bestimmten Markt oder um staatliche Mittel gesetzt. In einem solchen Kulturwettbewerb sind massenweise, unterhaltsame, kurzweilige und kurzfristige Formen oder aber skandalöse und provokative Angebote im Vorteil. Dies eben im Namen der Gleichwertigkeit von allem Möglichen. Die Freiheit schlägt in eine Ungleichheit zwischen Stärkeren und Schwächeren auf dem Markt um.

Was die Kunst betrifft, ist die augenscheinlichste Folge einer solchen Entwicklung von Ereignissen (nicht nur in Slowenien) die „posthistorische“ Verlagerung von der ästhetischen zur populärerem funktionalen Wahrnehmung, von der bildenden zur visuellen Kunst und von der bildenden zur visuellen Hermeneutik; obwohl die bildende Kunst auch weiterhin ein wichtiger Bereich des Schaffens und paralleler Kultur bleibt. Die Logik dieser Verlagerung ist aus dem immanenten *Unterschied* zwischen bildender und visueller Kunst ersichtlich, der permanent vorhanden ist, doch größtenteils unreflektiert bleibt. Er zeigt sich im Verhältnis der einen und der anderen Modalität der Kunst zum visuellen Kontext der Realität (Frelj und Muhovič 2012, 27–58).

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Die bildende Kunst hat im Verhältnis zur visuellen Realität von jeher referentielle, mimetische und transformierende Appetite, d. h. die Intention, das Visuelle nachzuahmen, zu erforschen, zu erweitern, zu verfeinern, vor allem aber in einer dem Schein übergeordneten *artefakten Form*, zu der eine künstlerisch-ästhetische Wahrnehmung und Denkweise und eine ihnen entsprechende Kreativität führen, über das Visuelle hinauszugehen. Ihre Stärke liegt im Drama der Formbildung, d. h. im *In-formieren der (bildenden) Materie* bzw. im gleichzeitigen „*Forma-lisieren der Seele*“. Dies bedeutet, dass die bildende Kunst spontan zur Gestaltung und Umgestaltung der visuellen Gegebenheiten aufruft, dass sie den schöpferischen *Eros* aktiviert, das kreative Risiko hervorhebt und eine besondere schöpferische und hermeneutische Kompetenz fordert.

Eine entgegengesetzte Haltung gegenüber dem visuellen Kontext der Realität hat die visuelle Kunst, für die das Visuelle kein Bereich der Erforschung, der Fortsetzung, der Erweiterung, der Transzendierung und des Risikos ist, sondern ein *Medium* der Ausbeutung, des gesellschaftlichen Konstruierens, des Provozierens, Semantisierens, Mobilisierens und der Kritik. Ihr *Agens* sind die funktionale Wahrnehmung und der „allegorische Impuls“ (Benjamin 1982, 223ff und 466ff), die den Menschen aus den bildnerisch-künstlerischen Transformationen, Idealisierungen und Mystifizierungen des Visuellen, die dem postmodernen Menschen über den Kopf gewachsen sind und denen er nicht mehr glaubt, erneut in eine nüchterne, konkrete und – natürlich – konfuse *reale visuelle* Welt führen (näher Muhovič 2014, 47–65). Ein allegorischer Denker glaubt nicht mehr an die intentionale Bedeutung dessen, was sich seinem Blick

bietet, und sucht sie nicht, vielmehr ist er sich bewusst, dass es von seiner Art der Fragestellung abhängt, welche Einsichten sich ihm bei bestimmten Artefakten und ihren Konstellationen eröffnen. Er ist sich auch der Begrenztheit, Fraglichkeit und Willkür dieses Fragens wie auch des dogmatischen Charakters seiner Antworten bewusst. Der Allegoriker, sagt Walter Benjamin, verwendet Fakten in gewissem Maße wie *Indexe* (Anzeiger, Hinweise), die nicht von selbst reden, sondern den Menschen auf Gegebenheiten in der – vor allem gesellschaftlichen – Realität lenken. Was er mit diesen Hinweisen tut, hängt von ihm selbst ab. Vor allem aber ist Folgendes wichtig: der Allegoriker fragt die Welt – und nicht intentional fixierte Aussagen. Die Welt ist es, die ihn zum Nachdenken anregt; künstlerisch aufgestellte Objekte sind nur Katalysatoren seiner Fragestellungen (Benjamin 1982, 466ff). Der allegorische Impuls, der die Spätmoderne prägt, lenkt unsere Kunsterfahrung immer mehr von der ästhetischen zur funktionalen Wahrnehmung (Benjamin 1982, 223).

Kurzum: Die bildende Kunst ist von der alltäglichen Welt auf das Epizentrum der *vergeistigten, künstlerisch transformierten und erweiterten Visualität* orientiert, die visuelle Kunst hingegen von der exklusiven und manchmal mythisierten bildnerisch-künstlerischen Verinnerlichung auf die *funktionalisierte Visualität*, die in ihrem Rahmen zum „Material“ einer konzeptualisierenden Vernunft in erster Person wird.

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Der Unterschied zwischen bildnerisch-künstlerischer und visueller Hermeneutik

So wie sich die bildende und die visuelle Kunst in ihrem Verhältnis zum visuellen Kontext der Realität unterscheiden, unterscheiden sich auch die Hermeneutik der bildenden und die der visuellen Kunst. Die Hermeneutik der visuellen Kunst enthält, genauso wie die Artefakte der visuellen Kunst, in ihrem Kern eine funktionelle Wahrnehmung, ein *allegorisches Denken* und eine Metapher, die bildende Kunst hingegen, genauso wie ihre Artefakte, eine ästhetische, also bildende Wahrnehmung, ein formenerzeugendes Denken, eine Form und eine formelle Analyse.

Wenn jemand sagt, „es nähern sich dunkle Wolken“, können wir diese Aussage zunächst realistisch auffassen, als meteorologische Prognose, dass „es regnen wird“. Man kann sie historisch oder sozial als eine Ankündigung

„schwerer Zeiten“ verstehen. Möglich ist auch, dass diese Feststellung den psychischen Zustand des Sprechenden ausdrückt, d. h. seinen Pessimismus bzw. seine *böse Vorahnung*, deren Anlass noch nicht ganz klar ist. All diese Bedeutungen – die realistische, die gesellschaftliche, die psychische – fordern von demjenigen, der die Aussage zu verstehen versucht, eine Entscheidung und die Bestimmung des wahrscheinlichsten und im gegebenen Augenblick sinnvollsten Interpretationstyps.

Ähnlich verhält es sich bei Teilen der visuellen Kunst, z. B. bei Installationen, Projekten des Sozialaktivismus, konzeptuellen und postkonzeptuellen Praxen oder beim „Gesamtkunstwerk als Spektakel“ – dem so beliebten Milieu des Wirkens der NSK.

Nehmen wir hier – als *Pars pro Toto* – das Beispiel der visuellen Hermeneutik des folgenden „Gesamtkunstwerks“: des Auftritts der Band *Laibach* im Theater Pongwha in Pjöngjang (Abb. 15).¹⁶

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16 Der Auftritt fand am 19. August 2015 im Kontext der nordkoreanischen Feier des 70. Jahrestags der Befreiung der Koreanischen Halbinsel von der japanischen Besatzung. Vgl. Dokumentarfilm *Liberation Day* (2017).



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Abb. 15: Laibach, *Liberation Day*, Theater Pongwha in Pjöngjang, Nord-Korea, 19. August 2015 (im Kontext der nordkoreanischen Feier des 70. Jahrestags der Befreiung der Koreanischen Halbinsel von der japanischen Besatzung); vorige Seite: Detail; oben: auf der Bühne.

Das Gesamtkunstwerk-Spektakel *Liberation Day* kann man zunächst *prosaisch* und *pragmatisch*, als heißen Marketing-Zug betrachten, mit dem diese avantgardistische Musikband mit sinkendem Rating auf der internationalen Szene erneut Aufmerksamkeit mit ihrem „unmöglichen“ Gastspiel in einer der verschlossensten, totalitärsten und repressivsten Staaten der Welt erwecken will, um daraus ein „mediales Business“ zu machen. Die Estradenshow mit totalitaristischer Ikonografie und heroischer Inszenierung in einem marxistisch-leninistisch fundierten politischen Umfeld kann als verspäteter Überidentifikationsflirt mit der obszönen Dimension des stalinistischen

Totalitarismus¹⁷ verstanden werden und in ihm, wenn man möchte, mit S. Žižek das „faszinierendste kulturelle, ideologische und politische Ereignis des 21. Jahrhunderts“ sehen (Žižek 2017). Ferner kann man den etwas sentimentaler gestimmten Auftritt wohlwollend als Ausdruck einer vorsichtigen „Sprache der Besorgtheit“ auffassen, die „ein gesellschaftliches Engagement“ bezüglich des nordkoreanischen „gesellschaftlichen Experiments“ verlangt, ein Engagement, zu dem Intellektuelle des Westens und Ostens *per definitionem* berufen sind. Das Spektakel, das für die jüngere nordkoreanische Partielite (*Partei der Arbeit Koreas*) inszeniert wurde, kann auch als eine Gelegenheit zur Reflexion der Band Laibach verstanden werden, d. h. zur kritischen Betrachtung des Aktionsradius ihrer kulturpolitischen und ideologischen Prämissen, da gerade eine Reflexion dieser Prämissen die Grundlage für die Beurteilung der Relevanz der Laibachschen Thematisierung wirklicher gesellschaftlicher und kultureller Dilemmas ist (Abb. 15). Und so weiter. So wie bei einer metaphorischen Sprache muss sich der Interpret auch bei Teilen der visuellen Kunst selbst entscheiden, welcher möglichen Interpretation er folgt und warum. Mehr noch. Die Interpretationen kann er auch selbstständig relativieren, erweitern und neue „erfinden“.

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17 Žižeks Ausdruck lautet im Original „Flirt mit der obszönen Dimension des Faschismus“ (Spiegel Online 2017). Zur Beschreibung von Totalitarismen und repressiven Systemen verwenden die Mitglieder der NSK und ihre Mediensprecher in der Regel die Bezeichnung „Faschismus“ und nur ausnahmsweise analoge Begriffe wie „Nazismus“, „Kommunismus“, „Stalinismus“, „Maoismus“, »Titoismus«, was vielsagend scheint (vgl. Turk 2017).

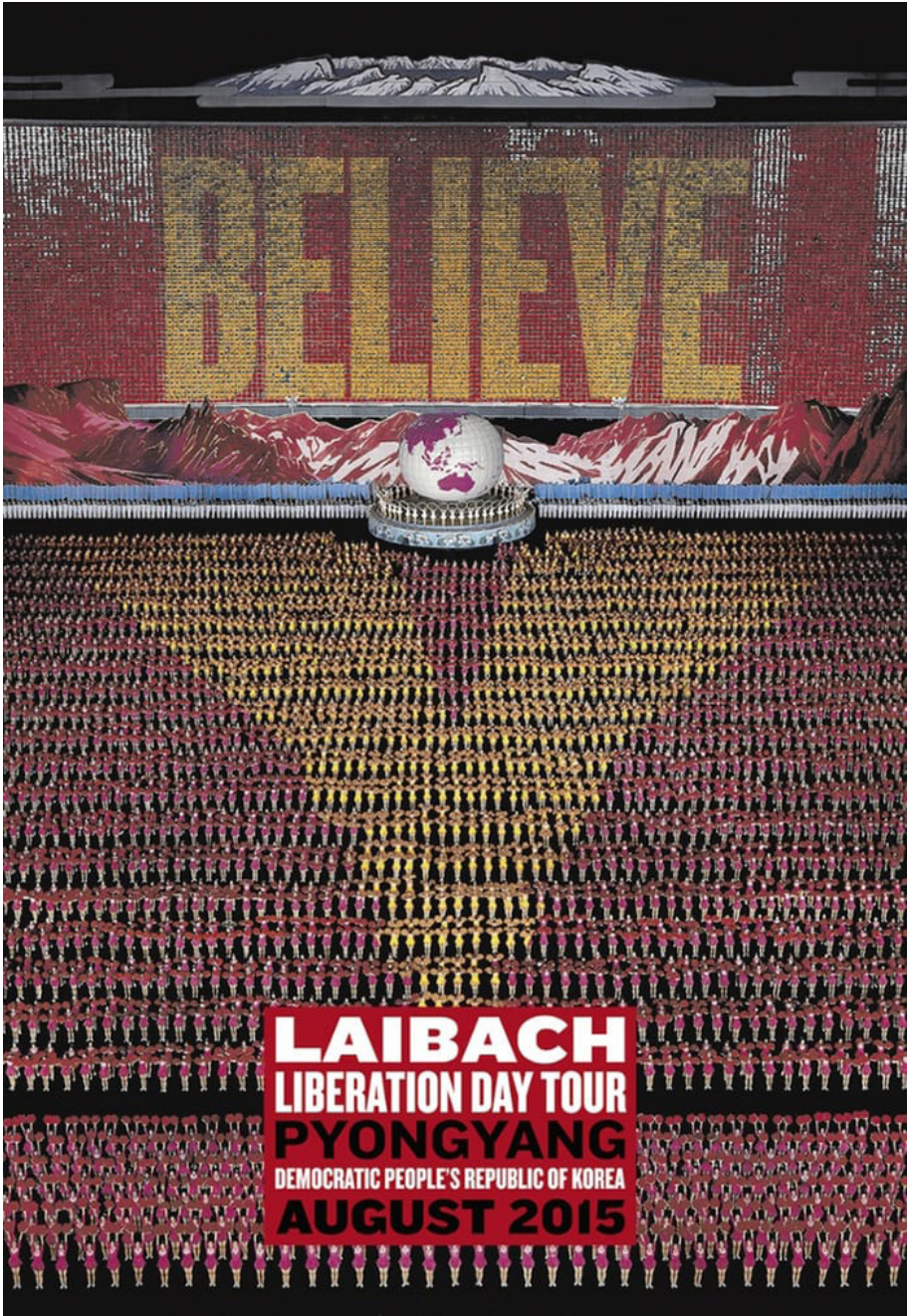


Abb. 15: Laibach's Pyongyang Konzertplakat; Photo: Laibach/AP.

Bei der bildenden Kunst ist es genau umgekehrt. Wenn ich eine bildende Kunstform betrachte, mich in sie vertiefe und sie mir erkläre, bleibe ich nicht frei. Sie verlangt von mir, das zu erkennen, was in ihr in-formiert ist. Mehr noch, nicht nur erkenne ich ihre, d. h. des Autors Logik und Denkweise, die in ihr artikuliert sind, sondern ich nehme sie auch an. Darin ähnelt die Kunstform mehr einem rationalen Begriff, der zur richtigen Benutzung Erkenntnis, Erforschung und rationale Bestrebung fordert, während das (Arte-)Fakt der visuellen Kunst eher einer Metapher gleicht, die uns zur eigenen freien Auslegung einlädt.

Diese formale und hermeneutische *differentia specifica* muss man kennen und beachten, sonst kommen Missverständnisse auf, wenn man in der visuellen Kunst bildnerische Qualitäten (formenerzeugende Invention, formale Originalität usw.) sucht, die *per definitionem* dort nicht zu finden sind, nicht aber das findet, was in ihr vorhanden ist (z. B. ernüchternde Unmittelbarkeit der Faktizität, beschleunigte Kommunikation, kritisches Potential usw.). Und wenn man in der bildenden Kunst nicht mehr das zu schätzen weiß, was in ihr enthalten ist, sondern in ihr sozialkonjunkturelle informationelle und diskursive Qualitäten sucht, die es in ihr nicht gibt.

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Epilogik

Das Imaginarium des einstigen „wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus“, das nur auf eine einzige „richtige“, „aufgeklärte“ Ideologie der „objektiven Gesellschaftswissenschaft“ und ihren Entwicklungsgesätze setzt und alle konkurrierenden Ideologien als pervers und falsch ansieht und sie verbietet, kann uns heute daran erinnern, dass selbst die reifste Auffassung der Kultur und Kunst nicht über der Ideologie steht, dass sowohl die relevantesten Interpretationen noch immer *Interpretationen* sind und dass kulturelle und künstlerische Artikulationen nicht im Diskurs dieser oder jener gesellschaftlicher und medialer Über-Macht verifiziert, sondern sich nur durch „Beständigkeit in der Zeit“ behaupten können.

Der optimistische postmoderne Vorschlag, die kalorische metaphysische „Flucht ins Beständige“ künftig aus unserem kulturellen und künstlerischen Speiseplan zu streichen und sie durch eine kalorienarme postmetaphysische

„Flucht ins Flüchtige“ zu ersetzen,¹⁸ ist nicht so unproblematisch wie es scheinen mag. Sein elegantes Dogma nämlich wirft neben dem berausenden futuristischen Licht auch einen Schatten der Vorahnung, dass es weder in Slowenien noch weltweit möglich sein wird, die existenzielle Überzeugungskraft des Künftigen endlos mit konzeptuellen Legenden wie z. B. Kontext, Projekt, Event, erweiterter Kunstbegriff, Technologisierung u. Ä. zu nähren. Auch wenn dies alles momentan noch so zufrieden mit sich selbst ist.

Womöglich wird sich die Kunst in Zukunft bei der Konfrontation mit der realen Realität des Menschen in archaische Redeweisen zurückziehen müssen, um erneut die existenziell notwendigen Dinge aussprechen zu können, für die es keine brauchbaren postmodernen Ausdrücke gibt. Wer weiß.

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THE SPATIALIZATION OF THE WORLD

TECHNOLOGY, MODERNITY, AND THE EFFACEMENT OF THE HUMAN

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Abstract

The idea of progress, commitment to which has been a defining feature of modernity, has almost always been associated with a belief in the progressive possibilities inherent in technology. The improvement of the world—even the achievement of some sort of utopia—has thus been seen as tied to the increasing technological mastery of the world. Yet, there are good reasons to suppose that the optimistic progressivism associated with technological modernism is misplaced, and that regardless of the various instantiations of modernity, with which technology is associated, and regardless, too, of the many benefits of particular technological advances and devices, the essential structure of technology conceals a danger within it. The key claim in this argument is that technological modernity is intimately connected with a certain

mode of spatialization, and through this, to a blindness to, or even a refusal of, the necessary limits within which even technology itself comes to be. As a result, there is an essential contradiction within technological modernity that threatens the very possibility of a genuinely human—or ethical—form of life.

Keywords: ethics, human being, limit, number, place, space.

Spacializacija sveta. Tehnologija, modernost in izbris človeškega

Povzetek

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Ideja napredka, zavezanost kateri temeljno opredeljuje modernost, se je skorajda vselej spajala z verovanjem v progresivne možnosti, inherentne tehnologiji. Izboljševanje sveta – celo doseganje nekakšne utopije – je potemtakem bilo obravnavano kot združeno s naraščajočim tehnološkim obvladovanjem sveta. Vendar obstajajo dobri razlogi za mnenje, da optimistični progresizem, povezan s tehnološko modernostjo, ni na mestu, da struktura tehnologije, kljub mnogoterim s tehnologijo spojenim uobličenjem modernosti in kljub številnim prednostim posameznih tehnoloških napredkov in aparatov, v svojem bistvu skriva nevarnost. Za razpravo je ključnega pomena trditev, da je tehnološka modernost intimno povezana z določenim modusom spacializacije in potemtakem s slepoto ali celo odklonilnim stališčem glede nujnih omejitev, s katerimi nastaja tudi tehnologija sama. Zato znotraj tehnološke modernosti obstaja bistveno protislovje, ki ogroža samo možnost pristno človeške – oziroma etične – oblike življenja.

Ključne besede: etika, človeško prebivanje, meja, število, kraj, prostor.

Commitment to an optimistic progressivism has long been characteristic of mainstream politics of both the left and the right. Thus, whether one is socialist or social democratic, neo-liberal, or even neo-conservative, the tendency is to assume that we can shape the world according to our interests and desires—we can make the world “better”—and that this is possible through our increasing mastery of various forms of technology. The improvement of the world—even the achievement of some sort of utopia—is thus seen essentially to be a technological promise. Technology is progressive—even utopian—and progress is technological.

Yet, there are good reasons to suppose that the optimistic progressivism associated with technological modernism is misplaced, and that regardless of the various instantiations of modernity with which technology is associated, and regardless, therefore, of whether technology is associated with a social democratic or neo-liberal agenda, and regardless, too, of the many benefits of particular technological advances and devices, the essential structure of technology nevertheless conceals a danger within it. Indeed, the argument I will make here is that the danger is one that threatens the very nature of the human, and since I will argue that the human and the ethical are tied together, it is also a danger that threatens the possibility of a genuinely ethical mode of life. The key claim in my argument is that technological modernity is intimately connected with a certain mode of spatialization, and much of what I have to say will involve an exploration of the nature of this form of spatialization and its connection to technological modernity, what this implies about modernity, especially as it relates to place and so also to limit, and then how this underpins the critical appraisal of modernity, including the relation between technological modernity and the ethical. In essence, the argument to which my discussion will lead is that there exists an essential contradiction within technological modernity, and that contradiction is what renders modernity problematic.

Technology and the project of modernity

Modernity, which is so closely associated with technology, is a mode of organization of the world, but it is also a project. The project of modernity is typically identified with the Enlightenment, and both are characterized by

their concern with the twin notions of freedom and of reason. Indeed, these two ideas are closely intertwined: reason is the purest form of freedom, and freedom is that in which reason finds its realization. The emphasis on freedom here, and on reason with it, typically (though not always) brings with it a commitment to the unbounded nature of human possibility and the seemingly unlimited power of reason. Having freed itself from the shackles of tradition and superstitious belief, human being, which is to say human reason, is free to realize itself in a way that has no a priori bounds.

Although the twentieth century, along with the unfolding twenty-first, provides ample evidence that casts doubt on the rational “progressivism” that seems to underpin the idea of modernity at work here, still this rational, progressivist ideal, and the notion of freedom that goes with it, remains a powerful element in contemporary culture and society—one that may even be said to be reinforced by the “enemies” that appear ranged against it. Extremist religious movements, to take one example, and especially extremist Islamic movements such as Islamic State, have thus typically been seen as throwbacks to a pre-modern past—as intrusions into modernity of a medievalism that cannot have any long-term viability.

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Significantly, this way of understanding modernity in terms of the inexorable movement towards the realization of freedom and reason in the world—with phenomena such as Islamic State or National Socialism appearing as instances of resistance to modernity that modernity will eventually leave behind—elides the fact that modernity is not instantiated only by those social and political forms that fit the “progressivist” model. National Socialism, for instance, was not a purely anti-modern phenomenon, but incorporated strongly modernist elements within it, and can even be seen as having instantiated a form of modernism. Islamic State, in spite of its oppressive and violent character, has been a movement enmeshed with and thoroughly reliant upon modern technological systems, from weaponry and communications to forms of organization and finance, and especially in its use of the Internet. The supposedly anti-modern is thus itself part of modernity. Moreover, even many supposedly “progressivist” states and societies seem to exemplify what might otherwise be thought of as thoroughly “regressive” phenomena—the rise of xenophobic politics being one such example and restrictions on civil liberties

and the free exchange of information being another. Even the modern thus seems to include elements of the “anti-modern” within it.

One might be tempted to distinguish at this point between the “project” of modernity, on the one hand (a project that is progressivist and emancipatory), and, on the other, modernity as it names a particular period of historical development (a period that encompasses elements that are both progressive and regressive, emancipatory and oppressive). Yet, the trouble with such a distinction, simple and straightforward though it may seem, is that the project of modernity cannot be so easily disentangled from modernity as such, since to attempt to do so is to make obscure any sense in which the project of modernity can indeed be said to be “of” modernity in the first place. Only if the modern can be separated from the pre-modern or the anti-modern, such that the regressive elements that appear as part of the contemporary world can be seen as indeed the persisting elements of that which is not modern, can the idea of a distinctive project that attaches to modernity itself be maintained, and yet such a separation renders problematic the very idea of such a project, or at least, of such a project “of modernity”. Perhaps part of the mistake here is to suppose that modernity is indeed something abstractly “rational”, rather than “material”—as if reason were operative in history while nevertheless being apart from it; as if the project of modernity stood outside of the actual occurrence of the modern. The event of modernity is not the gradual realization of a rational ideal in the world, but rather the unfolding of a set of material processes and structures that are increasingly mediated though globalized, technological systems. One can say that this material unfolding is the unfolding of something rational, but inasmuch as reason is indeed at issue here, then it is reason as transformed—*reason as it becomes technological; as it takes the form of technology*. In modernity it seems as if reason and technology have become almost identical.

Technology and the technological

Immediately, the question arises as to what is meant here by “technology” and the “technological”, and this was a question already at issue in the discussion of modernity, even if only implicitly, from the very beginning—it is the question I signaled at the start.

One way of understanding technology is to take it to be precisely the system of techniques, by which we extend our abilities to act in the world so as to realize our interests and desires—rather like a toolbox of sorts. Technology is thus a collection of devices available for use. Such a conception of technology is thoroughly instrumentalist, and instrumentalism of this sort is in complete accord with the optimistic progressivism of contemporary modernity. Yet, to take the character of technology as completely captured by such instrumentalism (if it captures it at all) provides little or no insight into the real nature of technology—it reduces the technological to the instrumental, but the instrumental is surely not identical with the technological, even if the technological may sometimes be said to operate instrumentally. This means that we must not make the mistake of thinking, from the outset, that technology is just identical with technological devices or apparatus—although such an identification is, indeed, commonplace.

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One might argue that the Enlightenment itself, in its view of reason as the instrument by which freedom is achieved, takes reason itself as offering a certain “technology” of freedom. Reason is the means to freedom. This becomes all the more evident when the Enlightenment is understood, not only in relation to a set of social, economic, and political developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but also in relation to the developments in scientific knowledge that occur at the same time (developments that all serve to interact with and to reinforce one another). The idea of reason as tied to freedom is thus itself part of a mode of thinking that sees the power of reason as exemplified in the new knowledge emerging, from the sixteenth century onwards, across the natural sciences, and to which the human sciences also aspire. The project of modernity is thus also a project of technology—not merely of abstract knowledge or contemplation, but of knowledge as it is connected with concrete forms of action and change.

Embedded in the question as to what is meant by “technology” and the “technological” is a question about what technology might itself be. There is a tendency in much contemporary discussion of technology to shy away from such a question and to reject as illegitimate any treatment of technology that tries to understand it other than in terms of discrete and differing technologies. There is, however, something odd about such a tendency. One seldom finds

any similar tendency in the understanding of science—one may well look to the way particular sciences are configured, and there are enormous differences between the way different sciences proceed, but this is not usually viewed as over-riding a broader concern with science as such. Moreover, even to talk of different technologies is already to imply a question as to what it is that unites different technologies in their technological character—in their character as, indeed, technologies. This latter types of objection are often leveled at one of the best known critiques of technology in the twentieth century, that of Martin Heidegger—a critique that stands in the background of my own account here (cf. Heidegger 1977). Heidegger’s critique of technology is not unusual or idiosyncratic, however, but rather stands within a long tradition of European pessimism about modernity—a tradition exemplified by Rousseau, notably his *First Discourse* (cf. Rousseau 1751), as well as by Nietzsche’s attacks on the life-destroying character of modernity, Karl Marx’s critique of capitalism, Max Weber’s analysis of the “iron-cage” of rationality, and the arguments of a range of twentieth century thinkers from Arendt and Adorno to Camus and Virilio. It is notable that such pessimism is generally less evident in Anglo-Saxon culture which has remained more strongly progressivist and optimistic—and so also more inclined to remain more unequivocally committed to the ideals of freedom and reason, especially as enshrined within liberalism. Inasmuch as Heidegger’s own political misadventures have led to his perception as a reactionary thinker (Heidegger was the Nazi-appointed Rector at Freiburg University from 1933–34), so Heidegger’s critique of technology has also been seen as tied to a form of political conservatism and to a dangerous romanticism—and to some extent this has also colored perceptions of technological pessimism, especially within European thought, more broadly.

Although it can indeed be situated within this larger tradition of technological pessimism, and it is important that it be so situated, Heidegger’s critique of technology is especially notable for the particular manner in which it proceeds. Heidegger is explicit in connecting modernity with certain modes of spatiality and spatialization—perhaps the only other thinker who makes a similar connection is Virilio, who emphasizes the character of technological modernity in its relation to speed and acceleration (cf. Virilio 1977), but in Virilio’s case the connection to space and spatiality is much less perspicuously

worked out. According to Heidegger, modernity is characterized, above all else, by the dominance of the spatial—and not only that, but by the dominance of a particular mode of the spatial, namely, space as quantifiable extension which, as quantifiable, has no intrinsic limit, and that possesses a uniform structure describable in mathematical principles.¹ The paradigmatic model of the spatial, in this account, is indeed the grid, which, in principle, can be extended infinitely, and which is familiar in the form of many modern city plans. In modernity, even time is understood in such spatialized terms typically represented as a succession of moments and appearing as another axis within the multiple dimensionality of space. Here, the world is identical with space, and space identical with the world. One of the reasons the critique of technology that is central to the later philosophy of Heidegger is so significant is that it is one of the few attempts to address technological modernity in a way that is indeed attuned to this phenomenon of spatialization.

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Space is very much a modern notion. Indeed, if the origins of modernity are to be found in the rise of modern science, then it is with the rise of space as a *sui generis* concept that both science and modernity begin. One might argue that the key work here is not so much Galileo or Newton, both of whom are often cited as the founding figures in the modern thinking of space (Heidegger cites them both), but Giordano Bruno whose *On the Infinite, the Universe and Worlds*, from 1584, proposes the idea of a genuinely infinite space in which is to be found an infinity of worlds also (cf. Bruno 2014). The idea of space at issue here is thus tied to the idea of extension and also to the idea of such extension as being both uniform (or at least subject to uniform laws) and as lacking any intrinsic limit (there is thus nothing in the concept of space that refers us to anything beyond or outside space). Central to this idea of space is that it has no boundaries that belong essentially to it as space. The notion of space at issue here is one that is tied to number, to measurability and so to quantity.

Once again, one can see how this notion of space is so much a part of modern science, since modern science is also tied to number and to quantity.

1 On Heidegger's understanding of the connection between the notion of space and modernity see my discussion in: Malpas 2012, 97–112.

Indeed, although the relation is not always explicitly recognized, number can itself be understood as essentially spatial—a point evident from the history of science, but also confirmed by psychology (which suggests that both the developmental origins and the representational format of numerical information are spatial in character; cf. De Hevia et al. 2012, 466). Number, like space, also has no intrinsic boundary, and here one can see how even the field theory of space may be said to be continuous with the thinking of space that is tied to extension, measurability, uniformity, and lack of intrinsic limit.

Given the fundamental nature of space in modern thought, it should be no surprise to find that in modernity time tends to be tied to space, even reduced to space. This is not only true of physical theory, but is a feature of the organization of the modern world more broadly. The modern tendency towards measurability and quantity means that time is subject to number, and in being so subject, it is, as we have already seen, also spatialized. Moreover, as time comes to be tied to notions of speed, acceleration, and efficiency, so the connection of time to space is reinforced. Time becomes a measure of movement in space, sometimes even a measure of space. Moreover, just as time is reduced to space, so place becomes, within this modern frame, equivalent to simple location. Place is thus a point or area in space—a “moment” in space—that is entirely derivative of space.

Since space carries with it no intrinsic idea of boundary or limit, so the reduction of time and place to space implies the loss of any idea of boundary or limit that belong to time or to place.

As it is indeed modern, so this modern notion of space is to be distinguished from older ways of thinking, and especially the modern notion of space is to be distinguished from the older notion of place. Indeed, if we retain a *sui generis* sense of place, a sense that is not reducible to space, then it is to this older notion of place that we must turn. Here place appears, in contrast to the modern idea of space, as essentially tied to bound or limit. This is especially clear in regard to the Greek term for place which has also remained as a near-synonym for place in English, namely, *topos*. As Aristotle characterizes it, *topos* is an inner bounding surface (cf. Aristotle 1957)—and this usage is echoed in “topography” as the study of the surface of the earth. The notion of place that appears here is a fundamental one. The idea of limit or boundary

is itself dependent on this idea of place, and so any thinking that draws on such notions, if it would do so in a way that does not reduce these notions to something arbitrary or conventional, must draw upon a notion of place also, whether explicitly or implicitly. Here, the limit or boundary appears, not as a mere line within space nor as simply restrictive, but rather as the constituting horizon that belongs to a place, and that allows things to appear within it—the boundary is productive much as the boundary of a square of piazza creates a space within it that allows things to happen, to take place. In this way, the boundary, and so the place, gives “room” to things—which is to say it gives space, and the space it gives is directly related or “appropriate” to that which appears.

