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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION



It is with great pleasure that we present the ninth volume of *Kronos Philosophical Journal*. Our editorial policy has always been motivated by care for the tradition of European thought in its original, Greek sense. The Greeks were the first to consider an entelechy that would become innate to the European form of humanity. What they meant by this is *Logos* – the language of free, civilized people, one that is characterized by a theoretical attitude, the ambition to understand the world as a whole and subjugate it, as well as the desire to ultimately master reality. Every European philosopher who

claims to represent the classical tradition is inherently a conqueror in spirit, passionately striving to seize and tame whatever puts up resistance, remains alien, or has not yet been fully recognized. A certain kind of cognitive aggressiveness – let us be frank about this – seems to be the primary feature of the European attitude toward the surrounding world. This is the heritage of the earliest Greeks. However, it is also signaled in the biblical imperative to act – “replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28; KJV) – which constitutes the foundation and credo of European culture. Thus conceived, this intellectual impulse has determined the paths taken throughout history by entire nations, including outward trajectories (such as expeditions and conquests) and inward ones (e.g., bloody wars fought in Europe). It has set in motion processes thanks to which the European continent – there are no others, or none will materialize any time soon – is gradually emerging as the “new humanity,” as Husserl termed it. Countries situated on the outskirts of Europe – Russia and the United States, which will determine the future shape of the world – are merely its crisis forms or strongly caricatural images. Therefore, barbarism characterizes anyone who lacks the European drive to achieve self-definition, fails to question the assumptions of their culture, or remains incomprehensible, like Shakespeare’s Caliban, whose speech is a mere torrent of abuse, gibberish, repetition, and grievance.

The European identity has been forged for centuries around an intellectual “colonialism” understood in this way, entailing fascination with reality, aspiration to hegemony, active understanding, and cultural wars. There is no need to take offence at this characterization or pretend things have been different. It cannot be claimed that the ruthless striving to reign over others was a temporary eclipse of the European mind or a spiritual aberration that could be rectified in some way – this is simply not the case, and nothing can change it.

We have never been coy about this focus – on the contrary, it was already clear in the first volumes of *Kronos Philosophical Journal*, where these claims were made explicitly by Leo Strauss in his lectures on Aristotle’s philosophy (we printed them first in 2014) and less overtly by Gustav Shpet, the Russian disciple of Husserl (in the 2015 volume). This question was also addressed by Eva

Brann in an excellent essay on courage (2019) and slightly more cautiously by Otfried Höffe, who draws attention to certain provocative aspects of Aristotle's anthropology (2020). Owing to the fact that *Kronos Philosophical Journal* has facilitated a discussion of key problems in political philosophy and metaphysics, it has become an important forum for some of the most outstanding scholars from Poland, the United States, Russia, France, Italy, and Germany, who regard the cultivation of the European intellectual tradition as their task.

Piotr Nowak
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Piotr Nowak

HEIDEGGER'S CLASS

*For I reverence not our father of evil name,
for he first thought of doing shameful things.*
[Hesiod, *Theogony*]¹

THE SAME SONG OVER AND OVER AGAIN (ARENDT)

Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss are the most prominent students of Martin Heidegger. Their attitude toward their master varied over time, and the temperature or the quality of the relationship changed as the twentieth century's terrible toll escalated.

In the 1920s, Heidegger was regarded by young German intellectuals as someone whose "name traveled all over Germany like the rumor of the hidden king."² He made them discover him, slowly letting them into the arcane secrets of classical literary, philosophical, and religious texts that had been so loaded with a traditional approach. "We gave Heidegger the nickname 'the little magician from Messkirch,'" as Karl Löwith reports. "He was a small dark man who knew how to cast a spell insofar as he could make disappear what he had a moment before presented. His lecture technique consisted in building up an edifice of ideas which he then proceeded to tear down, presenting the spellbound listeners with a riddle and then leaving them empty-handed. This ability to cast a spell at times had very considerable consequences: it attracted more or less pathological personality types,

¹ *Works and Days, Theogony, and The Shield of Heracles*, trans. H. G. Evelyn-White (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006), 33.

² H. Arendt, *Martin Heidegger at Eighty*, trans. A. Hofstadter, *The New York Review of Books* (October 21, 1971), 50.

and, after three years of guessing at riddles, one student took her own life.”³ It appears that even Heidegger’s closest students, and Löwith certainly was one of them, did not spare him cutting remarks.

Much has been written about Hanna Arendt’s love for her teacher, seventeen years her senior, and even more has been gossiped about it. Suffice it to recall the fact that on campus Heidegger really enjoyed the reputation of being a womanizer, “a tempter,” “a charmer.” His wife, Elfride, was maddened by the sight of a mob of mesmerized girls besieging her husband’s office. Heidegger risked quite a bit to engage in his relationship with Arendt. Revealing the affair might have cost him his job at the university and put an end to his promising academic career. This was probably the reason behind Arendt’s departure from Marburg to Heidelberg University, where she was tutored by Heidegger’s friend Karl Jaspers. At that time and that place – and we are in the Germany of the 1920s – this kind of switch was nothing extravagant. As Leo Strauss points out in an interview with Jacob Klein, students could exercise their academic freedom and move between universities.⁴ After the war, Arendt became one of the most intransigent critics of the “magician from Messkirch” – partly, perhaps, as a disappointed lover, but certainly as a sophisticated thinker sorely tried by history. In her letter to Jaspers from September 1949, Arendt writes:

Heidegger [...]. What you call impurity I would call lack of character – but in the sense that he literally has none and certainly not a particularly bad one. At the same time, he lives in depths and with a passionateness that one can’t easily forget. The distortion is intolerable, and the very fact that he is arranging everything now to look like an interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* suggests that it will all come out distorted again. I read his letter against humanism. Also very questionable and often ambiguous but still the first thing of his that is up to his old standard. (I’ve read him here on Hölderlin and also his quite awful, babbling lectures on Nietzsche.) This living in Todtnauberg, grumbling about civilization, and writing *Sein* with a “y” is really a kind of mouse hole he has crawled back into because he rightly assumes that the only people he’ll have to see there are the pilgrims who come full of admiration for him. Nobody is likely to climb 1,200 meters to make a scene. And even if somebody did do it, he would lie a blue streak and take for granted that nobody will call him a liar to his face. He probably thought he could buy himself loose from the world this way at the lowest possible price, fast-talk himself out of everything unpleasant, and do nothing

³ K. Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933: A Report*, trans. Elizabeth King (London: Athlone, 1994), 44–45. See also Löwith’s exceptionally malicious satire *Fiala: die Geschichte einer Versuchung* [Fiala: The Story of a Temptation]. The more followers, the more nicknames, and Heidegger left no one indifferent. For example, Jean Améry calls Heidegger “that disquieting magus from Alemannic regions.” See *At the Mind’s Limits. Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. S. Rosenfeld and S. P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 18.

⁴ J. Klein and L. Strauss, “A Giving of Accounts,” *The College* 22, no. 1 (April 1970): 2.

but philosophize. And then, of course, this whole intricate and childish dishonesty has quickly crept into his philosophizing.⁵

At about the same time – that is, in the late 1940s – Arendt began to write her *Denktagebuch*, in which she allegorically depicted Heidegger as a fox. Because the fox was the cleverest of all animals in the forest, he decided that, instead of falling into the traps set by life and by hunters, he would simply move to one of them. It must be acknowledged that the fox was a hospitable host and gladly invited other animals to his trap. “Nevertheless, many came. For this trap was our fox’s burrow, and if you wanted to visit him where he was at home, you had to step into his trap.”⁶

A couple of years earlier, in 1946, Arendt had published her essay “What Is Existenz Philosophy?” in *Partisan Review*. Karl Jaspers was thrilled with it. But in retrospect, it does not seem to rank among Arendt’s most successful undertakings. According to her biographer, it marked Arendt’s first attempt at writing a philosophical essay after a thirteen-year break in professional activity.⁷ However, personal allusions to Heidegger’s life (remarks about his alleged antisemitism or his opportunism toward the French occupation authorities) indicate something else – namely, that “Existenz Philosophy” was driven by resentment, offended pride, and rage.

The very first paragraph betrays a certain haste and impetuosity of thought, when Arendt squeezes into just one sentence a mixed bag of the most eminent modern philosophers. This might imply that the pioneers of existentialism were thinkers as diverse as Schelling, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Scheler, Heidegger, and Jaspers. The foci of Arendt’s attention are then mostly the latter two. In her opinion, Heidegger failed completely in establishing his system of fundamental ontology because he did not find a convincing answer to the question of human temporality (which is why he abandoned writing the second volume of *Being and Time*). Likewise, he failed in the field of existential philosophical anthropology, basing it on, as Arendt argues, “tricks and sophistries of speech”⁸ and stating that the meaning of existence of each human being (be it of a professor or a greengrocer, a milkman or an artist) must be nothingness. Nothingness that excludes all Being is precisely what human understanding of reality is built upon. For example, “Man can imagine himself, can relate himself to Being that is given, no less than the Creator before the creation of the world, which, as we know, was created out of nothing.”⁹ That analogy then allows man to identify his own, human action with the divine action, the starting point of the latter being the ontological void. As viewed from that perspective, creation seems indistinguishable from destruction because nothingness always tends to annihilate what is. “Since I am not a world-creating being, perhaps my nature is to be a world-destroying being.”¹⁰

⁵ Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence 1926–1969*, trans. R. and R. Kimber (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 142.

⁶ H. Arendt, “Heidegger the Fox,” *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 361–62.

⁷ E. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt. For Love of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 217.

⁸ H. Arendt, “What Is Existenz Philosophy?” *Partisan Review* 13, no. 1 (1946): 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Arendt names Heidegger as the author of the thesis about an equal ontological status of essence and existence, thought and action. The coinciding of the two, which Western metaphysics (now happily overcome) saw in God, is transferred to man, who thus becomes the “Master of Being.”¹¹ This peculiar process of self-deification that Heidegger’s philosophy deals with is a phenomenon previously unheard-of in the history of human thought.

Another objection raised by Arendt in her essay is to the functionalization of human behavior, if for Heidegger human behavior is nothing more than a rather loose, indeterminate set of various modes of being, life functions. Arendt equates the existential functionalism understood in this way with Hobbes’s realism. This equation occasions her to note a certain regress in Heidegger’s thought in relation to Kant’s postulate of the autonomy of the moral person. According to her, man’s renunciation of the principles of autonomy, and therefore of freedom, in favor of the ontology that functionalizes reality, as well as the understanding of human behavior only in terms of mood, might merely help in the struggle for survival, nothing else [*sic!*].