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It is important to note the contrast between this notion of place, and, associated with it, of boundary or limit, and the spatialized versions of these notions. Understood as modifications of space, place, boundary and limit tend to be arbitrary or conventional. They are essentially subjective projections onto the objectivity of space. Perhaps surprisingly, the idea of place as itself a projection is common across much of the contemporary literature in which place is supposedly thematized: place is understood as space plus “meaning” and thus place ceases to function as a *sui generis* concept in its own right. The broader tendency to understand the world in terms of just such “projections” or “posits” is one of the respects in which Heidegger views technological modernity as given over to subjectivism. In a world, in which space dominates, then there is no room for any notion of time or of place other than as modifications of space—other than as amenable to the numerical, the measurable, and the quantifiable; in such a world, what lies outside the objectivity of space and number can only be subjective and so conventional—or, one might say, “constructed”. The difficulty, however, is that this leaves almost everything that pertains to the human as belonging to the realm of conventionality, and so as having no intrinsic foundation or limit, at the same time being completely subject to the supposed objectivity of the spatial and the numerical. Contemporary capitalism, conjoined with modern information systems, and embodied in the “market” (itself an informational as much as economic system), becomes the all-encompassing technological “machine” that allows spatialized human subjectivity to be worked out within

the realm of the objectively quantifiable and numerical. Moreover, there can be no easy defense against the encompassing reach of technological modernity, including its instantiation in contemporary capitalism, since technological modernity refuses the very idea of boundary or limit on which such a defense must depend. Consequently, attempts to argue against economic models by reference to ethical notions, if they are to remain genuinely ethical rather than prudential or utilitarian, must rely on some notion of an absolute ethical limit to economic activity of a sort that are unrepresentable within the universalized discourse of contemporary economic thinking. Either ethics is already encompassed within the machine of the market, in which case it is essentially reducible to economics, or else it is nothing at all.

Although place is often treated as an exclusionary notion, so that to emphasize place is to emphasize that which is here and apart from anything else, quite the opposite is actually the case. Places always implicate other places, both internally to the place, as places are nested within other places (a feature of place that underpins the connection between place and memory), and externally, as every place is nested within, as well as connected to, other places. However, what enables this topological or topographical inter-implication is exactly that which is often taken to underpin the exclusionary character of place, namely, the boundary or limit. Properly understood, the boundary is not that which cuts off, but rather that which connects at the same time as it also separates—which is why borders are such contested places. Indeed, here appears something about the way the topological underpins the very possibility of identity and difference—identity and difference are themselves topological. It is this aspect of place that is crucial to the character of place as that which founds appearance—every appearance is placed because the very happening of identity and differing that is appearance is always a happening of place.

The nature of the inter-implication, or as one may also say, the connectedness that is at the heart of the notion of place is nevertheless radically distinct from another kind of seeming “connectedness” that is associated with space. It is commonplace to talk of technological modernity as characterized by connectivity and “flow”. Indeed, the development of technology can be understood in terms of an increasing connectivity that draws together the world. Technology is a system of convergent connectivity. This is true

both of technology itself and of that which technology encompasses. The development of technology is thus a development, in which one sees not just the development of successive improvements in particular devices, but rather improvements across whole ranges of devices and systems—and so one never encounters, except as technological remnants or repressions, advanced technologies that operate only with respect to a narrow range of devices or in narrowly circumscribed domains. Technologies are systematic, not discrete, and so the development of technology is always the development of a system that expands across the entirety of a society's activities. Connectivity, and increasing connectivity, is thus essential to the way technology constitutes itself. Moreover, this is apparent, not only in the self-formation of technology, but in the way it forms the world in which it operates. The technological ordering of things is one that draws things together into systems of interconnection that mirror the interconnection of technology.

102 This is true even of the simplest technologies, of course, so that one can argue for a continuity between the technology of the earliest hominids and our own digital technologies—as the famous sequence from the Stanley Kubrick film version of Arthur C. Clarke's *2001*, in which a bone used as a weapon transforms into an orbiting missile platform (cf. *2001: A Space Odyssey*), might suggest. But there is also a difference: as technology develops so the single tool or device tends increasingly to disappear into the larger technological system and this difference becomes almost a difference in kind rather than merely of degree—in the simplest technologies, the technological system is itself almost entirely captured either within the single tool or device, or within a small array of such tools or devices—often across a very small range of types or functions. Contemporary technology is characterized by tools and devices that are not only enormously varied, but that also encompass greater functional capacity, and often drawing different functions into a single instrument—witness the mobile phone, for instance, or the laptop.

At this point, the relation between technology and space comes back into the picture—and not only in virtue of my reference to Kubrick or Clarke—, but because of the nature of the connectivity that appears here. The mode of connectivity of the technological is not the same as the mode of inter-implication that is associated with place, but rather the interconnectivity of

the extended homogenous field—what is so often talked about today as the space of boundless connectivity and flow. Significantly, Heidegger himself identifies this, if somewhat obliquely, in his own account of how technology operates: “[...] the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew.” (Heidegger 1977, 16) Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are, he says, ways of revealing. They are also ways of revealing that depend on the idea of an expansive and unbounded space within which such unlocking, transforming, storing, and distributing can proceed in a seamless and unobstructed fashion. The space of technology is a space of connectivity, but it is also therefore a space of uniform, unbounded, extendedness.

Moreover, the connectivity at issue here, precisely because it is spatial in this way, is also a mode of connectivity that proceeds through the effective elimination of differentiation—which also means, through the effective obscuration of any genuine appearing of things. The character of technological modernity as drawing everything into the same system of connectivity is a large part of what underlies the disquiet Heidegger famously expressed at the images of earth from space: here, even the earth itself appears as taken up into this same system of spatialized connection. Nothing stands outside the technological embrace here symbolized by the framing of the camera itself. One might say that the same idea is expressed in the dominant language of the Anthropocene, in which we seem to have already identified the earth as subject to the human.

Technology’s delusions

It is commonplace to talk of the radical changes wrought by technological modernity, and there is a radicalism about it that must not be overlooked. Yet, the idea of radical change is itself part of the discourse by which technological modernity elaborates itself—it is one version of the progressivist story of modernity (though only part of that story—and the story actually consists of multiple stories that are not always compatible with one another). Technological modernity does not change—because it does itself depend upon—the more

basic ontology of the world and of human being. Nowhere is this clearer than in the operation of the connected digital technology which, for all its promises to free us from location, still works, and can only work, through our own embodied located engagement with it.

Heidegger famously comments that “the essence of technology is by no means anything technological” (Heidegger 1977, 4), and this is only partly true, because Heidegger wants to insist on a more basic characterization of technology in terms of what he calls *Gestell*—variously translated as “Enframing” or even “Positionality”, both of which, inadequate as they are, nevertheless point to the way Heidegger understands technological modernity in terms of a form of encompassing spatialization. The essence of technological modernity is not technological, because, in addition, technological modernity cannot be understood in the terms that it already presents—in terms of its own understanding of itself *as technological*. This is a crucial point since it means that technological modernity misrepresents and misunderstands itself, and in doing so it obscures the boundaries within which it is itself inevitably constituted. It is thus that Heidegger also refers to technological modernity as an “obscuring cloud” that obscures its own character as obscuring.

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The obscure and obscuring character of technological modernity stands as an ironic counterpoint to the idea of “enlightenment” that is so much at the heart of the project of modernity. But, there is more than just irony here. The inability of technological modernity to understand itself, and even to elaborate itself in ways that cover over the very boundaries and limits that make it what it is, means that technological modernity turns out to carry within itself an inevitable tendency to breakdown and failure that it cannot adequately represent, and to which it can only respond in technological terms (which means in ways that often exacerbate rather than ameliorate). It is thus that technological modernity, which promises the utopic, so often seems to end in one or another form of the dystopic. The supposed failure of neo-liberal economics over the last forty years or so should, in this respect, be unsurprising—not only the fact of its failure, but the way that failure seems not to have hampered its continued operation. What this shows is that although technology justifies itself in instrumental terms, it is not itself instrumental—its inner rationale is not based on instrumental success, but rather on its prior

commitment to its own universalizing imperative (an imperative which, in any case, over-rides any particular instantiation of it).

Technology's own self-representation, nevertheless, tends to be given in instrumentalist and functional terms—and this is as true of the technological system that is modern informational-capitalism as of any more particular technological device whether it be the mobile phone, the computer, or the drone based weapon systems that are now beginning to dominate modern warfare. Of course, these systems are extremely powerful, and their power derives from their spatialized/connected modes of operation, but their very encompassing nature, and the increasingly complex connectivity on which they depend, is also a source of fragility. Modern technological systems are prone to breakdown in a way that older, simple technologies were not, and protecting against their propensity to breakdown itself requires the development of further technological systems that have this as their primary aim (it is thus that many modern technologies become technologies whose main aim is the prevention of technological failure). Paul Virilio argues that technology itself arises in a way that is intimately tied to its own breakdown—every technology brings with it the concept of its own failure, the concept of the “accident”. Yet, this becomes something for technology to try to constantly overcome, even though the very attempt to do so does not eliminate, but rather shifts the character of the failure at issue.

Technology, ethics, and the human

Technological modernity's own difficulty in grasping its own limit, its own breakdown, its own failure, is not merely indicative of an instrumental or prudential problem for technology, but rather shows something much deeper. What is at issue here, is technology's own tendency to obscure the very appearing of things as the things they are—which means the obscuring of the bounds within which things appear, the obscuring of the place that belongs to their appearing as things.

Without being able to go into the details of the argument here, I would suggest that fundamental concept in any understanding of the ethical is, indeed, that of the constituting limit, the boundary, or horizon, which allows

anything to appear as what it is. Of course, this conception of the ethical goes completely against the conception that is consonant with modernity in which the ethical is precisely that which transcends limit, which is abstracted from place, and which is most obviously expressed in the idea of utilitarian ethics or perhaps in the idea of risk. But ethics begins with the recognition of that which appears and demands our attention as a focus for ethical concern. Such ethical appearing does not occur in the leveled out space of technology; it does not occur in the calculation of benefit and risk; it occurs only in the simple presencing of self, of others, and of world. The ethical relation arises only within the space opened up in the place in which we find ourselves and others—a place that is always bounded and yet open. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer, as the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas suggests, than in the relation of encountering another human face (cf. Levinas 1969).

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It is this, the locatedness of our very being in the placed encounter, and in place itself, that modern technology obscures and effaces. The loss at issue here is not the loss of something that has merely constrained us, but rather of that which makes us what we are. The challenge is to find a way to respond to our present situation, the situation of a globalized, technological modernity, that enables us to regain a sense of that sense of limit, of place, and also of self. Perhaps that can only be done by returning to a reassertion of the fundamental human values that underpin lives—values that are not given in the form of measures or even principles, but rather in a recognition of the demands that our own place makes upon us.

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„HERD“ BEI HEIDEGGER UND SCHELLING

EINE ERLÄUTERUNG AUS MYTHOLOGISCHER PERSPEKTIVE

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**“Hearth” in Heidegger and Schelling. An Interpretation in a
Mythological Perspective**

Abstract

There are few preceding studies on “hearth [Herd]” in Heidegger. This article takes up this idea in Heidegger and Schelling. The hearth can be understood as an important key for Heidegger’s thought on Being. My thesis is that it symbolizes Being itself (*Sein selbst*) or Ereignis as the event of the world (*Weltgeschehen*). The purpose of this article is to demonstrate this concretely and make it productive through a

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comparison with “hearth” in Schelling’s thought. First, I grasp Heraclitus’ quotation regarding the “place of gods,” which is passed on in Aristotle’s *De partibus animalium*, and trace Heidegger’s interpretation of it. Second, I clarify the traditional meaning of the hearth. Third, I discuss the connection between the hearth and Schelling’s philosophy, and finally I compare Heidegger and Schelling.

Keywords: hearth, mythological perspective, Heidegger, Schelling, *unvordenkliches Sein*.

»Ognjišče« pri Heideggru in Schellingu. Razjasnitev iz mitološke perspektive

110*Povzetek*

Ni veliko predhodnih študij o »ognjišču [Herd]« pri Heideggru. Pričujoči članek obravnava to idejo pri Heideggru in Schellingu. Ognjišče lahko razumemo kot pomemben ključ za razumevanje Heideggrove misli o biti. Moja teza se glasi, da simbolizira bit *sámo* (*Sein selbst*) oziroma *Ereignis* kot dogodje sveta (*Weltgeschehen*). Članek skuša predpostavko prikazati na konkreten način in jo napraviti produktivno s primerjavo z »ognjiščem« v Schellingovi misli. Najprej se spoprimem s Heraklitovim citatom o »prostoru bogov«, kakor ga posreduje Aristotelovo delo *De partibus animalium*, in predstavim Heideggrovo interpretacijo. Nato pojasnim tradicionalni pomen ognjišča. Kasneje obravnavam povezavo med ognjiščem in Schellingovo filozofijo in nazadnje primerjam Heideggra in Schellinga.

Ključne besede: ognjišče, mitološka perspektiva, Heidegger, Schelling, *unvordenkliches Sein*.

Einleitung

Meines Wissens gibt es kaum Forschungen zur Bedeutung des „Herdes“ in Heideggers Denken.² Auf seine früheste Nennung in einem speziell heideggerschen Sinne stoßen wir, soweit ich weiß, in *Überlegungen II* (*Schwarze Hefte 1931–32*), wo Heidegger vom „Herd des Seins“³ spricht. In den Vorlesungen taucht er zum ersten Mal in der Vorlesung zu Hölderlins Dichtungen vom WS 1934–35 auf. Weitere Beispiele finden sich u.a. in der Vorlesung *Einführung in die Metaphysik* vom SS 1935, in *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1936–38) sowie in der Vorlesung *Hölderlins Hymne „Der Ister“* vom SS 1942. Wenn ich es richtig sehe, kommt Heidegger zuletzt in seinem Text „Aufenthalte“ (1962) auf den Herd zu sprechen.

Die Thematisierung des Herdes könnte, so meine These, einen wichtigen Schlüssel für Heideggers Denken des Seins bilden, denn nach traditionellem Verständnis symbolisiert er das Sein selbst bzw. das Ereignis als Weltgeschehen. Die Aufgabe des vorliegenden Beitrages sehe ich demnach darin, diese These zu konkretisieren und im Vergleich zu der Bedeutung des Herdes in Schellings Denken fruchtbar zu machen. Dazu möchte ich in einem ersten Schritt den von Aristoteles in *De partibus animalium* tradierten Spruch Heraklits zum „Ort der Götter“ aufgreifen und Heideggers Deutung nachzeichnen (1). In einem zweiten Schritt wird die geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Herdes erläutert (2). Im Anschluss daran werde ich auf den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Herd und Schellings Philosophie eingehen (3), bevor ich in einem letzten Schritt das Denken von Heidegger und Schelling einem Vergleich unterziehe (4).

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1. Heraklits Ipnos

Denn in allem Natürlichen ist etwas Wunderbares enthalten, und wie Heraklit zu den Gästen gesprochen haben soll, die ihn besuchen wollten, die aber stehenbleiben, als sie beim Eintritt sahen, dass er sich

2 Vgl. Thiemer 2014. Thiemer deutet zwar die Thematik des Herdes beim frühen Heidegger an, verzichtet jedoch auf eine entsprechende Auseinandersetzung mit seinem späten Denken.

3 GA 94, 97.

am Ofen [πρὸς τῷ ἰπνῶ] wärmte – er sagte nämlich, sie sollten getrost eintreten; denn auch hier seien Götter [εἶναι γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεούς] [...] (Aristoteles 2007)⁴

Jean Beaufret schreibt in einem Brief kurz nach Kriegsende an Heidegger, er denke über das Verhältnis zwischen Ontologie und irgendeiner Form von Ethik nach. Heideggers berühmte Antwort darauf in seinem „Brief über den Humanismus“ (1946) lautet, dass der Unterschied zwischen Disziplinen wie Ontologie und Ethik an Gültigkeit verloren habe. Im Blick auf die Ethik sei vielmehr die Bedeutung des Ethos (ἦθος) zu erörtern und damit eine Dimension, die vor einer Unterscheidung zwischen Disziplinen liege. Dabei verweist er auf das Wort Heraklits: „ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων“ (Heraklit, Frag. B 119),⁵ das er wie folgt erläutert:

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ἦθος bedeutet Aufenthalt, Ort des Wohnens. Das Wort nennt den offenen Bezirk, worin der Mensch wohnt. Das Offene seines Aufenthaltes läßt das erscheinen, was auf das Wesen des Menschen zukommt und also ankommend in seiner Nähe sich aufhält. Der Aufenthalt des Menschen enthält und bewahrt die Ankunft dessen, dem der Mensch in seinem Wesen gehört. Das ist nach dem Wort des Heraklit δαίμων, der Gott. (GA 9, 354)

Nach dieser Deutung sage das Fragment B 119: „[D]er Mensch wohnt, insofern er Mensch ist, in der Nähe Gottes.“ (GA 9, 354 f.) Der Mensch hält sich in der Nähe Gottes auf und die Götter kommen in der Nähe des Menschen an und bleiben dort. Der Ort des Verweilens für Menschen und Götter ist für den Menschen also jener Ort, an welchem die Götter ankommen, erscheinen und anwesend sind. Anschließend verweist Heidegger auf die Aristotelische Überlieferung in *De partibus animalium*, die mit der Bedeutung des Fragments B 119 übereinstimme.

4 Aristoteles, *De partibus animalium* 645a. Für das griechische Original beziehe ich mich auf: Aristoteles 1983. In älteren Ausgaben (z. B. Aristoteles 1829) wird „ἰπνῶ“ als „ἴπνῳ“ wiedergegeben; ich lese es jedoch im vorliegenden Beitrag als „ἰπνῶ“.

5 Vgl. GA 9, 354. Die bekannte Übertragung von Diels: „Seine Eigenart ist dem Menschen sein Dämon“ (Diels 2004, 177), lehnt Heidegger als ungriechisch ab.

Heideggers Interpretation dieser Überlieferung zu Heraklit lässt sich im Kern so zusammenfassen: Fremde besuchen aus reiner Neugier Heraklit. Als sie ihn antreffen, geraten sie wegen des Anblicks, der sich ihnen bietet, in Verlegenheit. Sie hatten nämlich erwartet, dieser Denker müsse auf eine seltene, reizvolle und ungewöhnlich interessante Weise leben. Diese Erwartungen wurden enttäuscht. Statt auf den erwarteten Reiz stoßen sie auf das ärmliche Leben Heraklits, der sich „an einem Backofen [πρὸς τῷ ἰπνῶ]“ (GA 9, 355) wärmt. Heidegger übersetzt „ἰπνός“ (Ipnos) mit dem deutschen Wort „Backofen“. Der Ipnos ist eigentlich ein Ofen und sein Ort mithin „ein recht alltäglicher und unscheinbarer Ort.“ (GA 9, 355) Heraklit zeigt seine Armut, indem sich lediglich an ihm wärmt, ohne Brot zu backen. Bei diesem Anblick verlieren die neugierigen Gäste das Interesse, Heraklit näherzukommen, und sind schon im Begriff, umzukehren. „Deshalb spricht er [= Heraklit] ihnen Mut zu. Er fordert sie eigens auf, doch einzutreten, mit den Worten: εἶναι γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεός, ‚Götter wesen auch hier an.‘“ (GA 9, 356) „Hier [ἐνταῦθα]“ – im Sinne von „auch hier [καὶ ἐνταῦθα]“ – meint den Ort des Ipnos, den Ort am Ipnos. Nach Heidegger ist „hier“ der „gewöhnliche [...] Ort“ (GA 9, 356), wo „jeglich Ding und jeder Umstand, jedes Tun und Denken vertraut und geläufig, das heißt geheuer ist.“ (GA 9, 356) „Auch hier“ bedeutet daher, dass *auch* „im Umkreis des Geheuren“ (GA 9, 356) die Götter anwesen, die eigentlich un-geheuer sind. Daraus erklärt sich nach Heidegger die Bedeutung von „ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων“: „Der (geheure) Aufenthalt ist dem Menschen das Offene für die Anwesenung des Gottes (des Un-geheuren).“ (GA 9, 356) Der Bindestrich im „Un-geheuren“ deutet hier auf den vermittelnden Charakter des Ort des Ipnos: Gerade der heimische Ort für Menschen wird zugleich zum Erscheinungsort oder zur Nähe des Unheimlichen. Der Ort des Ipnos ist der Ort *zwischen* dem Heimischen und dem Unheimlichen. Dieser Zwischencharakter des Ipnos lässt sich meiner Ansicht nach durch die Geistesgeschichte des Herdes als „Hestia“ untermauern.

2. Zur Geistesgeschichte der Hestia (Herd)

Das griechische Wort „Hestia“ ist einerseits der Eigenname einer jungfräulichen Göttin, die zu den zwölf Göttern des Olympos zählt und als

das erste Kind von Gott Kronos und Göttin Rhea als „älteste der Götter“ (Merkelbach 1996, 61) bezeichnet wird. Das Wort „Hestia“ nennt andererseits als Appellativ den Herd als einen Altar der Göttin Hestia.

Der Herd als Hestia verbindet sich zunächst mit dem traditionellen Kult im griechischen Altertum. Dem deutschen Philologen Reinhold Merkelbach (1918–2006) zufolge befand sich die Hestia in der Mitte jedes Hauses⁶ und Tempels.⁷ Das Feuer der Hestia als Altar im Prytaneion des Stadtzentrums der Polis musste unablässig bewacht werden.⁸ Der Altar der Hestia in jedem Tempel war „ein heiliger Ort“, an dem „es die Götter, Hestia, Zeus gibt“ (Robert 1965, 68).

Philologische Forschungen haben gezeigt, dass das Bild der Hestia aus diesem kultischen Zusammenhang in einen dichterischen und philosophischen Kontext versetzt wurde. Frühe Beispiele der Hestia im dichterisch-philosophischen Sinne finden sich bei Sophokles (ca. 496–406 v. Chr.),⁹ Euripides (ca. 480–406 v. Chr.) und Philolaos (ca. 470–385 v. Chr.). In Euripides' Fragment Nr. 944 heißt es:

... and mother Earth, whom the wise amongst men call Hestia, as
“seated” in the aether. (Euripides 2009, 527)¹⁰

Hestia wird hier als Mutter Erde (*mother Earth*) bezeichnet. Der mütterliche und der jungfräuliche Charakter stehen zueinander in Widerspruch. Die Gleichsetzung von Hestia und Mutter Erde weicht somit vom traditionellen Verständnis der Hestia ab und folgt der Übertragung der Hestia in einen dichterisch-philosophischen Kontext.¹¹ Bei Euripides geht sie nach August Preuner auf dessen Mentor Anaxagoras (ca. 499–428 v. Chr.) zurück, genauer gesagt, auf einen pythagoreischen Einfluss durch Anaxagoras. Zwar lässt sich

6 Vgl. dazu Nietzsche 1995, 401.

7 Vgl. Merkelbach 1996, 53.

8 Vgl. Merkelbach 1996, 52.

9 Vgl. Sophokles, Frag. 615 (Sophokles 1917 II, 252), sowie (dazu) Sophokles, Frag. 290 (Sophokles 1917 I, 212).

10 Vgl. Macrobius 1852, 204 und Preuner 1864, 11.

11 Vgl. Preuner 1864, 11.

die Gleichsetzung bei Anaxagoras selbst nicht finden und auch für einen Einfluss der Pythagoreer auf Anaxagoras gibt es keinen eindeutigen Beleg,¹² aber Anatolios (gest. 458 n. Chr.) sagt, die Identifizierung der Hestia mit der Mutter Erde sei damals unter den Philosophen durchaus geläufig gewesen.¹³ Der Grund, weshalb man sie mit den Pythagoreern in Verbindung bringt, liegt in einem ganz bestimmten Verständnis der Hestia begründet, das Euripides und Philolaos – ein Pythagoreer – teilen. Von Philolaos ist das folgende Fragment überliefert:

Das zuerst zusammengefügte, das Eine, in der Mitte der Kugel heißt Herd (oder Hestia).¹⁴

Die „Kugel“ ist pythagoreisch betrachtet der Kosmos.¹⁵ Philolaos setzt die Hestia jedoch nicht mit der Erde gleich; nach seiner „Hestia-zentrischen“ Theorie bewegt sich auch die Erde um die Hestia herum, die allein im Zentrum des Kosmos bleibt.¹⁶ Sie wird zum „Centralfeuer“ (Preuner 1864, 158) für die Bewegung des ganzen Kosmos.¹⁷ Die Fragmente von Euripides und Philolaos decken sich miteinander in dem Punkt, dass die Hestia unbewegt in der Mitte des Kosmos verharrt. Ihr Charakter der Unbeweglichkeit steht laut Preuner (1864, 144) in Zusammenhang mit dem Verbum „ἰστάναι (ἴστημι)“, das so viel wie „stellen lassen“, „still stehen lassen“, „stiften“, „bleiben“ bedeutet.¹⁸ In diesem Sinne meint Hestia das unbewegt bleibende Zentralfeuer, die „gründende Erde“ (Merkelbach 1996, 62) oder – in der Neuzeit bei Schelling – „die alles im Stehen Erhaltende“ (SW II-2, 626). Für den philosophischen Kontext ist dabei folgende Stelle aus Platons *Phaidros* von Bedeutung:

12 Vgl. Preuner 1864, 160.

13 Vgl. Euripides 2009, 527–529.

14 Philolaos, Frag. B 7, übersetzt von Diels.

15 Vgl. Pythagoras. Schriften, Lehre. 21 (Diels 2004, 105).

16 Vgl. Philolaos. A 16 und A 17 (Diels 2004, 403).

17 Vgl. Philolaos. A 16 (Diels 2004, 403).

18 Vgl. Pokorny, 2005, 1170 f.

Der große Herrscher im Himmel Zeus nun seinen geflügelten Wagen lenkend ziehet der erste aus, alles anordnend und versorgend, und ihm folgt die Schar der Götter und Geister in eilf Zügen geordnet. Denn Hestia bleibet in der Götter Hause allein.¹⁹

Das Haus der Götter ist der Olymp, auf dem die zwölf Götter wohnen. Ausziehende Götterzüge gibt es nur elf, da die Göttin Hestia in ihrem Haus zurückbleibt. Von Macrobius (370–430 n. Chr.) stammt dazu folgender Kommentar: „Dass Hestia allein im Götterhause bleibt, bedeutet, dass Hestia, die wir für die Erde halten, im Götterhause [intra domum deorum], nämlich in der Mitte des Kosmos [intra mundum] unbewegt bleibt.“ (Macrobius 1852, 204; übersetzt von K. O.)²⁰ Jean-Pierre Vernant sagt dazu:

Allein Hestia bleibt unbewegt im Hause, ohne ihren Ort zu verlassen.

116 Dieser feste Punkt, das Zentrum, aus dem sich der menschliche Raum orientiert und organisiert, die Hestia der Dichter und Philosophen, lässt sich mit der unbewegten Erde im Zentrum des Kosmos identifizieren. (Vernant 1963, 13).

Geistesgeschichtlich bewohnt Hestia als Zentralfeuer (bei den Pythagoreern) oder als Erde (bei Euripides oder Platon) das Zentrum des Kosmos. Porphyrios (ca. 233–305), ein Neuplatoniker, schreibt: „Als das Gemeinsame von Göttern und Menschen ist die Hestia.“²¹ Diese Gemeinsamkeit stellt im traditionellen Kult ihren eigentlichen Charakter dar. Porphyrios denkt jedoch nicht an die Hestia in der Mitte des Hauses, des Tempels oder der Polis, sondern er meint damit die Hestia im Zentrum des Kosmos. Dieser philosophische, dichterische und mythologische Charakter der Hestia erinnert an ein weiteres Fragment Heraklits, das bekannte Fragment B 30: „Diese Weltordnung, dieselbige für alle Wesen, schuf weder einer der Götter noch der Mensch, sondern sie war immerdar und ist und wird sein ewig lebendiges Feuer, erglommend nach

19 *Phaidros* 246e–247a, übersetzt von Friedrich Schleiermacher.

20 *Saturnalia* I 23, 8.

21 *De abstinentia* II-32 42.

Maßen und erlöschend nach Maßen.“²² Das „ewig lebendige [...] Feuer (πῦρ ἀείζων)“ deutet auf eine Verbindung zwischen Heraklits Lehre vom Feuer und dem Feuer der Hestia hin. So hält beispielsweise Cornutus, ein Stoiker aus dem 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr., fest:

Beide, Hestia und Demeter, scheinen sich nicht von der Erde zu unterscheiden. Denn die Alten haben die Erde auch „Hestia“ und „Demeter“ genannt, weil Hestia durch Alles steht [ἑστάναι διὰ παντός], weil der Kosmos auf Hestia – wie auf dem Grundstein – steht [ἑστάναι] und weil Demeter nach Art einer Mutter alles wachsen lässt und nährt. [...] Das immer lebendige Feuer [ἀείζων πῦρ] gehört zu Hestia, weil sie selbst es zu sein scheint; vielleicht auch, weil alles Feuer im Kosmos von ihr genährt wird und durch sie existiert; vielleicht auch, weil sie lebenspendend ist und die Mutter aller Lebewesen, für die das Feurige die Ursache ihrer Existenz ist. (Cornutus 1881, 52–53, übersetzt von K. O.)

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Der Ausdruck das „immer lebendige Feuer“ (ἀείζων πῦρ) ist als Zitat aus Heraklits Fragment B 30 zu verstehen.²³ Zwar findet sich das Wort „Hestia“ in den Fragmenten Heraklits nicht, doch lässt sich das Feuer bei Heraklit unschwer als das Prinzip der Tätigkeit des Kosmos in Verbindung mit der Hestia verstehen. Bei Schelling beispielsweise verbindet sich der „Heerd eines uralten Feuers“ (Schelling 1993, 13; vgl. auch 217 f.) mit dem von Heraklit im Fragment B 30 genannten Feuer.²⁴ Dieses „Feuer sei das Innerste, also auch das Älteste, durch Dämpfung des Feuers habe sich erst Alles zur Welt angelassen.“ (Schelling 1815, 12 f.; = SW I-8, 352) Auch Merkelbach schreibt: „Ich will natürlich nicht behaupten, daß Heraklits Philosophie aus dem Kult der Hestia abzuleiten sei. Aber immerhin darf man wohl sagen: In den religiösen Vorstellungen, welche sich mit der Göttin Hestia und dem Kult des Herdfeuers verbinden, lagen Ansatzpunkte, von denen ausgehend Heraklit seine Gedanken formulieren konnte.“ (Merkelbach 1996, 66)

22 Heraklit, Frag. B 30, übersetzt von Diels.

23 Vgl. Merkelbach 1996, 55 f.

24 Vgl. Schelling 1990, 164.

Was die Bedeutung des Ipnos betrifft, so vertreten die Philologen hier einen anderen Interpretationsansatz als Heidegger. Zur Erinnerung: Die Gäste Heraklits bleiben stehen, als sie beim Eintreten sehen, „dass er sich am Ofen [πρὸς τῷ ἰπνῶ] wärmte“, worauf Heraklit sie ermuntert, „denn *auch* hier sind Götter“ (εἶναι γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεούς). Sowohl die philologische Lesart als auch Heidegger gehen davon aus, dass es für ein Verständnis des hier Überlieferten von entscheidender Bedeutung sei, den Zusammenhang zwischen „am [Back-] Ofen“ (πρὸς τῷ ἰπνῶ) und „auch hier“ zu erkennen. Nach Louis Robert setzt diese Geschichte jedoch die traditionelle Bedeutung der Hestia voraus: Während Hestia (Herd) als Altar, wie oben erwähnt, „ein heiliger Ort“ (Robert 1965, 68) ist, an dem die Götter anwesen, sei der Ipnos (Ofen, Backofen) lediglich ein „praktisches“ (Robert 1965, 68) Küchengerät. Heraklit saß also nicht an der Hestia, sondern am Ipnos. Von hier aus lässt sich Heraklits Wort „auch hier“ so verstehen: „*Auch* hier“, d. h. auch am Ipnos als einem bloßen Küchengerät wesen

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die Götter in gleicher Weise wie an der Hestia (Herd) als Altar.²⁵ Es geht mir hier allerdings weniger darum, ob diese Interpretation „richtig“ oder „falsch“ ist, als um die Tatsache, dass es durchaus naheliegend ist, Heraklits Ipnos und Hestia zu verbinden. Auch Heidegger nimmt diese Verbindung vor.

Zwar stimmt die philologische Lesart nicht mit Heideggers Deutung überein. Bei Heidegger geht es nicht um den Kontrast zwischen Hestia und Ipnos, sondern um den Kontrast zwischen dem Unheimlichen und dem Heimischen. Aber das bedeutet nicht, dass Heidegger das Problem der Hestia einfach übergeht, da sich die Bedeutung des Ipnos auch bei ihm aus der traditionellen Bedeutung und seinem Verständnis der Hestia speist, wie wir im Folgenden sehen werden.