Another unengaging feature of Heidegger’s “existentialism,” Arendt argues, is his barren otherworldliness, seclusion, the peculiar implosiveness of ideas whirling in the windowless Dasein. Every time it goes out to meet others, it falls. It is unable to stay for even five minutes in the atmosphere of *Mitsein*. Therefore, “what, consequently, appears as ‘Fall’ in Heidegger, are all those modes of human existence which rest on the fact that Man lives together in the world with his fellows.”¹² Against the background of those of Heidegger’s concepts that bring to mind secularized religious categories such as fate (Heidegger links *Geschick* with *Geschichte*), conscience, guilt, fall, call, gift, fear, finitude, being-toward-the-end, and others, Jaspers’s philosophy seems “more modern,”¹³ probably just as modern as the Charleston that was also invented at that time. Unlike Heidegger, Jaspers does not regard others merely as witnesses to Dasein’s fall. He notices in them the seeds of a possible community that will renew the human world, freeing it from the curse of homelessness. The man in question does not have any undue claims to reality but “experiences the fact that he can neither know nor create Being and that thus he is not God.”¹⁴

THE SAME AGAIN (STRAUSS)

Leo Strauss’s account is seemingly neutral. In his conversation with Jacob Klein, Strauss speaks of the beneficial influence of Heidegger’s conceptual “terrorism,” which was always characterized by a living thought. “One of the unknown young men in Husserl’s entourage was Heidegger,” as Strauss recalls it. “I attended his lecture course from time to time without understanding a word, but sensed that he dealt with something of the utmost importance to man as man. I understood something on one occasion: when he interpreted the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. I had never heard nor seen such a thing – such a thorough and intensive interpretation of a philosophic text. On my way home I visited Rosenzweig

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

and said to him that compared to Heidegger, Max Weber, till then regarded by me as the incarnation of the spirit of science and scholarship, was an orphan child."¹⁵

Reading Leo Strauss's books, I found no clear trace of Heidegger's influence on his philosophical works, except to consider the first chapter of *Natural Right and History*, which is explicitly directed against historicist thinking and implicitly against, inter alia, Heidegger's philosophy. Strauss devoted only one of his texts to the master of his youth, and it dealt with Heidegger's alleged existentialism, like Hannah Arendt's essay. It is interesting that he wrote those remarks at the time when he himself enjoyed the reputation of a master. It is clear to me that the process of aging brought him into a state of recurring questions.

As opposed to Platonism, Thomism, or Marxism – and just like pragmatism – existentialism is a nameless movement. Nevertheless, its substance was determined by the effort of one man: Martin Heidegger. "We saw with our own eyes that there had been no such phenomenon in the world since Hegel,"¹⁶ Strauss admits, not even trying to hide his fascination with the precision and depth of Heidegger's lectures, which he attended until 1922.

The starting point for Heidegger's philosophy was Husserl's phenomenology, especially his critique of science. Scientific cognition does not mean a perfect understanding of the world but a certain modification of the prescientific ways of interpreting it. This has to be proved on the basis of an "unbiased" analysis of the objects perceived by the senses. This method, says Heidegger, is not good; it is good to begin not by examining this or that thing or how this or that thing appears. Rather, they ought to be understood as the Greek *πράγματα*, as things in their uses, in their "for-the-sake-of-which." *Πράγματα* are neither abstract things nor phenomena but things that are *handy*, objects of daily use, and only in this sense are they *also* objects of possible cognition. According to Husserl, however, the horizon of the appearance of a thing is pure consciousness, which, Heidegger argues, needs to be reformulated and then understood as inevitably finite, temporarily limited, and mortal.

The 1920s and 1930s saw the reign of neo-Thomism, Marxists, and Heidegger. Due to the apparent weakness of academic philosophy, young people searched for greatness away from the universities, which stank of naphthalene; like moths, they felt attracted to brighter flames. "But here is the great trouble, the only great thinker in our time is Heidegger."¹⁷ Even if that was indeed true, if no one could question that truth or even undermine it, it still did not mean Heidegger was not lying. But who would be there to judge it? We are now touching a sore spot on the academic body – namely, assessment criteria. Who, in fact, establishes them? Where to look for a competent judge whose verdict we could accept without objection? Kant was the first to make an important distinction between thinkers and scholars, philosophers and the historians of

¹⁵ Klein and Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," 3. Strauss recalls it also in his essay on existentialism, though in a slightly different way. See L. Strauss, "Existentialism," *Interpretation. A Journal of Political Philosophy* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 304.

¹⁶ Strauss, "Existentialism," 304. The lecture has been published before in a more heavily edited form under the title "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism," in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, ed. T. L. Pangle (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

¹⁷ Strauss, "Existentialism," 305.

philosophy. The latter are absolutely dependent on the former for the simple reason that they do not think but classify thoughts, do not put forward issues but find them, only to later catalogue them and arrange them in a herbarium of dried ideas. Comparing other people's views, they are unable to recognize the sense within fundamental questions; they want to call them "utopian," which is not even an invective but means that they seem to consider all philosophical programs either untrue or true in the same way. "The scholar faces the fundamental problems through the intermediacy of books. If he is a serious man through the intermediacy of the great books. The great thinker faces the problems directly."¹⁸ Scholars and historians of philosophy are methodical and cautious in their work. They lack the boldness that is the hallmark of all great thinking – conflicting and liberating at the same time. They thrive on the fight of the giants, "wondering which of them is more likely to be right."¹⁹

But let me repeat my question: Who has the right to adjudicate whether one is a giant or just a scholar? Was Heidegger indeed what he posed to be and still is considered to be, or was his greatness overblown by the smallness of his time? Strauss gives a binding answer to this question: the great one is the one who changes the face of the era. All of us, but mostly the scholars, need time to understand it. Eventually, it is time that "legitimizes" thinking (that's a somewhat odd claim, for it comes from a presentist). Therefore, we must think with the giants. "The most stupid thing I could do" – and the "I" here stands for the "scholar" me – "would be to close my eyes or to reject his [Heidegger's] work."²⁰ Yet another method of consolidating philosophical truth is to establish one's own school, to create a natural environment for the development of thought. If there are many ways of arriving at truth, says Strauss, referring to Collingwood, then you have to find your own way.

It is at this point and in this context that Strauss raises the question about Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi movement. If the energy of his thought had the power to transform reality, by which his greatness and his genius were disclosed; if he was "the smartest one in the village,"²¹ then what prompted him to side with Hitlerism? What devil or demon led him astray and thwarted his plans? Strauss seeks the answer to this question in Heidegger's criticism of parliamentary democracy. "It would be wholly unworthy of us as thinking beings not to listen to the critics of democracy even if they are enemies of democracy – provided they are thinking men and especially great thinkers and not blustering fools."²²

¹⁸ Ibid., 306.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The phrase was used by Krzysztof Michalski to refer to Leszek Kołakowski, the Polish "giant" who was hypnotized by Stalinist Marxism in his early youth. See K. Michalski, *Zrozumieć przemijanie* [Understanding time] (Warsaw: Fundacja Augusta hr. Cieszkowskiego, 2011), 18. I myself would like to fathom the reasons why a thinker such as Kołakowski was relatively easily deluded by a totalitarian movement. The same wish is expressed by Paweł Śpiewak in his essay "W pół drogi. Warszawska Szkoła Historyków Idei" [Halfway. Warsaw School of Historians of Ideas], in *Wojna pokoleń* [War of generations], ed. Piotr Nowak (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2006), 143–59.

²² Strauss, "Existentialism," 307.

Heidegger was regarded as a nonconformist among the German professors of that time. He was seen as a walking contradiction, an “anti-intellectual intellectual.”²³ Regarding himself in terms of peculiarity or eccentricity moved Heidegger in the direction of radical political solutions. His association with the German Nazis ought to be seen as an attempt to counteract the danger of European nihilism. He believed that liberalism, communism, and democracy – the three political phenomena he considered the same²⁴ – go beyond the repertoire of German solutions; that there is the need for order, and the only way to create this order is by means of the *Führerprinzip*, the leader principle. It was from Jacob Burckhardt, and to some extent also from Nietzsche, that Heidegger adopted the opinion that democracy, the twin sister of tyranny, killed the Greek πόλις. The truth about that incident, as well as the knowledge of the antilibertarian roots of Western democracies, can only be endured, he claimed, by the strong.²⁵ Consequently, he postulated a new style of nobility. He recognized the necessity of adopting a clear hierarchy along with the principle that would define the differences between people on the basis of their strength and creative abilities. Only those who are dominant are at the top. Heidegger justified his need for a hierarchy as well as his revolutionary activism by giving due importance to the Nietzschean category of the great creator, *der grosse Schaffende*, which included poets, thinkers, and all those who make tough laws, mainly for themselves. This way they can bring relief to ordinary people, freeing them from the horrible burden of nihilism (and here the figure of Dostoyevsky’s Grand Inquisitor is as valid as it is obvious).

It remains to be settled what the alleged existentialism of Heidegger has to do with all these things. At the beginning of Strauss’s essay, we are informed that existentialism is for the forgetful. It reminds us that thinking is incomplete, reflected in the false mirror of everyday habits and the beaten tracks people follow as long as they forget about themselves or, in other words, forget that they think and are part of the thinking itself. Heidegger refers to anxiety as the most important experience in the light of which all human occurrences should be seen. After all, having it is one thing, and regarding it as the basis for experiencing the world is another thing. This means that its basic character is not sufficiently guaranteed or attested by experience. “Anguish” is part of contemporary discourse, nothing more; it is being talked down. Meanwhile, it must be a fundamental premonition rather than a representation. It is nowhere to be found, unlike, for example, a table. It is “vaguely felt but not faced,”²⁶ as Strauss puts it. As such, it provides an opportunity to reveal our fundamental uneasiness. However, this uneasiness remains indefinite, elusive, unclear for us. Its vagueness is an essential feature of humanity in general because it opens us to nothingness. And if nothingness is the basis for knowing reality, man (and thus nothingness, freedom) is the beginning and the source of all meaning (the “project” to understand the world). “More precisely man always lives already within such a horizon without being aware of its character; he takes his world as simply given;

²³ R. Wolin, *Heidegger’s Children. Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 85.

²⁴ Strauss, “Existentialism,” 316.

²⁵ M. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. G. Fried and R. Polt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 148. See also Wolin, *Heidegger’s Children*, 67.

²⁶ Strauss, “Existentialism,” 308.

i.e. he has lost himself; but he can call himself back from his lostness and take the responsibility for what he was in a lost, unauthentic way.”²⁷ The remedy for lostness is the authenticity of one’s existence, abandoning one’s being false to others. “Only if man *is* in this way,” that is, in a state of anguish and uneasiness, being constantly undermined by nothingness, “do the things in the world reveal themselves to him as they are. The concern with objective certainty necessarily narrows the horizon. It leads to the consequence that man erects around himself an artificial setting which conceals from him the abyss of which he must be aware if he wants to be truly human. To live dangerously means to think exposedly.”²⁸ Heidegger demanded of man as well as of Western philosophy that they “overcome” their own resistance, get rid of anachronistic contents, and replace them with completely new images. At this point, says Strauss (whose sudden “twist” is just as baffling as it seems unconvincing), there comes to the fore the inner limitation of existentialism being a symptom of all the ailments consuming liberal civilization, a paraphrase of Nietzschean fears, an exemplification of Marxist prognoses. “Existentialism belongs to the decline of Europe or of the West.”²⁹ “It was in the spirit of such hope that Heidegger perversely welcomed 1933.”³⁰ The fiasco of the Nazi project along with Heidegger’s abandonment of the questions typical of Western metaphysics directed his attention toward the East, broadly understood, which had never experienced the power of European temptations, and replaced the will to power with humility toward being. “There is needed a *meeting* of the west and of the east.”³¹ The hope of salvation lies hidden in the unified planetary religion that we may become sensitive to only through deep reflection on the historical situation we find ourselves in. The hope for “human survival” (What do these words mean? Should humanity survive or change? Should it still be humanity or something else? – these are some of my doubts) must be sought in the marriage of the East and the West, of mystery and technological rationality. And this marriage ought to be worked out by a Western thinker who explores the limits of rationalism, basing himself on the Holy Scripture. Because it stands for the East in the people of the West. “Not the Bible as Bible but the Bible as eastern can help us in overcoming Greek rationalism.”³² Only basing ourselves on the Word are we able to go beyond the limits of the old well-knit world, the limits conceived by the spirit of the Greek rationalism; to go beyond toward Being, *Seyn*, “the ground of grounds,” which enables not only the religious unification of nations but above all the meeting of gods “as impersonal as the Platonic ideas and as elusive as the biblical God.”³³ In the last phase of his work, after the so-called “turning,” Heidegger felt the great need for myth; he watched out for gods everywhere and made every effort to conjure them to yearn for the world they had left. Such needs were beyond Hannah Arendt’s understanding. More and more often, she saw him as a citizen of the Europe of

²⁷ Ibid., 311.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 314.

³⁰ Ibid., 316.

³¹ Ibid., 317.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 318.

loonies, “the last (we hope) Romantic” of Adam Muller’s type.³⁴ “What underlies everything that Heidegger has said,” as Karl Löwith aptly points out, “and makes many take notice of and listen to, is the unsaid: the *religious motif* that has indeed detached itself from the Christian faith, but precisely in its dogmatically unbound indeterminacy appeals all the more to those who are no longer pious Christians but nevertheless would like to be religious.”³⁵ Strauss, even more so than Arendt, lacked the sense of the scale of religious phenomena. For him, they indicated mental aberration, an alienation of reason, a legacy from the dark ages when objects (idols) of religious worship were used for political purposes. Meanwhile – and here all Straussians would nod in agreement – philosophy was born from the separation of thinking and myth, from a conscious abandonment of religious ideas. The “late” Heidegger considered this way of reasoning to be wrong, referring to it as a Platonic-Aristotelian superstition. “[M]ythos and logos are not, as our current historians of philosophy claim, placed into opposition by philosophy as such; on the contrary, the early Greek thinkers (Parmenides, fragment 8) are precisely the ones to use *mythos* and *logos* in the same sense. *Mythos* and *logos* become separated and opposed only at the point where neither *mythos* nor *logos* can keep to its original nature. In Plato’s work, this separation has already taken place. Historians and philologists, by virtue of a prejudice which modern rationalism adopted from Platonism, imagine that *mythos* was destroyed by *logos*. But nothing religious is ever destroyed by logic; it is destroyed only by God’s withdrawal.”³⁶ Strauss found this solution hard to accept. The master of his youth appeared to him as a priest of the new church who would see the sun in a dream. He argued with Heidegger’s early writings, especially *Sein und Zeit*, to which he responded with his *Natural Right and History*. However, the final stage of Heidegger’s work – according to Strauss – was only marked by the decline in thinking, the loosening of intellectual discipline, obscurity, and madness.

AFFINITY BY CHOICE

Regardless of their differences, Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss had much in common. What they unquestionably shared was the lack of a car and no ear for religion. They were both German Jews who grew up during the Weimar Republic. They might have sat at one desk in Heidegger’s seminars. Both Arendt and Strauss managed to escape from the Nazis and created original political theories in English, shortly afterward. Both of them were preoccupied with the so-called “Jewish question” to which they devoted their first works – on Rahel Varnhagen (Arendt) and on Spinoza, Cohen, and Maimonides (Strauss). For most of their lives, the two made an effort not to notice each other. When in one of his letters Jaspers asked Arendt about the postwar fate of Strauss, whom he remembered as “an orthodox Jew who is providing justification for authority,”³⁷ she answered casually that “Leo Strauss is professor of political philosophy in Chicago, highly respected.

³⁴ Arendt, “What Is Existenz Philosophy,” 46.

³⁵ K. Löwith, *Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960), 111.

³⁶ M. Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking*, trans. F. D. Wieck and J. G. Grey (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 10.

³⁷ Arendt/Jaspers, *Correspondence*, 247.

... He is a convinced orthodox atheist,” truly gifted, but not very nice.³⁸ Strauss repaid her with similar reluctance. Even when they were colleagues at the same department at the University of Chicago, their paths never crossed. “The only person here on campus who is agitating against me is Leo Strauss, and he would have done it in any case.”³⁹ It is hard to state how this mutual dislike began. Reportedly, in the 1930s, Arendt pointed to Strauss’s semifascist views, while also criticizing his badly tailored suit, which was somewhat too short. Who knows what hurt him more.

They were both interested in similar topics: the Ancients; the crisis of Western political thought associated with the names of Machiavelli, Marx, Nietzsche; and finally, the political weakness and instability of the democratic order. Therefore, it would be difficult to imagine that these two prominent thinkers – so unlike and at the same time so much alike – did not polemicize, even though they did not refer to each other by name or cite from each other’s works.⁴⁰ However, what I am more concerned with is something else – namely, their attitude not to each other but to Heidegger, whose philosophy was the source of their own thought.

Heidegger’s famous rectoral address of 1933, *The Self-Assertion of the German University*, abounds in many interesting statements. Regardless of the shameful circumstances, one must admit that the various threads that can be traced to that speech are typically Heideggerian.⁴¹ Suffice it to mention the constantly recurring problems related to the “death of God,” “emptiness,” “uncertainty,” or the spiritual crisis of Western man. The idea that theory is the supreme realization of practice is among the basic claims of the “young” Heidegger. And thus in his *Self-Assertion* we read that “the Greeks struggled precisely to conceive and enact this contemplative questioning as one, indeed as the highest, mode of ἐνέργεια, of man’s ‘being-at-work.’ They were not concerned to assimilate practice to theory; quite the reverse: theory was to be understood as itself the highest realization of genuine practice.”⁴² It turns out, then, that philosophy, and therefore a certain “theory” of oneself and the world, is always achieved through action. Any other purely speculative way is not possible. Clearly, this idea of perceiving the world actively was inherited by Arendt from Heidegger. “Her political thinking followed what one might describe as a ‘left

³⁸ Ibid., 244.

³⁹ Ibid., 535.

⁴⁰ Ronald Beiner and Dana Villa did a great job of reconstructing the latent dialogue that Arendt and Strauss had with each other. See R. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss,” *Political Theory* 18, no. 2 (May 1990); D. R. Villa, “The Philosopher Versus Citizen: Arendt, Strauss,” *Politics, Philosophy, Terror. Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁴¹ Having met Heidegger in Rome in 1936, Löwith put forward a thesis about the link between the way of his thought and the Nazi movement. Heidegger was to agree to it without objection. See Löwith, *My Life in Germany Before and After 1933*, 60. One might wonder to what extent Heidegger’s Nazism was a wrong answer to the rightly posed questions and to what extent it was itself an emanation of his thinking. In her tribute written on the occasion of Heidegger’s eightieth birthday and included in a special *Festschrift* volume, Arendt argues the opposite – namely, that Nazism had nothing to do with “the life of the mind” and that Heidegger practiced “spiritual resistance” to the Nazi regime. Besides, when he took office as rector, he himself had a rather vague idea of the course of events that would follow. Yet to claim that after a year Heidegger woke from political stupor is somewhat overstated.

⁴² M. Heidegger, “The Self-Assertion of the German University: Address, Delivered on the Solemn Assumption of the Rectorate of the University of Freiburg,” trans. Karsten Harries, *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (March 1985): 472–73.

Heideggerian' course: she transposed the revolutionary energies that Heidegger praised in right-wing revolutionary movements to the ends of the political left. Thus, Arendt identified profoundly with the experience of the workers' council movement.⁴³ However, it is easy to make a mistake on this point if too much generalization is involved. It proves difficult to classify Arendt according to any party key, to pin her down politically. When interviewed by Hans Morgenthau about her political sympathies, Arendt replied – honestly, I suppose – that she did not know and that she most probably had none. “I really don't know and I've never known. And I suppose I never had any such position. You know the left think that I am conservative, and the conservatives sometimes think I am left or I am a maverick or God knows what. And I must say I couldn't care less.”⁴⁴

Both Heidegger and Arendt aimed to stir the masses, to break their daily routine so that their vague premonitions would take the form of a dream about a better world. Each of them did it in their own particular way. The “pathos of novelty,” so strongly present in Arendt's *On Revolution* or *The Human Condition* and related to the idea of the renewal of political life without looking back, is, again, a legacy of Heidegger. “The beginning still *is*,” as we read in the *Rektoratsrede*. “It does not lie *behind us*, as something that was long ago, but stands *before us*. As what is greatest, the beginning has passed in advance beyond all that is to come and thus also beyond us. The beginning has invaded our future. There it awaits us, a distant command bidding us catch up with its greatness.”⁴⁵ They both contrasted activity, political commitment, “action” with social passivity. At the same time, their mistrust and wariness of the so-called “ordinary men” branded them undemocratic, elitist thinkers. As applied to Heidegger, this kind of opinion might seem justified. And how about Arendt? There is no doubt that she was inspired with her master's “revolutionary spirit.” *Vita activa* – political causation – will never be shared in by many. Only a few can manage the tough demands of politics. This is where the weakness of democracy lies. Where exactly? In its refusal to claim politics to be right. People who are trapped within the walls of their own privacy do not want to participate in politics, nor are they able to do so. They want peace, which they do not have, because politics, ousted from the public space, returns to haunt them by night, enters the world through sewers, and pours out of the cesspit. Therefore, it is necessary to create elites. “The joys of public happiness and the responsibilities for public business,” says Arendt in the final part of *On Revolution*, “would then become the share of those few from all walks of life who have a taste for public freedom and cannot be ‘happy’ without it. Politically, they are the best, and it is the task of good government and the sign of a well-ordered republic to assure them of their rightful place in the public realm. To be sure, such an ‘aristocratic’ form of government

⁴³ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 67.

⁴⁴ *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. M. A. Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 333–34. Replying to Scholem's famous letter, in which he accused her of communism, diaspora nationalism, and the newly acquired Americanism of a Jewish convert, Arendt wrote, “If I can be said to ‘have come from anywhere,’ it is from the tradition of German philosophy.” See “Eichmann in Jerusalem: Reply to Gershom Scholem,” *Encounter* 22, no. 1 (1964): 53. Hannah Arendt called herself a German philosopher *after the war*; before, the question of the “nationality” of philosophy would never cross her mind. It was quite the contrary in the case of Leo Strauss and Gershom Scholem: *after the war*, they would never call themselves German philosophers.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” 473.

would spell the end of general suffrage as we understand it today; for only those who as voluntary members of an ‘elementary republic’ have demonstrated that they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world would have the right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic.⁴⁶ The need for a selection of the best, giving them all due respect and position, while excluding from the public debate *ιδιοτήτων*, those who have no interest in the domain of common things, is a Platonic/Nietzschean concept of creating a new aristocracy, free from the burden of the past and manifesting its will to rule publicly. The political activity of the new class of public figures is contrasted with the passivity of the masses. The aestheticization of politics, the absolutization of a grand gesture, of high-minded, dangerous deeds, would all be meant to breed a new order. Therefore, “action” breaking the framework of everyday experience requires other criteria; it “can be judged only by the criterion of greatness because it is in its nature to break through the commonly accepted and reach into the extraordinary, where whatever is true in common and everyday life no longer applies because everything that exists is unique and *sui generis*.”⁴⁷ It turns out that one’s own “authenticity,” one’s own “truth,” can be communicated not only or not chiefly in private, “after hours.” One must communicate it in public, without any intermediation. In private, at home, you are prosaic, unexciting, as unexciting as human physiology and metabolism are. This involves the belief that politics, the space for the appearance of what is human, consists in virtuosic, agonistic behaviors. According to Arendt, such an understanding of politics – when the weak hide in the shadow of the strong – is, as a matter of fact, undemocratic. At the same time, it is underpinned by a particular kind of altruism that makes one have concern for the “humiliated and insulted;” the weak should be shown kindness and respect, as well as being protected against the unleashed element of history.