3. Das Herdfeuer bei Schelling

Was besagt denn die in der Mitte stehende Hestia für das Denken des Seins beim späten Heidegger? Um auch den dynamischen Aspekt der Hestia aufzugreifen, möchte ich mich zunächst auf Schellings Beschreibung des Herdfeuers in *Die Weltalter. Bruchstück* (1813) beziehen:

25 Merkelbach bestätigt diese Interpretation, vgl. Merkelbach 1996, 65.

Ewig erzeugt sich der Gegensatz, um immer wieder von der Einheit verzehrt zu werden, und ewig wird der Gegensatz von der Einheit verzehrt, um immer neu auszuleben. Dieses ist die Feste (ἑστία), der Heerd des beständig sich selbst verbrennenden und aus der Asche wieder neu verjüngenden Lebens. Dieß das unermüdliche Feuer (ἀκάματον πῦρ), durch dessen Dämpfung, wie Heraklit behauptete, das Weltall erschaffen worden [...]. (SW I-8, 230)

Es geht Schelling hier um seinen mythologischen Ansatz. In anderer Weise beschreibt er das Problem auch in seiner Erlanger Vorlesung von 1821:

Wie nun diese ewige Freiheit sich zuerst in eine Gestalt – in ein Seyn – eingeschlossen, und wie sie durch alles hindurchgehend und in nichts bleibend endlich wieder hindurchbricht in die ewige Freiheit – als die ewig ringende, aber nie besiegte, stets unüberwindliche Kraft, die jede Form, in die sie sich eingeschlossen, immer selbst wieder verzehrt, also aus jeder wieder als Phönix aufsteht und durch Flammentod sich verklärt – dieß ist Inhalt der höchsten Wissenschaft. (SW I-9, 221)

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Hieraus wird ersichtlich, dass „der Heerd des beständig sich selbst verbrennenden und aus der Asche wieder neu verjüngenden Lebens“ oder „das unermüdliche Feuer (ἀκάματον πῦρ)“ mit der ewigen Freiheit zu identifizieren ist. Diese Freiheit besagt die absolute Freiheit, die sich durch ihren eigenen, sich reflektierenden Prozess weiß (entwickelt). Dieser Prozess, der nach Schelling der „Inhalt der höchsten Wissenschaft“, d.h. der Philosophie ist, umfasst die folgenden drei Phasen:

(1) Die absolute Freiheit, die das absolute Subjekt ist, bedeutet das „lautere Können“ (SW I-9, 220), das nicht das Können von etwas, sondern ein reines Können ist, das es noch nicht (objektiv) gibt. Während das absolute Subjekt dabei „in der absoluten Innerlichkeit“ (SW I-9, 231) verbleibt, ohne sich selbst zu wissen, befindet sich das menschliche Wissen als ein bloßes „Nichtwissen“ in der „absolute[n] Aeußerlichkeit“ (SW I-9, 232).

(2) Dieses Können geht aber als Wille zum Sein über, denn das absolute Subjekt wird zum Sein. Schelling hält dabei den ursprünglichen Zufall im

Übergang aus der reinen Möglichkeit der ersten Phase in das Sein der zweiten Phase fest: „Denn er [= Wille] glaubte, in der Wirklichkeit noch eben dasselbe bleiben zu können, was er in der Möglichkeit war.“ (SW II-2, 153) Das Übergehen ist zwar das Gewollte des Willens, aber die Folge dieses Übergangs war das nicht Gewollte; er wollte nämlich eigentlich eben sich selbst als die lautere Möglichkeit als das absolute Subjekt, wurde jedoch zum Sein. Diese Folge ist „das nicht Gewollte, Unversehene, Unerwartete“ (SW II-2, 154), „Mißgeschick“ oder der „Ur=Unfall“ (SW II-2, 160). Dieses „Urereignis“ (SW II-2, 153) ist „die unwiderrufliche That“, die „nicht wieder ungeschehen gemacht werden kann“ (SW II-2, 153). Diese ungewollt-zufällige Folge des Willens ist aber noch nicht die wirkliche Welt, sondern das noch unbegrenzte „blinde Sein“ (SW I-10, 276) oder das „verstandlose Seyn“ als „das *reale* Princip“ (SW I-10, 242), das „das nicht seyn Sollende“ (SW I-10, 246) genannt wird. Weil es unwiderruflich ist, muss der Wille es „überwinden“ (SW I-10, 276),

120 indem er es aus einem Ungewollten zu einem Gewollten macht bzw. indem er es begrenzt oder negiert. Hieraus entspringt die wirkliche Welt, die nicht blind oder verstandeslos-unverständlich ist, sondern begrenzt-verständlich. Im Grunde der Welt liegt mithin diese unwiderrufliche Tatsache beschlossen. Das Geschehnis des verstandeslosen Seins ist jener Vorgang, „vor dem sich das Bewußtseyn nichts denken, nämlich [an] nichts sich erinnern kann“ (SW II-2, 153). Während das absolute Subjekt in dieser Weise ins äußerliche Objekt bzw. ins objektive Wissen übergeht, erhebt sich das menschliche Wissen aus der „Äußerlichkeit“ zum „Innerlichen – Wissenden“ (SW I-9, 232). Erst hier gibt es ein objektiv begrenztes Wissen.

(3) Aber das absolute Subjekt (die absolute Freiheit) bleibt nicht im Objekt stehen, sondern kehrt ins absolute Subjekt zurück. Dieses Subjekt ist nun aber nicht das bloße Subjekt, das früher rein in sich blieb, sondern das „wiederhergestellte“ (SW I-9, 232) Subjekt. Auch wenn der Mensch eigentlich das absolute Subjekt in der objektiven Welt sucht, bemerkt er nur objektive Dinge – „Wir suchen überall das Unbedingte und finden immer nur Dinge“ (Novalis). Der Mensch gibt es daher auf, das absolute Subjekt objektiv wissen zu wollen. Das menschliche Wissen wird wieder zum Nichtwissen, das aber nicht das bloße Nichtwissen schlechthin, „sondern [...] wissendes Nichtwissen [ist]; es ist Nichtwissen, aber nicht äußerlich, wie im Anfang, sondern innerliches

[...] es hat sich die ewige Freiheit wieder erinnert“ (SW I-9, 232). Das Wissen als ein Sicherinnern an die ewige Freiheit ist nicht das Wissen des zum Objekt gewordenen absoluten Subjekts, sondern das Wissen des aus dem Objekt wiederhergestellten absoluten Subjekts. Das absolute Subjekt erlangt durch diese Erinnerung das Wissen von sich selbst als absolutes Subjekt.

Die Aufgabe der Philosophie liegt in der Erinnerung dieses dreiphasigen Prozesses: „[A]lle Philosophie [besteht] nur in Erinnerung“ (SW I-9, 232). Es geht dabei thematisch um die Erinnerung der wiederhergestellten Freiheit. Zwar sagt Schelling von der zweiten Phase, das blinde Sein sei das „unvordenkliche Seyn“ (SW II-4, 337). Aber nach der Bestimmung der Philosophie ist auch dieses nicht absolut un-erinnerlich. Die Voraussetzung des Sicherinnerns besteht nämlich darin, dass man etwas vergessen hat. Wenn man sagt: „Ich habe etwas vergessen“, so bedeutet dies, dass man *weiß*, dass man etwas vergessen hat, selbst wenn man nicht sagen kann, was genau es ist. Es geht dabei um die Erinnerung oder das Wissen vom Vergessen – und in genau dieser Weise wissen wir um „das blinde, wilde, grenzenlose Seyn“ (SW I-10, 242), das als der zufällige Abgrund im Grund der Welt oder des Weltgeschehens liegt.

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4. Schelling und Heidegger im Vergleich

Worum es Schelling geht, ist das Weltgeschehen, das nicht aus dem menschlichen Subjekt stammt. Im Weltgeschehen spielt nicht der Mensch die zentrale Rolle. Eine analoge Dezentralisierung des Menschen lässt sich auch im Wandel („Kehre“) des heideggerschen Denkens ausmachen. In seiner metaphysischen Periode (1927–1930)²⁶ schreibt Heidegger: „[I]n dem Verstehen von Sein liegt zugleich der Vollzug des Unterschiedes von Sein und Seiendem; es gibt Sein nur, wenn Dasein Sein versteht.“ (GA 26, 199) Es sei so, dass „das existierende Dasein sich selbst so etwas wie Sein gibt“ (GA 26, 195). Hier geht es also um einen anthropo-zentrisch medialen Prozess in dem Sinne, dass zuallererst das Dasein Sein und Seiendes voneinander unterscheidet und verbindet und dass *sich* das *Dasein selbst* das Sein, also die Welt, gibt: „Im

26 Vgl. Tengelyi 2015, 234.

Wesen der Existenz liegt Transzendenz [des Daseins], d.h. Geben von Welt.“ (GA 26, 195). Dabei spielt die Freiheit des Daseins, die die Physis als „das an sich Seiende“ (GA 26, 281) transzendiert, bei Heidegger eine ähnliche Rolle wie die Freiheit bei Schelling, und die Physis, die nach Heidegger „in der Verborgenheit“ (GA 26, 281) bleibt, gleicht dem blinden Sein Schellings.

Dagegen steht Heideggers Denken der dynamischen Physis als Sein selbst in einer anderen Weise in der Nähe Schellings. Heidegger schreibt: „Aus der Epoche des Seins kommt das epochale Wesen seines Geschickes, worin die eigentliche Weltgeschichte ist. Jedesmal, wenn das Sein in seinem Geschick an sich hält, ereignet sich jäh und unversehens Welt.“ (GA 5, 338) Jäh und unversehens, mithin ungewollt oder zufällig, ereignet sich Welt. Hier geht es weder um die Freiheit noch um den Willen bei Schelling – es handelt sich vielmehr um das Sein selbst als einen Prozess der Selbstdifferenzierung, aus dem die Welt hervorgeht.

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Im Blick steht dabei natürlich nicht der absolute Wille; aber es gibt einen weiteren Vergleichspunkt: die Unvordenklichkeit des Seins. Das, was Heidegger als „das Unvordenkliche“ bezeichnet, ist das, bei dem die „Metaphysik endet“: „Schelling versteht dieses [= das Unvordenkliche] noch aus dem vorstellenden Denken.“ (GA 73.2, 933) Für Heidegger ist es nicht das blinde Sein, das nach Schelling als das Nicht-sein-Sollende vom „ideale[n] Prinzip“ (SW I-10, 243) negiert werden muss, sondern vielmehr „das Gewesene und das Kommende“ (GA 74, 112), das nämlich *nicht mehr* und *noch nicht* gedacht werden kann und das doch als „das Un-sägliche“ in der „Sprache als Sage“ (GA 74, 112) gewahrt wird. Wenn es dabei um die Physis oder „Wesung“ (GA 65, 73) im Sinne des späten Heidegger geht, handelt es sich weder nur um das reale Prinzip (Daß-sein) noch nur um das ideale Prinzip (Was-sein), sondern (wenn man überhaupt noch diese metaphysische Unterscheidung heranziehen möchte) um das reale und das ideale Prinzip – heideggerisch gesagt, um das Erdhaft-Weltliche oder dessen Mitte. Für Heidegger ist eben diese Mitte das „Herdfeuer“, das die „Mitte des Zwischen“ ist, das „den Göttern die ungewollte, jedoch nötige Behausung, dem Menschen aber das Freie der Bewahrung dessen wird, was, erdhaft – weltlich, das Wahre verwahrend, in dieser Freiheit als das Seiende entsteht und vergeht.“ (GA 65, 486) So heißt es in der Vorlesung *Hölderlins Hymne „Der Ister“* vom SS 1942:

Der Herd ist demnach die Mitte des Seienden, auf die alles Seiende, nämlich weil es und sofern es Seiendes ist, anfänglich bezogen bleibt. Diese herdhaftige Mitte des Seienden ist das Sein. Das Sein ist der Herd. Denn das Wesen des Seins ist für die Griechen die φύσις – das von sich aus aufgehende Leuchten, das durch nichts anderes vermittelt, sondern selbst die Mitte ist. Diese Mitte ist das anfänglich Bleibende und alles Umsichsammelnde – jenes, worin alles Seiende seine Stätte hat und als das Seiende heimisch ist. (GA 53, 140)²⁷

Das Sein ist das herdhaftige Sein, das durch nichts anderes vermittelt wird und von dem vielmehr alles Seiende im Ganzen vermittelt wird. In den *Beiträgen zur Philosophie* wird diese ursprünglich mediale Funktion „Ereignis“ genannt: „Das Ereignis ist die sich selbst ermittelnde und vermittelnde Mitte.“ (GA 65, 73) Hier wird die Verbindung zwischen dem zeitlich-dynamischen Charakter des Herdes und der selbst-medialen Funktion des Ereignisses beim späten Heidegger offenkundig.

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Schlussbemerkungen

Der vorliegende Beitrag nahm seinen Ausgang zunächst bei Heideggers Deutung des sich am Ofen (Ipnos) wärmenden Heraklit und seinem Ausspruch „ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳι δαίμων“. Von hier aus habe ich in einem geistesgeschichtlichen Exkurs den eigentümlichen Charakter des „Herdes“ (Hestia) nachgezeichnet, die Mitte des Kosmos zu bilden. Auf diese Tradition nimmt mehr oder minder ausdrücklich auch Heideggers Denken Bezug. Anschließend wurde im Blick auf den „Herd“ in der Spätphilosophie Schellings der dynamische Aspekt

27 Vgl. das ähnliche Bild des Herdes bei Proklos: „Durch alle diese (Ausführungen) macht er [= Parmenides] ja deutlich, dass auch er die Denkgegenstände als eine Vielheit setzt und eine *Seinsordnung* unter sie, als erster, inmitten stehender und *schließlicher* (Bestimmungen), und eine geheime Einung unter ihnen – nicht als ob er von der Vielheitlichkeit des Seins nichts wüßte, aber vor Augen (die Idee), dass diese ganze Vielheit aus dem einen Seienden hervorgegangen ist. Dort war ja die Quelle des Seins [πηγή τοῦ ὄντος] und sein Herd [ἔστία] und das im Geheimen Seiende [κρυφίως ὄν], von dem aus [ἀφ’ οὗ] und um das herum [περὶ ὃ] alles, was ist, seine Einung erfahren hat [...].“ (Proklos 2010, 133; 708 C).

des Herdes bzw. Herdfeuers als ein Bild des Prozesses des Sichentwickelns der absoluten Freiheit herausgearbeitet. Abschließend erfolgte ein Vergleich von Schellings Philosophie und Heideggers Denken sowohl in seiner metaphysischen Phase als auch nach der „Kehre“. Aus ihm wurde ein beiden Denkern gemeinsamer Kern des Herd-Verständnisses ersichtlich, dass nämlich das Herdfeuer den ganzen Prozess des Weltgeschehens oder des kosmologischen Entstehens und Verschwindens des Seienden symbolisiert. Einen weiteren Verbindungspunkt bildete die „Unvordenklichkeit“ des Seins, die für Schelling nur im Moment der Realität des ganzen Prozesses liegt, den das Herdfeuer symbolisiert. Für Heidegger dagegen gilt die Unvordenklichkeit als der ganze erdhaft-weltliche Prozess des Sichdifferenzierens des Seins, welches sich im Herd verkörpert. Trotz dieser Unterschiede ist zu sagen, dass beide Denker in dasselbe Geheimnis der lebendigen Wirklichkeit eingetreten sind, die im Grunde unserer Welt liegt.

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MAN'S UN-NATURAL LIFE

TOWARDS AN ONTOLOGY OF *RESSENTIMENT*

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Abstract

To grasp the true importance of *ressentiment* in Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals*, animals and beasts of prey, of which Nietzsche speaks throughout the book, should not fall out of the focus of our interpretation. It is what generally happens in the reception history: when *ressentiment* is discussed, there is not much room left for animals. Once we bring back animals into consideration and take much more seriously Nietzsche's speculative naturalism, which has rarely been the case, the genealogy will appear in the light of a metaphysical quest for origins. In this radical, apparently metaphysical form of genealogy, *ressentiment* becomes a fundamental category. To reflect on the animality of human-animal is the task of genealogical thinking. If it turns out to be a business of metaphysics, it is because the difference

between *healthy* and *sick beast* is the most fundamental difference that opens up the genealogical interrogation. This animal difference, animal *detour* from the animal, underlies all basic metaphysical differences. It is precisely there that *ressentiment* should be thought of, as it is neither fully personal nor it exclusively belongs to the horizon of human morality. It is *neither fully included nor excluded* from the morality. It is *neither quite inside nor quite outside*. It is swinging back and forth. Defined as a “repeated reliving” (Scheler), it refers to something neither fully alive nor dead. It seems to belong to what Derrida labels “undecidable”. *Ressentiment* marks that crucial point in the evolution of species when instincts and feelings enter into a twisting course, trace a bending curve (*Verinnerlichung*) that we recognize in the prefix “re-” - of *ressentiment*. It is that same process, “a flexion of *physis*, relation to itself of the Nature,” Derrida found in the genealogical explanation of arts in Kant.

128 *Keywords:* Friedrich Nietzsche, *ressentiment*, animality, humanity, morality, Jacques Derrida.

Človekovo ne-naravno življenje. Na poti k ontologiji resentmenta

Povzetek

Če želimo dojeti resničen pomen resentmenta v Nietzschejevem delu *H genealogiji morale*, pri interpretaciji ne smemo spregledati živali in zveri, o katerih v svoji knjigi Nietzsche nenehno govori. To se navadno dogaja znotraj recepcijske zgodovine: ko gre za obravnavo resentmenta, ni veliko prostora za živali. Če v diskusijo spet pritegnemo živali in resneje vzamemo Nietzschejev spekulativni naturalizem, kar se je redko primerilo, se genealogija prikaže v luči metafizičnega iskanja izvora. Znotraj takšne radikalne, očitno metafizične oblike genealogije resentment postane temeljna kategorija. Refleksija o živalskosti človeške živali je naloga genealoškega mišljenja. Če se takšen poskus izkaže za metafizičen opravek, je to posledica okoliščine, da je razlika med *zdravo* in *bolno živaljo* najbolj temeljna razlika, ki razpira genealoško raziskavo. Živalska diferena, živalski *detour* od živali, leži v temelju vseh osnovnih metafizičnih

razlikovanj. Natanko tukaj je potrebno premisliti resentment, ker ni niti popolnoma oseben niti ne pripada izključno horizontu človeške morale. Ni niti popolnoma vključen v moralo niti izključen iz nje. Ni niti čisto znotraj niti čisto zunaj. Niha sem ter tja. Če ga opredelimo kot »ponovljeno podoživljanje« (Scheler), se nanaša na nekaj, kar ni niti popolnoma živo niti mrtvo. Zdi se, da spada k tistemu, kar Derrida poimenuje »nerazločljivo«. Resentiment zaznamuje ključno točko v razvoju vrste, ko se instinkti in občutja podajo na vijugajočo pot, začnejo zasledovati upogibajočo se krivuljo (*Verinnerlichung*), ki jo razpoznamo v predponi »re-« besede resentment. Gre za enak proces, »za fleksijo *physis*, samonanašalnost Narave«, kakršnega je Derrida našel pri Kantovi genealoški pojasnitvi umetnosti.

Ključne besede: Friedrich Nietzsche, resentment, živalskost, človeškost, morala, Jacques Derrida.

[...] it is the meaning of all culture to breed a tame and civilized animal,
a household pet, out of the beast of prey "man" [...]
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

Our question today is about animals. Or it is not. It is more about beasts. Perhaps this is not true, either. What is certain is that our topic today is *ressentiment*, resentment in Nietzsche's philosophy. And still, I am going to speak about animals and beasts in Nietzsche. However, it is true that I have promised I would speak about the topic, have my word about "Nietzsche and the culture of *ressentiment*." Promised? Promise is an important concept in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, in his late work where the concept of *ressentiment* was introduced for the first time in his thought. It is there that Man was defined as an animal able to make promises. Am I myself an animal able to keep my promises? Speaking of animals, and beasts, of course, I promise I will keep my promise—to speak about *ressentiment* in the first place. All that to be considered in Nietzsche's thought, of course. And beyond.

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I am going to speak on *ressentiment*, and will not avoid animals and beasts. I believe it is the only way to grasp the true nature of *ressentiment*, as conceived by Nietzsche. The true nature—is there any true nature in Nietzsche's genealogy of morals? Particularly, when it is about *ressentiment*? Is it rather the most unnatural thing one can imagine, if it is true that Western morality started with the generalized feeling of *ressentiment*, and that it is morality that alienates us from nature? Still, if there is something like a natural condition, or rather precondition, of human morality, of the unnatural world of culture and morality, then it is *ressentiment*, according to Nietzsche. It can be remarked that it is the most natural felling, but certainly not a healthy one, which is to say: it is against nature.

It is notoriously evident that *ressentiment* plays a crucial role in each of the three treatises in the *Genealogy of Morals*. But it is not at all clear *how crucial* this concept actually is. My point is that it is far more important to the whole project of genealogy than it has been usually thought in the reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) of the text. Surprisingly, *ressentiment* remains undefined, at least as a term, in Nietzsche's text in spite of its importance. It is surprising that Nietzsche, the philologist, who borrowed this French word to play

a key role in his genealogical vocabulary, did not find it worthwhile to clarify the re-appropriation of the word, the specific capacity of its use and meaning. It is all the more surprising given the fact that genealogical critique of Western culture undertaken here by Nietzsche relies heavily, if not decisively, on linguistic, primarily etymological analyses. These analyses actually provide the basis for genealogical clarifications. A great number of words, considered to be highly relevant in our understanding of morality, were put under the scrutiny of the philologist. Nietzsche demonstrated how important etymological derivations from Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and Old German roots can be in revealing the major stages in the evolution of morality. The etymological account is perhaps more than a principal tool of Nietzschean genealogy: one may wonder if it is this what genealogy is all about! Heidegger, one of the most influential followers of Nietzsche, may be called upon to testify to this.

The question is: why the word *ressentiment*, as it was used in the context of the *Genealogy of Morals*, did not deserve any particular attention of its author-philologist? Let me notice in passing that the French word *ressentiment* is etymologically quite interesting, as its meaning has, over a period of time, gone through a remarkable metamorphosis.¹ How foreign, in Nietzsche's time, was that French word and to whom? Was it so well appropriated, at least to a certain social class, that no clarification was needed? Still, what was so specific to this word that it was not and perhaps could not be exchanged for some synonymous word or words in the German language? However, a clarification of the imported word, as it turned out, was required. The translators and interpreters of the *Genealogy of Morals* have rarely neglected to tackle with the word. Here are two instructive examples:

[...] it is a mistake to think that when Nietzsche originally used *ressentiment* he was using a word insulated from ordinary German conversation. Although German has words of its own roughly equivalent to "resentment," such as *groll* (most literally translated as "rancor") and *ver-*

1 According to the "Robert" dictionary, the development of the term extends from the obsolete meaning *souvenir reconnaissant* dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries to its modern meaning synonymus to *rancœur*, *rancune*, *animosité*.

stimmung, even before Nietzsche's time *ressentiment* was the word most Germans would use when they wanted to express this concept. Borrowed during the Enlightenment vogue for all things French (and, as Walter Kaufmann points out, Nietzsche's reaching for the French word can be seen as an instance of his aspiration to be a "Good European," a deliberate repudiation of Hegel's nationalistic attempt to "Germanize" the philosophical lexicon), the word would not necessarily have been spoken by the man in the street. But it was part of the general diction of the educated, cultured German, who, when they said it, reached for it with no strain, no affect. (Birns 2018, 4–5)

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Although *ressentiment* is a French word (and thus missing from the Grimms' dictionary), the German educated elite had used it since the 17th century. The word was presumably adopted because German lacks a good word for the English "resentment" and the French "*ressentiment*." (There is the word "*Groll*," which, however, does not characterize a frame of mind or an attitude, but tends to arise with regard to a specific event or person.) // De Gruyter's notifies in his *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch* that these words serve reasonably well as translations of each other, except that the French word seems to possess a stronger connotation with memory. Rüdiger Bittner goes even so far as to claim that *ressentiment* in French expresses "a more straightforward annoyance, less of a grudge than *ressentiment* in German does". (Risse 2003, 146 –47, footnote 11)

Another intriguing issue was how to render into English the French word from German, how to make the double transfer. Here are two opposite opinions whether *resentment* is an appropriate English word for *ressentiment*:

Nietzsche uses this French word, which since his writing, and largely because of it, has entered the English language as an important term in psychology: a short definition is as follows: "deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility, accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly" (*Merriam-Webster*). *Ressentiment* is thus significantly different in meaning from *resentment*. (Nietzsche 2009, 25, footnote 1)

Before we get to the history of the concept of *ressentiment*, we should look at the word itself. Why, when we are discussing a German philosopher in English, do we use a French word? All *ressentiment* means in French is *resentment*. If a French person had heard the word used, all they would have understood is the garden-variety connotation of “resentment” in English. It has no original idiomatic meaning in French. (Birns 2018, 4)

When Scheler writes a book in 1912 that is exclusively devoted to *ressentiment*, he refers to the *word* as a technical term in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Thereafter, the meaning of the word has become connoted by the colors Nietzsche brought to it.² Let us listen how Scheler defines its meaning:

We do not use the word “ressentiment” because of a special predilection for the French language, but because we did not succeed in translating it into German. Moreover, Nietzsche has made it a *terminus technicus*. In the natural meaning of the French word I detect two elements. // First of all, *ressentiment* is the repeated experiencing and reliving [*das wiederholte Durch- und Nachleben*] of a particular emotional response reaction against someone else. The continual reliving of the emotion sinks it more deeply into the center of the personality, but concomitantly removes it from the person’s zone of action and expression. It is not a mere intellectual recollection [*bloß intellektualen Erinnerung*] of the emotion and of the events to which it “responded”—it is a re-experiencing of the emotion itself [*Immerwiederdurch-und-Nachleben der Emotion*], a renewal of the original feeling [*Es ist ein Wiedererleben der Emotion selbst – Nachfühlen, Wiederfühlen*]. // Secondly, the word implies that the quality of this emotion is negative, i.e., that it contains a movement of hostility. Perhaps the German word “Groll” (rancor) comes closest to the essential meaning of the term. “Rancor” is just such a suppressed wrath, independent of the ego’s activity, which moves ob-

² “Nietzsche was using *ressentiment* in a particular manner that, once he used it, was bound to become a term of art in later intellectual formulations [...]” (Birns 2018, 4)

scurely through the mind. It finally takes shape through the repeated reliving [*durch wiederholtes Durchleben*] of intentionalities of hatred or other hostile emotions. In itself it does not contain a specific hostile intention, but it nourishes any number of such intentions. (Scheler 1972, 39)³

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Therefore, if the word includes all these layers of meaning, as Scheler claims it does, the word cannot be translated. Scheler tried, but he couldn't do it. So, the word became untranslatable for at least two prominent German philosophers. What one, the philologist, omitted, the other, his successor, has given—a linguistic explanation. The crucial term of *Genealogy* is required to be explained, *not only as a concept, but firstly as a word*, French, foreign, imported, re-appropriated, even re-made word. Scheler meticulously explains what makes this word so special. But someone may still object that this is not a linguistic analysis, but a thick conceptual interpretation. It is hard not to hear typical overtones of phenomenological discourse at work. Scheler can respond to this by saying that his conceptual analysis tries to grasp meanings inherent in the word itself. He says: “In the natural meaning of the French word I detect two elements.” It is this “natural meaning” that holds the analysis by the word. What is its natural meaning? I emphasize the word “natural”. Hence, the word *ressentiment* should be preserved in its natural (French) meaning. It cannot be translated into German, except at the cost of being denaturalized. It is a plant that is not to be transplanted. Is Scheler a philosopher who preserves the plant in its natural condition or shape, and, at the same time, denaturalizes it? Compared to Nietzsche who left it as it is, maybe from the fear not to devitalize it?

Nevertheless, I suspect that the proposed conceptual analysis of the natural meaning of the word would be opposed by Nietzsche. However, I believe that Nietzsche was more interested in preserving the naturalistic semantic charge of the word than Scheler, and not simply because Nietzsche remained silent on the issue. To support this claim, I will attempt to supply two corresponding arguments. First, the way the whole project of genealogy is conceived, suggests

3 Cf. the German original: Scheler 1915, 44–45.

that to preserve the naturalistic semantic charge of the French word is of crucial importance for Nietzsche. Second, there is considerable overlapping between Nietzsche's and Scheler's understanding of the notion of *ressentiment*, of the phenomenon if/when it is related to a personal attitude. This is to say that drawing out of conceptual implications from the natural word, as Scheler did it, will not be considered as a misinterpretation, provided that its supposed "natural content" is not distorted.

I wonder whether the strictly linguistic components in Scheler's clarification of the word, in both of the elements he found there, are helpful in paving the path for a better understanding of Nietzsche's genealogy. Let us take a tour through the already cited passage keeping our eye on certain words and particularly on certain prefixes. The word "*ressentiment*" is a compound word with a nonhyphenated prefix: *re*. Scheler has done a great job to elucidate the importance and function of this tiny morpheme having only two phonemes. It is important to see how he translated the prefix, the stem of the word, and their mutual combination, all that in a variety of forms through repeated attempts. Now I will just underline words in the passage translated in English, matching them with corresponding words in the original German text:

- *ressentiment* is the repeated experiencing and reliving (*das wiederholte Durch- und Nachleben*);
- it is a re-experiencing of the emotion itself (*Immerwiederdurch- und-Nachleben der Emotion*);
- a renewal of the original feeling (*Es ist ein Wiedererleben der Emotion selbst – Nachfühlen, Wiederfühlen*);
- it finally takes shape through the repeated reliving (*durch wiederholtes Durchleben*).

What we have is the following: living, experiencing, emotion, feeling, which should be a package of synonyms, each time being preceded by a staccato of the two phonemes: R and E. In the German it is: *Leben, Emotion, and fühlen*, prefixed by: *wieder, nach, immerwieder, durch*. The interesting thing is that these German prepositions and adverbs are all compressed into a single unit RE, so that English language gives back to the French language its loanword from Latin. Thus, the prefix meaning "again" or "again and again" to indicate repetition was used repeatedly, again and again, in Scheler's definition of the

word. Not less worth noting is the second meaning of the morpheme RE, which is “back” or “backward” to indicate withdrawal or backward motion. So, in *ressentiment* there is this RE, after RE, after RE... As it happens in Freud’s *Wiederholungszwang*.

This repetitive operation at work here appears most condensed in a syntagm from the last quoted line: the *repeated reliving*. The repeated reliving of what? Are negative, hostile emotions, condemned to be repeated, because they must remain suppressed? Is Scheler describing, in his own phenomenological vocabulary, Freud’s mechanism of *Verdrängung*, when writing that: “The continual reliving of the emotion sinks it more deeply into the center of the personality, but concomitantly removes it from the person’s zone of action and expression”? What is actually this “continuous or repeated reliving” of a hostile emotion? It is its deeper and deeper sinking into the zone where no true action or expression is possible. It is not any sort of emotion, but an essentially reactive one. Scheler emphasizes that what is suppressed is “a particular emotional response reaction [*eine bestimmte emotionale Antwoortsreaktion gegen einen Anderen*]” (again we hear: RE, RE). It is actually a reaction that cannot be abreacted. Nor can it disappear. It is constantly *relived*, which is to say *revitalized* and *reanimated*, but never fully brought to life, *revived* (once again: RE, RE).

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Scheler depicts an amazing allegory: cut off from the ego’s activity—which is to say, from activity *tout court*, because for a phenomenologist, there lies the very source of life—the suspended re-action of *ressentiment*, the emotional reaction constantly renewed and postponed, “moves obscurely through the soul [*dunkel durch die Seele wandelndes*]”. For Derrida, who was obsessed with ghosts, this might be a challenge: neither alive nor dead, lifelessly living entity wandering in the soul of Western man.⁴

It is this double RE of LIVING, the *repeated reliving* (*das wiederholte Durch- und Nachleben*), that gives us a clue to the principal objective of Nietzsche’s genealogy. It traces a path to the very origin of human morality.

Let me now turn to the mentioned conceptual overlapping. There is at least a partial agreement between Nietzsche and Scheler concerning the concept of

4 Cf. Derrida 1967b, 108.

ressentiment. In his *Genealogy*, at different points, Nietzsche gives quite precise definitions. This passage is usually quoted:

[...] the man of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naive, nor honest and straight with himself. His soul *squints*; his mind loves dark corners, secret paths and back-doors, everything secretive appeals to him as being *his* world, *his* security, *his* comfort; he knows all about keeping quiet, not forgetting, waiting, temporarily humbling and abasing himself. (Nietzsche 2008, 22)

Is this a relevant definition of *ressentiment*? Relevant for what? What is actually defined here is “the man of *ressentiment*.” How he behaves, what he thinks, feels, and loves, what kind of character he is. This definition obviously belongs to Nietzsche’s psychology of *ressentiment*. But is it the sole and exclusive domain of his dealing with the phenomenon? The majority of interpreters do not go beyond the psychology of *ressentiment*. It is, therefore, not surprising that what follows after the last quoted sentence is usually omitted. It reads: “A race of such men of *ressentiment* will inevitably end up *cleverer* than any noble race [...]”

Nietzsche is also interested in a psychology of races, but the majority of interpreters are not. Many believe that it is not worth mentioning, holding that the author paid tribute to the prejudices of his time. A lot of efforts have been made to exonerate Nietzsche from his *Rassentheorie*. But what if it is a particularly important element of his theory of *ressentiment* and, therefore, fundamental to his *Genealogy*?