While Arendt’s attitude to Heidegger is marked with the dying embers of her love, interlaced with elements of a generational struggle for recognition (as evidenced by her essay on existentialism),⁴⁸ while her work is to some extent an expression of Heidegger’s apology for action (“decisionism”), Strauss needed Heidegger to support his own “experiments” with the East understood as the Jewish religion and culture. The best example of this is Strauss’s famous essay on Athens and Jerusalem, in which he confronts the words of Eastern prophets with the teachings of Socrates, the “prophet” of the Western world. Besides, Heidegger’s philosophy and practice provided a handy screen for Strauss’s early, antidemocratic beliefs and considerations. To put an end to any misunderstandings regarding this issue, let me conclude with an excerpt from his letter to Karl Löwith written in May 1933: “And, what concerns this *matter*: the fact that the new right-wing Germany does not tolerate us says nothing against the principles of the right. To the contrary: only from the principles of the right, that is from fascist, authoritarian and *imperial* principles,

⁴⁶ H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 279.

⁴⁷ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 205.

⁴⁸ Compare Arendt’s letter to Jaspers (November 1961), in which she complains that it was her fault, that is, it was because of her girlish modesty, that Heidegger always saw her as a student who could barely count to three or sometimes to four. “Then I suddenly felt this deception was becoming just too boring, and so I got a rap on the nose.” Arendt/Jaspers, *Correspondence*, 457.

is it possible with seemliness, that is, without resort to the ludicrous and despicable appeal to the *droits imprescriptibles de l'homme* [inalienable rights of man] to protest against the shabby abomination. I am reading Caesar's Commentaries with deep understanding, and I think of Virgil's *tu regere imperio ... parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*.⁴⁹ There is no reason to crawl to the cross, neither to the cross of liberalism, as long as somewhere in the world there is a glimmer of the spark of the *Roman* thought.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "[T]o bear dominion over the nations [...] to spare the humbled and to war down the proud." Virgil, *Aeneid*, bk. 6, ll. 851–53, trans. J. Jackson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), 258.

⁵⁰ L. Strauss, "Letter to Karl Löwith," trans. S. Horton, *Constellations* 16, no. 1 (March 2009): 82. Let me also point to W. H. F. Altman's book *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012). Altman considers Strauss to be "the secret theoretician of National Socialism" (510). In any case, it needs to be stated out loud that he was not a typical Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany but a zealous German Nazi hiding his atheism and nihilism under the guise of a philosophical rhetoric. Like the Guest from Plato's *Laws*, he attempted to undermine the religious foundations of Western civilization. He hated Judaism and liberalism equally and, as is the case with "cultural Zionism," equated one with the other. As far as the art of insinuation is concerned, Victor Farias could learn a lot from his imitator.

ROUSSEAU AND HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY OF ORIGINS

The "natural" is always historical.
[Martin Heidegger]

There is no human nature. Nor is there nature and law, nature and art, nature and nurture. All these combinations collapse with the denial of the first term. For if there is no nature to set off against the activity of legislation, creation, and cultivation, then the latter must all be revised if not discarded. Indeed, if there is no human nature, there is also no rational or political "animal" – there is no animal at all; or, rather, only an animal created as a benchmark for the human. In all these cases, nature is essentially a benchmark denoting what is fixed and unalterable in the human, and, as we know from centuries of speculation about nature, what is natural in human beings takes precedence over what is wrought through the efforts of human beings themselves. Is it not so that education cultivates by modifying, not creating, our nature? The terms are all familiar: we train, discipline, direct what is always already there. We do not create it. We educate our minds as athletes train their bodies. Yet, if there is no human nature, this comparison is untenable. If there is no human nature, there is no benchmark, there is nothing we may depend on as origin or end, as raw material to be molded into a fitting final form.

It seems to us that if there is one central thinker who opens this line of thinking, thereby inaugurating what amounts to a new period in Western thought, it is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. While Rousseau is certainly not the first to be concerned with nature – such a concern may be traced back to the earliest investigations of Aristotle, if not earlier still – he is surely among the first to consider the possibility that nature does not determine our identity as ostensibly natural beings but, indeed, the inverse: that nature is the creation of human beings, a creation of human freedom in a sense that requires considerable elaboration. In our view, this singular transformation represents a revolution that has not been completed and that may in fact not be capable of completion, a revolution, to be sure, that has not ceased to shape the horizon of possibilities we entertain in the early twenty-first century.

If Rousseau initiates this revolution, we contend that no thinker, not even among Rousseau's successors in France, has taken that revolution farther than Martin Heidegger – Heidegger, we wish to argue, is a radical student of Rousseau's. We are quite aware that aligning Rousseau and Heidegger may raise more than a few eyebrows. How

dare one compare the revered, though controversial, prophet of 1789 with the disgraced professor of 1933? But this difference, along with the underlying similarity, is what we find intriguing. While Rousseau opens up possibilities of thinking that Heidegger later exploits, Rousseau does so in furtherance of a political task that Heidegger strives to undermine; it is precisely Rousseau's attempt to create a community of equals in which equality reigns as the primary beginning and end that Heidegger endeavors to undo: if Rousseau is one of the outstanding advocates of equality as the cornerstone of modern politics, his most sophisticated antipode is Heidegger, whose revolutionary thinking seeks not only to undermine equality but to overcome a way of thinking that calculates "mathematically" in accordance with a fundamental notion of equivalence. Exactly what sort of community Heidegger creates is an issue of considerable complexity; one may argue that Heidegger radicalizes Rousseau's advocacy of freedom to such an extent that the need for community – the crucial opening gesture in Rousseau's narrative of a fall from a putative original freedom – no longer has any hold on us.

I.

In the *Second Discourse* (*Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*, 1755), Rousseau sets out to answer the question posed by the Dijon Academy: "What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorized by natural law?" To answer this question, he suggests, we must know ourselves; we must determine whether or not inequality occurs as the result of immutable, constitutive imperfections in our nature or as the unintended consequences of our actions. We must ascertain whether inequality is natural or artificial: Is there something to or in our nature as humans that is responsible for inequality? Or does inequality arise as a contingent result of human sociability? By framing the issue in this manner, Rousseau acknowledges the challenge before him – he has to know our "original constitution" in the state of nature in order to separate out what is natural from what is artificial. But how can he know with certainty a state that he himself insists is prior to language, reason, and sociability? He cannot, as Rousseau admits:

How will man ever succeed in seeing himself as Nature formed him, through all the changes which the succession of times and of things must have wrought in his original constitution, and to disentangle what he owes to his stock from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state? Like the statue of Glaucus which time, sea, and storms had so disfigured that it less resembled a God than a ferocious Beast, the human soul altered in the lap of society by a thousand forever recurring causes, by the acquisition of a mass of knowledge and errors, by the changes that have taken place in the constitution of Bodies, and by the continual impact of the passions has, so to speak, changed in appearance to the point of being almost unrecognizable.¹

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men or Second Discourse," in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 124.

The human being is malleable to such an extent that it no longer resembles its original, natural appearance, if such an appearance ever existed in the first place. But that very claim, as Rousseau knows, presumes to know precisely what Rousseau says is nearly impossible to know. To assert that the human has changed presupposes knowledge about the state from which it has changed. We need the original image of the human in order to say that it has been altered to the point of being nearly unrecognizable. Otherwise, how can we be certain that it has changed at all? Put more broadly, how do we know change itself without knowledge of its starting point?² As Rousseau puts it, “For it is no light undertaking to disentangle what is original from what is artificial in man’s present Nature, and to know accurately a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never did exist, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have exact Notions in order accurately to judge of our present state.”³ While knowledge about man in his natural state is essential to Rousseau’s effort both to explain and to evaluate the issue of inequality, he makes a point of stressing that no philosopher has ever reached the state of nature; indeed, it may never even have existed.⁴ Nonetheless, Rousseau proceeds to describe the natural state of man in the first part of the *Second Discourse*.

What is Rousseau doing? Though there is no shortage of debate on this question in the secondary literature, it seems clear to us that Rousseau is wittingly creating a historical narrative about a mythic origin.⁵ Rousseau grounds his argument on an uncertain, ever

² Turning to natural history can be of no help either because it cannot know with any certainty the natural state of man, as Rousseau ironically suggests in his discussion of the “facts” of natural history. Rousseau ironically invokes Buffon as an authority of scientific knowledge, only then to undermine the certainty of his authority through Buffon’s own words: “With the very first step I take, I confidently rely on one of those authorities that are respectable to Philosophers because they come from solid and sublime reason which they alone are capable of discovering and appreciating. ‘However great may be our interest in knowing ourselves, I wonder whether we do not know better everything that is not ourselves.’” Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 189. See Natasha Lee, “Making history natural in Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*,” in *Rousseau and Freedom*, ed. Christie McDonald and Stanley Hoffmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 24–43.

³ Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 125.

⁴ On the explanatory and normative conception of “nature”/“human nature” in Rousseau’s *Second Discourse*, see Frederick Neuhouser, *Rousseau’s Critique of Inequality: Reconstructing the Second Discourse* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16–60.

⁵ In the secondary literature, there is a significant amount of controversy over the status of Rousseau’s state of nature – namely, whether it should be interpreted as a conjectural construct or as a description of an actual period in the history of the human being. Along with Frederick Neuhouser, we believe that the textual evidence strongly supports viewing Rousseau’s state of nature as a construct. See Neuhouser, *Rousseau’s Critique of Inequality*, 33–37. See also Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 159; Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 135–59. For contrary views, see, for example, Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 117–18; Marc F. Plattner, *Rousseau’s State of Nature: An Interpretation of the Discourse of Inequality* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1979), 17–25; Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 267n32. For another view that puts in question the kind of ameliorative reading Neuhouser derives from considering the state of nature as construct, see Richard Velkley, “The Measure of the Possible: Imagination in Rousseau’s Philosophical Pedagogy,” in *The Challenge of Rousseau*, ed. Eve Grace and Christopher Kelly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 217–29. Also see Gabrielle Radica’s recent (and immense) book, *L’histoire de la raison: anthropologie morale et politique chez Rousseau* (Paris: Champion, 2008). Radica identifies Thomas Hobbes as the founder of the genealogical method but suggests that Rousseau’s radicality lies precisely in his attack on the universalism imposed by natural law theory. Also see Céline Spector’s interesting

elusive foundation: the natural state that cannot be known with certainty other than as a historical narrative told from the perspective of civilized man.

Nature is thus not prior to history. To the contrary, it is a product of history itself. The very capacities Rousseau characterizes as natural – self-love (*amour de soi-même*), freedom, pity, and perfectibility – are projected back onto the natural state from the standpoint of sociability.⁶ Hence, Rousseau's philosophy of origins yields no other origin than the one that emerges from his historical narrative of humankind's fall from the equilibrium of nature. Let us turn to one of the central passages of that narrative to get a fuller sense of his radical historicism.

Rousseau opens the second part of the *Second Discourse* with his famous attempt to trace the origins of inequality to the declaration of property:

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to say *this is mine*, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors Mankind would have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling the ditch, had cried out to his kind: Beware of listening to this impostor. But in all likelihood things had by then reached a point where they could not continue as they were; for this idea of property, depending as it does on many prior ideas, which could only arise successively, did not take shape all at once in man's mind.⁷

The origins of inequality lie in property – this claim made Rousseau famous, though it is hardly the boldest point he makes in this passage. Even bolder is his claim that the development of property arose from a wholly contingent historical encounter that could have unfolded differently or not at all had the person asserting ownership not made the claim in the first place or had the person listening to it not recognized the claim.

Yet, while history need not have led to property ownership, it did. Why? As far as the person recognizing the claim is concerned, Rousseau suggests simply that he or she was gullible enough to believe the claim; matters are more complex, however, with regards to the one who made the claim. To explain the imperative to declare something as one's own, Rousseau turns to what he calls *amour propre*, the passion “to set greater store” by oneself than by anyone else.⁸ *Amour propre* is the desire to be esteemed and valued by others as distinct through, among other ways, the ownership of property: we own property not out of “genuine need” but out of concern for maintaining and expanding our own particular position, role, or status in society.⁹

review of this book: “La raison a-t-elle une histoire? Rousseau et les paradoxes du rationalisme moderne,” in *Critique* 5, no. 744 (2009): 398–412.

⁶ This claim may, at first glance, be difficult to follow in regard to the capacity of freedom. But freedom, too, has a history if, following Rousseau, it is an abstraction or general idea (that is, a product of civilized man). See Hannah Arendt's discussion of freedom/willing in *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2 (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1977).

⁷ Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 161.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 171.

If Rousseau isolates *amour propre* as crucial to inequality, whence originated this pernicious passion? It obviously did not come from nature where the “human” was utterly alone and silent, devoid of all relations, language, and reason, a point that Rousseau emphasizes by contrasting *amour propre* with *amour de soi-même*. The latter refers to the “natural sentiment which inclines every animal to attend to its self-preservation.”¹⁰ *Amour de soi-même* describes the animalistic imperative to satisfy the purely natural needs of food, rest, and sex.

This distinction reveals the radicalism of Rousseau’s historicism. If the essence of the human is the artificial passion of *amour propre*, which is fundamentally different from the natural sentiment of *amour de soi-même*, then it follows that the human is artificial – the human is a radically malleable being of history and time. And, if that is the case, if the nature of the human is the absence of any nature, then what guidance can there be for human thought and action?

II.

This question may be put to Heidegger with equal insistence, and the radicality of his response provides an instructive contrast to Rousseau. Indeed, we may fairly trace the fortunes of modern historicism in outline by comparing Heidegger’s response to that of Rousseau. Given the sheer vastness of Heidegger’s corpus (over 102 volumes in the current *Complete Edition*, or *Gesamtausgabe*), this may seem no easy matter for our present purpose. But, in fact, Heidegger writes incisive, compelling histories in relatively short works. Of these, two outstanding examples are his essays on truth: “On the Essence of Truth” (delivered as a talk in 1930 and published in 1943) and “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” (1940). In the compact form of these essays, Heidegger develops a conception of truth that sets out two basic points: (1) that truth presupposes a more fundamental origin or “open” from which truth emerges as the establishment of an authoritative norm; and (2) that this emergence inaugurates a narrative of decline understood as the necessary distortion or “disfigurement” or, more precisely, forgetting of the origin. Heidegger’s understanding of truth is a fundamental narrative of origins, specifically of the origins of normativity itself. In this respect, Heidegger provides an extraordinary abstract treatment of the construction of normativity that recasts Rousseau’s own narrative of the progression of man from the state of nature. Heidegger’s narrative is intriguing both for the focus on truth as the very epitome of the normative as well as for his omission of any discussion of what we might call psychological traits such as *amour propre* or *amour de soi-même*. We will first take up the Heideggerian understanding of truth as emerging from an inscrutable origin on the basis of his essay “On the Essence of Truth.” Then we will take up the particular history of truth that Heidegger finds determinative for the West on the basis of “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth.”

“On the Essence of Truth” unfolds Heidegger’s thinking about truth as the response to a simple question: What is the essence of truth? What is common to different kinds of truths or truth statements that allows us to refer to them commonly as such?¹¹ Of course,

¹⁰ Ibid., 218.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 115. There is an important literature in English on Heidegger’s concept of truth. For a general orientation, see Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Heidegger’s Concept of Truth* (New York: Cambridge University Press,

this is no idle question. Truth is ostensibly the final arbiter of disputes in human affairs, and she who possesses the truth possesses authority in this sense – as ultimate tribunal and point of reference for human action. Hence, determination of the essence of truth, of what makes truth truth, goes to the very heart of the social system as a system of norms.

Heidegger first discusses interpretations of truth that flow from the notion that truth describes the correspondence between mind and thing, what Heidegger refers to as the *adaequatio intellectus et rei*.¹² There are two layers of this relation. One describes the relation of mind and thing without the intervention of the divine mind. Two possibilities come to the fore: either (1) the thing conforms to the mind (idealism) or (2) the mind conforms to the thing (empiricism). The other layer features the divine mind and sets up a triad whereby the human mind comes to truth to the degree it can relate things to the divine ideas of things. Heidegger provides a critique of these views based on questioning their origin in the absence of God: whence the ideas, whence the things? The correspondence model of truth presupposes for Heidegger an essential encounter between mind and thing whose identity is obscured by the relation itself insofar as the relation already establishes an attitude to the essential encounter that remains unquestioned. Heidegger sees his task, then, as one of investigating the conditions that allow for this fundamental encounter – Heidegger seeks to investigate what is unsaid or unthought in the relation itself or, in more Kantian terms, he seeks after the condition(s) of possibility of this encounter. His leading question turns on the possibility of there being a relation between mind and thing in the first place. As Heidegger writes in his book on Kant, the basic Kantian problem is to figure out how there can be any relation between the conceptual order (of the mind) and the physical order (of the thing).¹³ This mind–body problem, which has bedeviled post-Cartesian philosophy, results from the forgetting of the fundamental issue: the encounter with things that must precede any definition of them.

Heidegger's reasoning is astonishingly simple: that there is a thing, and one who encounters that thing presupposes a "place" of encounter that belongs neither to the one nor to the other but is the condition of possibility of both – that is, it is the condition of possibility of any encounter. This "place" of encounter is referred to by Heidegger as the "open" (*das Offene*).¹⁴ Without this place of encounter, there is no possibility of a relation of any kind. If this is so, however, the relation established must conceal the place of encounter. But why is this so?

2009), and Miguel Beistegui, *The New Heidegger* (London: Continuum, 2005), 30–59. Dahlstrom's book deals with the Heidegger of the 1920s but offers an effective prolegomenon to the later Heidegger. See also John Sallis, "Interrupting Truth," in *Heidegger toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s*, ed. James Risser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 19–30, as well as Rodolphe Gasché's contribution to the same volume, "Tuned to Accord: On Heidegger's Concept of Truth," 31–50. For two classic accounts, see William J. Richardson, *Heidegger, Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 4th ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 211–54, and Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984).

¹² *Ibid.*, 117–20. Heidegger gives several formulations of this "accordance": *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, *adaequatio ad rem intellectus* and *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*. The latter two express more forcefully the direction of the accordance, i.e., the orientation primarily to mind or thing.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 24–28. See also Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 258–59.

¹⁴ Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," 121.

Perhaps no notion in the study of Heidegger has become more of a cliché than that of the relation of concealing and unconcealing or revealing.¹⁵ We may reduce this relation to its most dogmatic expression: any revealing is at once a concealing. That is well and good. But we must repeat our question: Why is this so? To claim that any revealing is at once a concealing is to claim that no one revealing can possibly grasp the whole of a thing or set of things. The whole itself cannot be grasped as such but we must also presuppose it. That this is plausibly the case may be made evident by reference to the problem of perspective and finality. To grasp the whole as such implies a position beyond the whole – thus, grasping the whole as such involves a contradiction. We do not need the paradoxes of set theory – of the set of all sets – to see that any claim to grasp the whole is problematic in this way.¹⁶

Heidegger makes use of this paradox to assert that no relation can claim finality. No relation can claim not to avoid or conceal another possibility of relation. And if the whole cannot be grasped without paradox, there are always more possibilities. Heidegger refers to this excess of possibilities or the unbounded whole as the open. Heidegger cannot do more than describe the open as such because the paradox of the whole imposes the restriction. The unbounded is that which contains but cannot itself be contained: it is a sort of ineluctable excess that is concealed to the extent any version of the whole claims completeness. If we return to the definition of the truth as the relation of correspondence, we may now see clearly that this relation cannot encompass the whole and, therefore, an excess of possibility that brings the relation itself into question as a relation, that is, as relative to an encounter that cannot claim to be authoritative because it cannot exclude definitively (without contradiction) the possibility of possibility – of other encounters.

The open is aptly named as such. But Heidegger does not stop there. Heidegger argues that the relation of correspondence does not give us truth – the whole – but only a distortion of truth.¹⁷ The truth, as the whole – and one cannot ignore the famous Hegelian equation from *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, the “truth is the whole” (*das Wahre ist das Ganze*) – must be the open, that which recedes or withdraws from any relation. Heidegger puts it this way: “The essence of truth reveals itself as freedom.”¹⁸ Truth is that which is essentially free insofar as it resists determinacy. The truth in itself is indeterminacy.

By any account, this is a striking conclusion. If truth is essentially indeterminate, then no one (or determinate) truth can be true in the traditional sense of possessing an exclusive normativity authority.¹⁹ Indeed, any one truth is merely a relation among other

¹⁵ The relation is also extraordinarily complex. See Mark Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11–93.

¹⁶ The paradox in question, Russell’s paradox, results from the attempt to define the set of all sets. Now, the set of all sets should not contain itself. If it contains itself, it cannot be the set of all sets. If it does not contain itself, it also cannot be the set of all sets since it is missing one set – itself. The Hegelian variant is that you cannot describe anything until you have exceeded it. To describe the whole in itself is to suggest the whole has not been described since one describes from a point of view necessarily beyond the whole (whatever that might be) or, more precisely, expressing a new whole the understanding of which creates yet another new whole *ad infinitum*.

¹⁷ We use the term distortion because, as we note elsewhere, Heidegger does not claim that distortion is a falsification but rather a disclosure of truth that distorts only to the degree it is taken as giving the whole truth or the truth of the whole.

¹⁸ Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth,” 128.

¹⁹ See Taylor Carman, “Heidegger on Truth and Correctness,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 28, no. 2 (2007): 103–16.

possible relations that cannot command supreme authority because it cannot be complete. The philosopher has only to refer to what the relation conceals – the indeterminacy at its origin – to indicate that the truth is the result of the successful imposition of a certain relation as *the* relation. To put this in terms of our discussion of Rousseau, determinate truth is necessarily contingent. A truth is merely a particular way of configuring *the* truth that discloses itself as withdrawing from disclosure.²⁰

In “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger refers to particular truths as constituting a regime of correctness, and he distinguishes between correctness and truth.²¹ Correct are what we have hitherto referred to as particular or determinate truths; true is that truth which in its essence withdraws from all determinacy. In “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” Heidegger shows how the disclosure of truth as a particular *idea* is nothing more than a disclosure of truth that can claim authority as the truth only on the basis of a fundamental dissimulation. A regime of truth understood in the sense of correctness is thus contingent, an inevitable distortion or *Verstellung* or concealment of the originary truth. Heidegger suggests that there is no narrative, no history that is not contingent, not a distortion, and not a decline insofar as the plenitude of possibility, the freedom of the truth, is rejected.