The very term of “ressentiment” appears for the first time in the First Essay, Chapter 10, of *The Genealogy of Morals*. There we find the following lines:

The beginning of the slaves’ revolt in morality occurs when *ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of

a triumphant saying “yes” to itself, slave morality says “no” on principle to everything that is “outside,” “other,” “non-self”: and *this* “no” is its creative deed. This reversal of the evaluating glance—this *essential* orientation to the outside instead of back onto itself—is a feature of *ressentiment*: in order to come about, slave morality first has to have an opposing, external world, it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all, —its action is basically a reaction. The opposite is the case with the noble method of valuation: this acts and grows spontaneously, seeking out its opposite only so that it can say “yes” to itself even more thankfully and exultantly [...] (Nietzsche 2008, 20)

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Here, the concept of *ressentiment* is illuminated from the perspective of the slave morality and of the noble or master morality. These are considered to be two symmetrically-opposed classes or rather castes, as being hereditary, attitudes. Now we have the picture of the two mutually antagonistic groups whose morality has been defined in the terms of a specific *personal attitude* typical for each group. This class morality differentiation is thus achieved through a *psychological analysis*. However, its scope is not individualistic. It aims at reaching far beyond this scope, and that is the basic structure of *collective selves*. As it is implied that there are only two types of collective selves in general, the slave and the master, the psychology of *ressentiment* is not a psychology in the usual sense of the term, as it should capture basic traits of the human mind, the very ontology of mankind. This reflects Nietzsche’s use of broad metaphysical categories, actually the most basic conceptual oppositions, like *outside/inside*, *Self/Other*, *genuine reality/imaginary reality*, *action/reaction*, and the like.

It is not wrong to say that in order to give a comparative account of the two types of moral evaluation, Nietzsche draws on the psychology of *ressentiment*. But it is certainly not enough. The monumental task of metaphysics is at stake here. As the question of Being is posed in evolutionary terms—Nietzsche’s

genealogy is inspired by Darwin and evolutionists—,⁵ what has to be solved, is the enigma of the birth of human mind, culture, and moral values. Mathias Risse has rightly noted: “Nietzsche’s account constitutes the same sort of speculation about socialization and its impact on individuals that Rousseau develops in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Kant in his *Conjectures on the Beginnings of Human History*, and Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, despite all the differences.” (Risse 2003, 144, footnote 5) Of course, Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* should be on the list as well.

What we see from the first, introductory definition of *ressentiment* is a concern with *psychology*. It deals with: “beings who are prevented from a genuine reaction, that is, something active, and who compensate for that with a merely imaginary vengeance.” And then a huge machinery of metaphysics is put in operation! Already there, in the first account! It turns out that the personal attitude (towards the inner or outer world) has broad ontological implications. In order to understand the very sense of the genealogical project, the question of personal attitude should be in our focus. We need to ask: how personal is this attitude that explains *ressentiment*? Indeed, Nietzsche and Scheler agree in characterizing the general attitude of the person of *ressentiment*. Scheler has devoted a whole book to that topic. Indeed, who can better do the job of describing all sorts of personal attitudes (recall Husserl’s famous term *Einstellung*) than a phenomenologist? In Scheler, the morally harmful behavior of a person of *ressentiment* fully belongs to the horizon of morality. For Nietzsche, *ressentiment* is *neither fully personal nor exclusively belonging to the horizon of human morality*. It is *neither fully included nor excluded* from morality. It is *neither quite inside nor* is it quite outside. It is swinging back and forth. It seems to belong to what Derrida labeled “the undecidable”. Which makes it a useful tool for deconstructive strategies.

Ressentiment has no proper place under the arches of metaphysics. However, it can be rightly reduced to a moral attitude when our ambition is to study

5 Concerning this well-explored topic, cf., for instance, Richardson 2004, 4: “Nietzsche appropriates the central idea of Darwinism, and his attacks on Darwinists really express the ways he tries to extend or build beyond it.” What can be labeled “Nietzsche’s anti-Darwinist stance” cannot undermine the circumstance that we can “see Nietzsche operating in the shadow of Darwin, not as his spiritual antagonist” (Johnson 2010, 214).

moral phenomena (not from the radical genealogical perspective, of course).

What appears here as a crucial distinction is that between Scheler's immanent moralism and Nietzsche's transcendental immoralism. The point of difference is Nietzsche's *transgression of the perspective of a personal attitude*. To see where their paths diverge, given their common concern with *ressentiment*, it is highly instructive, I believe, to read in Scheler's *Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, published in 1915, the last essay entitled "Zur Idee des Menschen," especially Chapter Two on *Homo naturalis*. There, Scheler explains why he is not at all interested in evolutionary arguments concerning the descent of man, while at the same time apparently accepting the animal nature of human beings. His central argument is that our human personhood is not a product of evolution but a God's creation. Man is "a new type of beings and things, a realm of persons, who have not 'originated' at all, very much like colors, numbers, space, time, and other true essences, they have not 'originated,' either." However, God's creation, whom Scheler calls "*Gottsucher*," is also an animal belonging to the natural world. Like the essence of personhood, it is not a product of the evolution: "Similarly, *homo naturalis* is not something developed from the animal world, as he simply was, is, and will remain an animal [*Tier*]." (Scheler 1915, 356–357)

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On the other side, Nietzsche is highly interested in the being of *homo naturalis* as well as in the origins of Man's personality. Similar to Scheler, he thinks that Man's personality is of a moral nature in the first place. However, the supposed origins are in the nature, where there are beasts, "wild beasts of prey." So if we start our interpretation of *ressentiment* from the class antagonism between masters and slaves, provided that the genealogical explanation is still our aim, we are already many millennia too late. What has been considered, in the history of reception, as pretty unimportant additions, derived from Nietzsche's *metaphysical naturalism* that used to be ignored, deserves to be taken seriously. One has to take a look behind the historical scene, towards "the other scene" hidden in the abyss of time, there where Nietzsche discerned the cruel world of "human animals." Then, prehistoric supplements of each and every major historical actor or category, supplied by Nietzsche in the *Genealogy of Morals*, gain importance. Behind the nobles and the common people there are "joyful monsters" and "sick, powerless human-animals,"

behind the two classes of masters and slaves, one finds two races: “the blond beasts—Aryans” and “the dusky, dark-haired non-Aryans,” etc. The so-called “logic of supplement” (Derrida 1967a) is probably required to compensate for the repression (*Verdrängung*), for the *repeated reliving*, of the protohistoric life-world.

To think the animality of human-animal is the task of genealogical thinking. If it turns out to be a business of metaphysics, it is because the difference between *healthy* and *sick beasts*⁶ is the most fundamental difference that opens up the genealogical interrogation. This animal difference, the difference in life-power (for Nietzsche life is power, and power is life) underpins all basic metaphysical differences. It is precisely there that *ressentiment* should be thought of. Psychology, or even the speculative anthropology ascribed to Nietzsche, is not enough. The guiding thread might be his “animal psychology”⁷ if we take it not to be a mere psychology.

In the *Genealogy of Morals* it is *ressentiment* that illuminates the path towards the origin of Manhood, Personhood of persons. Man was born from the spirit of *ressentiment*. The nature does not know inner worlds, minds, thoughts... But there are instincts and feelings: *les sentiments*. It is there that genealogy should start from: from frustrated *sentiments* of the human animal, the beast of prey. The psychology comes too late as it discusses *the subject* of

6 One is a beast, the other a detour from it, a denaturalized being, tamed and sick animal. What is for our (Christian or today's post-Christian) morality “good” and “evil,” for Nietzsche, the supposed naturalist and immoralist, is “healthy” and “unhealthy.” Nature or rather natural life is the last instance of his value judgment. Can one say, therefore, that *ressentiment* is the most natural feeling which is nevertheless a counter-natural feeling, one that has the potential to go against the order of nature? It is “bad for health,” and far more than that! The health of mankind or the good natural condition of humanity is here at stake! That is what the good is all about! As Jacques Derrida put it: “The good can be eatable.” Cf. Derrida 1995, 255–287.

7 “For one significant goal of the *Genealogy* is to develop the kind of ‘animal psychology’ (GM III, 20) that explains why our emotions are what they are. Explanations must end somewhere, but Nietzsche's cease too early if he cannot ground *ressentiment* within his anthropology. The secondary literature has not yet offered an account tracing the origins of *ressentiment* within Nietzsche's anthropology and thus fails to investigate whether he is entitled to his claims about *ressentiment* and its importance for morality. This study attempts to close the gap.” (Risse 2003, 143) See also Risse 2007, 57–82.

ressentiment, the subject which is in itself a product of *ressentiment*.⁸ Hence, the privilege given, by Nietzsche, to the physiology of *ressentiment*. Once we see in *ressentiment* the *Ur*-phenomenon of the genealogy of morality, we shall see that this genealogy also covers the emergence of human mind, subjectivity, and personality. *Ressentiment* marks that crucial point in the evolution of species when instincts and feelings enter into a *twisting course*, trace a *bending curve* that we recognize in the RE of *ressentiment*.

In the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche gives the following account:

All instincts which are not discharged outwardly turn inwards—this is what I call the internalization of man: with it there now evolves in man what will later be called his “soul”. The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man’s instincts was obstructed. (Nietzsche 2008, 57)

The *internalization* of man (*die Verinnerlichung des Menschen*)⁹ is an effect of the curve vector: what was supposed to be discharged to the outside is turned back inside. The human “soul” evolves from the arch of

8 To consider the phenomenon of *ressentiment*, implying already the genealogically accomplished “subject of *ressentiment*,” seems to be a common fallacy in reading Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*. For an illustrative example in this regard cf. Poellner 2011, 136. There one can read: “I conclude then, that Nietzsche’s account of *ressentiment* as intentional self-deception is coherent and does not require a reconstruction in terms of non-intentional or subpersonal processes. The theory is arguably a powerful tool for explaining various phenomena of individual and social psychology, including many manifestations of nationalism, chauvinism, and indeed some religious psychologies.”
9 Cf. the original German text: Nietzsche 1999, 322.

ressentiment.¹⁰

It is a process occurring in the streams of LIFE. It is that same process Derrida found in the genealogical explanation of arts in Kant. In his essay on “Economimesis,” Derrida describes it as “a flexion of *physis*, relation to itself of the Nature.”¹¹

The *flexion* of Nature or Life. The *flexion* of Natural Life. Already “the animal is capable of auto-affection.” (Derrida 1995, 268) Is this *detour* from animal, animal *detour* from animal, still a challenge for contemporary thought, particularly after the racism of the 20th century? *If Life itself, the Nature of Life, is a crucial metaphysical question, can it be received, tackled, and examined without its “flexions” and “detours” which immediately make this question highly political and ethical?*

The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has recently asserted that philosophy, throughout its long history, has never managed to define what

10 This is in line with what was stated in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 229: “Almost everything we call ‘higher culture’ is founded on the spiritualization and internalization of cruelty—that is my proposition; that ‘wild animal’ has not been killed off at all, it lives, it thrives, it has simply—made itself divine.” Included as “Supplementary material” in Nietzsche 2008, 164. Here, we can again see the “logic of supplement” at work. What was said in the earlier book is supplemented by the later. Nietzsche himself presented his *Genealogy* as “appended to the recently published *Beyond Good and Evil* as a supplement and clarification.” And even the earlier work is itself a supplement. Keith Ansell-Pearson writes in his “Introduction” to Carole Diethe’s translation of *On the Genealogy of Morality*: “*On the Genealogy of Morality* belongs to the late period of Nietzsche’s writings (1886-88). It was composed in July and August of 1887 and published in November of that year. Nietzsche intended it as a ‘supplement’ to and ‘clarification’ of *Beyond Good and Evil*, said by him to be ‘in all essentials’ a critique of modernity that includes within its range an attack on modern science, modern art and modern politics. In a letter to his former Basel colleague Jacob Burckhardt dated 22 September 1886, Nietzsche stresses that *Beyond Good and Evil* says the same thing as *Zarathustra* ‘only in a way that is different – very different.’” (Nietzsche 2008, xiii and xiv)

11 “[...] une flexion de la *physis*, le rapport à soi de la nature.” Cf. Derrida 1975, 59.

life as such is.¹² There always emerged some “detours” and “flexions” so that the major questions remained postponed and neglected. Agamben himself engaged in framing a genealogy of the present mis/understanding of the concept of life, starting with Aristotle and ending with Heidegger. It has been revealed that the question about the essence of life, the natural essence *par excellence*, has often invoked the idea of an animal-man and that of a human animal.

Once the perspective of life has been taken, whereby life as such is conceived as the greatest value, Nietzschean examination of morality becomes possible, the one in which the major figure of the story is a beast-man. The century of Darwinism has brought about an obstinate endeavor to finally separate and reconnect the human and the animal or the inhuman. The century of Holocaust has shown that racism is one of the most important philosophical and political-practical responses to the unprecedented experience of the proximity of man and animal-man. Nietzsche’s understanding of *ressentiment* remains today highly relevant as it masterfully describes what is at stake in the most puzzling contemporary issues, like “the unity of the human race”¹³ under the challenge of human bestiality. Agamben even goes to say that “the ethics of the twentieth century opens with Nietzsche’s overcoming of resentment.” (Agamben 1999, 99)

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12 “For anyone undertaking a genealogical study of the concept of ‘life’ in our culture, one of the first and most instructive observations to be made is that the concept never gets defined as such. And yet, this thing that remains indeterminate gets articulated and divided time and again through a series of caesurae and oppositions that invest it with a decisive strategic function in domains as apparently distant as philosophy, theology, politics, and—only later—medicine and biology. That is to say, everything happens as if, in our culture, life were *what cannot be defined, yet, precisely for this reason, must be ceaselessly articulated and divided.*” (Agamben 2004, § 4, 13)

13 Cf. Antelme 1957, 228–30.

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MAX SCHELER'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF SOLIDARISM

“THE THIRD PATH” OF NORMATIVE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

On the level of normative political philosophy, Scheler not only criticizes “individualism” in a familiar sense, but also rejects “universalism”. But then he develops the “third way” of “solidarism” as different from both individualism and universalism. Solidarism is fundamentally a kind of value-personalism in its phenomenological essence. It is to be founded both upon Scheler’s distinction between the individual person (*Einzelperson*) and the collective person (*Gesamtperson*), and upon “a theory of all possible essential social units”. Fundamentally, the so-called “third way” is first of all the “principle” of a phenomenological “meta-sociology” and of a “meta-ethical-politics”, but not a concrete project for the development of social history.

Keywords: Scheler, individualism, universalism, solidarism, personalism

Fenomenologija solidarizma pri Maxu Schelerju. »Tretja pot« normativne politične filozofije

Povzetek

Na ravni normativne politične filozofije Scheler ne kritizira samo »individualizma« v običajnem smislu, temveč zavrača tudi »univerzalizem«. Nato razvije »tretjo pot« »solidarizma«, ki se razlikuje tako od individualizma kot od univerzalizma. Solidarizem je po svojem fenomenološkem bistvu v osnovi vrednostni personalizem. Utemeljiti ga je potrebno na podlagi Schelerjeve razločitve med individualno osebo (*Einzelperson*) in kolektivno osebo (*Gesamtperson*) ter na podlagi »teorije vsakovrstnih možnih bistvenih družbenih enot«. Tako imenovana »tretja pot« je v svojem temelju »načelo« fenomenološke »meta-sociologije« in »meta-etične politike«, ne konkretni projekt za razvoj družbene zgodovine.

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Ključne besede: Scheler, individualizem, univerzalizem, solidarizem, personalizem.

Up to the end of the first century of phenomenology, there were still some people complaining, “One of the great regrets in phenomenological movement is the lack of political philosophy.” (Sokolowski 2000, 226)¹ As a matter of fact, early in 1927, Scheler discussed the theme of “Politics and Morals”, under which title he presented a social-political conception, “solidarism [Solidarismus]”, which is different from both “individualism” and “universalism” in their usual senses. Such a “third path” was also called by Scheler “value personalism” which includes not only the fundamental issues dealt with by positive socio-political philosophy, but a series of phenomenological reflections intended to found “socio-political philosophy” itself. In what follows, I will probe into and reveal the most fundamental principles of solidarism or value personalism as such.

I. Individualism and universalism

Scheler once analyzed the problem of “self-deception [Selbsttäuschung]” and made criticisms of leading modern theories of it, contending that at the level of social problems, one of the most fundamental manifestations of “self-deception” as such is “the immersion [Eingeschmolzenheit] in the spirit of the community” (Scheler 1973c, 242; English translation [E. t.]: Scheler 1954, 248). It is of two types: we encounter the experiences of other people as if they were our own, or take those of others for one’s own (Scheler 1973c, 241; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 246 ff.);² we also transfer to the psychic world facts, relations, and forms which belong to material existence (*Dasein*).³ The two types have one point in common: one’s own experiences are entangled with one’s surroundings or, in other words, one’s own experiences are in essence immersed in the minds of others or in the community.⁴ According to Scheler, this “immersion in the spirit

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2 Cf. also: Scheler 1972, 265; E. t.: Scheler 1973b, 65.

3 Cf. Scheler 1972, 257; E. t.: Scheler 1973b, 54.

4 Cf. Scheler 1993, 382.

of the community” failed to be noticed by people notwithstanding, it in effect is the dominant “self-deception” in natural world view and, as a rule, the damage it brings about is all the more severe. This is because it essentially immerses each unique and unrepresentable individual into the so-called “social self” and hence obliterates in essence a person’s own individuality before resulting in a sort of “depersonalization [Entpersonalisierung]”.

What is yielded by this “self-deception” in the sphere of philosophical sociology or socio-political ethics is the so-called theory of “*universalism* [Universalismus]” into which various forms of socialism, collectivism, etc., are distinguished.⁵ These theories share one property: the self-value of the being of the person is no longer regarded as the end of all community and historical process, though things should be so. Contrary to Scheler, in this doctrine, the being of the person is considered valuable only to the degree that he effects something particular of value for the community and the progress of history (e.g., to the degree that he furthers cultural development).⁶ According to these doctrines, the individual is nothing but a member of the collective whole, and the individual person’s idiosyncratic particularity no longer has value; all individual human beings exist merely “for the sake of” the unity of the community and, in addition, the individual person no longer owns a “private sphere”, nor any self-value, but can only “be devoted to the public life” (Scheler 1993, 379). This reduction of the value of the person to his contribution to the community can be seen rather clearly in the so-called the “great man” theory, which, albeit different from socialistic doctrines in many ways, is most essentially coincident with them in this: “The value of the person is derived from and dependent on what he achieves in an impersonal community or an impersonal historical process.” (Scheler 1980a 494; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 503) A “great man” is great exactly due to the fact that he exercises great influence on the course of history. The “great man” does not set store on the value of a “man’s” “personhood”, but on his (even if as an impersonal X) “great” achievements in society and history. Therefore, his value is ultimately the one necessarily founded in the “group” and deduced in a causal fashion from his achievements,

5 Cf. Scheler 1993, 378 ff.

6 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 493; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 501.

and hence the “great man” theory” ultimately reduces to “a causal personalism” and “a value collectivism” (Scheler 1980a, 495; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 504).

According to Scheler, different from the various universalism theories, value-personalism possesses a requirement that any philosophical sociology or socio-political ethics must meet. Specifically, the individuality of the person must be maintained, for “all history has its goal in the being and activity of person” (Scheler 1980a, 496; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 505). The value of the being of person must be maintained, and the value of the person must be founded in his individuality itself, rather than relying upon the sum of the achievements yielded by his activity in some community or historical epoch.

Nonetheless, while maintaining the value of the person’s own individuality, as we must, we must also be alert to sliding wrongly into another direction, i.e., into “*individualism* [Individualismus]”. Although this term has various expressions, they all share some fundamental points: on the one hand, they fail to deal correctly with the relation between the “single [Einzel]” and the “individual [Individuum]” person and hence in effect stress “single” when intending to stress “individual” and, as a result, they completely deny the “collective person [Gesamtperson]”. As a matter of fact, the “collective person” is merely the opposite of the “single person [Einzelperson]” and there is one individual “collective person” just as there are individual “single persons”. On the other hand, individualism as such confuses all the merely individually valid things with merely “subjective” things. To Scheler, the a priori or eidetic is irrelevant to the universal or individual and there are exactly a priori or eidetic, viz., objectively valid things to an individual, so being individually valid is by no means identified with being purely subjective.⁷

In the eyes of Scheler, no matter how many differences there are between Kant’s and Nietzsche’s concepts of the person, there is one most fundamental common point between them: they both stand opposite universalism, namely, they do not assess the value of person according to its role or efficacy in community or history, but just the opposite, that is, they assess the value of community and history according to “which these are able to provide *the being of the person* with the most appropriate foundation for his existence

7 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 501; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 510.

and action (for Nietzsche, the being of the most valuable persons, i.e., ‘the great personalities’; for Kant, the being of the rational person *in every man*).” (Scheler 1980a, 494; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 503) In this sense, they both represent a sort of individualism and in them, “all the collective unities are ‘for the sake of’ the individuals” (Scheler 1993, 374).

Nevertheless, since Kant denies the merely individually valid things and treats them as mere subjects, he finally “*identifies* the rational person *with* the spiritual individual person” (Scheler 1980a, 502; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 512) and, in point of fact, regards the rational person itself as “trans-individual” and “universally valid”. In this, he essentially follows Averroism, viz., he presupposes a so-called “trans-individual and transcendental reason”. The theoretical consequence of this theory may be found in the modern realistic view of life as “drive-individualism”. “Drive-individualism” means that only the lived body individualizes the person. These philosophers completely ignore spiritual individualism. The target that this view of life ultimately directs us towards is in fact quite opposite to what it first claimed to uphold. The concept of a “subjective consciousness” of such “individualists” maintains that I am a special individual. Nonetheless, in their conception of individuals, these philosophers posit a large-scale objective uniformity. For although they disregard a spiritual element in individuals, they believe that only the lived body and its drives can individualize the person. Thus, one can almost predict the nature and actions of others from a single example of their behavior. Plainly, rather than what they subjectively expect—that they themselves are special individuals—the foundation of any genuine “objective individuality” is in effect completely absent from them.⁸

In this matter, Nietzsche runs exactly counter to Kant and his followers. In Nietzsche, it is not in every individual that a homogeneous rational person and its act-relations display a partitioning of ethic-moral value; rather, each person is itself originally different in essence from others. The identity of persons as they stand before universally valid ethical laws is merely an assumption and it is only because, in order to seek for the so-called universally valid good, that humans tend to ignore the original differences between values. Nietzsche’s

8 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 504; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 514.

stress on a person's individuality and essential difference from others can also be seen from his criticisms and analyses as regards to "the morphology of self-feeling [Selbstgefühl]". In his view, collective self-feeling is at the level of "a school cultivating individual self-feeling." In collective self-feeling, say, the pride that a member has compared to that of the members of another group may force the individuals to embody it. Therefore, to embody the community in a person, the individual must speak and behave with a sort of extreme reverence for himself. The process of this "cultivation" as such, nevertheless, is in effect a sort of "de-selfness [Entselbstung]" (Nietzsche 1999, 111 ff.). Differently put, in the self-cultivation of a school, individual self-feeling or personality is essentially destroyed and replaced by the "self-cultivation" of the members of some group or community. We may notice the similarity of Nietzsche's "de-selfness" to Scheler's "de-personalization [Entpersonalisierung]" in word formation. In fact, on this point, Scheler surely agrees with Nietzsche *in toto*, but draws a sharp line between Kant and him.⁹

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In Scheler's view, nevertheless, Nietzsche's problem is that he has essentially gotten enmeshed in the "pragmatistic prejudice" according to which "it is exactly the realization of the highest ethical value that necessarily may and must be a task of our *desires* and *acts*." (Scheler 1980a, 508; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 518) That is to say, Nietzsche correctly regards a (great) person's being itself as the highest value of social or historical progress, but he also takes it, with the "pragmatistic prejudice", as the immediately intended goal of our acts. To Scheler, contrariwise, the realization and enhancement of the person's value is that "this experience is the timeless *consequence* of his activity, a consequence that is *not* immediately directed toward him and thus it is not an intended content." (Scheler 1980a, 498; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 507)

Nay, Scheler further points out the common fallacy in Kant and Nietzsche's forms of "individualism". On the one hand, it is manifested in the fact that they reasonably treat persons as the bearers of ethical values, but they also wrongly contend that the person is the "positor" of values, namely, that the person posits values as what they are. Thus, their individualisms became entangled with "value-nominalism" and "subjectivism" with the only

9 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 505 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 514 ff.

difference being transcendental subjectivism in Kant instead of empirical subjectivism in Nietzsche. On the other hand, although they point out, not without reason, that every person is “self-responsible”, they ignore the fact that every person is simultaneously and with equal *originality* “co-responsible” for the comportment, willing, and actions of any other person. In this connection, both of them are essentially trapped into “singularism [Singularismus]”, where the only difference is that Kant’s personalism is rational singularism, and Nietzsche’s empirical singularism.¹⁰

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What is clear for Scheler is that the common fallacies of Kant and Nietzsche are fundamentally coincident with his revealing of the two wrong origins of “individualism” mentioned before. In the final analysis, Scheler’s difference from all the theories of “individualism” is situated at the following two fundamental points. 1) “Individual” is completely different from “single”. The emphasis on a person’s individuality by no means implies a rejection of a “collective person” which is the contrary of the “individual person”. There is, also primarily, an individual “collective person” or the individuality of the “collective person”. In this case, each person is both self-responsible and co-responsible and, hence, it is not a form of “singularism” (be it rational or empirical) but the “principle of solidarity [Solidaritätsprinzip]” that is the essential principle of value personalism. 2) That it is valid of individuals cannot also lead us to confuse solidarism with mere “subjectivity”. In this connection, value is a priori, which is irrelevant to whether it is individually or universally valid. The a priori value is itself “objective” rather than merely subjective, even if it is simply individually valid. Furthermore, an a priori objective value is itself an ideal being, so it is not “posited” by a subject or a person (be it transcendental or empirical). A person is in essence merely a “bearer” of values instead of a positor. Thus, another essential principle of value personalism is value apriorism or value objectivism.

So long as the target that they are aiming at is slightly modified, these two fundamental points may well be employed to refute “universalism” of any form whatsoever. 1) Person-being is its own value, the highest value, which is determined by value apriorism or value objectivism. According to the a

10 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 506; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 515 ff.

priori order of ranks of values (namely, merely considered from the aspect of the bearer of values), any value of things must be superior to the value of the state, whereas the value of a person is, *ipso facto*, all the more superior to the value of things.¹¹ In this line, the values of a community of persons or of social or historical progress are in essence all values of things and hence they are undoubtedly inferior to the value of the person. For value-personalism, the meaning or value of community and history lies precisely in “their providing conditions within which the most valuable persons can come to the fore and freely bring about their effects” (Scheler 1980a, 496; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 505). For short, “a person value is higher than all values of things, organizations and community”, which is the “most essential and important proposition” that *Formalism* strives to demonstrate and propagate.¹² 2) It is just because a person’s value is *ipso facto* the superior value that the individuality of its being needs to be highlighted, be it the individuality of the collective person or the individual person. So, different from the case of “universalism”, that which is essentially maintained or embodied by value-personalism is “solidarism”.

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Scheler’s essential endeavor is aimed at finding a “third path” between “individualism” and “universalism”, viz., “solidarism” or value personalism. That which needs to be particularly explained is, the “solidarism” as such is no nearer to “universalism” than to “individualism” in the general sense. Although Scheler once called his stance “individualism” in quotation marks, as is stressed by us once and again, that which Scheler intends to highlight is nothing but person’s individuality, which is by no means the person’s individuality in general sense. In Scheler, a person’s individuality is that of both the individual person and the collective person, and value personalism is both value “individual”-personalism and value “collective”-personalism. Similar to other places, Scheler’s mode of thinking is all the time one and the same. Specifically, he always denies the opposite pair, for his ultimate aim is to question the premise of “duality” (on which this pair depends) itself, and his phenomenological path ultimately appears as an “in-between [Zwischen]”. Undoubtedly, such an “in-between” never means “mediation”.

11 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 117; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 100.

12 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 15; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, xxiv.

As a matter of fact, the disputes around truth in philosophy are far beyond mediation.

What on earth, then, does such a path of “in-between” “solidarism” mean?

II. Individual person and collective person

Scheler’s third path is called “solidarism” which is in essence a sort of value personalism or one essentially founded upon Scheler’s phenomenology of value and of the person, particularly, in the latter case, upon his differentiation between the individual person and the collective person. How, then, are we to understand the notion of a “collective person”?

I will take as my point of departure Scheler’s renowned example of “a Robinson Crusoe endowed with cognitive-theoretical faculties”, but who has never in his life encountered, in any way, creatures of the same species as him or their marks or traces, and who has never had the existential experiences pertinent to this species of creatures. Is it possible that such a man would know of the existence of communities of spiritual-psychical beings like himself, and is it possible that he would also know that he essentially “belongs to” such a community? Scheler offers a rather positive answer to this thought-experiment. Such a “Robinson” would by no means hold that there is no community and he alone exists in the world, nay, he also would not be lacking in the eidetic intuition and the idea of community; on the contrary, he may think, “I know that there is a community, and that I belong to one (or several such); but I am unacquainted with the individuals comprising them, and with the empirical groups of such individuals which constitute the community as it actually exists.” (Scheler 1973c, 228 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 234)¹³ Scheler stresses that we should clearly distinguish the general *eidetic* cognition of community and “Thou-existence [Du-Existenz]” on the one hand, and the cognition of the factual existence of some specific community or a member of a certain historical community on the other. “An imaginary Robinson Crusoe endowed with cognitive-theoretical faculties would also co-experience his *being a member of a social unit* in his experiencing the *lack* of fulfillment of acts of

13 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 511; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 521.

act-types constituting a person in general.” (Scheler 1973a, 511; E. t.: Scheler 1973a , 521)

In his *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (*The Nature of Sympathy*), Scheler marks the theoretical fruit of this experiment of thought as “evidence of your existence proper”, or the existent evidence of “the sphere of the Thou” and “the world of the Thou”. Here the “Thou” is certainly a rather wide concept, referring either to “you” or to “he/she/it” or “they” as the result of which the evidence of the existence of others is more suitable. The a priori evidence of the existence of others as such and of one’s belonging to some community has its phenomenological foundation in intuition which, as with Robinson here, is manifested in, for example, a sort of “consciousness of emptiness [*Leerbewusstsein*]” and “not-being-here consciousness [*Nichtdaseinsbewusstsein*]” of the emotional act of “the love of others”. Specifically, one would sense oneself as being capable of loving others and of knowing some other person, so the “love of others” is “not here”. Differently put, insofar as an act of pursuit is concerned, this intuition is manifested in a sort of “consciousness of ‘something lacking’ [*Mangelsbewusstsein*]” or “consciousness of ‘non-fulfillment’ [*Nichterfüllungsbewusstsein*]”, which appears when Robinson is engaged in some mental acts that can constitute a unity of sense only when there is also a possible “social response [*Gegenakt*]” (Scheler 1973c, 229 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 235). In a word, the existences of “the sphere of the Thou” or the sphere of the other and the community are phenomenologically evident, and these a priori intuitions of essence will not be changed whether or not people are capable of finding real people in community with one another .

In Scheler’s phenomenology of person, person is in essence the executor of acts, the “act-substance” or “the inner being within acts”, as he is essentially the “concrete subject” of acts. Since there are different act-essences or types of essences, there may also be different essences in type of “concrete subject”. Differently put, by virtue of the differentiation of type of essences as to different acts, people may distinguish different types of essences under the rubric of “person”. In the context of the person, Scheler has distinguished, as it were, “individualized acts of a person ” from “essential social acts” or “socially responsive acts”, the former involving, among others, consciousness of self, self-esteem, self-love, the scrutinizing of one’s conscience, the acts of commanding,

obeying, ordering, promising, vowing, etc.¹⁴ Be they the acts of an individual or essentially social acts, they are *ipso facto* consistent act-performances and are merely differentiated phenomenologically. Compared with a person proper, these two kinds of act are merely a sort of “abstract essentia”; compared with each act-performance, yet, on the other hand, they are all of “concrete essentia” so long as people regard them as penetrating act-performances rather than objectifying them.¹⁵ Thus, each “individual person [Einzelperson]” is the concrete subject of the individualized personal act which, exactly, “constitutes within a person and a world in general in the special essential class of singularizing acts” (Scheler 1980a, 511; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 521); the collective person, in contrast, is the concrete subject of essentially social acts. It constitutes itself as a specific essence in executing its social acts. More importantly, the differentiation between the individual person and the collective person is an “abstract” essential one and hence it is not that some person is individual whereas another is collective. Rather, “an individual person *and* a collective person ‘belong’ to every *finite* person. Both factors are essentially necessary sides of a concrete whole person and world.” (Scheler 1980a, 511; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 521 ff.)