Heidegger chooses one particular narrative, however: that of the installment of the idea as the standard for truth. And he examines this narrative in the context of Plato’s famous parable of the cave (*Höhlengleichnis*). Heidegger thus chooses a fiction, a very famous and central one, to ground his claim for the authority of the idea. In this respect, Heidegger suggests that this fiction creates or establishes the ground for his subsequent narrative. The idea as determinative of the being of any given being of which it is the idea turns out to have been forged not by argument but by a parable that opens up the space in which the idea comes to prevail. Heidegger affirms here, as elsewhere, the prime importance of poetry, or *Dichtung*, as the necessary basis for philosophy.²² Lest we take

²⁰ How far can one take this? For example, is death not a truth in the sense that it must be difficult to argue that death itself, as a “simple” fact of individual existence, is *merely* an interpretation? Heidegger suggests that there is some X that is encountered in the open and that the open is such precisely because what is encountered is incomplete or requires interpretation of some kind. This act of interpretation is hardly neutral or disinterested but seeks, at the very least, to render the unintelligible intelligible – in a word, truth emerges from this hope of intelligibility and reflects the motives that inform it. Put somewhat more bluntly, the openness of the open is lost or undermined by the process of definition that is the “discovery” of the fact or thing. Here Heidegger may seem to be quite opposed to Hegel’s attack on “immediate” openness or the fullness of sense certainty in the *Phenomenology*; yet determination itself as negation of the indeterminate asserts the indeterminate in negating it. The open then is a necessary presupposition of determination that itself exceeds, resists, and undermines determination – it is, in other words, the *ground* of determination. But as such it remains unintelligible or indeterminate in itself. So the fact of death remains a fact relative to an interpretation, but is there any interpretation that avoids death as a fact for us? Is the open not a word simply for what exceeds anthropomorphization? If it is, the open is then the twin of Rousseau’s state of nature.

²¹ Martin Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155–82. For an interesting treatment of the original lecture course at the basis of this essay (and another, strikingly political one, given in the winter of 1933–34, which Heidegger later considered “inadequate”), see Wrathall, *Heidegger*, 72–93.

²² This is a point Heidegger makes in his Hölderlin lecture of 1934/1935 and in one of the collected *Ereignis* manuscripts in volume 73.1 of the *Collected Edition*. See Martin Heidegger, *Zum Ereignis-Denken*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2013), 676. Heidegger claims in this volume that the act of creation, or *Dichtung*, is the “hidden essence” of both thinking and song, which both attempt to speak the silence of Being or *Beyng* (*Seyn*). See also Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*, ed.

the notion of fiction too far, we caution that the idea, as Plato sets it out in the parable of the cave, is indeed a disclosure of the truth. Fiction as we commonly think of it, as a lie or fantasy, is a misleading term in this context if it is taken to mean that the idea is nothing more than a completely arbitrary creation.²³

Heidegger concludes that the idea has created the canon or measuring rod²⁴ by which all beings are measured. The idea as such requires a correspondence orientation to beings that are beings only to the extent that they conform with a given idea. The idea may rest in the mind of man as a reflection of a more or less divine original, or it may be located in the mind of God as the proper canon for all created beings (*entia creata*). The idea, as its etymology indicates, privileges a visual cliché or “look” that becomes definitive for what a being is and can be. Indeed, a being can be understood as a determinate composite of visual clichés. But this is a telling circumstance since Heidegger does not suggest that there is any necessary connection between the visual cliché and the being identified by that cliché.

The emergence of a necessary connection seems to be little more than a product of habit that forgets itself as such. The “unsaid” that Heidegger mentions at the very beginning of “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” seems to have something to do with the forgetting of the sheer novelty of Plato’s creation, both of the cave parable itself and of the enduring concept of the idea that emerged in that and other Platonic works.²⁵ Plato’s sovereign power becomes clearest to us when we recognize the fundamental change that Plato wrought in the tradition by his creation of the ideas through their success as the guiding foundation of a way of life, a world, a society. Heidegger places himself at the other end of this epochal transformation, and his technique of “barring the device” aims at shaking us out of our slumber or obliviousness to Platonic creativity.²⁶ Only through this defamiliarizing action are we able to see that what we took to be immutably and eternally true is but one approach to reality that has lost its purchase on truth because it has become *questionable*.

The narrative Heidegger fashions out of this becoming questionable is one of decline and collapse. The relation to the truth as idea gives way to a far broader grasp of

Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2013), 15: “Dieser Zuspruch – der Philosophie – ist die *Dichtung des Seins*.” (This assertion – of philosophy – is the *poetry of Being*.)

²³ Contingency does not necessarily entail the arbitrary, for the arbitrary presupposes the possibility of a nonarbitrary relation, which Heidegger denies. Both terms have the weakness of their historical heritage that makes them relative to notions of final necessity (or wholeness) that are untenable in Heidegger’s view. If necessity is impossible, so is contingency in the strict sense. What we have instead is one possible unconcealing of the truth that may stand beside many more.

²⁴ Canon (τὸ κανὼν) is a measuring rod in ancient Greek. The term was used by Epicurus to describe the part of philosophy concerned with what we call epistemology. See Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth,” 122. Heidegger uses the term *Richtmaß* in that essay to describe the original encounter that determines the being of a being for the purposes of subsequent measuring – the crucial encounter for the regime of correctness (or representation as *Vorstellung*).

²⁵ Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” 155. See also Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 163–66.

²⁶ “Barring the device” or “defamiliarization” are of course concepts developed by the neglected Russian formalists. At their most sophisticated and general, both are terms denoting the breakdown of a particular cliché of representation (a form or figure or combination of forms and figures and other elements). The device is bared or one is knocked into the unfamiliar because the device fails to “fit” its accustomed context or is thrown into an unaccustomed context. See Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive, 1990).

the tenuousness of the relation to the truth and, ultimately, to what we referred to as its contingency. From this perspective, Heidegger comes remarkably close to Rousseau. But he radicalizes Rousseau by refusing to admit that Rousseau's inferences about sociability can be themselves anything more than contingent truths. If we put the matter in Rousseau's terms, the state of nature is essentially ineffable – we cannot return to the whole that is nature, nor may we make claims about that whole.

Are we thus creatures of fiction? We must be very careful about making such a claim because we seem to come perilously close to the Nietzschean position according to which all truths are falsehoods.²⁷ Heidegger does not go this far. He suggests that any determinate truth is merely one possible disclosure of truth that cannot exhaust the possibilities of disclosure. It is thus no more true or false in this sense than any other determinate or positive disclosure of the truth. Heidegger refers to these disclosures of the truth as erring – not as error, but erring. Determinate truths are a form of erring, of crossing through the open.²⁸ Danger and decline result not because of the disclosure of beings according to a specific relation to them; rather, danger and decline result from the forgetting of the open, the forgetting, in other words, of the fact that the determinate truths that emerge from a specific disclosure of truth, like the idea, are only one possibility of disclosure among others. The moment one view (relation) blocks off others, the tradition begins to decline into dogmatic rigidity.

Heidegger thus “purifies” Rousseau by suggesting that there is nothing but history, and that history is the history of erring, a journey on multiple paths that cannot come to a conclusion or construct a durable coordinate order or hierarchy. The notion that human beings are inherently sociable or “by nature” sociable is but another narrative having no greater authority than any other. We are indeed always free to think differently.

III.

If Rousseau and Heidegger both write histories and turn to origins, the historical narratives they create underpin two fundamentally divergent political interventions. One might even say that a parallel interpretation of Rousseau and Heidegger sheds light on the political divide in modern European history between the left and the right, a divide that hinges on the question of egalitarianism. And, crucially, both the left and the right rely on historical narratives to advance their respective political aims. Narratives of origins lie at the heart of much of modern political thought.²⁹

Rousseau's *Second Discourse* provides one of the most influential histories of equality in the modern period. He sets out to show that inequality emerges when humans

²⁷ As Nietzsche suggests in famous examples taken from the *Second Untimely Meditation* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (those, respectively, of truth as an army of metaphors and of judgments as falsehoods). Truths are falsifications that enhance our capacity to survive and flourish. But the problem here is, of course, that Nietzsche merely reverses the standard of what is correct. He does not transform it or show its foreground character. That Nietzsche gets no further than reversal is a major thesis of Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures. See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1 (Pfullingen: Meske Verlag, 1961), 38–40.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997), 15.

²⁹ Obvious cases are those related to Rousseau, such as Marx, which have created historical traditions. But the trend runs much deeper to cover some of the most important non-Marxist accounts of modernity, such as those of Hans Blumenberg, Michel Foucault, and Leo Strauss.

leave the “solitary lifestyle prescribed to us by nature” and become dependent on others.³⁰ With no mutual dependence on others, Rousseau suggests that “inequality is scarcely perceptible in the state of nature.”³¹ Inequality came into existence with the chance coming together of several unconnected causes that rendered the “natural” differences among humans – age, health, bodily strength, and qualities of mind or soul – consequential in a way that they never were in the state of nature. Differences among humans bore virtually no importance in the state of nature; they only came to matter as an unintended consequence of a specific historical development that happened to unfold as it did.

The power of Rousseau’s historical account in supporting an egalitarian politics can be illuminated by turning to the example of race. What is race? Some would say that it is a concept that reflects a natural difference: we perceive different skin colors, and the idea of race comes into our minds. The idea conforms to the thing that we see. But Rousseau would ask: Did this idea always exist in human history? Did the “natural” difference of skin color ever register to man in a state of nature? It obviously could not have, since making distinctions and comparisons only makes sense in the context of society. A distinction such as “race” would thus be entirely artificial for Rousseau, a creation of circumstance, of history. While he would characterize skin color as a “natural” difference, he would insist on the point that nature offers no guidance as to what to make of that difference or any other difference that forms the basis of inequality. For such differences are purely products of history and, as such, are susceptible to change. In this respect, Rousseau’s historicism opens up the possibility of transformation.³²

If Rousseau aligned this possibility of transformation with egalitarianism, other thinkers in his wake, beginning with Friedrich Nietzsche, took his method of genealogy in a much different direction to critique and challenge the “Jewish slave” inversion of aristocratic values into democratic ones. The same dependence that Rousseau decries becomes, as an origin, the source of morality, a potent servitude that comes to transform all relations between humans as it universalizes itself: for Nietzsche, the slave gains dominion over, or revenge against, its master by creating a model of servitude with universal scope. If universality is not yet equality, the upshot of the slave revolt is to create the conditions for universal equality (and thus servitude), a making similar and equal.³³ The fundamental critique that emerges in Nietzsche’s genealogy is antidemocratic insofar as it reveals the tyrannical singularity and uniqueness of the slave revolt in place of sameness and equalization. In this respect, Nietzsche employs the same tactic as Rousseau to a diametrically opposed end. For, if Rousseau seeks to show us the more or less arbitrary introduction of difference as a legitimating basis for inequality – and in this sense Rousseau holds that difference is

³⁰ Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 138. Mutual dependency is the key issue for Rousseau in explaining inequality: “Everyone must see that since the ties of servitude are formed solely by men’s mutual dependence and the reciprocal needs that unite them, it is impossible to enslave a man without having first put him in the position of being incapable of doing without another” (*Second Discourse*, 159).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² We stress possibility here because Rousseau hesitates about the prospect of reaching a new kind of human existence at the present moment. No one path of redemption presents itself to deliver us from all the various forms of human oppression that currently entrap us into a state of complete freedom.

³³ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 278.

the very basis of inequality – Nietzsche moves in the opposite direction to show the more or less arbitrary introduction of equality as a response to difference.³⁴

Heidegger follows Nietzsche, but he strives to avoid a significant difficulty that besets Nietzsche's account of origins: Nietzsche's own tendency to universalize his countering history. The problem may be expressed in the following terms: Nietzsche has no choice but to employ the conceptual terminology and language of the slave in order to reveal the limitations of both. Nietzsche must then depend on the very frameworks of understanding he seeks to overcome. Does not Nietzsche become stuck, then, in a vicious circle? It seems quite evident that Nietzsche is stuck – he affirms his own servitude in attempting to overcome it by revealing its limits. All that Nietzsche can do is provide an alternative account, to allow for irony and detachment, the typical resources of the powerless left to flail against a regime that they cannot change. And what, indeed, could be more ridiculous than to admit defeat because one cannot, by definition, claim victory?