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In this connection, the individual and the collective person are always essentially distinguished “in abstract fashion” from each other in the person itself. They belong in essence to the same person and may be mutually connected within this concrete person. They are equally original without one being founded upon the other. In the light of this, we see that the collective person undoubtedly does not refer to the sum or the group of individual persons; rather, it is in essence an experienced real being, but by no means a constructed component. Like the individual person, the collective person is a spiritual act-center, but, more exactly, it is the center of the essential social acts of spirit, while the individual is the center of its own individualized acts of spirit, and they both belong to a person in general which is the concrete spiritual act-center.¹⁶

On account of this, it is not supposed that we merely understand the

14 Cf. Scheler 1973c, 225; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 229 ff. Cf. also Scheler 1980a, 511; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 521.

15 As to the difference between “abstract essence” and “concrete essence”, cf. my article: Zhang forthcoming.

16 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 531; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 543.

collective person as a social organization or a unit composed of single individuals or individual persons. The difference between the individual person and the collective person has nothing to do with the difference between the individual and the universal. Just as there is a single individual person, there is also a single collective person, such as state (nation),¹⁷ church, etc., for instance, the former Prussian state is itself both a collective person and a spiritual individual.¹⁸ Therefore, the stress upon a person's individuality is by no means that upon some individual person. Not all kinds of social units are unities that may be called collective persons. What, then, is the relation between collective person and social unit? And, to which kind of social unit is the collective person intrinsically related?

III. The theory of the essential unity of all possible societies

To answer the questions above, Scheler developed "a theory of all possible essential social units". I would like to offer the following table, according to his discussions, so as to explicate the most fundamental principles of this theory in a clearer fashion:¹⁹

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17 Scheler distinguished "folk [Volk]", "Nation" and "State [Staat]". The folk is essentially a life-community, while the state is a spiritual total subject. It is not a perfectly or purely spiritual collective person, but rather a concept of politics or sociology, and only the nation is a cultural collective person (cf. Scheler 1980a, 533 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 545 ff.). For instance, we may say the "Bavarian people" (the people) or the Federal Republic of Germany (state), but we can also discuss a nation such as "Germany".

18 Cf. Scheler, 1980a, 514; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 525.

19 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 515–548; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 525–561.

Social unit	Act of understanding	Fundamental principle	Responsibility	Member
the mass	without self-understanding	imitate others unconsciously	without individual responsibility	lack of self-consciousness
life-community	quasi-understanding	representable [vertretbar] principle of solidarity	co-responsibility	includes minors
society	mediate understanding	principle of contract	self-responsibility	adult single person with self-consciousness
person-community	genuine understanding	irrepresentable [unvertretbar] principle of solidarity	equally original self-responsibility and co-responsibility	person proper embracing single person and total person

What must be stressed in advance, is that some scholars relate these four sorts of social unities to Scheler's four modes of values, that is, from the low to the higher, the mass to sensible values, life community to the vital values, the society to spiritual values, and person-community to absolute values.²⁰ In my view, this is rather reluctant, even misleading. We may take the person-community as an example. According to Scheler, the person-community is one made up by persons proper, embracing both the individual person and the collective person, whereas the two pure forms of the collective person are the cultural and religious collective persons respectively, the former corresponding to spiritual value, the latter to absolute value which, as a result, makes it hard to say that a person community purely corresponds to absolute value. Various problems exist in other layers as well. In this vein, we can hardly consider that Scheler's eidetic analyses pertinent to these four social units correspond to his

²⁰ Cf. Keller 2002, 126–157.

analyses of the scale of values. Of course, among these social units, there are the distinctions among elements of higher and lower value, which originate from *forms* rather than the *materials* of the a priori order of values, namely, from the distinctions among a social unit's bearers of value. Whereas the mass and life-community possess thing-values [Sachwerte], the society possesses the values of both matter and person, and the person-community possesses pure personal values, and the low-and-high relations of values between them are manifested in such a formal order.

Let us come back to this table. The first one can be explicated briefly; it is the social unit of "the mass [Masse]", which is on the lowest layer. It resembles a herd of animals, for it is founded in such experience as mere mutual infection *without understanding*, and its members are "assembled" by means of an unconscious imitation of others. As people act in a mass, they are essentially unconscious of themselves.

In contrast to "the mass", among the members of "life-community [Lebensgemeinschaft]" there is a sort of "understanding" upon which its modes of common living [Mitleben] and reliving [Nachleben] are founded. The "understanding" here is not yet on the level of Scheler's "inner perception of others", for in the life-community there is no definite distinction between "my experiences" and "your experiences" among the members; rather, they are a unity of a mutual "co-experiencing" (Scheler 1980a, 515 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 526). In this connection, the "understanding" here is merely presented as corresponding to the "lack of understanding" among the members of "the mass" and, to differentiate it from the true "understanding" founded in the person-community, which will be discussed later, we may call it "quasi-understanding". In the life-community, people share common experiences via the "quasi-understanding" in the "mutual experiencing" and realize that they are members of the community, and hence should be commonly responsible for it. In the life-community as such, the principle that is followed is a sort of "principle of representable solidarity", namely, "the individual is in principle 'representable' by other individuals according to law" (Scheler 1980a, 517; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 527). The most typical cases for this are marriage, family, clan, hometown group, and the like. As is embodied by the case of "family", a life-community may undoubtedly include its minors, e.g., a child whose "self-consciousness" is as yet indefinite.

Essentially speaking, people in the life-community lead a “natural” life, whereas in the “society [Gesellschaft]”, life is an “artificial” one in which single persons are associated with each other via a sort of particular conscious act to “artificially” constitute a society. In some sense, the society can even be called an “association of individual persons”. In the society, an individual person is considered to be a “person proper”. As a result, the “individual”, in the genuine sense of individual spiritual person, is here confused with the “single” human being and, consequently, these individual persons in the society are in essence “*originaliter equal and of equal value*” (Scheler 1980a, 519; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 530) . It is on this ground that what seemed to be formally unrepresentable “individual persons” are in fact exactly representable in the society, inasmuch as each citizen is identical to every other on the level of the “material” (the non-formal). In a society, each individual person is conscious of himself precisely as an individual, and hence there is no “co-experiencing” of a “common living” or “reliving” among his fellows. The association between them therefore is not immediate; rather, they grasp each other by means of a sort of *mediate understanding*, specifically, an analogy that mediates between them.²¹ Due also to a lack of such an immediate “mutual understanding”, “groundless and primordial suspicions” are pervasive among members of a society, just like “groundless trust” is pervasive among the members of life-community. In this connection, the fundamental social principles, by which the interactions among members of society as an “association of individual persons” are mediated, take the form of a kind of “contract”. Thus, among members of a society, there is no common responsibility, but merely the “one-sided” self-responsibility of each person for himself and for others. There is not any form of solidarity, but merely the similarity or dissimilarity among individual persons or the “interests of class” they represent. My responsibility for others or for some social stratum is based essentially on a one-sided “self-responsibility”, or, essentially speaking, on the self-responsibility for upholding “contracts”.

21 Some scholars call this “mediate understanding” “self-centered understanding of the other ego” (cf. Denninger 1967, 170 ff.).

Of the essential kinds of social units, the highest form is person-community [Personsgemeinschaft], which is also called by Scheler “a solidaristic realm of love” of persons (Scheler 1980a, 527; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 538) or “a realm of love of all finite persons” (Scheler 1980a, 535; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 547.). Here, I’d like to note that although many scholars consider the “collective person” to be the highest form of the essential kinds of social units, a consideration that is not unreasonable, we still must differentiate between the “collective person” and the “person-community” for the sake of clearly understanding the collective person itself and the essence of the “person-community” as a social unit or, simply, for the sake of convenient discussion. The “collective person” refers to the *abstract* essence of person proper which, simultaneously, may become a *concrete* act-center of the total world.²² In this vein, the collective person may also be a social unit or a “person-community”. As was stated above, the consciousness of the collective person and of the individual person may be contained in the performance of the concrete phenomenological acts by each finite person, that is to say, “the individual and collective persons in the nature of the uniform finite person” are of “co-originality”.²³ Each finite person *is simultaneously* an individual person and a member of the collective person, and, what is more, it is an essence knowable apodictically that the “being simultaneously” of the individual and the collective in the acts of each person should be the case, and each finite person should also experience itself in this way. Each finite person grasps with evidence the being of other persons, and, just as evidently, he or she experiences him- or herself as a member of collective person. As a consequence, as with a person’s understanding of him- or herself, so also is his or her “understanding” of other persons *a truly immediate one in toto*, an immediate understanding in the “inner perception of others”, and, in the end, is a genuine and complete understanding that can

22 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 526; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 537 ff.

23 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 524 (footnote); E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 535 (footnote 189).

only be founded in “love”.²⁴

It is exactly such finite persons embracing genuine and complete “understanding” who become members of a “realm of love” or “person-community”, in which each member is a unique individual person and hence absolutely unrepresentable, and in which each member or individual person and each collective person is self-responsible, and, moreover, each member is co-responsible for the collective person and for other individual members of the collective community, and the collective person itself is also co-responsible for each of its members. On this account, the co-responsibility as such is manifested in “mutuality” rather than “isolation”, and, at the same time, it will not completely exclude the self-responsibility of the both. In this sense, for other individual persons, each individual is not only co-responsible *qua* a “member” in the collective person (like the bearer of some post or the possessor of some status in social structure), but it is, first and foremost, co-responsible *qua* unique individual person and a bearer of the conscience of individuals. Therefore, that which is followed in this “realm of love of all finite persons” is nothing other than the apodictically unrepresentable principle of solidarity which means that “in *this* sense the principle of solidarity is for us an eternal component and a *fundamental article of the cosmos of finite moral persons*” (Scheler 1980a, 523; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 534). The model of purely spiritual collective persons with which Scheler provides us is: the cultural collective person, the ([nation] state or cultural circles), and the collective person of the religious community.²⁵

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24 Angelika Krebs has once attempted to treat Scheler’s notion of “mutual feeling [Miteinanderfühlen]” in his *Sympathy* as corresponding to the essential act of “person community”, and she has expressed many inspiring reflections. I have also experimented with similar trains of thought. Nevertheless, to discuss the social unit here by means of the several acts of sympathy in *Sympathy* brings about far more difficulties than the inspirations it may give us (cf. Krebs 2010, 9–43).

25 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 533 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 545.

IV. Solidarism: “The Third Path”

Here it is of course necessary to limit ourselves to the most fundamental principles of “a theory of all possible essential social units” whose full development, in Scheler’s view, will constitute the presupposition or basic problem of philosophical sociology and socio-political ethics.²⁶

Speaking on the whole, the mass, life-community, the society, and person-community constitute the essential types of social units. From the viewpoint of phenomenology there are two essential traits that need to be stressed for the four types.

In the first place, there are essential relations between these four types. Let us tentatively set aside the combination of individual persons without self-consciousness, namely, “the mass”, inasmuch as, essentially speaking, this social unit as such is by no means forever fixed, that is, people may join in a mindless riot today by being infected by the mob without inquiring into whatever the reason the riot was for, but withdraw from it the next day. In terms of the other three social units: 1) all the “social” units are necessarily founded in the units of life-community. The founding relation here, of course, does not mean the foundation between two real social groups but rather between “two essential structures of social unification”. It is manifested in three ways: first, the individual person as a member of some society must have been at one time a member of some life-community, say, when a member of some society acts as required by his/her social status, he/she must simultaneously be or have been the son/daughter of a family; secondly, there must be a fundamental contractual principle that gives to the unified society its roots in the principle of “solidarity”. The foundation of the duty to keep mutual promises is essentially located “in the solidary obligation of the members of the community to realize the contents that ought to be for the members” (Scheler 1980a, 520; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 531); thirdly, conventions and artificial terminologies that support the social form of mutual awareness have their roots in the natural language, and the languages of those conventions can themselves be established through natural language and remain dependent on the categories of meaning it possesses. On

26 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 515; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 525.

the basis of the “dependency” in these three aspects, the social unit of society is essentially rooted in the life-community.²⁷

2) Meanwhile, the two essential forms of social units of society and life-community both “belong to” the highest form of person-community. This is because, in the view of Scheler, the former two essential forms are so constructed as to serve the latter one, and to realize it; and, although the highest essential form is apodictically not a mere synthesis of the first two, the essential characteristics of both are nevertheless co-given in it: the independent, individual person, as in society, and solidarism and real collective unity, as in the community.²⁸ There is not only the original self-responsibility but also the original co-responsibility in the highest form, in which the individual and collective persons are in an essential relationship of manifest connection.²⁹ It is exactly due to its essential nature that the person-community is the essential form of the highest social unit. The community has its ultimate foundation in the idea of the person, and it is not the values of the community, but the values of the person that are the highest values. It is precisely due to the fact it contains the values of the “collective person” that the person-community is higher than the other two essential forms of a unified social entity.³⁰

Moreover, the differentiation of the four essential forms of social units is never a chronological differentiation of positive, longitudinally developed socio-historical social formations. Scheler does not mean to say that the mass comes to be before the life-community develops, then after it the society, and finally the development of the person-community, which together embody a linear “development” process (from the lower to the higher kind). Scheler refuses firmly such a theory of generation and development of social formations, since, in his view, these four essential forms of social units essentially were “present *at all places and at all times* in some measure and in some order. The only changes that occur in the real subjects of these types are the sizes of the groups that fulfill them, the world of *goods* [*Güter*] in which these types of *values* are

27 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 520 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 531 ff. Cf. also Scheler 1973c, 226 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 231. Cf. also Scheler 1986a, S. 265 ff.; E. t. Scheler 1987, 137 ff.

28 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 527; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 538 ff.

29 Cf. Scheler 1973c, 212; E. t.: Scheler 1954, 216 ff.

30 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 514; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 524 f.

represented, the organizations of communal groups, etc.” (Scheler 1980a, 530; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 541 ff.) This means that the four essential forms are in essence one “form”, which determines the “limits” of the development of social unity during the factual development of history. What is historically variable, is simply the “content” and “material” of mass, life-community, society, and collective person, and at all times the four essential forms have been present in various mixture in the social units of the facts of historical communities, and the only difference is that in a certain historical period, one essential form dominated, or one “preferred [Vorziehen]” structure, one ethics became dominant. Fundamentally, we can note that the “particular cases” of the four essential forms in any certain fact of history of social units, such as in modern society, we can see both the rioting “mass” and the “life-communities” such as marriage, family, and, of course, “society” and “[nation] state”, etc. “There are also certain essential relations among and within social units.” (Scheler 1980a, 543; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 556)

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Insofar as this is concerned, “the third path”, presented by Scheler, which is identical to neither the means of the individualism nor that of the universalism, is first and foremost a path of “principle”, rather than a concrete historical and practical social formation. However, he later posed corresponding ideas in his studies of sociology and politics.³¹ What is certain, is that his positive sociology and politics are essentially founded on “solidarism” or the “principle of solidarity” which we discussed here as principles.

“What are the essential elements on which this great and sublime principle rests?” (Scheler 1980a, 523 ff.; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 535) Scheler answered his own question: the principle of solidarity ultimately rests on two essential propositions. First, a community of persons belongs to the “evidential essence” of a possible person. This essence is evidently self-given in phenomenological insight, and it does not, in principle, rely on any empirically real connections whatsoever, be it with some social formation or with Christianity. This is the *foundation* that makes moral solidarity possible. Secondly, what makes

31 For instance, during the interval of 1910s and 1920s, he presented a theory of “prophetic socialism” or “Christian socialism”, which aroused heated disputes. Cf. Scheler 1986b, 259–272; Leonardy 1976, 242 ff.; Henckmann 2006, 12 ff. As to more detailed references about Scheler’s studies on social politics, cf. Lichtblau 1999, 7–31.

it necessary is the formal proposition concerning the essential opposition or reciprocity and opposite or reciprocal values of all morally relevant comportment, viz., the aforementioned phenomenological essence of “essential social acts” and the essence of their corresponding (reciprocal) value constitute the *necessary foundation* of the principle of solidarity.³² On this ground, “solidarism” or “the principle of solidarity” is in essence a principle of “meta” thinking of phenomenology rather than a positive socio-political theory.³³

Translated from the Chinese original by Lin Zhang

32 Cf. Scheler 1980a, 524; E. t.: Scheler 1973a, 535.

33 Many thanks to Prof. Eugene Kelly for modifying the English version of this essay.

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THE MORAL POWER OF THE NARRATIVE

ART, LITERATURE, AND MORAL KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

Should moral criteria play any role in assessing pieces of art? In which way are ethical issues inscribed in literary works of art? Are there any ethical values in literature? Whether it is possible to be taught by art has been a question that has troubled philosophers since the time of Plato. In a way, one could argue that aesthetics, as a branch of value theory, began with Aristotle's defense of the cognitive value of tragedy in response to Plato's famous attack on the arts in the *Republic*. Cognitivist accounts of aesthetic experience have been central to the field ever since, although in the eighteenth century, it has been pointed out that aesthetic experience is important due to its emotional impact, precisely the opposite of what Plato criticized. Although one cannot

doubt the fact that art can have a strong emotional effect on us, the question is whether it is possible for art to influence us in such a way as to contribute to our self-development and to our understanding of the world. Moreover, the recent ethical turn towards art and literature redefines, on contemporary terms, the study of both ancient and modern philosophy by stressing the need to combine literature and the narrative arts into the pursuit of a common moral goal.

Keywords: ethics, art, literature, narrative, Martha Nussbaum.

Moralna moč pripovedi. Umetnost, literatura in moralna vednost

Povzetek

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Ali naj bi moralni kriteriji igrali vlogo pri ocenjevanju umetniških del? Na kakšen način se etični problemi vpisujejo v literarne umetnine? Ali so v literaturi etične vrednote? Vprašanje, ali nas umetnost lahko česa nauči, bega filozofe od Platonovega časa dalje. Na določen način bi lahko rekli, da se je estetika, kot veja vrednostne teorije, pričela z Aristotelovo obrambo kognitivne vrednosti tragedije v odgovor na Platonov znamenit napad na umetnost v *Državi*. Kognitivistične obravnave estetskega izkustva so odtlej na tem področju osrednjega pomena, čeprav so nekateri avtorji v osemnajstem stoletju poudarili, da je estetsko izkustvo pomembno zaradi njegovega čustvenega naboja, kar je natanko nasprotje Platonove kritike. Čeprav ne moremo dvomiti glede dejstva, da lahko umetnost na nas čustveno močno vpliva, ostaja vprašanje, ali je vpliv umetnosti lahko takšen, da prispeva k našemu samo-razvoju in k našemu razumevanju sveta. Nedavni etični obrat k umetnosti in literaturi znotraj sodobnih okvirov nanovo opredeljuje študij tako antične kakor moderne filozofije, tako da izpostavlja potrebo po združevanju literature in pripovednih umetnosti z zasledovanjem skupnih moralnih ciljev.

Ključne besede: etika, umetnost, literatura, pripoved, Martha Nussbaum.

Should moral criteria play any role in assessing pieces of art?¹ In which way are ethical issues inscribed in literary works of art? Are there any ethical values in literature? Whether it is possible to be taught by art has been a question that has troubled philosophers since the time of Plato. In a way, one could argue that aesthetics, as a branch of value theory, began with Aristotle's defense of the cognitive value of tragedy in response to Plato's famous attack on the arts in the *Republic*. Cognitivist accounts of aesthetic experience have been central to the field ever since, although in the eighteenth century, it has been pointed out that aesthetic experience is important due to its emotional impact, precisely the opposite of what Plato criticized. Although one cannot doubt the fact that art can have a strong emotional effect on us, the question is whether it is possible for art to influence us in such a way as to contribute to our self-development and to our understanding of the world. Moreover, the recent ethical turn towards art and literature redefines, on contemporary terms, the study of both ancient and modern philosophy by stressing the need to combine literature and the narrative arts into the pursuit of a common moral goal.

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Furthermore, in this paper, I would also like to touch upon how politics and ideology influence art, not only in the theoretical domain of philosophy of art, e.g., politically motivated aesthetic theory, such as Marxist views about the arts such as socialist realism (Sim 1992, 441–471) or moralistic accounts of aesthetic theory such as Tolstoy's Christian art (Tolstoy 1889), but also in the practical domain of state educational policy. In a way, both these accounts are "consumer-oriented" in the sense that, according to them, art is to be viewed from the perspective of the person viewing or hearing the work (Hanfling 1992, xiii). In other theories, though, the central role is played by the person creating the work; art is to be defined by reference to the creator's feelings rather than to the feelings of the consumer, although it should be noted that the consumer's feelings are also taken, to some extent at least, into consideration.

1 For helpful comments regarding earlier versions of this article, I would like to thank audiences in Krakow (2013) and Ancient Olympia (2014), and, in particular, I am grateful to George Anagnostopoulos, Leonidas Bargeliotes, Chris Evangeliou, Athanasia Glycofrydi-Leontsini and Carole Talon-Hugon.

Indeed, novels, poems, ancient tragedies, plays, films—and even, although less often, paintings and sculptures—can affect people’s emotions and influence their actions, sometimes in ways that appear to do harm. A famous example of a poem that had an impact on human psyche but also on one’s beliefs and ideas about morality has been William Wordsworth’s (1770–1850) famous poem “Daffodils” (Wordsworth 1807) that refers to artistic creation and aesthetic pleasure. This poem has, in a way, been associated with utilitarian theory, in the sense that J.S. Mill—as he himself says in his *Autobiography* (1865)—had his first nervous breakdown after he read it, since Mill realized for the first time, that there exists aesthetic pleasure and that not all is dependent upon Jeremy Bentham’s principle of utility and its maximization for the greatest good.

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At the same time though, another question connected to the relation between art and morality is associated with the relevance of morality to imaginative literature and of imaginative literature to morality. This is a long-standing debate that goes back to Plato and Aristotle and has its roots to “the ancient quarrel between the poets and the philosophers”, as it is called in Plato’s *Republic*. According to Jerrold Levinson, this issue involves two questions:

First, how can fictional narratives, being neither true nor pretending to truth, afford moral insight, instruction, or improvement? How can they give us knowledge of human nature, or of anything else? Second, if imaginative literature has a moral dimension, does this open it to moral assessment, and if so, how does the moral assessment of literature stand to the aesthetic assessment of it? (Levinson 1998b, 10)

Art in general, and literature in particular, seems not to be a source of real knowledge, of a moral one or of any other sort, given that imagining things a certain way, in response to a fiction, does not seem like any ground at all for thinking that they are that way. “Moral knowledge” could be defined “as justified true beliefs about right standards for judging real human actions to be morally good or bad” (McCormick 1983, 400). Thus, the question here is whether art is like philosophy in expressing universal truths, or as Aristotle famously claimed in his *Poetics* that “poetry is something more philosophical and more important than history, since poetry tends to give general truths

while history gives particular facts” (1451b3-4),² since “a poet’s object is not to tell what actually happened but what could and would happen either probably or inevitably” (1451a36-37).³ Of course, one will argue that literary works cannot *assert* moral truths; they can merely *suggest* moral truths. Literary works do not suggest moral truths in the sense that authors *intend* to suggest certain truths or in the sense that particular readers actually grasp these truths: “something is true even though the author may not intend it and be quite unaware of it, and even though the audience may be so imperceptive as not to grasp it” (Richards 1926; quote in McCormick 1983, 402). Therefore, another question that arises, in relation to whether fictions are cognitive, is whether the cognitive force of fiction should be construed in terms of moral truths or rather in terms of moral beliefs. Literature may be a source of “genuine moral beliefs about real and not just fictional human actions” and “moral fictions may be even necessary components of any reflective person’s attempt to articulate a satisfactory viewpoint” (McCormick 1983, 409).

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Related to the above is the question referring to the role that works of art might play in moral education; a question again as old as Plato’s *Republic*. As Noël Carroll points out:

Ever since Socrates met Ion, this has been the great quarrel between poetry and philosophy. For in his momentous effort to depose Homer as the educator of the Greeks in favor of his own tutor, Plato was at pains to argue that neither literature nor art could teach anyone anything, since teaching requires something to teach, namely, knowledge, moral or otherwise; and knowledge, according to Plato, was something that neither literature nor art had to offer. Moreover, this Platonic tradition, albeit modern variations adapted for different epistemological convictions, still persists. (Carroll 2002, 3)

2 Φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποιήσις ἱστορίας ἐστίν (*Poetics*, 1451b3-4).

3 φανερόν δὲ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ὅτι οὐ τὸ τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτο ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον. (*Poetics*, 1451a36-37).

Noël Carroll has, in his paper “Art, Narrative, and Moral Understanding” (1998), but also in his “The Wheel of Virtue: Art, Literature and Moral Knowledge” (2002), argued that fictional narratives can yield moral amelioration and that narrative is thus rightly subject to moral assessment, though there is no value to narrative *per se* (Carroll 1998, 126–160). According to Carroll, literature and art can provide a source of knowledge and a contribution to education, especially moral knowledge and education with respect to the virtues. Literary works can be regarded as thought experiments that encourage conceptual discrimination of our virtue schemas through the imaginative deployment of structures of studied contrasts that function argumentatively. As he succinctly points out in the conclusion of his paper:

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Since the knowledge in question is conceptual, it makes no difference that the cases are fictional. Since the education involved concerns the refinement of our grasp of virtue concepts, it is not best described as banal or platitudinous, but rather as affording added insight into what we already know. This need not always be taken as a mere repetition of familiar knowledge but can be an amplification or refinement thereof. Admittedly, much of the work of argument and analysis served up by art, especially art that employs virtue wheels, transpires in the mind of the audience. But in that respect, artworks function no differently than philosophical thought experiments. Thus, in the great and ongoing quarrel between philosophy and poetry, philosophy cannot win without undermining itself. (Carroll 1998, 19)

Indeed, Carroll is sharp in pointing out that the very own practice of philosophy, its own way of arguing, is based on creating thought experiments, metaphors, myths, and allegories. It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that one could argue back—in defense of Plato and the like—that philosophical thought experiments are not artistic creations; they are consciously made up cases aiming at clarifying a philosophical argument. Similarly, myths and allegories presented by philosophers—like, for example, the ones in Plato’s *Republic*—are either purpose-written imaginary examples or borrowed by

literature or mythology, aiming at educating into virtue. So, in that sense, they are not at all like works of art whose intension is arbitrary.

In “Art, Narrative, and Moral Understanding”, Carroll also provides us with a very useful classification of the four views that have been formulated so far on the relation of art to morality which he labels *autonomism*, *Platonism*, *utopianism*, and *clarificationism*, respectively. He defends the latter. According to Carroll, on the one hand, *autonomism* holds that art and morality are entirely separate, and that the latter is irrelevant to the former. On the other hand, *Platonism* and *utopianism* both take art as a whole to be subject to extensive moral assessment; but a negative moral assessment as far as *Platonism* is concerned and a positive one in the case of *utopianism*. According to Carroll, “*Platonism* regards all art as morally suspect”, due to its essential features, while “*utopianism* leads us to presume that, in virtue of its very nature, art, properly so called, is always morally uplifting” (Carroll 1998, 127). *Clarificationism*, though, the view that Carroll defends, maintains only that *some* narrative art, properly engaged with, can deepen moral understanding, through clarifying the content of our moral categories and principles, and that such art is thereby both better morally and better as art. It is better art, according to Carroll, because it is ultimately more absorbing in virtue of its moral content (Levinson 1998b, 10–11).

According to a further classification made by Christopher Hamilton, accounts such as Carroll’s presented above, *clarificationism* can be termed as an imagination-based conception of the way in which works of art can be morally significant (Hamilton 2003, 37–55). Other imagination-based accounts are the ones presented by Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1996) and Frank Palmer (Palmer 1992). These are accounts of the relation between art and morality in which the moral significance of art lies in developing our imaginative capacity to be sensitive to the needs, emotions, and moral qualities of other people. Hamilton thinks that this type of insight into the inner life of others is characteristic of many works of art, and indeed an important part of their value as art. Hamilton, nevertheless, points out that such an insight is not always beneficial, and it is for this reason among others that many works of art are deeply morally ambiguous. It does not follow, according to Hamilton, that works of art—or the love of art in general—will make us better people, that

they will morally equip us with compassion, sensitivity, and concern for others (Hamilton 2003, 39). Hamilton argues that, on the contrary, they might inspire the cruel to do evil (Hamilton 2003, 40).

At this point, I would like to focus more specifically on Martha Nussbaum's work on literature and the narrative arts, and mainly, on what I would call her "imagination-based utopian account". Martha Nussbaum puts forward in her books *Love's Knowledge* (1990) and *Poetic Justice* (1996) an imagination-based conception of the way in which works of art can be morally significant which clearly lies, according to my opinion, within the *utopianism* camp, although Carroll does not quite think so (Carroll 1992, 156, n. 5). I would like, at this point, to examine briefly Nussbaum's imagination-based utopian account which focuses mainly on the moral significance of literature.

More specifically, in *Love's Knowledge*, Martha Nussbaum investigates the connection between philosophy and literature, the relationship between style and content in the exploration of ethical issues, the nature of ethical attention and ethical knowledge, the role of emotion in deliberating and self-knowledge. Nussbaum also offers an argument in favor of a conception of ethical understanding that involves emotional as well as intellectual activity, and gives priority to the perception of particular people and situations rather than to abstract rules, a conception which, according to Nussbaum, "finds its most appropriate expression and statement in certain forms usually considered literary rather than philosophical," which must themselves be included as texts within moral philosophy (Nussbaum 1996, ix). Most importantly though, Nussbaum's project in this book is to reorient moral philosophy and to sustain a distinctive approach to moral thinking and judgment that has ancient roots (mostly Aristotelian), but has been largely neglected in modern thought, by arguing that we should take literature, and the narrative arts in general, as partners in a common enterprise. Nussbaum also argues that emotion and love are key moral phenomena important to the good life. Nussbaum, following Stanley Cavell (Cavell 1976; Cavell 1979; Cavell 1987), argues that we should look carefully into the possibility that literature not merely presents values, descriptions, and morally interesting cases, but also a complete standpoint about the good life, necessary to all who engage with the study of moral philosophy, but also important to moral education in general.

It should be pointed out though that Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* is mainly a collection of essays written at various points in time, not altogether agreeing completely with each other. These are bound together by Nussbaum's "common project" presented in her "Introduction" which is mainly an auto-biographical account that provides us, nevertheless, with very interesting historical information about the study of literature and philosophical aesthetics, and in particular its reception by the Anglo-American philosophical tradition at the time that Nussbaum was a student.

The questions that Nussbaum poses throughout her book are many and of various sorts, interesting for both literature and philosophy, but mainly for moral philosophy and literary criticism. For the purposes of this paper, I will only mention some of these questions that she poses: "How should one write, what words should one select, what forms and structures and organization, if one is pursuing understanding? (Which is to say, if one is, in that sense, a philosopher?)" (Nussbaum 1996, 3) Literary form is not, according to Nussbaum, separable from philosophical content (as *autonomism* claims), but is, itself, a part of a content—an integral part of the search for and the statement of truth. But this suggests, again according to Nussbaum:

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that there may be some views of the world and how one should live in it—views, especially, that emphasize the world's surprising variety, its complexity and mysteriousness, its flawed and imperfect beauty—that cannot be fully and adequately stated in the language of conventional philosophical prose, a style remarkably flat and lacking in wonder—but only in a language and in forms themselves more complex, more allusive, more attentive to particulars. (Nussbaum 1996, 3)

Further to the above, Nussbaum also makes an interesting point about love, the most important emotion in ethical theory, since it is our concern for others that makes us moral agents:

And what if it is love one is trying to understand, that strange unmanageable phenomenon or form of life, source at once of illumination and confusion, agony and beauty? Love, in its many varieties, and their

tangled relations to the good human life, to aspiration, to general social concern? What parts of oneself, what method, what writing, should one choose then? What is, in short, love's knowledge—and what writing does it dictate in the heart? (Nussbaum 1996, 4)

This brings us to another question posed throughout the book: “What does all this mean for human life? What possibilities does this recognize or deny?” (Nussbaum 1996, 12) Indeed, there are many interesting points raised by Nussbaum in *Love's Knowledge*, the most important being, according to my philosophical preferences, her appropriation of Aristotle. Throughout *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum is referring to an Aristotelian account of morality and moral philosophy, to an “Aristotelian ethical position”, which also borrows Stoicism and the eighteenth century moral sentiment theories, such as Adam Smith's. The Aristotelian ethical position is of course in opposition to Plato's theory, but also to both Kantian and utilitarian theories.

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One of the most important features of this theory is the “ethical value of emotions and imagination”. Emotions involve cognitive structure and “beliefs about how things are and what is important”, as well as being “discriminating responses” to what is valuable, good, and proper (Nussbaum 1996, 41). Affectivity is best put into play when controlled by the disciplined and essentially loving imagination of the novelist. According to Nussbaum, “practical reasoning unaccompanied by emotion is not sufficient for practical wisdom” (Nussbaum 1996, 40). This is something that, according to Nussbaum, Aristotle also asserts. If emotion is prevented or excluded, not consulted as emotion, then this in, at least, “certain contexts will actually prevent a full rational judgment—for example by preventing access to one's grief, or one's love, that is necessary for the full understanding of what has taken place when a loved one dies” (Nussbaum 1996, 41).

This is indeed a very interesting and insightful account presented by Nussbaum that I do not, unfortunately, have enough time to discuss here. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that this last point made by Nussbaum brings us back to the aforementioned question posed previously by Christopher Hamilton. It is not at all clear that art cannot pose a threat to morality. Nussbaum is not merely arguing, as Hamilton does, that a novel

can contribute to the life of virtue, but she is actually making a much stronger claim. She is arguing that a novel, by its very nature, rules out the possibility that it could cultivate a person's cruel or wicked dispositions, claiming that a novel promotes mercy through its invitation to empathetic understanding, that it cultivates a moral ability that is opposed to hatred in its very structure (Nussbaum 1996, 76). This is a strong *utopianism* position to maintain and its validity still remains to be seen or is, at least, in need of further philosophical and not mere historical argument that Nussbaum amply produces by making reference to the attitudes of the Ancients towards all forms of literature in general and tragedy in particular. But this would require another paper.

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KANT AND CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS

HISTORICITY AND TELEOLOGY IN KANT'S LATER PHILOSOPHY, AND ITS ETHICAL AND POLITICAL POTENTIAL

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Abstract

In the contrast to the prevailing ahistorical Neo-Kantian constructivism, authors such as Axel Honneth intended to reconcile Kant's practical philosophy with Hegel's philosophy of history. In several of his later works, written mostly after the publication of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant offered accounts on judgment, history, and morality which effectively altered some of his earlier constructivism and explicated the model of reflection on human existence beyond the binary of absolutism and relativism. Considering the interpretations, provided by Rudolf A. Makkreel, Hannah Arendt, and Paul Ricoeur, the following discussion intends to provide an alternative model for the hermeneutics of social and political existence, and show the basis for a political ethics, founded upon the reflective potential inherent

in the rational, yet historically, contextually, and intersubjectively grounded being-in-the-world, while being attentive to the dangers of Eurocentrism and the justification of pathological political practices.

Keywords: Immanuel Kant, hermeneutics, social philosophy, historicity, critical theory.

Kant in kritična hermenevtika. Zgodovinskost in teleologija v Kantovi poznejši filozofiji ter njen etični in politični potencial

Povzetek

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V nasprotju s prevladujočim nehistoričnim novokantovskim konstruktivizmom so avtorji, kakršen je Axel Honneth, skušali spraviti Kantovo praktično filozofijo s Heglovo filozofijo zgodovine. V nekaterih svojih kasnejših delih, napisanih predvsem po objavi *Kritike razsodne moči*, je Kant ponudil razumevanje razsodne moči, zgodovine in moralnosti, ki je dejansko deloma spremenilo njegov zgodnji konstruktivizem, in razgrnil model refleksije človeške eksistence onkraj binarnosti absolutizma in relativizma. Pričujoča razprava želi s premislekom interpretacij, kakršne so predstavili Rudolf A. Makkreel, Hannah Arendt in Paul Ricoeur, predložiti alternativni model za hermenevtiko družbene in politične eksistence in razpreti bistvo politične etike, utemeljene na refleksivnem potencialu, vsebovanem v racionalni, a zgodovinsko, kontekstualno in intersubjektivno zasnovani biti-v-svetu, medtem ko obenem skuša pozorno razbirati nevarnosti evrocentrizma in upravičevanja patoloških političnih praks.

Ključne besede: Immanuel Kant, hermenevtika, socialna filozofija, zgodovinskost, kritična teorija.

I. Introduction

In the recent years, the silent transformations of the communicative patterns of media representation of socio-political realm may have distorted the relationship between the political action of the few and the public sphere of the many. Following Hannah Arendt's depiction of power as the ability of persons to act in harmony while exhibiting their collective potential, the affirmative political expression of power may be related with the social ontology of "being-with" as the primary mode of human social existence in contrast to the mere "being-along". Elsewhere, I argued that the implications of social recognition and intersubjective self-realization in the ethical world do exhibit a political dimension, harboring the immanent potential for the productive communal existence and the condition for the formation of the public sphere with healthy and effective models of communication. However, such a social theory, which is partly based upon Hegel's reinterpretation of Kant's moral and political philosophy, and was, for example, later appropriated and revised in the contemporary terms by authors such as Axel Honneth, faces two problems to which I intend to suggest a possible solution: the issue of justificatory standard for the normative claims and the related issue of the translation of social theory into the realm of politics which concerns the questions of ethical and political judgment, and the role of the *creative* dimension of society, pervaded by symbolic mediation which steers cultural and political traditions, social institutions, and ideological practices, and the formation of social symbols that preserve certain ideologies, and the social and political order. For this reason, we may take a step back before appropriating the Hegelian legacy of social and ethical philosophy, and revisit some of the contributions made by Kant in his aesthetic, political, and moral philosophy, as well as his philosophy of history and progress.

Before we turn to Kant's later philosophy, it also needs to be acknowledged that while research on ideology and social imagination should be regarded as an integral part of the investigation of society, it is also a part which makes it harder to theorize about it in abstract and definite terms, and showcases the need for hermeneutics that could recognize and help with the interpretative nature of such a conduct. In that regard, we might turn to Ricoeur's hermeneutical

philosophy of narrativity as the means of a formation of self-identity by way of reflective distancing and only subsequent re-appropriation of normative practices in concurrent society. Additionally, one could emphasize the role of imaginary significations of society for the formation and expansion of moral imagination, self-realization, legal practices, and as the origin of power-relations, while recognizing the dangers of reification of ideo-logical processes (what Hannah Arendt called logocracy in Arendt 1954, 134), and the changes in the socio-political landscape in which the disturbances in realms of politics and economy affected not only the material conditions of existence, but also the social imaginary and the assessment of the value of truth (as correspondence to facts) in political discourse. Nevertheless, to research the manners, embedded in social practices, through which both the normativity and the diagnostics of social pathology can be inferred from the social ontology, a normative standard that could justify the ethical claims and motivation is required, and might still be in need of further exploration. In the following discussion, I will show how the program of social and political philosophy that is based upon the recognition of the interpretative nature of the social conduct, and acknowledges the role of (critical) hermeneutics in its realization, might be reinforced by taking clues from Kant's philosophical contributions. As I argue in this paper, Kant's late philosophy harbors an inherent hermeneutical and interpretative dimension while remaining tied to the ideals of modernity and enlightenment.¹ For that, we need to be able to bridge the metaphysical gap between the *noumenal* and empirical domain that pervades Kant's philosophy, and find a place for it in the historical, desubjectified and detranscendentalized world.

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1 In my research, I am, amongst others, heavily indebted to Rudolf A. Makkreel who emphasized the link between Kant's reflective judgment and philosophical hermeneutics (e.g., in Makkreel 1997, 151–166 and Makkreel 2015).

II. The telos of human history: Kant's three models for a justification of the hypothesis of historical progress and the question of narrativity

From the ontological setting of being-with as the primary mode of being in society,² the complex relationship between the strata of primary mutual recognition as the locus of achievable communal co-existence, and the sphere of institutions as the determinate patterns of material and symbolic reproduction of society, often mediated by ideological and strategic discourse, can be recognized. My aim is, however, not to advance the problematic differentiation, which in the works of the critical theorists of Frankfurt School frequently results in a kind of two worlds ontology and methodology (for example, in Habermas' binary relationship between the lifeworld and the system, and Honneth's later move from psychological-anthropological theory of recognition to the sociological-historical theory of social freedom), but rather to research the phenomena of recurring patterns of intersubjective co-determination as mediated by ideology and imaginary significations. To infer the conditions that pre-set the possible articulations of the social in speech acts and practices, both productive and pathological, and the formation of the "we" of society, we may, therefore, take a step back to Kant and his later philosophy of modernity and history, mostly realized in and after the publication of the *Critique of Judgment* (1790).³

Kant's practical philosophy as it was set forth in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) has become a cornerstone for the constructivist, cognitivist, and universalist approaches to normative ethics and political philosophy, especially since the release of Rawls' *Theory of Justice* in 1971. However, its absent, abstract, and

2 Such a view is based upon Heidegger's ontology of *Dasein* that is also *Mitsein*, which was reintroduced in social ontological terms and further developed by Jean-Luc Nancy in Nancy 2000.

3 The most relevant essays in that regard are: *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784), *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* (1784), *On the Common Saying: "This May Be True in Theory but It Does Not Apply in Practice"* (1793), *Perpetual Peace* (1795), and *Contest of Faculties* (1798).

demanding character has driven many to search for alternatives that might bring to the moral philosophy the life force of actual living world and the productive acknowledgement of the historical and fallible nature of human beings that rarely follow their inner rationality, and rather behave on the basis of contextual considerations; in fact, the factual unachievability of fully autonomous decisions—that is, the possibility of operating upon the maxims chosen by the procedure of categorical imperative that would be completely unsullied by empirical justifications—, the issue of application of norms to concrete historical situations,⁴ and the non-congruence between the rational and the purposeful might itself be a cause of social suffering in some circumstances. Hegel's historical and teleological account regarding ethical life that provides normative justifications via the reconstruction of *actual* practices and claims made by the participants in the rational and institutionalized self-unfolding of the spirit⁵ appears as such a welcome alternative to the more rigid Kantianism, and has been widely studied in such diverse circles as hermeneutic phenomenology and Critical theory. However, Hegel's solution is founded upon objective teleology of spirit that appears untenable in the current philosophical and political-theoretical climate, is outdated, and brings forth the dangers of conventionalism⁶ and the possible admission of harmful social and political practices that could, despite appealing to the substantial ethical values in the community, be still retroactively justified by acknowledging their place within the progress towards the end state. While Hegel's take on social and ethical philosophy certainly has its charms by encouraging social freedom that allows the optimal self-realization of individuals, acknowledges the roles of intersubjectivity and social recognition for both individual and social improvement, and both contextualizes and historicizes normativity by locating its source in the actual living world, a deficit of robust normative standards that would be impervious for the ideological, power-exploiting, and

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4 The remarks about inapplicability, justificatory circularity, and the abstract and empty formalism are the *geist* of Hegel's criticism of Kant's ethics (e.g., in Hegel 1991).

5 See particularly Hegel 1991. For a "modernized account" see Honneth 2014.

6 However, Axel Honneth, a staunch defender of Hegel's philosophy, is adamant in his insistence that Hegelian method of "normative reconstruction" can be exonerated from the charge of conventionalism. See Honneth and Koch 2014, 817–826.

economically-oriented social distortions, and its problematic reliance upon the teleology of objective spirit could serve as an inspiration to seek additional sources for the grounding of social theory. As we will see, Kant's late political writings exhibit quite a different character in comparison to philosophy of the first two *Critiques*, and may already anticipate Hegel's historicization of reason and the moral and cognitive worth of mutual co-belonging under the aegis of the idea of the moral progress of society.⁷

While his ideal of an ordered civil society based on the principles of freedom and public reason is far removed from the bleak outlook of the Hobbesian society in which a state of conflict between the self-interested individuals can only be overcome by appealing to the common power (Hobbes 1996, 119–121), Kant obviously knew well that humans have a hard time following the freedom of (practical) reason and, in terms of them being the participants in common destiny, exhibit “unsocial sociability” (Kant 1991, 44), which drives them to conduct their behavior in opposing and competing manners leaving only hope that the (natural) course of history will allow human species to improve their fortunes after a series of internal conflicts due to their envious and egotistical nature. Despite the shortcomings of the human race and its tendency to silence the urge for rational self-improvement and to dominate and exploit another while it maintains unjust social order, that is, while it operates under the conditions of the reified hierarchical society,⁸ he was optimistic that a society of enlightened individuals which can be up to the task of administering to the politics based on rationality and individual autonomy is a distinct possibility.

7 In his later philosophical writings, Honneth appears to be persuaded by such an interpretation, although he also finds those arguments “system-bursting” and incompatible with the general tone of Kant's moral philosophy (see Honneth 2009, 11). While a large part of the present paper follows and comments on the said Honneth's essay, the question about the vicinity of Kant's writings on history and society and Hegel's philosophy has been asked quite frequently with differing opinions (e.g., in Kain 1988, 345–368; Yovel, 1980).

8 Kant makes remarks about the oppression of the powerful, which use aggressive tactics to domesticate the dominated in their environment, making them docile and less likely to lead the intellectual resistance against them, in an essay *An Answer to the Question: “What is Enlightenment?”* (see Kant 1991, 54–60).

Most of Kant's works on philosophy of history are closely tied to the notion of human capacity to make reflective judgments, particularly of teleological variety. In the *Critique of Judgment* Immanuel Kant identified reflective judgment as the type of judgment corresponding to aesthetic and teleological claims. Unlike determinative judgments in which a universal is given and a particular is subsumed under it, reflective judgments start from a particular and actively seek to connect with a universal (Kant 2007, 18–19). Reflective judgments are non-cognitive: their validity cannot be justified with epistemic certainty. As such, reasoning about the beautiful or the purposeful starts from subjective experience; only after the acknowledgment of its singularity, can I recognize a specific object of interest as a token of a universal.

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The capacity for reflective judgment is the cornerstone of Kant's attempt to ground the hypothesis of progress in the cognitive interest of people to integrate the worlds of natural order and moral autonomy. I already mentioned Kant's problematic metaphysical separation between the *noumenal* and empirical realms, between the domains of freedom and natural laws: a teleological judgment that operates with the category of purposefulness intends to bridge the gap between the two realms and supports the will to see the history of humans as a unity resembling natural order that puts an external pressure on the “unsociably sociably” disposed human beings, thus displaying the need for cultural civilization and intellectual improvement of humanity under the flag of a cosmopolitan ideal as dictated by natural order of things (Kant 1991, 41–54; see also Honneth 2009, 4–5; and Ricoeur 2000, 100–101).

A justification of the hypothesis of progress, based on theoretical interest, which Honneth identified as his first justificatory model, never fully satisfied Kant, and in the later works, such as *On the Common Saying: “This May Be True in Theory but It Does Not Apply in Practice”* and *Perpetual Peace*, a different attempt to ground the hypothesis may be recognized, this time founded upon one's practical reasoning. As a being possessing the capacity to exercise his freedom in obeying inner morality, an enlightened actor is bound to assume that he is not alone in his endeavor: due to the universal character of Kantian morality, the latter must be able to be translatable into the empirical world and communicated between peoples and generations—the “ought implies can” (Kant 1998, 540–541), and can be realized in a historical world. This highly speculative

thesis relies on one's moral imagination: by creating a moral image of the world,⁹ the actor is able to assume that his own moral convictions can be shared and contribute to the progress of humanity, even if they need no external justification of their legitimacy. Such a picture of a morally determined idea of progress which complies with the late Kant's tendency to situate practical reason in the living world is much more interesting for our cause since it appears to contemplate upon *temporal* and *intersubjective* dimensions of morality. Nevertheless, the model is beset by several problems: it retains the framework in which there is still a division between freedom and nature, the moral actions of the agent are still tied to monological cognition of duty, and it continues to rely on the teleological judgment to comfort the doubting agent about the (natural) purpose of his actions and contributions (Honneth 2009, 5–7; also consult Kant 1991, 108–110; and Kant 1991, 61–92). We will later return to Kant's moral philosophy when we will reflect on the political dimension of practical reason; for now, it should be noted that Kant's teleological arguments which presuppose the existence of a common world manifest the need for reflective rather than determinative judgment when applying the moral "ought" onto the historical context.

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It is, however, in the essays *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* and *Contest of Faculties* that we find the most unexpected and promising approach to the understanding of the idea of progress and normative justification of modernity. Here—in, according to Honneth, the third model for justification of progress—Kant makes a somewhat surprising turn towards the de-transcendentalized thinking, situated in the historical world, employing a fair share of political imagination in the interpretation of current social climate and historical tendencies; an approach which Michel Foucault in one of his last philosophical contributions saw as a turn towards the "ontology of actuality" (Foucault 1984, 32–50). We may, along with Honneth, perceive that Kant in the above-mentioned essays showcases *hermeneutic* attitude as he envisions a self-reflecting and a contextually, historically concerned manner of approaching the themes of human destiny, moral development, and social and political existence.

9 I took the expression from Putnam's interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy (Putnam 1987, 51–52).

This time, Kant changes the focus from writing in the perspective of an anonymous, only indirectly affected observer of the course of history to the direct participant in the era-defining events that illuminated humanity's capacity for rationality and set the course of history towards Enlightenment.¹⁰ In those essays, the progress is tied to the public expression of moral and political norms which necessitates the conscious internalization of the *geist* of historical transformations of all those who agree and sympathize with the moral and intellectual progress. Unlike the previous two models, which were bound to the idea of the natural inclination, here Kant allots the idea of progress in the actions of self-understanding individuals. Contributors to the revolutionary events have no choice, but to reflect on the historical perspective of time, in which they are situated, to understand the horizon of the past and the tendency of future as an opportunity for further improvement. With that solution, Kant approaches the ideas of effective history, the importance of communicability, the role of experience from the first-person perspective in judgment, and the refiguration of internalized convictions after the circle of self-reflection, which indeed appear to echo Hegel's historicization of Kant's philosophy and the later development in philosophical hermeneutics. While we should not go overboard with reaching for the associations, Kant's late philosophy does show the signs of a more actualized and historically situated philosophical perspective which *secretly* anticipates existential, hermeneutic, and phenomenological philosophies. By justifying the moral progress of humanity via collective impressions of the actions of individual actors rather than the over-rationalized objective teleology of spirit, Kant's insights have a certain advantage over Hegel's idea of moral progress as they allow the practical reason to settle in the empirical world and endure a share of existential contingency requiring the use of non-determinative interpretation.

10 Now, there are obviously some differences between the two essays due to the fact that *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* reflects on the progress under the confines of enlightened monarchy of Frederick the Great (see Kant 1991, 54–60), while for our cause especially interesting *Contest of Faculties* glides on the intellectual waves of the French Revolution (see particularly Kant 1991, 177–190). However, the general views regarding the concept of progress appear to be similar (Honneth 2009, 8–11).

Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned that the following interpretation of Kant's justificatory models of progress relies on Honneth's reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of history which is problematic in some areas—however, due to constraints of the following discussion further analysis can only be sketched here. However, both Honneth's own social philosophy of recognition and social freedom, and the already suggested issues with Kantian philosophical framework require additional interpretation and cannot be unequivocally accepted without some further considerations which connect the present discussion with the question of ontologically and anthropologically oriented investigation of selfhood and personal identity.

A special concern should be given to the issue of moral standards that underlie the idea of historical progress; if the progress should count as an immanent criterion for the justification of moral and political norms, we should consider to which underlying first-order principles should we appeal to when judging historical transformations as progressive and morally justified. In other words: without resorting to the Kantian monological account of morality or adopting the Hegelian *objective* teleology of spirit, can we avoid collapsing into circularity, *Whig historiography*, Eurocentrism, and cultural colonialism? Such problems are attributed by Allen to Honneth's late philosophy which takes the account of progress towards social freedom as the basis for his critical theory of social freedom (Allen 114–121; also Zurn 2015, 193–194). Curiously, a conscious decision to not follow Hegel's philosophy towards the finalization of historical progress in the self-transparency of absolute knowledge is also what separates Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics from Hegel's philosophy of spirit and renounces the possibility to attain the rational justification for the necessity of historical progress (Gjesdal 2009, 132–141). By appealing to the concepts of dialogical understanding, effective history, and tradition, such a hermeneutical approach is a welcome alternative to the monological constructivist accounts of ethics and political philosophy, but may, without resorting to either a tight anthropology that would justify the specific features of progress, or the rational standards of normativity like in Habermasian discourse ethics, have a hard time to avoid the charges of (moral) relativism and reformism on the spectrum of hermeneutics (sharing certain similarities with communitarianism in political philosophy) or, as in Honneth's critical theory, Eurocentrism.

A certain, if only partial, solution to relate the notion of self-understanding to the idea of dialogical ethics and to the importance of public reasoning and the progress towards greater social freedom might be to appeal to the notion of narrativity, stemming from the anthropological account regarding self-identity like in Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology. As Ricoeur believed, narrative identity bridges the gap between one's character (which relates to the notion of *what oneself is*) and selfhood (which answers the question of *who oneself is*), mediates between the passive, time-resistant features of oneself and the will to keep the promises through the temporal changes, and gives history to the subject (Ricoeur 1992, 165–166). By ordering it into narratives, one gives a meaning to his life; in addition, by linking a fragile identity via the progress of *refiguration* to the intention of a “good life lived with and for others in just institutions” (Ricoeur 1992, 172), the notion of narrative identity is also connected to the ethical identity of a singularly responsible, self-constant agent.

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Rather, the following the line of argumentation that is based on the dialectics between teleological (Aristotelian) ethics and deontological (Kantian) morality (where the primacy is on the side of ethics; Ricoeur 1992, 170), Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach to the philosophical anthropology of selfhood, which forms the backbone of his later work in ethics and political philosophy, reveals an important element that transposes the focus from the agent-centered theory of moral progress, based upon the individual perception, to the notion of ethical narratives, mediating between oneself and the other, and the publicly based political narratives, which introduce the third party into the discussion.¹¹ As it will be expounded upon in the next chapter, the interpretative character

¹¹ Nevertheless, an account that would expound upon the dialectics of teleological ethics, based on the notion of personal virtues, and deontological morality, founded upon the concept of duty, could offer fruitful insights for the discussion about ethical-anthropological foundations of social philosophy, particularly in connection with the normative and epistemological concerns; however, such an attempt would greatly exceed the limitations of the present article. However, similar duality also underlines the difference between the ethical and the political, which I exposed above and is indebted to Levinas' account on the disparity between the asymmetrical obligation to the other and the symmetrical notion of public justice between equals, introduced by the appearance of the third (in Levinas 1991, 213).

of reflective judgments might be useful in representing and deciding upon the ideological narratives of spectators and the actions of the agents of political change. However, the importance of publically expressed opinions in form of narratives could be recognized; in words of Iris Marion Young, narratives “aid in constituting the social knowledge that enlarges thought” (Young 2000, 76), orient us to deliberate on the source of values, cultural meanings, and allow us to experience the feelings of the other (cf. Young 2000, 73–75). Through the symbolic form of narratives, a Kantian appeal to the “public use of one’s reason” (Kant 1991, 55) garners a new meaning in which the criterion of publicity makes the narratives, the texts of interpretative nature, the center of attention.

The moral or political narrative is always told to the other or to the concerned public; however, as it may *refigure* one’s understanding of the self and the society, the hermeneutical attitude may be required from participants in the political discourse, demanding from one to have the ability to listen to and hear the voice of the other, the use of practical reasoning and the self-realization about the finite nature of understanding and human conduct (see in Gadamer 2004).

Thus, while the moral image attained by accepting the possibility of progress and by listening to the narratives that reveal both the extent of social suffering and the normative expectations of the members of society, might retain its interpretative character and might by itself not fully justify the normative claims of the participants in the historical process, it can still be recognized as an important element in reaching the self-realization, the recognition of one’s particular needs, and allow us to relate the individual inclinations of its members to the collective actions in a particular society.

While the model of historical progress which I presented in the present chapter remains to be plagued by some problematic and anarchic aspects of Kant’s moral philosophy and his rational anthropology, it seems to have a potential to contribute to the question of recognition of the objectified normative standards in institutionalized social sphere as a complement to the more committed psychological understanding of the nature of agents in society. In the following paragraphs, we will see how Kant’s philosophy of history can also be connected to the theme of political judgment and social hermeneutics by taking another, more indirect route of interpretation.

III. Reflective judgment, social, and political interpretation and the social imaginary

Until now, we have been following Honneth's analysis of Kant's justifications of historical progress with a purpose to recognize the areas where his moral and what could be retrospectively named socio-political philosophy may be important for a contemporary thinking regarding the questions of ethics, justice, and politics, founded upon the belief in interpretative nature of understanding and judgment of human conduct. There is, however, another way to approach Kant's late philosophy in the interest to garner support for a contemporary hermeneutics of society. This time, upon returning to Kant's conception of reflective judgment, we may consider employing aesthetic rather than teleological judgment like in Kant's writings on philosophy of history as a tool for social and political interpretation. Such an approach, relying on the category of taste rather than purpose, is well known by Hannah Arendt's work in the unfinished third volume of *Thinking, Willing, Judging*.

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Instead of going into the details of Arendt's reinterpretation of aesthetic judgment in Kant as the potential basis of political judgment, we should only reflect upon the most interesting aspects of her work for the present discussion. Given Kant's penchant for teleological judgments in his works on philosophy of history, which come close to the status of political philosophy, the choice of aesthetic judgment and the notion of taste over teleological judgment and the category of purpose may seem odd at first, but a reflection upon taste certainly has its advantages. Instead of taking into account Kant's claims in his works on philosophy of history, which are predominantly tied to the understanding of human species in entirety, basing its intuitions upon the *phantom* of the intention of nature—however, as we have just seen, such a conception can be circumvented and largely overcome as in *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* and *Contest of Faculties*—, Arendt takes a more creative stance in adopting the judgment of taste as a more dynamic foundation for political judgment, specifically appealing to its inherent attributes of *communicability*, which ensures its universality by appealing to the common sense (*sensus communis*), the tendency to recognize the *particularity* of a (beautiful) object, and *retrospective* orientation which relates to the notion of the spectator rather

than actor of the events in history, allowing this mode of thinking to take on the new and—over the course of time—refined meanings.¹²

We see that we are operating here with a different take on the potential of Kant's political understanding and the conception of reflective judgment. Whereas we previously— with the help of Axel Honneth—subscribed to the will to see the conjoined efforts of rational individuals reflected in a vision of moral improvement that manifested the standard for normative directions for society, the examination of the promising aspects of (aesthetic) judgments of taste yields different results for the alternative areas of interest. Since reflective judgment is based on the idea of the reflective appropriation of a particular under the heading of a general rule without objective subscription, it is more easily translatable into contingent world of “post-rational” society than determinate theoretical and moral judgments, and complies with the theoretical interest in a historical and interpretative nature of the world. Despite their interconnection, the judgment of taste has certain “hermeneutic” advantages over the judgment of purpose, namely the immediacy of the intuition of taste, its self-imposing need for the cultivation of the sense of taste, and its appeal to

12 The following overview of Arendt's decision to use aesthetic judgment as a foundation of political judgment is a summarization of Ricoeur's concise analysis in Ricoeur 2000, 94–108. Also, see and consult the primary sources: Kant 2007; Arendt 1968. It may be relevant to also draw attention to the work of Italian critical theorist Alessandro Ferrara, another author who transported Kant's vision of reflective judgment to contemporary political philosophy believing it allows us to recognize “exemplary normativity” of particular norms and standards in an effort to avoid the extremes of overgeneralized universalism of liberals, and the passivity and normative relativism of communitarians (see, e.g., Ferrara 2008). It should also be taken into account that the “first-person experience” I mentioned above and the role of spectator are understood in different contexts: the first relates to the question of interpretation and judgment, the second is considered from the perspective of the action.

the *sensus communis*.¹³

An important issue that Arendt recognizes with the notion of reflective judgments is that they reveal a *tragic dimension* of social conduct; as they are *retrospectively* used by spectators rather than the actors of political events in history, they expose the extent of the tragedy of human existence by way of connecting the past events into the seemingly endless chain of manifestations of human fallibility (Lara 2008, 94); they mirror our finite understanding and continuous struggle to interpret the seemingly chaotic conglomeration of the actions of actors on the stage and place them into an ordered chain of events that could entertain the possibility of historical progress.¹⁴ Nevertheless, at this point we must ask—is there a tighter connection between the roles of the judging spectator and the actor in historical events? To answer this question, we shall make a small detour with the short reflection upon the concept of (social) imagination.

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There is, however, another important aspect of aesthetic judgment, related to the faculty of imagination. As it is well known, the judgment of taste observes and judges upon the effects of the “free play” of understanding and imagination, where imagination takes the upper hand as it “schematize[s] without [overarching] concept.” (Kant 2007, 116–117)¹⁵ Considering the role that ideology plays in a world where the web of symbolic mediation not only mediates the particular intellectual and cultural tradition (legacy), but also

13 Hans-Georg Gadamer, while critical to Kant’s aesthetics (especially the trend of “disinterested anesthetization” which it is supposed to have commenced), recognized positive development in his appeal to common sense in the communication of the judgment of taste; however, he may have missed the opportunity to further develop this reflection, and gain additional theoretical support for his ideas on effective history and *Bildung* without predominantly grounding it in a more problematic legacy of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit. See Gadamer’s remarks regarding Kant’s aesthetics and judgment of taste in Gadamer 2004, 37–52.

14 Here we are obviously again confronted with what Honneth called the “first model” for the justification of historical progress.

15 The discussion about the significance of the faculty of imagination in Kant’s philosophy and the interconnection between the synthetic function of said faculty in his theoretical philosophy, and its role in the judgment of taste and the production of the beautiful far exceeds the boundaries of purpose and length of the present paper, yet it is certainly an investigation that has been and still remains worthy of undertaking.

social institutions as relatively stable and permanent patterns of social behavior, legal relationships, and consciousness, political programs, social symbols of authority, and ideological practices, a reflection upon the imaginary aspects of social existence could reveal the necessary orientation of the normative expectations of social agents. Here, an interplay between the imaginary work of a genius—an exemplary individual who creates utopias of better life—and an observer of social reality who reflects upon ideologically and symbolically mediated society and interprets it in conjunction with the normative standard, set by the actions of contributors to the progress of human values, curbs the enthusiasm of the “genius” by applying the normative orientations to the actual living world.¹⁶ It is the “enlarged mentality” that the reflective judgment of taste brings into the discussion which may help to understand the—both pathological and illuminating—effects of ideology upon society, and be the potential source of a cure for pathologies and disorders of contemporary society.

Such a depiction of the role of reflective judgments in the understanding of political currents and state of society brings us back to the notion of moral and political narratives we explored earlier. The reflective, interpretative judgment can be recognized as an important tool in deciding upon the value and the relevance of particular narratives, often masked by hidden agendas of economic and political forces, and sometimes even systematically distorted due to the unjust distribution of social power, as it judges the particular characteristics of the inspected object, and can temporalize the moral and political image of the examined object or event by reflecting upon the historical perspective of society in which it takes place. Again, such an approach may require a hermeneutical attitude which recognizes the omnipresence of ideological narratives which pervade current society and regards the possibility of a definite answer to the social and political challenges as a delusion, yet strives towards a better understating of the self, the other, and the state of society in question.

16 For a discussion on the conception and the interplay between ideology and utopia consult Ricoeur 1986.

IV. Conclusion: Kant, critical hermeneutics, and the responsible interpretation of contemporary society

In conclusion, let us see if a common ground has been found for the two lines of interpretation of contemporary importance of Kant's later philosophy that we assessed in the previous chapters. Firstly, I undertook the investigation of Kant's late philosophy by consulting Honneth's take on the relevance of his philosophy of progress, which allowed me to recognize the inherent if restrained "hermeneutical", historical and, communicative dimensions in Kant's moral and political thinking. Approaching the spectrum of the phenomenology of social change, Kant conducts the philosophy of historical progress, where the notion of moral improvement is tied to the demand for experiencing intelligible claims in the real historical world.

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Let us remind ourselves that even in what we, along with Honneth, recognized as the "second justificatory model" for the hypothesis of progress, Kant's moral philosophy has an inherently political dimension. The categorical imperative as a rigorous testing procedure for the sustainability of maxims that lead to concrete actions in the empirical world should be used by the rulers and the administrators in public deliberation to reach morally appropriate decisions. However, the formal and abstract character of Kant's deontological ethics, relying on the separation between the realms of freedom and natural law, has frequently proven to be difficult to translate into the contingent and often "irrational" actuality. Thus, the justification of moral progress, tied to the keenly shared self-understanding of the role and place of the particular participants in the process of enlightenment—moral, intellectual, and political improvement—can offer the structural framework for the exposition of normative standards and interpretation of the current of social change. While such a conception does bring a plethora of new problems, ranging from the broadness of the vision and potential Eurocentrism to the problematic anthropology that sets its formal background, the apparent "empiricization" of practical reason suggests a welcome alternative to the overly strict logic of Kant's practical philosophy and Hegel's objectivized representation of progress and ethical life.

As it turned out, the notion of moral and political narratives which help publicly situate reason can be utilized to serve as a link between the discussion

upon the hermeneutically depicted concerns of the self-understanding participants in the course of history of society and anthropologically oriented reflection upon the narrative identity that constitutes human nature.

After investigating Kant's writings on history, teleology, and politics I took a more specified look at the potential of the concept of reflective judgment for the usage in contemporary political theory and moral philosophy. Rather than orienting according to the teleological variety, which was a key to understand Kant's works on philosophy of history, I followed Hannah Arendt in assessing the relevance of the aesthetic judgment of taste for the understanding of contemporary politics. Such a judgment might have an important role in the investigation of ideology and social imaginary, which ties the reflection upon moral standards of society relating to the normative expectations of its actors to the investigation of the methodology for a contemporary moral and political interpretation.