Heidegger's approach is dramatically different. It can be described most perspicuously by reference to the difficulty we have already addressed previously at two different junctures. Heidegger does not argue, as Nietzsche does, that truth is a falsehood, that any and all narratives are fictions created for specific purposes. Truth itself is not a falsehood or a lie in Heidegger. To the contrary, Heidegger maintains that determinate truths participate in truth to the extent that they must assert a certain relation to truth as their very condition of possibility. The correspondence model of truth Heidegger criticizes in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" is obviously a possible model for configuring truth – its mere existence proves that possibility. Heidegger does not say that it is false. Heidegger says that it is merely one relation opened up in the open, others are possible, and the open is the context that permits this latter suggestion.

The open thus operates as a bulwark against the egalitarian impulse because it allows Heidegger to claim that privileging a given relation to things over other relations is a reductive distortion that reveals a tyrannical impulse to impose a given relation on all: Heidegger exposes the tyrannical impulse behind the imposition of equality without succumbing to that tyrannical impulse himself. In other words, Heidegger's reference to the open is not a refutation but rather a qualification or limitation of the hegemonic impulse that one must associate with the apparent need to elevate one relation to the open, one regime of disclosure, as the dominant relation, thereby automatically ruling out of bounds as false or nugatory any other relation.³⁵

Heidegger's radicalization of the natural state blocks the possibility of using it to legitimate a universal claim, including any that one might associate with Heidegger's thought itself. This is perhaps one of the most thorny aspects of Heidegger's thought, for we may be tempted to accuse him of the same sort of performative contradiction that traps Nietzsche and Rousseau. Heidegger's own description of decline would seem to invite

³⁴ There is a connection here between Nietzsche and Derrida, and the latter claims victory by suggesting that no one can claim victory – one is stuck in repetition because no final freedom is available: it is the freedom-to-come. Derrida is suspicious of Heidegger's attachment to freedom from the tradition, his "other beginning." See Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 31–36.

³⁵ See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 145.

such a comparison. But that may well be mere foreground as Heidegger is wont to say: What of the open itself?³⁶

IV.

This question about the open returns us to the beginning. For both Rousseau and Heidegger, the beginning is essential, and the fundamental question is unavoidable: Is the beginning itself normative, a universal, or is it outside of normativity?

These problems are familiar to anyone who has even a casual acquaintance with theology, and that is no accident, for the notion of a beginning is itself a historical one shaped primarily by a theological heritage in which God plays the crucial role of beginner par excellence or, as we like to say, creator (*creator mundi*). Both Rousseau and Heidegger adopt a concept of theological provenance, and the debate that ensues has a distinctively theological aspect. Indeed, we might suggest that here we find ourselves implicated in yet another turn in the battle between realism and nominalism, the former positing an essential regularity and equality of relations for all things, the latter the possibility of radical disruption, change, particularity.

Hans Blumenberg has described the difference between these two attitudes in his book about the founding of the modern world, and Jorge Luis Borges has memorably described it in his cunning summary fashion in several of his always short works, perhaps most notably in “From Allegories to Novels.”³⁷ Suffice it for us to point out that the essential distinction between realism and nominalism turns on the possibility of change or disruption. It would seem obvious that the mere possibility of a beginning itself inclines us in the direction of change and disruption, for without change or disruption of a putative regularity, no beginning as such could ever be possible. And if no beginning is possible, then it is more than a little problematic to focus one’s thought on it. After all, a beginning presupposes an interruption or transformation. This presupposition only makes sense if there is something that is interrupted or transformed. That is, the beginning reveals itself

³⁶ Heidegger is notoriously dismissive of the law of noncontradiction, indeed, of logic itself. As he writes in his lecture course from the summer of 1935:

For it cannot be decided so readily whether logic and its fundamental rules can provide any measure for the question about beings as such. It could be the other way around, that the whole logic that we know and that we treat like a gift from heaven is grounded in a very definite answer to the question about beings, and that consequently any thinking that simply follows the laws of thought of established logic is intrinsically incapable of even beginning to understand the question about beings, much less of actually unfolding it and leading it toward an answer.

See Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 28. Heidegger’s point – that logic is relative to an origin – may be turned against Heidegger’s assertion itself as having an origin, too. By doing so, however, we are caught in a trap for we affirm Heidegger’s basic point in refuting his assertion of that point. The implosion of regular habits of authority, of granting one assertion unblemished hegemony based on a final claim about the whole, is clear. We are thus compelled to rethink our habits of constructing authority and, ultimately, our insistence on authority itself. See our note 24 regarding the problem of the whole.

³⁷ See Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 145–80; Jorge Luis Borges, “From Allegories to Novels,” in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger (New York: Penguin, 1999), 337–40.

as possible only as it differs from the continuous, which, to be sure, is only revealed as such by the beginning. Put starkly, a beginning is essentially differential and must be so. Without a beginning, we may only assume the rule of pure continuity. The result of continuity would be a continuous repetition of the same since there would be no possibility for disruption (and, thus, no recognition of continuity as such since continuity would be the “way things are”). Freedom understood as the power to interrupt or transform a given order would be simply impossible. And what other kind of freedom is possible?³⁸

Viewed in this way, it might be obvious that, while they show a common adherence to the notion of a beginning, Rousseau and Heidegger cannot be more divergent in their attitudes to that beginning. Rousseau in effect seeks to reverse the beginning by arriving at a new equilibrium that restores the equilibrium disrupted or undermined by that beginning. To use a celebrated metaphor, Rousseau seeks to heal the wound that disrupts the “natural” functioning of nature, and we are that wound, the creature always out of joint or, in more Romantic terms, the locus of nature’s struggle with itself. Heidegger, to the contrary, cultivates the beginning and the disequilibrium that it promises. It is therefore not surprising that Heidegger places a premium on struggle and, most tellingly, on the philosophic work that is not a work (itself an attempt to regain or retain a certain equilibrium) but a site of exploration and erring.

Both Rousseau and Heidegger recognize that the declaration of a beginning is itself a declaration of freedom, an ungrounded declaration that seeks to prove itself. By claiming a beginning, we permit ourselves the crucial, related claim that we are in some manner free, that we have the power to change or redirect the course of things. Rousseau’s response to this power is to turn it toward its own elimination in the reestablishing of equilibrium that is the final egalitarian community. Heidegger’s response reveals a persistent irony insofar as his exaltation of the beginning forestalls conclusion – if we hold to the beginning, we engage in a struggle without end – and, indeed, there is no philosopher in the modern age who feared the end, the assertion of a final order, more greatly than Heidegger in his decades-long struggle against the nihilism of technocratic modernity.³⁹

V.

Rousseau and Heidegger thus show markedly different attitudes to history. While they both embrace the notion that norms are products of specific historical circumstances and thereby assert the primacy of the historical in the formulation and assertion of norms, they diverge sharply in their attitude to the starkest conclusion to be drawn from their own

³⁸ Perhaps the question is too hasty. We may look at freedom as the power to choose among different possible actions, those possibilities already being established, or as the power to initiate a different route of action hitherto unknown. The former freedom is limited to a given framework of possibility; the latter creates its own framework. Which freedom is really freedom? If we judge by Heidegger, the former freedom is tied to correctness, the latter to no restriction at all. The former is “a” freedom; the latter is freedom itself.

³⁹ In Heidegger’s view, technology threatens to end the primordial strife that he affirmed as the essence of history in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) by disclosing all beings as resources (*Bestand*) and by turning knowing into the production of information. The danger of technology is that it threatens to end daring, violence, and thinking. It threatens to end history in a final, unchanging interpretation of Being. Such an end would lead to the “bestialization” of the human being (see Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I-V [Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948]*, GA 97 [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015], 41).

investigations: the loss of the eternal, the universal – of nature – as the immutable standard. Rousseau’s return to the state of nature seeks to bring an end to history and is, indeed, the distant predecessor in this sense to the end-of-history thesis that Alexandre Kojève famously associated with Hegel. From this point of view, the discovery of history ends up in the rejection of history as being constitutionally unable to support a positive universal claim for equality.⁴⁰ At best, the assertion of the historical contingency or historicity of narratives that support or reflect a given set of beliefs and norms permits the assumption of a “negative” claim for equality, that is, the absence of authoritative norms – we are thus all equally barred access to a privileged authority that lies outside of the human. But Rousseau does not take this route, preferring to establish a historical narrative that rejects the disequilibrium of history in favor of a final order asserted by the general will that should eliminate history.⁴¹ History can be little more than lamentable evidence of our inability to complete nature. History is thus error and can only be error as long as it has no conclusion: those who expect to find truth in it as a final standard or authority of some kind can only be in error themselves. Rousseau repeats the traditional philosophical suspicion of history with the remarkable twist that he turns this suspicion against philosophy itself: the upshot is that the end of philosophy and history are united in so far as philosophy as well comes to an end at the end of history.

Heidegger’s exploitation of history has no end in mind other than to dispense with ends, at least final ends. Heidegger opens up history by insisting on the generation of different narratives, different interpretations, without thereby granting any one an authority to exclude the others, except of course (and with all due irony) his own narratives that accompany the notion of the open: the forgetting of Being, the decline from the beginning into nihilism, and therewith the rise of technology as the highest form of nihilism. One is free to contest these narratives, and, by doing so, one engages in the activity of debate, questioning, and struggle that turns history away from becoming a narrative of finality that is the proper counterpart to technology’s aim to assert a final interpretation of Being.

In this respect, Heidegger develops an intriguing terminological pair to describe these different notions of history: one oriented to ascertaining a final narrative, the other to resisting not only a final narrative but any narrative at all. Since translation of this pair has proved quite difficult, we set them out here in the German: *Historie* and *Geschichte*. The former term applies to historical narrative understood as either a science or an art with a definite methodological content, no matter how varied. *Historie* is a discipline or, in Heidegger’s language, a kind of *tekhnē* that gives definitive and thus final identity to the events of the past. *Historie* creates models and narratives and, in so doing, explains history,

⁴⁰ The assumption is that equality requires a kind of completion. If there is change, it must be repetition only. One may know an entire infinite sequence from one complete segment. If history is anything other than this, it is differential and asserts the impossibility of equality.

⁴¹ In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau creates a community without dissension where all exercise their will in essentially the same way. The general will asserts a universal state in which one frees oneself by subsuming one’s will into the rational whole, thereby eliminating selfishness (i.e., *amour propre*) as the source of conflict. As Rousseau writes, “Each of us puts his person and his full power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.” One frees oneself by becoming free of the selfish impulses to distinguish oneself from others through property, art, and science. One embraces a kind of collective Stoicism that resists the impulse to overcome death by making history.

making it perfectly intelligible. *Geschichte*, to the contrary, has no *tekhne*. *Geschichte* denotes a kind of “happening” that does not and cannot be reduced to an authoritative narrative. As may be evident from this brief account, *Historie* resembles correctness and *Geschichte* resembles the open.

The comparison with Heidegger's discussion of truth reveals to what extent Heidegger affirms, like Rousseau, that *Historie* errs, but, unlike Rousseau, it also reveals Heidegger's affirmation of error itself.⁴² If Rousseau appears to argue that the historical process as the reign of error must be brought to a close, Heidegger insists that error itself must no longer be suppressed but must be cultivated as a new beginning or transition from metaphysics that seeks not to come to a close but to open the open. Heidegger's affirmation of the open might simply seem to be another affirmation of difference, creativity, with a subjunctive applying to every historical assertion: “if it were really so, then...” This “celebration” of plurality may seem bracing, but it is all too easy to forget that the consequence of error is not infrequently violence and discord, since error is an elementary form of violence. Indeed, the most elementary form of violence is likely the utter dissolution of final certainty that accompanies affirmation of the open.