Both of those lines brought me to the belief that Kant's late philosophy contains inherent interpretative¹⁷ and historical elements which could prove beneficiary for the critical hermeneutics of society, which intends to retain its focus on the deepened understanding of its features and one's specific role in the course of its self-presentation rather than a mere explanation of social facts, and yet ascribe to the certain normative and interpretative standards of validity. The narratives which we tell each other depict moral images of society and its members, and they often contain the seeds of hope—the hope that in a society in which both rationality and *common sense* are often expelled from public discussion the understanding of *the tragedy of human existence*, the acknowledgment of finiteness of our knowledge, and the interpretative character of our judgments can help us provide a more effective means of

17 Accordingly, Rudolf A. Makkreel names the reflective judgments as »interpretative judgments« (Makkreel 1997, 160).

fighting social injustice.¹⁸ Thus, a critical hermeneutics that allows us to create visions of a better life while remaining tied to the idea of responsible interpretation of the symbolically and ideologically pervaded society can prove to be a useful and effective manner of approaching the current social and political challenges.

18 One should also be attentive to the work of Stanley Cavell who, besides reflecting on the relevant attitude of *acknowledgment* which he regards as a conceptual necessity for the understanding of the meaning of linguistic propositions (Cavell 2002), and might be connected to Heidegger's notion of *care* (see Honneth's analysis in Honneth 2008, 50–52), displays hermeneutic sensibility when approaching the concept of *moral perfectionism* where he connects the themes from Emerson, Thoreau, Nietzsche, and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology (in particular with regards to the reflection on the finiteness of existence and authenticity) with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language to inspect the possibly of *originary ethics* that reach beyond the normative issues of traditional ethics, and intend to grasp the foundational stance that represents the source of all moral judgment (see, e.g., Cavell 1990; a possibility of relatedness to the present discussion can be recognized in Grušovnik 2014, 117).

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RETURNING TO ITSELF, IN ITSELF

ON THE META-HERMENEUTIC DIMENSION OF FICHTE'S

PRINCIPLE OF IDENTITY

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Abstract

Despite its general omission, the “Aenesidemus-Review” stands among a pair of fundamental texts for the initial conception of Fichte’s philosophy. The present article intends to show just how fundamental the “Aenesidemus-Review” is in this scope; namely, we intend to prove the key role the “Aenesidemus-Review” has in establishing a theoretical dialogue, as well as a positional confrontation, between Fichte, Schulze, and Reinhold; how the main problem from thence arisen is a problem of a hermeneutic nature, inasmuch as it deals with the language and the communicability between concept and idea, as well as idea and human spirit (or lack thereof); and hence, how the “Aenesidemus-Review”, and its main problem, subsequently stimulate Fichte for further reflection on the topic: how, from this small writing,

Fichte sets out to acquire a new first, uninterpretable, and hence universally communicable principle for all philosophy: the principle of identity.

Keywords: Fichte, hermeneutics, philosophy, identity, absolute.

Vračanje k sebi, v sebi. O meta-hermenevtični dimenziji Fichtejevega načela identitete

Povzetek

208 Kljub splošnemu prezrtju, je »recenzija Aenesidemusa« vsekakor eno izmed temeljnih besedil za zgodnje zasnovanje Fichtejeve filozofije. Pričujoči članek skuša pokazati, kako resnično temeljnega pomena je v tem oziru »recenzija Aenesidemusa«; želimo namreč dokazati njeno ključno vlogo pri vzpostavitvi tako teoretskega dialoga kot soočenja stališč med Fichtejem, Schulzejem in Reinholdom; da je na tej podlagi razprti poglobitni problem hermenevtične narave, kolikor obravnava govorico in medsebojno sporočljivost med pojmom in idejo ter med idejo in človeškim duhom (ali njegovim umanjkanjem); in da sta, torej, »recenzija Aenesidemusa« in njen osrednji problem Fichteja kasneje spodbudila k nadaljnji refleksiji o tematiki: da se je na osnovi tega majhnega spisa Fichte podal na pot doseganja novega prvega, nerazložljivega in potemtakem univerzalno sporočljivega načela za vso filozofijo: načela identitete.

Ključne besede: Fichte, hermenevtika, filozofija, identiteta, absolutno.

I. Brief introduction

Looking at the different versions of Fichte's *Doctrine of Science*, most of them bear that very name and focus on the issue therein expressed. Prior to the latter, however, there are others still, the most ancestral of all the attempts at a Doctrine of Science, which do not yet bear that name, and therefore tend to go unnoticed, though they may be regarded as the living essence of Fichte's philosophy.¹ Among these, two moments truly explain the *defining moment in Fichte's conception of an absolute identity*; the text "Eigne Meditationen", a long group of reflections composed between October 1793 and February 1794,² and the "Aenesidemus-Review,"³ also composed during the winter of 1793, in response to G. E. Schulze's work *Aenesidemus* (1792).⁴ For the sake of economy, we shall deal with only one of these moments: the one that, rather unfairly, is held as the less decisive of the two, namely, the theoretical dialogue between Fichte, Reinhold, and Schulze in the "Aenesidemus-Review". Through this brief analysis, we hope to understand Fichte's *need for a doctrine of science*; which, in turn, may help us discern the contours of a question whose solution would be Fichte's last design, and would occupy all German (idealist) philosophy as a whole: that is, the question of the possibility of philosophical apodicticity, or the

1 Apart from the two writings mentioned, I refer, among other possible examples, to "Über die Würde des Menschen", in 1794, or to the first version of what was to be the writing "Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre", in 1794, namely Fichte's Lectures in Zürich (still in 1793), attended by J. B. Erhard or J. I. Baggesen, and transcribed by J. K. Lavater.

2 "Eigne Meditationen über Elementar-Philosophie", in: Fichte GA, II.3, 21–177.

3 "Aenesidemus, oder über die Fundamente der von dem Hrn. Prof. Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementar-Philosophie. Nebst einer Vertheidigung des Skepticismus gegen die Anmaßungen der Vernunftkritik", in: Fichte W I, 1–25.

4 Cf. Schulze Aen.

possibility of an absolute principle of philosophy, a philosophy of principles.⁵

II. The “Aenesidemus-Review” and the hermeneutic problem of Reinhold’s principle of consciousness

The “Aenesidemus-Review” is something of a three-voiced argumentation, now consonant, now dissonant, on the validity of Reinhold’s principle of consciousness⁶—and, therefore, on the possibility of a supreme principle of philosophy.

The fundamental idea that presides over Reinhold’s thought, and that would bring about this controversy, is in a way akin to the one that would preside over Fichte’s and Schelling’s theories. According to the Austrian philosopher, *philosophy lacked a fundamental ground, an absolute principle that would unite its theoretical and practical parts*,⁷ which were then divided due to the *over-interpretation* to which philosophy had been subjected by the various sects forming around Kant’s critical edifice. To Reinhold, then, *the problem was of a hermeneutic essence*; and hence, peace among sects would have to involve the acquisition of such an absolute principle, free from all erroneous interpretations, which would protect the critical edifice from any possible attacks and gather the different sects around *a single critical language*; otherwise, Reinhold concludes, one would forever neglect the regulative

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5 Because the theme of the onset and constitution of Fichte’s philosophy is vast, I prefer to underscore the much more unknown, and yet no less important contributions towards acknowledging the role of the “Aenesidemus-Review” in the aforementioned process. Amongst these, much less in number, I would stress: Breazeale 1981; Baum 1979; Wood 1991; Druet 1973; Lauth 1971; Fincham 2000; Franks 2016. For a more comprehensive study of the theme, however, I would recommend the inevitable works by Henrich 2004 I and Frank 1998.

6 Although Reinhold’s theoretical views on his principle of consciousness extend from his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1786) to *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* (1791), it is in the first volume of the *Beiträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Missverständnisse der Philosophen*, in 1790, that the aforementioned principle is established as Reinhold’s own absolute principle.

7 See Reinhold 2003, 3: “[...] den Mangel eines ersten und allgemeingeltenden Prinzips aller Philosophie überhaupt.”

enterprise of reason, and subject it to the heteronimity of the latter.

As for Fichte, the problem was of a similar nature. For, on the one hand, Fichte too was “intimately convinced that no human understanding could go beyond the limit where Kant had stood, especially in his Critique of the Faculty of Judgment” (Fichte W I, 30);⁸ but, on the other hand, it was Fichte’s belief that Kant had never determined that limit, nor had he indicated it as the final frontier of all finite knowledge;⁹ and hence, both to Reinhold and Fichte, *philosophy was not yet science, the language of philosophy was not yet scientific, and, in a word, the task was to construe a system of reason which embraced all philosophy, as well as consummated the philosophical faculty of judgment*, thus completing the critical procedure with which Kant had imbued philosophy in general.

But if Fichte was profoundly influenced by *Reinhold* as to the incontrovertible necessity of an absolute principle of philosophy, and the elevation of philosophy to science, however, he was even more overwhelmingly so by *G. E. Schulze*. For, according to Schulze, never could language aspire to be as certain as an apodictic philosophy, just as philosophy could never be so apodictic as to call itself science; and hence, Reinhold’s principle of consciousness was not an absolute and apodictically certain principle, as was not its language, and therefore Reinhold’s was *not the answer to Kant’s problem*.

Now, Fichte certainly agreed with Schulze’s opinion regarding Reinhold’s principle; for, indeed, Reinhold’s principle of consciousness was not the absolute principle of philosophy.¹⁰ But, conversely, Fichte *did not believe in the impossibility of an absolute principle, nor that this principle was unattainable*

8 All citations will be presented in a traditional manner (abbreviation of work, volume of work, number of page(s)). The abbreviation of each work cited finds correspondence in the final bibliographical section. All citations have been translated from their original German language into English. The citations are of my own translation.

9 Which is why Fichte concludes the previous sentence by saying: “[...] which he never determined for us, nor indicated as the last limit of finite knowledge” (Fichte W I, 30).

10 See Fichte’s letter to Vloemer, dated November 1793: “[...] it came to be that, through the lecture of a resolute skeptic, I was immediately led to the clear conviction that philosophy is still very far from the state of a science, and was forced to renounce to my own previous system and to think of a more sustainable one” (Fichte GA III.2, 14). See also Fichte’s letter to Flatt, dated November or December 1793 (Fichte GA III.2, 18).

through language. Quite on the contrary, such a hermeneutic problem was solvable—just not through Reinhold’s principle of consciousness; and, as such, the need for such a principle persisted, and to attain it was now philosophy’s most sacred task; and language, the voice of such a principle, was that which forged it as an hermeneutic problem, and that which would ultimately provide its solution. And so, although the sense and final aim of Reinhold’s philosophy are notably similar to the ones of Fichte, and contrary to those of Schulze, it cannot come as a surprise that, while the “Aenesidemus-Review” is first and foremost a defense of Reinhold against Schulze’s heteronomy, at the same time, it is also a verification of the validity of Reinhold’s principles, and, whenever necessary, an attempt to surpass them, without ever adhering to Schulze. The aim in Fichte’s philosophy, one could say, is then to attain the consummation of the faculty of philosophical judgment, and thus build a “Vernunft-System” (Fichte W I, 45) that would embrace all philosophy, thereby furthering Kant’s critical enterprise, resuming and supplanting Reinhold’s principle of consciousness and consciously subduing to Schulze’s opinion—at least, only to the point when Reinhold’s opinion was proved to be wrong, and Fichte’s own opinion correct.

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Now, as is natural, the “Aenesidemus-Review” emerges as an important moment in the context of such an ample debate. Fichte ascribes it a triple formulation, so as to answer the three main objections Schulze raises against Reinhold in his *Aenesidemus*. Schulze’s objections were as follows. 1) “Reinhold’s principle of consciousness is not an absolutely prime proposition, for as a proposition and a judgment, it is below the supreme rule of all judgment, the principle of contradiction.” (Fichte W I, 5; Schulze Aen, 46) 2) “The proposition of consciousness is (a proposition) not permanently determined by itself.” (Fichte W I, 6; Schulze Aen, 48). And, 3): “The proposition of consciousness is neither a universally valid proposition, nor does it express a fact that is not associated to a determined experience or a certain reasoning.” (Fichte W I, 6;

Schulze Aen, 53).¹¹

As to the *third objection*, I shall deliberately leave it unmentioned.

As to the *first objection*, I shall very briefly say that Fichte draws from it *two distinct conclusions*: first, that Reinhold's principle of consciousness is indeed supreme within a theoretical sphere, not because it is *logically* superior to the principle of contradiction (which it is not, as had been pointed out by Schulze), but because it is *in reality* superior to it; but second, that although the principle of consciousness is in reality supreme in a theoretical plane, however, it was not completely so; for by proclaiming itself as such, the principle of consciousness had to neglect the principle of contradiction, which meant that the principle of consciousness cocooned itself in the theoretical domain, and so unilaterally did it do this, that it made its transition—or union—with the practical domain of philosophy impossible. Hence, Reinhold failed in uniting theoretical and practical through an absolute principle, and thus only reinforced the objections to the possibility of a first principle of all philosophy.

According to Fichte, then, though it is forged in the theoretical, and though it is theoretically supreme, the new principle will always have to address *the practical*; and hence, a new principle will always have to relinquish the exclusively theoretical primacy, and yet, *at the same time, it cannot but depart from one such plane towards the practical*. In other words, something had to be thought that transcended the mere laws of reflection, something that went *beyond pure speculation; something beyond Reinhold's principle of consciousness*.

I now approach the *second* objection. It deals with the decisive aggravation of the problem, namely, the fact that the principle of consciousness cannot be the supreme principle of all philosophy, for it is neither *absolutely autonomous* nor *necessary*: “The proposition of consciousness is (a proposition) not permanently determined by itself.” (Fichte W I, 6)

11 In Fichte's (and Schulze's) original words: 1) “Dieser Satz sey kein absolut *erster* Satz; denn er stehe als Satz und Urtheil unter der höchsten Regel alles Urtheilens, dem Satze des Widerspruchs.” 2) “Der Satz des Bewusstseyns sey kein *durchgängig durch sich selbst bestimmter* Satz.” 3) “[Endlich sey] der Satz des Bewusstseyns weder ein allgemein geltender Satz, noch drückte er ein Factum aus, das an keine bestimmte Erfahrung und an kein gewissen Raisonement gebunden sey.” (Fichte W I, 5 and 6)

Schulze had had good reason to raise this objection; and, in our opinion, so did Fichte. The reason for such an objection is as follow. Reinhold's principle of consciousness deems itself supreme. But, as any principle, its efficacy lies not just upon itself, but more specifically upon *the reflection dedicated to the meaning of the concepts that compose it* (in this case, Reinhold's concepts of differentiation and reference)—which requires the presence of the principle of contradiction, to regulate a perfect consonance between concepts and reflection. Now, since to Reinhold his principle of consciousness is greater than the principle of contradiction, then it must also deny the latter's validity, and if it does, and if the discriminating power inherent to the principle of contradiction is lost, then one is bound to lose sight of a correct order between species ["Arten"] and genus ["Gattung"], and subsequently lose track of what should be a materially apodictic, non-contradictory principle. For now, instead of a correct, there could be an *incorrect* determination of the concepts (species) that compose the principle (genus). And so, for Schulze (theoretically and practically), as for Fichte (practically), the principle of consciousness surely could not be superior to the one of contradiction, and precisely for that reason, it could not be apodictic. *But that is not all.* For what these two censors of Reinhold hereby suggest is much more important, and yet much graver than this, namely: that if the principle of consciousness is practically inferior to the one of contradiction, then it is not just Reinhold's principle, but also *his concepts of differentiating and referring that are not apodictic*, inasmuch as, since they are not regulated by the principle of contradiction, they do not have the same *meaning* to all men, rather they might contain either insufficient or excessive characteristics¹²—quite ironically, the same hermeneutic error that Reinhold had attempted to eradicate with his theory. And so, in a word, whatever the position of this principle of consciousness, it is impossible for it to conform to, to communicate, to render itself intelligible and interpretable to its parts. That is, in Reinhold's theory there prevails *a critical hermeneutic problem*, for the content of the critical concept is not consentaneous with the

12 In Fichte's own words: "[...] then these differentiating and referring must be at least complete, and hence be so determined, that they do not allow for more than one interpretation." (Fichte W I, 6)

form of that concept, which meant that the reflection generated by the meaning of the concepts that compose the concept of consciousness cannot be apodictic either—which, in turn, ultimately meant that Reinhold’s philosophical language did not avoid confining with experience, thus corrupting its real interpretation, and preventing its progression from theoretical to practical (as is stated in Fichte’s third objection to Reinhold).

That is why—to resume Fichte’s aim—, philosophy lacked a principle that truly united its two parts, namely, his own *principle of identity*;¹³ and to Fichte, if there was a way to solve this problem, it was precisely by thinking beyond the principle of consciousness, towards a legitimate and infallible union between theoretical and practical. In a word, it was necessary to ponder on the aforementioned concepts that composed the I, as well as their possible relations: namely, the resistance between the two opposite halves of the I, *feeling* (the ideal, the objective) and *reflection* (the real, the subjective); to question their differentiation and/or reference, and the possibility of bringing them together, thus solving Reinhold’s hermeneutic problem; and finally, to acquiesce the subsequent possibility of an absolute principle of philosophy.

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The following chapter is therefore devoted to analyzing Fichte’s proposal of his own absolute principle, focusing on his resolution of the question of the opposites (“Gefühl” and “Reflection”), and the subsequent legitimation of his endeavor. This I shall do in the form of three general reflections on Fichte’s principle of identity; as it were, three proofs of the absolute infallibility of Fichte’s principle of identity, as well as three parts of Fichte’s resolution of the main problem in our article.

13 “How now, if precisely the indeterminacy and indeterminability of these concepts indicated the need to investigate for a superior principle, for a real validity of the proposition of identity and opposition; and if the concepts of differentiating and referring are to be determined only through that of identity and opposite?” (Fichte W I, 6)

III. Fichte's meta-hermeneutic alternative (A triple reflection on the absoluteness of the principle of identity)

III. 1. *The problem of the union between feeling and reflection*

The problem as raised in Fichte's "Aenesidemus-Review" was not dealt therein; rather, it was gradually solved later, throughout other versions of Fichte's Doctrine of Science. According to it, all depended on the perfect correspondence between meaning and concept; which, according to Fichte, translated into the need for an absolute principle, that is, a supreme example for this infallible correspondence. Hence, Fichte repeatedly approaches the problem of *a union between opposites*, the union between feeling and reflection; for only through this union may the original action (the "Urhandlung") of the I occur; only then may the I arise, be conscious and perceive itself, understand itself, reflect upon itself; and, of course, only through it may the absolute principle, if not exist, at least become discernible to the human spirit—and thus solve the problem enunciated in the "Aenesidemus-Review".

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Now this, of course, is not just *any* union; for the union as such, a union in general, occurs as many times as feeling and reflection come into contact throughout one's life; but because those are contact points between opposites, and therefore, feeling and reflection cannot be united—and because, nonetheless, feeling and reflection are recurrently intertwined in human life—, this constitutes a problem more conveniently analyzable not in those fortuitous contacts, but *in the first, the most original of those contacts: precisely in the original action*, which opens for the circle of man's existence. There, for the first time, feeling and reflection have the need to come into contact, which happens because feeling must become reflection and reflection must come from feeling—and both generate the I.

Now, the problem exists because the two of them—feeling, *the original activity* ("ursprüngliche Tätigkeit"), the I before being I, and reflection, the I that is already I—have incompatible properties, impossible to unite without their acknowledging themselves contrary to that which merges with them; and even if a brief, almost imperceptible contact between opposites were possible; even if we succeeded in conciliating part of them, what to do of their remaining

properties, which would nonetheless still oppose one another? Hence, in light of this problem, Fichte finds himself before a forked path: either the I *accepts* this mix between opposites, or he *denies* it, and must subsequently search for another platform, another perspective of the problem. Now, facing the need to think two irreducible opposites, Fichte, knowing that the first path would force him to abandon the autonomous character of the I, opts for the second path, and does so the only way he can, namely, by finding a *third plane* between A and –A. Fichte commonly designates it as C:¹⁴ *the point where the original action occurs, and the fate of the I is sealed*. Hence, what is C? The answer is self-evident: if the opposites are irreducible, and they must not suffer *real* union between themselves; and since, in a word, only one of them can exist in reality (otherwise, the I would not have identity, and consciousness would be so thwarted that its infallibly reciprocating movement would not reflect the apodicticity of an absolute principle of all philosophy), then Fichte must see C not as a field of affirmation, but as a *field of gradual, at last maximum negation between opposites*. That is, to Fichte, the original action is a maximum point between opposites, but only the maximum point of their *mutual limitation*, and therefore really a *minimum point between opposites*, and the course towards it as one of a gradual decrease in intensity between the latter. And ultimately, what does this mean? It means *an approximation, and a quite singular one, between the opposites of feeling and reflection*, ideal and real. For since the original activity is purely ideal; since C and with it reflection have the need to be real, thus forever letting go from the ideal original activity; and since, in other words, the I has the need to exist, for the “Trieb zum Ich” determines that he must come to be I, and that he can only be so once he reflects, then surely *ideal and real must come to be one in C*. That is, the properties of the one must surely *wane* to allow for the properties of the other; but this in such a way that, instead of a transition, feeling, surely real in the original action (but minimally real), yields to the real, surely minimal, but already growing properties of the reflection, and what might seem a mere transition is rather

14 See “Eigne Meditationen” (1793), and above all the *Grundriss des eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre* (1795), where Fichte addresses C as “the determinate point of limitation” (Fichte W I, 352).

an encompassment, an incorporation of feeling by reflection. And it is from this unique embrace that the original action, the first reflection is born, and with it the I, which shall henceforth exist as such, and follow its natural course; that is, the I shall grow, cumulatively potentiate itself, always reassuming the shape of the original I that is born from this concession, and yet progressing with it towards the comprehension of the absolute I, in a course not only attainable, but also necessary to the fulfillment of man's destination.

III. 2. The problem of the orientation(s) of the circle of existence

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Here lies the core of our understanding of Fichte's original action, which is already discernible from the words in the section III. 1. The fact from which we set off is this: the original action consists of an encompassment of feeling by reflection, or, in other words, a minimal contact between opposite parts, and the subsequent concession of an opposite ["Gefühl"] in favor of the other ["Reflection"], according to which feeling assumes the form of reflection. This results in a circle of existence endowed with a single direction, eternally rotating upon itself, eternally set in its necessary uniformity.

Now, the image of a circle, and no less a circle departing from an original action of the I, raises an important doubt. The doubt is this: if, in a circle with *a single* direction, the original action is a contact between minimum points, can one expect—if at all—a contact between maximum points? That is: if in such a circle reflection, as was said, encompasses feeling, and if its course must be directly opposite to the one of the original activity, then towards what point does reflection tend? For if the original action is a contact between the minimum points of the opposites, then it would be expectable that, in the antipodes of the circle, a maximum point would occur; namely, a point in which reflection, and philosophy, once taken to its extreme consummation, would once again dissolve into the original activity.

This question, we think, is of a rhetoric nature for Fichte; for its mere consideration would conflict with some of Fichte's most primary assumptions. And it is so for three erroneous reasons.

First, *regarding feeling*, the notion that *there was ever a maximum in the original activity*; for, according to our current understanding of the problem,

although the original activity proceeds through a decrease in intensity, that only happens because it itself seems to have to derive from a maximum of reflection, and not because there is a maximum of original activity.

Secondly, *regarding reflection*, the notion that reflection, since it departs from a minimum, immediately promotes its transformation (which is true), and that such a transformation appears under the guise of an intensification, a maximum that is *superior or even unattainable to it* (which to Fichte is false, for *it is attainable*, and we shall see why).

And third, *regarding the original action*, the notion that because the original action is an encounter between the minimums, it can only be legitimated by a different, maximum arrival point, as if this were dictated by *a different direction* of the same circle.

Let us then consider such coordinates, and further analyze their respective issues.

According to Fichte, the original action is an encounter between the minimum intensities of feeling and reflection; a gradual decrease in the intensity of feeling, its minimum, originates another minimum—the first reflection—, which is the same as saying that *in the original I the union between feeling and reflection occurs through a cessation of the feeling of inactivity of the I, which is replaced by the original action of the I, in reflection*—and never the opposite. Hence, feeling comes from no maximum, rather strives to decrease in intensity, thus being a waning vehicle of reflection; the first reflection does not tend towards a maximum, but rather prefers to be confined to the model of its first manifestation; and finally, the original action too is encapsulated in itself, due to the necessary neglect of another maximum contact point: which means that, according to Fichte, *the circle of the self-understanding of the I must have but one, and only one orientation; the one of its infinite, eternal return to itself*. That is, inasmuch as Fichte accepts but *a single* direction of the circle—and we acknowledge this fact as being fundamental in Fichte's theory of the I—, then, retroactively, this means that to Fichte the minimum points exist not only to, but *precisely* to re-generate the very same minimum points, and so forth, forever; which, in turn, explains why Fichte's original activity cannot depart from a maximum point; simply because, in a circle of a single direction, any encounter only promotes a further—and necessary—separation in

relation to that point, that is, a determination increasingly contrary regarding the origin, *but never a different contact point*; which is why, to Fichte, *this pure passiveness was never superior or inferior to what it always was, rather it was always equal to itself, since its inception*. Therefore, I would answer the first doubt as follows: *according to Fichte's circular comprehension of the I, one simply must not expect a second contact point, a maximum point between feeling and reflection, rather a single minimal encounter point, in the original action*; and once this is assumed, the original action surely means a minimum of original activity, but not because this minimum is a result of a *real decrease in intensity*, but rather because it is the result of an *ideal decrease in intensity* that consists of a simple disappearance of feeling, now embraced by real reflection. And so, Fichte says, if the original activity ceases in a minimum, if the original action is something of a minimum, and reflection arises from a minimum, then, from reflection to feeling—that is, in the other half of the circle, which once again is opened between the opposites—, there cannot be a replica of this encounter between minimums, only something completely different from this.

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Furthermore, according to Fichte, the original action is a contact point between the minimum intensities of feeling and reflection; a gradual disappearance of the feeling occasions a first reflection, which means that in the original I the union between feeling and reflection takes place with the appearance of a reflection of oneself, to the detriment of the original activity. So now we ask: where does such a reflection tend to? Surely it tends towards knowledge, towards the self-consciousness of man, towards the I's real activity; and apparently, also towards an accentuation of this knowledge, to the extent of an absolute knowledge of oneself. However, let us stress two aspects: first, that the course of Fichte's reflection must be directly opposite to the one of feeling; and, secondly, that, although feeling tends towards its minimum (which means that something has to change in feeling so that it becomes reflection), that does not mean that feeling comes from a maximum, nor does it mean that its waning happens only as a repercussion of this fact. Instead, there is no encounter between maximums, the original activity has always been the same, and feeling does not simply diminish, rather it is truly decomposed, deconstructed, and incorporated into reflection. Now, if this is the case with feeling, then also reflection is born from a minimum of itself; but neither is it

born of *any* minimum, nor does its course consist of a genuine accumulation, nor does it therefore tend towards its maximum (for that encounter between maximum points simply does not exist). Quite on the contrary, if there is something that emerges from Fichte's theory, it is that in the original action the I is born not as a simple minimum, *but already deeming itself absolute*; for what the real fusion between feeling and reflection suggests is that, since it is impossible for the opposites to subsist, and since reality *is* ideality, then real reflection prevails over ideal feeling, and embraces it, instead of trying to harmonize their properties. And so, the I who is born with reflection is already "A=A", it is already absolute identity, the same identity that provides an absolute principle of philosophy; and although much is yet to be done, much is yet to be conquered so as to consummate such a system, however, that course is not at all one of accentuation or intensification; instead, it consists of a minimization, and a minimization whose sole task is to obey the golden rule of the doctrine of science, according to which *the principle precedes the system*. Therefore, this is not the case of a quantitative, but rather only of a *qualitative evolution*; a change, an act of infinite perfection, an infinite and yet attainable perfectibility of the I in the cognition of himself. And so, regarding the second doubt, I would say that in Fichte reflection does not tend towards any superior point, towards any maximum (on the one hand, because it is inexistent, on the other hand, it is inexistent because it is initial, and not final), rather progresses through an attainable perfectibility, in a manner completely opposite to this. We shall now see how.

III. 3. The problem of self-consciousness

This third point shall serve as an answer to Fichte's ultimate problem, namely, the possibility of acknowledging an identity of the I, and hence, the possibility of elevating this I to the condition of a supreme principle of philosophy.

The "Urhandlung" is the original action of the I; it is its first action and, therefore, as in Fichte, it is the determiner of all its remaining actions, for it defines how the I is, how it relates to the world, what course it will henceforth take. In a word, the original action is the axis that defines the direction of the relation between feeling and reflection, that is, the course of the I as composed

of these two opposites; and what Fichte's original action determines is that, at the time of the first reflection, it sets the tone, or the direction, of the whole subsequent (practical) course in a way directly opposed to what was the course of the feeling.

Yet, let us see what this image of the original action really means. In my opinion, it suggests a triple layer of significance, and as such it must be understood in three phases.

A first phase of the understanding of the original action tells us what is visible: that reflection closes upon itself, and this is the reason of its perfectibility. To Fichte, the "Urhandlung" is the original action of the I; it is the birth of the I, the first and most solipsist acknowledgement of the I. However, since this moment of supreme intimacy of the I with itself arises from a minimum encounter between feeling and reflection; since this circle has but one direction, and this is a minimum encounter devoid of any sort of *union in disunion*—rather, it is *pure homogenization, a union despite of, and beyond disunion*—and has no maximum point where to tend, then this means two things: first, that Fichte deliberately leaves reflection—not the original reflection, but reflection in general—to delve in itself, to progress, yes, but only *in* itself, to have its own horizon, its own ideal, and its progression towards that ideal in itself, its advances and retreats always inside its own circle; and, secondly, that although it seems not to have an exterior, reflection does have an interior and an exterior, but in itself: and this is the reason for its perfectibility. In Fichte, reflection works towards its own perfection, but in such a way that this means a deeper evolution in itself, of its own speaking about itself, and also of its own interpretation of itself.

A second phase of the understanding of the original action is a consequence of the latter: that *the "Urhandlung", or the original reflection of the I, is absolute and prior to all systems, which is why a philosophy that wishes to become science may only perfect itself if it progresses retroactively.* Hence, if we only wished to keep track of the progress of this absolute self-absorption of reflection, all we needed to do was to understand that such a comprehension of the original action, as is the one of the doctrine of science, does not allow reflection (nor the I) to leave its own boundaries; for a circle is always closed in itself, it is incorruptible. But surely, we need *something else* to perceive the ultimate

reason for this absolute alienation. Here, as in other cases, the final cause requires us to go back to the first act. And if we do so in Fichte, and think that, according to the Professor of Jena, the first reflection is a model, and sets the standard and the procedure for all others, this might be the cause why reflection in general always isolates itself and does not tolerate any contact with the outside. For, to Fichte, the reason why the original action is the model of reflection in general, is that the principle arises before any other part of the system; the absolute principle, which to Fichte is apodictically certain, is acknowledged prior to the propositions subordinated to it (the genus is prior to the species, as in Reinhold), and only that may endow the system with validity, absoluteness, and a certainty as expectable as the fact that one such system is always returning to that which originated it (*it is returning to itself, in itself*). Well, this being so, and if the first reflection, thus born from the original action, extends its influence to the whole system of reflection, then there is no other solution for reflection in general but to progress, to accentuate itself, to perfect itself: but not in despair, as something that is lost, or imagines it progresses towards something illusory, but rather in possession of a coordinating point, thus trudging an infallible course, not a progressive, but a regressive one, back to the absolute principle and the original I. Hence, what this means is that Fichte's reflection does not progress forwards ("hin"), as if its ideal were in front of it, but backwards, retroactively ("her"), as if its ideal were—and is!—behind it; and this is the ultimate reason why reflection does not progress towards a maximum—for that maximum is not outside of it, rather is *in it, in germ*, and to progress correctly, all it takes is for it to pursue this path, that is, to know that it was born, and that it must continue in this path. For when it is born, or better still, in order to be born, Fichte's I declares itself absolute; this is its origin, its first word, its original positing of itself ($A(=A)$); and therefore, in being born this way, the I gives itself a consummate image of itself, in light of which the empirical I shall come to perfect itself. In other words, the fact that the I is absolute is something of a first instruction of the reflection of the I; it is the first proposition of the consciousness of the I; and so commences its philosophy, and all that is beyond it is precisely this philosophy, which, as a system that wants to preserve its true apodicticity, must proceed in return to it—for this return is the purest justification, the purest absolutization of that system!

A third and last stage of the comprehension of Fichte's original action, perhaps more secluded, but precisely for that reason more relevant, could be stated as follows: that which, like the original action, returns to itself, admits no contradictions, neither in its origin nor in its procedure, and, therefore, where there are no contradictions there is also no fracture of an original unit, *only and always that very same original unit*. Hence, we ask: if the original action marks the birth of a total I, of a single direction from which the foundations of an apodictically certain philosophical system are laid, then *how*, or rather, *what does the I live for?* Surely, Fichte would say, the I is born as an absolute I; and that is now visible through the original action, inasmuch as one accepts an absolute limitation between opposites, until they come to be united; for if we thus understand the I, it is simultaneously ideal and real, and, therefore, once the object is overcome, once the subject is left to its totality, it is autonomous and therefore apodictically certain. But the question here is: and does the I *live* as an absolute I? Surely not, Fichte himself would say; but since the I departs from its absoluteness only not to find any arrival point *but its own absoluteness*; that is, since the I is born absolute *only to consummate itself as absolute* (the core of Fichte's doctrine of science), then the I that philosophizes—the I that lives—has no solution but to think this relation, to understand it, and *to accept this as its own life*; and once it understands the whole extension of the course that is its destination, once it understands the unavoidable need that this is the fate of all philosophy, as well as the fate of the I that thinks and lives—*only then will it once again become that very absolute I*. Therefore, this means that the reclaiming of absoluteness depends not so much on attaining a final, absolute point of the I, but rather on a *constant aspiration of this point*, that is, in knowing itself in the retroactive path in search of the absolute I, but, at the same time, *in knowing itself absolute only because one is involved in this search*, that is, returning to itself in itself. And this, *this returning to oneself in oneself is the hermeneutic nuance of the I's consciousness to Fichte*, and this eternal, yet momentary circular movement: this is the I's identity, Fichte's A=A: knowing that, once the object is embraced by a total subject, and the subject is but object of itself, the I progresses towards itself, perfecting itself in the understanding of itself, and knowing that this is its own consciousness. Yes, for the I that departs from the absolute in order to arrive at the absolute does not *progress*, nor does

it *regress*; he just perfects itself in the consciousness of knowing itself eternal between the walls of its own absoluteness; and likewise, Fichte's I does not accept opposites, nor any further expectations; it is already *everything*, and in a certain sense one could say that he never really left its own absoluteness (for that would oblige reason and reflection to resort to understanding, and even to imagination, so as to carry through one such return), as it will never arrive anywhere else but itself, through reflection, through reason.

To sum up, it is my conclusion that Fichte's I is and was always whole. It *never really experiences the loss of an original unit between opposites*—he simply does not perceive it, he forgot it and must now remember it—, and, therefore, it never really loses its *own* original unit. Quite on the contrary, it anticipates the creation of a unit between it and itself, and therefore it does not live to claim anything, and its philosophy only lives to affirm and reaffirm the fact that, in knowing itself eternally absolute, the I maintains its own unit intact. In other words, and to resume Reinhold's hermeneutic problem, Fichte elected his own absolute principle of philosophy as the eternal union of two opposites—and hence, by uniting these two opposites under the roof of an absolute consciousness of the I, Fichte suppresses the problem of any inconsistencies between principle and parts, genus and species, subject and object. In a word, Fichte aims at promoting an apodictic, infallible connection between all the parts of the philosophical system of knowledge, and thus to ensure the apodictic mutual interpretation of all these parts, thus resuming his intent in the “Anesidemus-Review”, and ultimately suppressing Reinhold's hermeneutic problem. As such, then, the I writes its own history, it writes its history with its own words, its own language, and it does so from the original action and until the consummation of the philosophical faculty of judgment—and in doing so, he ensures its much needed *practical nature*: namely, that this history, that is, this philosophy, is acknowledgeable or understandable by all individuals in all eras.

Hence, and to sum up, Fichte's philosophy is a philosophy of the strengthening and intensification of the image of the I. Fichte's philosophy, one could say, glorifies the life of the subject, but not in the voluble personality of a system, nor in the casual construction of that system, variable between individuals, nor in its inconstant language, that is, nor in the scope of a genuine appreciation

of the philosophizing individual; quite on the contrary, it is glorified in the universality, the universal applicability, the universal communicability and comprehensibility of a philosophy that claims its merit, its justice, and its strength precisely because it belongs to all, and yet is independent from all, a philosophy that ascribes everyone its own course, that makes everyone speak through its own language, but does so because this is the philosophical course and language innate to men.

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FROM TRANSCENDENT EXISTENCE, INTENTIONAL EXISTENCE TO REAL EXISTENCE

THE PROBLEM OF F. BRENTANO'S "INTENTIONALITY"

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Abstract

It is accepted that the theme of "intentionality" highlighted in modern philosophy originated from F. Brentano who distinguished physical phenomena from mental phenomena on the basis of "intentional inexistence". Be that as it may, he failed to thematize and terminologize "intentional" which, as a result, is replaceable by "objective". From an empirical standpoint, set by Brentano, mental phenomena have real existence as well as "intentional inexistence", whereas physical phenomena merely have intentional existence, and commonsense phenomena have transcendent existence. Of the three kinds of phenomena, only the mental one can be given evident judgment. The conversion of theme from "intentional" to "intentionality" in phenomenology and analytic philosophy shows

later scholars' misunderstanding and recreation of Brentano's relevant thought.

Keywords: intentional inexistence, intentionality, Brentano, phenomenology, analytic philosophy.

Od transcendentne eksistence, intencionalne eksistence do realne eksistence. Problem »intencionalnosti« pri F. Brentanu

Povzetek

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Sprejeto je mnenje, da téma »intencionalnosti«, kakor jo je osvetlila moderna filozofija, izvira od F. Brentana, ki je fizične fenomene razlikoval od mentalnih fenomenov na osnovi »intencionalne ineksistence«. Toda ni uspel tematizirati in terminološko opredeliti »intencionalnega«, kar je pripeljalo do posledice, da ga je mogoče zamenjati z besedo »objektivno«. Z empiričnega stališča, kakršnega zastopa Brentano, mentalne fenomene zaznamuje realna eksistenca in »intencionalna ineksistenca«, medtem ko posedujejo fizični fenomeni zgolj intencionalno eksistenco in zdravorazumski fenomeni transcendentno eksistenco. Izmed treh vrst je samo o mentalnih fenomenih mogoče razsojati z evidenco. Sprememba tematskega poudarka od »intencionalnega« do »intencionalnosti« znotraj fenomenologije in analitične filozofije kaže na nerazumevanje in predruženje pomena pri kasnejših preučevalcih Brentanove misli.

Ključne besede: intencionalna ineksistenca, intencionalnost, Brentano, fenomenologija, analitična filozofija.

It is accepted that the theme of “intentionality” highlighted in modern philosophy, notably phenomenology, originated from F. Brentano. Nonetheless, “intentionality” remains to be thematized in Brentano’s thought. I will argue that the “intentional” in Brentano’s philosophy is replaceable by “objective”, and that the conversion of theme from “intentional” to “intentionality” both in phenomenology and in analytic philosophy shows later scholars’ misunderstanding and recreation of Brentano’s relevant thought. As a matter of fact, more than differentiating mental and physical phenomena as is generally thought by people, Brentano introduced “intentional inexistence” into modern philosophy for the sake of, all the more, differentiating “transcendent existence”, “intentional existence” and “real existence”.

I. “Intentional” and “objective”

Not a few scholars note that Brentano has never employed “intentionality” (*Intentionalität*), not even the noun form, i.e., “intention” (*Intention*). That which is used by him is the adjective form, namely “intentional” (*intentionale*), say, “intentional inexistence of an object” (*intentionale Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes*), “intentional existence” (*intentionale Existenz*), “intentional relationship”, or the like. Even the adjective “intentional” is seldom seen in his published writings.¹ In the first edition of his masterpiece, to wit., *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*,² he even failed to make any particular elucidation with regard to “intentional”. On the one hand, “intentional” emerges in the phrases constituted by “inexistence”, “existence”, etc., around which successive elucidations are primarily performed, e.g., the “intentional inexistence of an object” is elucidated as “a reference to a content”, or “a direction toward an object”, “immanent objectivity”, or something; on the other hand, in phrases having “intentional” as a constituent, Brentano usually offers similar expressions to it. For instance, in “the intentional inexistence of an object”, he replaces “intentional” with “mental”; in “intentional existence”, he parallels

1 Cf. Spiegelberg 1976, 119; Margolis 2002, 131–134; Ni 2002, 346.

2 All the relevant citations are obtained from *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (Brentano 1995; I use PES-E for short in the article). As to the key German words, I took *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Brentano 1924) as a reference.

“phenomenal” with “intentional”. This indicates that in the period when Brentano wrote *Psychology*, the meaning of “intentional” remained to be fixed, namely, it had different meanings in different contexts. In the meanwhile, as was factually shown, it was mentioned in passing more than being discussed qua a topic.

1911 witnessed the republication of Brentano’s *Psychology* entitled *The Classification of Mental Phenomena*. The difference was merely that some appendices and footnotes were added. That which is rather conspicuous is that a long note was added to “intentional” which, as a note made in his late years, can be seen as his verdict on “intentional”. He thus said:

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This expression had been misunderstood in that some people thought it had to do with intention and the pursuit of a goal. In view of this, I might have done better to avoid it altogether. Instead of the term “intentional” the Scholastics very frequently used the expression “objective.” This has to do with the fact that something is an object for the mentally active subject, and, as such, is present in some manner in his consciousness, whether it is merely thought of or also desired, shunned, etc. I preferred the expression “intentional” because I thought there would be an even greater danger of being misunderstood if I had described the object of thought as “objectively existing,” for modern-day thinkers use this expression to refer to what really exists as opposed to “mere subjective appearances.” (Brentano PES-E, 180)

Apparently, until his late years, Brentano still considered that the expression of “intentional” could be completely evaded, which is to say that it failed at last to obtain a nomenclature identity. That which replaced it best was “objective”. On this account, our theme will be promoted to the analysis of “objective”.

“Objective” is the adjective derivative of the noun form, “object”. In Brentano, the meaning of *object* is virtually the same as that of *Gegenstand*. *Gegenstand* is compounded by two words, i.e., *Gegen-* means “toward, opposed to, versus”, and *-stand* means “stand, be on one’s feet”, and the compound meaning is “to stand opposed to”. In common sense, “object” means that one thing stands opposed to another thing, both of which are factually existent. In the era of

Brentano, common philosophical ideas already approached common senses, and that is why he said, “Modern-day thinkers use this expression [‘objectively existing’—the author] to refer to what really exists as opposed to ‘mere subjective appearances.’” The factually existent object deposited by the common idea as such belongs, by Brentano’s standpoint, in “transcendent existence”.³ It is destined that scientific and philosophical views different from that of common sense, namely, albeit all that is seen in these three views can be said “empirical” (*Empirischen*), they are *de facto* drastically different “experiences”.

Brentano labeled his “psychology” as “from an empirical standpoint” wherein “experience” (*Erfahrung*) may be understood as that in commonsense, e.g., “life experience” or “historical experience” in daily usage, but also as the strict one in scientific-philosophical sense. The latter can be further classified into two states: one is the experiential object, say, the red (thing) that is seen; the other is the experiencing act, say, the act of “looking” itself, and here the “experience” is a verb. It is primarily at verbal level that Brentano employed “experience” which can be further classified into that of “observation” (*Beobachtung*) and of “inner perception” (*innere Wahrnehmung*), there being an interval between the former and the object of experience whereas the latter is not the case. The “interval” is of nothing but two sorts: spatial and temporal. When one experiences via external sensation, there is a spatial interval between the object and him; when one reflects on the act of sensation, there is a temporal interval between the act of reflection and the reflected act of sensation. For instance, when I see a red (thing),⁴ there is a spatial interval between the object and me; when I reflect on the act of my “looking” just now, there is a temporal interval between my act of “reflection” and that of “looking”. Both situations of interval belong to the experiences of observation or reflection the materials obtained via which are taken by each specific science as the basis. There is no spatial interval between the experience of inner perception and the object of

3 Here “transcendent” corresponds to “immanent”, but also to “empirical” in the strict sense of the word.

4 Brentano’s thought experienced great changes around 1905. He said: “One of the most important innovations is that I am no longer of the opinion that mental relation can have something other than a thing [*Reales*] as its object.” (Brentano PES-E, xxvi). This change however will not exert essential influences on the theme here.

experience, in fact, they are simultaneous. For instance, at the same time when I look at something, I perceive that I am looking, or at the same time when I lose my temper, I perceive that I am losing my temper. Brentano called this experience of inner perception “inner consciousness” (*inneren Bewusstsein*) having “immediate, infallible self-evidence [*Evidenz*]” (Brentano PES-E, 91).

Another great difference between the experience of inner perception and that of observation rests in their objects. The object of the experience of inner perception is “mental phenomena” whereas that of the experience of observation is “physical phenomena”, the former including the acts of presentation, judgment, and love-or-hate, the latter the colors, shapes seen, the sound heard, and the warmth and smell felt, or the like. A question may arise therefrom: should the primary mental phenomena as the object of reflection or introspection belong to mental or physical phenomena? Take the aforementioned reflections with respect to the acts of “looking” and “losing temper” as the example. To be sure, the acts of looking and losing temper belong to mental phenomena; when they are reflected on, nevertheless, the looking and losing temper will experience the change of their qualities of act. The change as such of mental phenomena occurs via the act of reflection, whereas the act itself becomes the mental phenomenon. In this connection, there is a temporal interval between the primary mental phenomenon as the object of reflection, on the one hand, and the act of reflection, on the other, the latter being a mental phenomenon whereas the former a physical one. A transition from mental to physical phenomena occurs here: the “looking” or “losing temper” as the act itself belongs to mental phenomena, which as the objects of reflection belong to physical phenomena. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that mental phenomena run at present, whereas the physical phenomena become the object in the interval.

In Brentano’s view, a mental phenomenon itself can be presented into its own object without any modification. This is because it embraces in itself an “inner consciousness” or “inner perception” which accompanies the mental act to the end. It can have an immediate originary perception of mental act on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it will not bring about any extra gains or losses to the mental act. For instance, when looking, I can perceive that I am looking, and when losing temper I can perceive that I am losing temper. When

I do not reflect on these acts intentionally, my perception of looking and losing temper will not influence the running acts of them. “Inner consciousness” or “inner perception” is the ultimate form of perception in mental acts, which is to say that it cannot—and there is no necessity for this, either—be perceived by the successive consciousness. The consciousness or perception without interval with its object, as such, is called by Brentano “immanent objective”, which is also the due meaning of mental phenomena. Brentano thus said:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a reality [*Realität*]) or immanent objectivity. (Brentano PES-E, 88)

Thus, there emerge three sorts of “objectivity”: the “transcendent objectivity” between the subject and the object in the common sense; the “external objectivity” constructed by mental phenomena and the physical phenomena upon which they are directed; and the “immanent objectivity” constructed by the inner consciousness of mental act and mental act itself. In rigorous philosophical analyses, the objectivity in the common sense can be suspended tentatively. Every mental act, however, embraces external and immanent objectivities. To this connection, when Brentano said “Every mental phenomenon includes something as the object within itself”, the “object” includes immanent as well as external ones. Take “looking” as an example, its external object is the color (thing) that is seen, and its immanent object is the act of looking itself. Here the “external object” is fundamentally identical to a “physical phenomenon”. Brentano also called external object “primary object” (*primärem Objekt*), and immanent object “secondary object” (*sekundärem Objekt*). Hence: there is also a transition between primary and secondary objects. Brentano retained this idea till his late years. He thus wrote: “All memories and expectations that refer to our own mental experiences have these experiences as their primary objects, and have themselves only as their secondary objects or a part thereof.” (Brentano PES-E, 278; cf. also Brentano

1981, 57) Generally speaking, in terms of genetic procedures, primary object is the basis, namely, the sound is prior to the hearing. This is not necessarily the case, though. Say, at dark night, or in a situation so silent that there is no sound whatsoever, albeit no external object (primary object) is seen or heard, the act of looking or listening (secondary object) can still exist; we can still reflect on the looking or listening without any external object. This is to say that it can again transfer to primary object. The case is similar also with “mood”. The mood of “vacuity” or the fear of “nothing” may have no primary object, or they would not be genuine; vacuity or fear *qua* a secondary object, however, have objectivity, or we would not sense our own mood of vacuity or fear. Of course, by saying so, I do not mean sensing in reflections, but that in the immediate inner consciousness or inner perception accompanying vacuity or fear.

II. Transcendent existence, intentional existence and real existence

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Essentially speaking, Brentano’s differentiation between external and immanent objects, viz., between primary and secondary objects is aimed to distinguish real existence from the intentional one. He said:

We said that mental phenomena are those phenomena which alone can be perceived in the strict sense of the word. We could just as well say that they are those phenomena which alone possess real existence [*wirkliche Existenz*] as well as intentional existence. Knowledge, joy and desire really exist. Color, sound and warmth have only a phenomenal and intentional existence. (Brentano PES-E, 92)

The “in the strict sense of” “perception” means that the word “perception” originally bears the meaning of “real”. In German, the first half of the word “*Wahrnehmung*” is “true” (*wahr*). Brentano’s “inner perception” is *de facto* “perception”. Strictly speaking, “external perception” is not perception in the true sense of the word in that it lacks direct evidence and, “as we have seen, the phenomena of the so-called external perception cannot be proved true and real even by means of indirect demonstration.” (Brentano PES-E, 91)

According to the aforementioned reminder of Brentano as regards to the replacing of “intentional” with “objective”, we can see that “intentional existence” of physical phenomena means that the phenomena of color, sound, warmth, etc., belong to “objective existence”, namely, color is the object of seeing, sound of hearing, and warmth of touching. The “object” here refers to the external object of a mental act, to wit., primary object. On the other hand, mental phenomena such as knowledge, joy, and desire, etc., are immanent objects, and hence they also first and foremost belong to intentional existence. Different from physical phenomena, they further own a “real existence” in addition to the intentional one. Where does the “real” come from? Brentano thus said:

We went on to define mental phenomena as the exclusive object of inner perception; they alone, therefore, are perceived with immediate evidence. Indeed, in the strict sense of the word, they alone are perceived. On this basis we proceeded to define them as the only phenomena which possess actual existence [*wirkliche Existenz*] in addition to intentional existence. (Brentano PES-E, 97)

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Plainly, mental phenomena own real or actual existence due to nothing but the fact that they “are perceived with immediate evidence”. This opens up a brand new path promoting our cognition to “existence”.

In Brentano’s thought, the theme of “existence” is founded in the area of the act of judgment. Judgment means to affirm whether or not an object exists. The object of the affirmation may be either internal (mental) or external (physical), even transcendent (commonsense). “Judgment” in Brentano’s terminology is by no means that which is upheld by predecessors, namely, assorting accident to a subject like “I am looking”, “The table is yellow”, or the like. Brentano called traditional proposition “categorical proposition”, contending that to probe into the true or false of a judgment, one must convert all categorical propositions into “existential propositions”. The previous two propositions can thus be converted into “I am the looking I”, “There is a yellow table”. Seen from the perspective of traditional logic, there are the following four sorts of categorical propositions: particular affirmative proposition, universal negative proposition, universal

affirmative proposition, and particular negative proposition. In Brentano's view, all four sorts of propositions can be converted into existential propositions without changing their meanings. In each sort of proposition, Brentano gave an example for the sake of specific display: categorical proposition "A man is sick" means the same as the existential proposition "A sick man exists," or "There is a sick man." The categorical proposition "No stone is alive" means the same as the existential proposition "A living stone does not exist," or "There is no living stone." The categorical proposition "All men are mortal" means the same as the existential proposition "An immortal man does not exist," or "There is no immortal man." The categorical proposition "A man is not learned" means the same as existential proposition "An unlearned man exists," or "There is an unlearned man." (cf. Brentano PES-E, 213). Apparently, the objects of judgment in Brentano's examples are all transcendent in the common sense. This also indicates that conversion of categorical propositions into existential ones is nothing but that on the syntactical structure, and as to whether the judgment is true or false, and whether its object is unobvious or evident, they can be tentatively suspended during the process of the conversion as such.

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How, after a categorical proposition is converted into an existential one, can we affirm the trueness or falseness of the latter? Brentano finds: "A judgment is true if it attributes to a thing something which, in reality, is combined with it, or if it denies of a thing something which, in reality, is not combined with it."⁵ It can thus be inferred: if a judgment affirms that an object exists which however does not, then the judgment is false; if a judgment affirms that an object does not exist which however does, then the judgment is also false. Apparently, whether the result of the judgment is true or false, it must be traced back to whether or not the affirmed object is existent. On the contrary, we can also infer the existence of the judged thing from a true affirmative judgment: "To say that an affirmative judgment is true is to say no more nor less than that its object is existent." (Brentano 1969, 74) The truth of the judgment is thus interconnected with the existence of the judged object, and Brentano called the "truth" as such

5 Quoted according to Parsons 2002, 183. This reminds us of Alfred Tarski's famous definition: "'Snow is white' is true, if snow is white." Genealogically, Tarski can be said to be the disciple's disciple of Brentano.

“a true in the sense of a being” (ibid., 73). Of course, “existence” here can be transcendent, intentional, and even real. Correspondingly, this is true also of different meanings and standards at different levels.

In this line, as to the various types of existential objects of judgment, in what sense are the existence and the truth guaranteed? As was mentioned before, seen from the strict empirical standpoint, the objects of judgment are of nothing else than three types, namely: “transcendent object”, “external object”, and “immanent object”. The transcendent object belongs in sphere of common sense which determines its existence. The true or false of the judgment of this object is also made in the common sense. The “true” as such belongs, in strict sense, to the sphere of opinion. Seen from Brentano’s stance, the external object is a physical phenomenon, and is merely of intentional existence, but of no real existence. That is to say, physical phenomena do not have immediate evidence, and the judgment about their existence originates from a belief in existence. As to this sort of judgment having no evidence and being determined merely by belief, Brentano called it blind judgment. Correspondingly, the true or false concluded via blind judgment is merely that in the sense of belief. Contrariwise, the immanent object as a mental phenomenon possesses real existence, namely, mental phenomena have immediate evidence. Strictly speaking, the real existence of mental phenomena takes its immediate evidence as premise. The judgment with mental phenomena as its objects is evident judgment. The object of “real existence” is completely identical to that of the true evident affirmative judgment, say, if “I am looking” is a true evident affirmative judgment, that means the looking I really exists. The truth of the judgment as such is the “true” in the strict sense of the word, namely, it means a real existence.

Albeit Brentano weakened Aristotle’s differentiation of various meanings between the substance and the accident of “existence”, at the level of the existence of commonsense, physical, and mental phenomena, he made the rigorous heterogeneous differentiation between transcend, intentional, and real existences. That which corresponds to this is the differentiation between blind commonsense, the “true” of belief and the “true” of evidence. Brentano’s outstanding explorations indicate that “ontology” and “epistemology” are originally one and the same albeit they are separated by force. The differentiation

between transcendent, intentional, and real existences is supposed to be traced back to that between common sense, correct belief, and immediate evidence at the level of the cognitive mode. Correspondingly, there are three drastically different perspectives viewing the world: common sense, natural sciences, and rigorous philosophy.

III. From “intentional” to “intentionality”

After Brentano, both the sphere of continental philosophy and that of Anglo-American philosophy developed, without previous agreement, their respective theories of “intentionality”. Due to the limitation of the theme and length of this article, I can only briefly discuss the approaches of these two theories from the standpoint of Brentano.

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In Brentano, “intentional” is non-thematized and completely avoidable. His disciple, Husserl, however, “adopted the term [intentionality—the author] as an inclusive title for a number of pervasive phenomenological structures.” (Husserl 1931, 242) When introducing “intentional”, Brentano originally intended to differentiate, in essence, the physical from the mental phenomena, contending that the former merely had intentional existence whereas the latter had real existence. The “real existence” here refers to the judgment made by evidence of inner perception regarding mental phenomena. Husserl, plainly, did not intend to differentiate between physical and mental phenomena. Early in *Logical Investigations*, he has performed modifications as regards to this fundamental differentiation of Brentano:

I may doubt whether an outer object exists, and so whether a percept relating to such objects is correct, but I cannot doubt the now experienced sensuous content of my experience, whenever, that is, I reflect on the latter, and simply intuit it as being what it is. There are, therefore, evident percepts of “physical” contents, as well as of “psychical”. (Husserl 1970, 865)

Plainly, albeit Husserl summarily misunderstood Brentano's "physical phenomena" as his own "outer object";⁶ this "outer object" is nothing but the "transcendent object" suspended by Brentano. Brentano's "physical phenomena" presented via perceptions, however, were converted by Husserl into the "sensuous content of my experience", really (*reell*) experienced in his view. In Husserl's view, mental phenomena in Brentano's terminology are also really experienced. On this account, there is no longer strict differentiation between mental and physical phenomena, and hence the essential distinction as to evident and non-evident judgments between intentional and real existences can be easily omitted. Since the really experienced content will not be evidently intuited unless after being "reflected", and the case is the same with both mental and physical phenomena, "there are, evident percepts of 'physical' contents, as well as of 'psychical'". Hence, in Husserl, the present evidence in inner perception is converted into intuitive evidence in reflection. The predicament that Brentano once tried to overcome arises again: how can the intermittent reflections guarantee that mental phenomena do not lose their truth? Presumably, what concerns Husserl is not the flowing mental phenomena themselves, but the understanding and reconstruction of the various phenomena in reflective intuition. This, therefore, needs a steady structure as the basis of analysis, and the "intention(ality)" connecting consciousness and objects is exactly qualified for this ideal frame. As a consequence, in Husserl, the meaning of "intention(ality)" extended from "being directed

6 Husserl contends: "[...] he [Brentano—the author] consequently gives the name of 'physical phenomena', not merely to outer objects, but also to these contents [present as real parts in perception—the author]." (Husserl 1970, 864) Husserl, however, failed to give support to this affirmation. According to Oskar Kraus, an authoritative expert on Brentano: "In citing examples of physical phenomena, Brentano intends to bring in first of all examples of 'physical phenomena' which are given directly in perception. Thus he enumerates: colors, shapes, musical chords, warmth, cold, odors. In each of these cases we are concerned with objects of our sensations, what is sensed. Now 'a landscape, which I see' has slipped in among these examples. But it was obvious for Brentano that I cannot see a landscape, only something colored, extended, bounded in some way. [...] Thus Husserl accuses Brentano of having confused 'sense contents' with 'external objects' that appear to us and of holding that physical phenomena 'exist only phenomenally or intentionally.' But this accusation is shown to be wrong." (Brentano PES-E,79)

upon” to “hitting upon”, and then to “construction”. Each extension meant the sublimation of “intentionality” in Husserl’s system of thought, so much so, that it, at last, became “a concept which at the threshold of phenomenology is quite indispensable as a starting-point and basis.” (Husserl 1931, 245) After Husserl’s thought was transferred to transcendental phenomenology, the theme of “intentionality” was carried out via the analyses as regards to “*noesis*” and “*noema*”, and what was thought, *qua* the essence, presented in reflections again constituted the formal and material ontological theme. Brentano employed “intentional” for the sake of differentiating and being evidently engaged in the present mental act existing in real fashion, Husserl, however, extended and fixed it as “intentionality” and constructed therefrom another “*eidetic*” world. In this vein, Husserl suspended the “transcendent” object and further invented a “transcendental” one. It is thus not hard to see why Brentano criticized his disciple for the latter’s being indulged in theoretical reflections but ignoring ethical practices (cf. Spiegelberg 1981, 132)

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Obviously, Scheler’s concept of “intention” originated from Husserl rather than Brentano. When he says, “this feeling therefore has the same relation to its value-correlate as ‘representing’ has to its ‘object’, namely, an intentional relation” (Scheler 1973, 258), his “object” is nothing but Husserl’s “*noema*”, *qua* the “essence”, only that in him, the correlate of the act of feeling is value *qua* the “essence”. In Brentano’s view, whether it is the object or the value as essence, it does not have immediate evidence, and hence is not qualified for a “real existence”.

Heidegger’s early thought intended to offer guidance through devoting attention towards practical life, and hence he mercilessly criticized his supervisor’s phenomenology inclining to theorization, and, simultaneously, he believed that intentionality on which Husserl relied was nothing other than an expression of his inclination to theorization. That is to say, rather than being an originary phenomenon, intentionality is one needing founding. During the period of *Being and Time*, Heidegger believed that intentionality should be founded upon the transcendence of *Dasein* and upon the ecstatic temporality (cf. Heidegger 1993, 49 and 363). At the level of evidence, the difference between “transcendence” as such of *Dasein*, on the one hand, and “transcendent being” in the common sense, suspended from the very beginning by Brentano

and Husserl, on the other, is hard to make, and it is due to the lack of rigor and evidence that “transcendent existence” was suspended. Of course, the two parties laid emphasis on different points: Heidegger aimed to grasp the fundamental structure and meaning of existence, whereas Brentano tried to be correctly engaged in various mental acts in the presence of evidence. Be that as it may, the trace of the “really existent” “mental act” can still be seen in the “actual *Dasein*” of *Being and Time*.

In the English world of philosophy, Roderick M. Chisholm can be said to be the most influential in introducing and developing Brentano’s thought. It is also in him that Brentano’s thought relevant to “intention” suffered intentional or unintentional distortion. He once said:

The phenomena most clearly illustrating the concept of “intentional inexistence” are what are sometimes called psychological attitudes; for example, desiring, hoping, wishing, seeking, believing, and assuming. When Brentano said that these attitudes “intentionally contain an object in themselves”, he was referring to the fact that they can be truly said to “have objects” even though the objects which they can be said to have do not in fact exist. Diogenes could have looked for an honest man even if there hadn’t been any honest men [...] but physical—or non-psychological—phenomena, according to Brentano’s thesis, cannot thus “intentionally contain an object in themselves”. In order for Diogenes to sit in his tub, for example, there must be a tub for him to sit in. (Chisholm 1976, 141–142)

Comparing this interpretation of Chisholm with Brentano’s relevant thought, we will see that the former’s “physical phenomena” is the “transcendent object” in the latter’s view, and the real existence of the former’s “mental phenomena” means that the subject can really have some mental attitude albeit toward some objects that may “exist” or “not exist” in transcendent or the common sense. This is already quite different from Brentano’s thought that “[p]hysical phenomena possess only a phenomenal and intentional existence, whereas psychical phenomena alone possess real existence as well as intentional existence.” Chisholm did not directly equate the “real existence”

of mental phenomena with “transcendent existence”, yet he understood the former by virtue of the latter; in the meanwhile, he failed at last to resist the temptation and equated physical phenomena or “intentional existence” with “transcendent existence”—the tub with a physical phenomenon. This is the origin from which the later intermingled situations in the discussions of intentionality in the English world of philosophy originated.

It is not hard to see from the above citation that Chisholm confused from the very beginning “mental phenomena” with “mental attitudes”, to which was exactly what Brentano objected. Brentano intended to replace “intentional” with “objective” primarily because “some people thought it [intentional—the author] had to do with intention and the pursuit of a goal.” Of course, Chisholm’s misinterpretation of “mental phenomena” from the stance of linguistic analytic philosophy also opened the way for the communication—albeit on the basis of misunderstanding—between Brentano’s thought and analytic philosophy. Once applied to the propositions of utterance, “mental attitude” will immediately transform into “propositional attitude” which, exactly, is the primary position where linguistic philosophy discusses about “intentionality”.

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Language-oriented is the dominant inclination of linguistic analytic philosophy, which is severely criticized by Searle who belongs to the same camp. He says: “We cannot explain the intentionality of the mind by appealing to the intentionality of language, because the intentionality of language already depends on the intentionality of the mind.” (Searle 1999, 85) Seen in this aspect, compared with Chisholm, Searle’s “intentionality” is nearer to Brentano’s “intention”. Nevertheless, the meaning of “intentionality” in Searle’s view is: “[Intentionality] is the general term for all the various forms by which the mind can be directed at, or be about, or of, objects and states of affairs in the world.” (ibid., 90) Seen in this line, Searle’s understanding of “intentionality” remains at the level of the common sense.⁷ What he considers via intentionality remains “transcendent existence”; he has missed “intentional existence”, let

7 Dennet also had similar comments in this regard. Cf. Dennett 1993, 193–205.

alone “real existence”. Even when he starts from “the first person”,⁸ the case remains unchanged.

90 years ago, when Heidegger was editing Husserl’s *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (*Lectures on the Consciousness of Internal Time*), he seized the opportunity to say: “*Auch heute noch ist dieser Ausdruck kein Lösungswort, sondern der Titel eines zentralen Problems*. [Even today, this expression of intentionality is not a password, but the title of a central problem.]” (Husserl 1966, xxv) If Brentano would reawaken 100 years after he had left the world, he would have accepted this assertion with pleasure.

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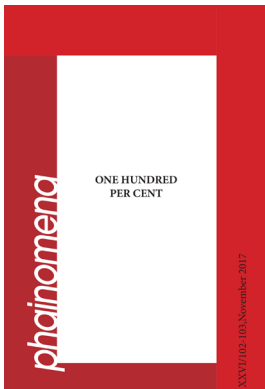
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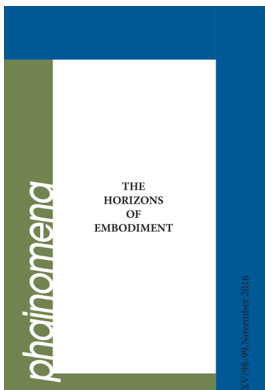
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