Error is not an innocent affair. One can err badly and suffer on that account. If one cannot determine a final norm, then one may suffer the absence of norms, a standard version of “nihilism.” While the absence of norms may be liberating, it may also be suffocating, the loss of certainty itself estranging one from any final comfort provided by a certain view. Yet, it is fair to say that a final norm may be equally suffocating. One finds oneself between a suffocating uncertainty and a suffocating certainty.

Rousseau and Heidegger not only historicize their own thinking, bringing into question what authority it may have; they also attempt to do the same with the historical narratives that underpin that thought, if not historical narratives in general, despite their evident variety. For, if there are many kinds of history, we would have to go a very long way back to get to the kind of history that does not distinguish itself from fantasy, fiction, or tall tale, that does not ask to be taken seriously. In a way that is more than a little striking, Rousseau and Heidegger, while seeking to free themselves from the burden of history, undermine even their own ostensibly liberating narratives. And they end up with a notion of history as error that breeds either a utopian politics of the left, an escape from or end of history, or a katechontic politics of the right that seeks to delay that end.

⁴² Unlike Nietzsche, Heidegger does not insist that we live in error, in falseness. Rather, Heidegger looks at truths as forms of error in the sense that they turn away from the open. But, as we noted, they are not false or wrong because that standard itself is a measure of error.

HEIDEGGER'S LATER THINKING OF ΧΡΟΝΟΣ: FROM ARISTOTLE TO ANAXIMANDER

*Whence things have their origin,
Thence also their destruction happens,
According to necessity;
For they give to each other justice and recompense
For their injustice
In conformity with the ordinance of Time.*
[Anaximander fragment, seventh century BCE]

I. INTRODUCTION

Heidegger's philosophical reflections on the ancient Greek word *χρόνος* have played an important role in the development of both his early and his later concepts of time. We can conceptually trace some of the shifts in Heidegger's own changes in his understanding of time through his reflections on this Greek word. While Heidegger's earliest reflections on the term begin with Aristotle's usage of *χρόνος*, he will eventually regard this understanding as nevertheless too metaphysical and will, by the mid-1940s, reinterpret *χρόνος* in light of the pre-Socratic thinker Anaximander. By charting out Heidegger's sources of interpretation, particularly Aristotle and Anaximander, we gain a fuller conception of Heidegger's own development with regard to time.

Heidegger's earliest reflections on Aristotle's use of the term occur in his 1923 lecture course *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. Aristotle's definition of the term plays a pivotal role in his analysis of world time in *Being and Time* (GA 2: 421/401),¹ yet despite his claim to the importance of the term and his repeated gestures to Aristotle's analysis, Heidegger offers no full treatment of *χρόνος* in *Being and Time*, and it is not until six months later, in the 1927 summer semester course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (GA 24: §19), that Heidegger offers a fuller reflection of Aristotle's conception of *χρόνος*. A significant footnote toward the end of *Being and Time* (GA 2:

¹ In referencing Heidegger's works, I cite according to the standard practice of providing the *Gesamtausgabe* volume number, followed by the German pagination, a slash, and then the English page number. In cases where no official English translation exists, all translations are my own, and pagination is given strictly according to the relevant *Gesamtausgabe* volume.

570/410) offers a truncated view of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's χρόνος. For the most part, Heidegger understands Aristotle's account of χρόνος as the standard way in which the history of philosophy has understood the phenomenon of time. It is not until his return to the pre-Socratics, specifically Anaximander, that Heidegger reassesses the meaning of χρόνος in a new, nontranscendental light.

Although Heidegger emphatically reminds his students in his 1932 lecture course *The Beginning of Western Philosophy* that Aristotle, in reference to *Physics*, bk. 4, had written a great treatise on time (GA 35: 18/14), Heidegger himself offers only a relatively brief account of Aristotle's notion of χρόνος in GA 24, and nowhere, that I am aware of, does he discuss how it is that he comes to move from his earlier preference for Aristotle's conception of the term to the later interpretation of Anaximander. In the context of the 1932 lecture course, Heidegger offers a tantalizing suggestion that it is through Sophocles's *Ajax* that we may arrive at the pre-Socratic conception of χρόνος (GA 35: 18/15).² Despite the absence of a direct mention of how one conception of χρόνος comes to be preferred over another, it is my claim that we can understand Heidegger's shift in understanding through his own discussion of the ancient Greek χρεών ("necessity" or "usage"). Central to my thesis is a comment made by Heidegger in his 1941–42 writings from *Das Ereignis* (GA 71, translated as *The Event*) in which he explicitly links χρόνος with τό χρεών (GA 71: 65/53). What is at stake here is the way in which Heidegger from outside the narrower limitations presented in *Being and Time* attempts to instead think of time fundamentally outside of metaphysics and the transcendental horizon of Dasein's understanding. My reflections occur in three parts. First (1), I briefly recapitulate Heidegger's early, pre-1940s, conception of χρόνος, which culminates in his analysis in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. I then (2), move to the way in which his understanding shifts in *Der Spruch des Anaximander*, joining an understanding of χρόνος with τό χρεών. I conclude (3) with some observations on what this suggests for an understanding of Heidegger's later concept of time. My emphasis here is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of Heidegger's interpretations of either Aristotle or Anaximander, nor to lay out in great detail Heidegger's reflections on the term χρόνος. Instead, my aim is a modest hermeneutic proposal. In charting the ways in which Heidegger himself interprets particular thinkers and his own subtle shifts in those interpretations, we may gain insight into Heidegger's own thinking. In this case, through an initial examination of the different ways in which Heidegger approaches the term χρόνος from within the tradition, we may see something of how Heidegger's own thoughts on time have similarly shifted throughout his work. This is particularly the case with time, a concept that is so central to all of Heidegger's thought. Much more needs to be said. However, I believe a brief look at Heidegger's tarrying with the term χρόνος offers us some unique insight into how his thoughts may have shifted and developed over the course of his career.

It is worth pointing out that Heidegger's reflections on the specific term χρόνος, particularly in light of other ancient Greek terms to which he devotes considerable space,

² Heidegger's own notes on this are equally underdeveloped but suggestive: "Undetermined – individual – on purpose *precisely that*: Sophocles, *Ajax*, 646–47: here: χρόνος φύει τ' αἰδηλα καὶ φανέτα κρύπτεται" (GA 35: 217/169).

are relatively underdeveloped. This is further complicated by the fact that Heidegger rarely, if ever, seems to directly analyze the term $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ by itself; he almost always does so in the context of other ancient Greek expressions.³ On the one hand, this allows us to gain further insight into how Heidegger sees time's relation to Dasein and to being. On the other hand, this introduces the interpretive challenge of understanding Heidegger's readings of $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ (or any other isolated Greek term) without reference to a host of other ancient Greek vocabulary, which also have their own attendant interpretations for Heidegger. It is my contention, however, that his thoughts on $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$, when examined across his career, are able to act as a bridge between Heidegger's own thoughts on the role of time for Dasein in his early period and his more mature reflections on the relation between time and being. As such, the changing role of $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ for Heidegger helps us better understand how and in what ways Heidegger's own reflections on the concept of time evolve. However, a fuller treatment of how Heidegger's understanding of time relates to Dasein and being, as well as the way in which Heidegger understands $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ with regard to other ancient Greek terms, is substantially beyond the scope of this brief presentation. I will therefore present only a cursory and somewhat suggestive idea of how $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ relates to the larger project of understanding Heidegger's thinking about time. I will begin with a short examination of Heidegger's earliest reflections on Aristotle's conception of $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$, particularly from the standpoint of *Being and Time* and just afterward.

II. HEIDEGGER'S TREATMENT OF ARISTOTLE'S $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$

In paragraph 81 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger famously distinguishes what he considers, at least in 1927, the conception of $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ from Aristotle's *Physics* as "what is counted" and connects it with a form of both representation and calculation on Dasein's part (GA 2: 421/400). As Heidegger writes, "This time is what is counted, showing itself in following, making present, and counting the moving pointer [of a clock] in such a way that making present temporalizes itself in ecstatic unity with retaining and awaiting horizontally open according to the earlier and later" (GA 2: 421/400). Recall that for Heidegger in *Being and Time* the horizons act as our available limits and surroundings, disclosing for us our possibilities. The ecstatic structure of the past, present, and future are reconsidered now on the basis of retaining, presencing, and awaiting as interpreted through the horizon of our possibilities. It is important to recognize that for Heidegger here $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ is not something that is "outside" of Dasein but is rather a representation and calculation by Dasein of its own fundamental horizontal structure. Heidegger recognizes, even in the context of *Being and Time*, that this does not mean that $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ is somehow privative; it is instead tied up with the very being of Dasein. This account of Aristotle's discussion of $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ is a relatively straightforward analysis of *Physics* IV.10–14 and the interpretation of time as the counting of movement – ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως – the number of movements with respect to a before or after. Heidegger's contribution, of something not expressly discussed in Aristotle's *Physics*, is to highlight the fact that it is Dasein that performs this counting. Heidegger may feel justified in interpreting time ($\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$)

³ This is especially the case in the expression $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ – φέει, which is central to understanding Heidegger's later concept of time but an analysis of which is outside the scope of this essay.

as something of which only human Dasein is capable of making sense. Put differently, because only human Dasein has the capacity to measure the number of movements (ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως), it may be that only human Dasein is capable of measuring χρόνος as time.

This is not immediately apparent in Aristotle's treatment in the *Physics*, but Heidegger seems to have interpretive warrant for making such a move. Heidegger's earliest reflections on the Aristotelian χρόνος occurred three years prior in the context of his 1924 Marburg course *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Heidegger informs his students that we can hear the sense of χρόνος in the expression "everything has its time" (GA 18: 56/80). In this way, Heidegger understands χρόνος to be deeply and intimately related to ψυχή, the being of Dasein. Heidegger's reading of χρόνος in the Aristotle course is associated with the way in which the being of Dasein deliberates about the why of its being-with-one-another in the mode of "the upcoming," "what has happened," and "what is present" (GA 18: 126, 86), further clarifying that a "definite aspect of temporality" appears in these aspects:

The one who is deliberating about what is encountered in the environing world is concerned with the μέλλοντα χρόνον, what is not there yet; and specifically what is not there in relation to what is posited in a definite care, but is to be made available in everyday life. [...] Everydayness itself is manifested within a fundamental basic-structure: its *temporality*. Being in itself as concern and concerned speaking is *temporal*, concerns the *not-yet-present*, speaks about what *has-happened-already*, treats the *existing-there-right-now*. (GA 18: 131–32/89–90)

Readers of *Being and Time* will hear the temporal structure of Dasein in this earlier analysis of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. What is significant here, though, is Heidegger's understanding of χρόνος solely with regard to Dasein's being-in-the-world. Temporality is, as in *Being and Time*, entirely caught up in the way in which Dasein lives and how it understands its world through the disclosure of its being in its future, past, and present. The form of χρόνος as understood here is entirely bound up with the being of Dasein and not with being itself. Heidegger's view would shift somewhat several months later in the summer 1927 lecture course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, a lecture course whose major focus seems to elucidate some of the central issues around time that were raised in division 3, part 1, of *Being and Time*. In the course on *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger widens the conceptual lens by which he interprets χρόνος by looking at other ancient authors, including Simplicius and Plotinus, among others, and by going into Aristotle's discussions of χρόνος in the *Physics* in more detail. Reading Aristotle, Heidegger remarks that χρόνος as time is not movement, even if it is involved with movement in that it is something counted "which shows itself *in and for* regard to the before and after in motion [...] encountered in the horizon of earlier and later" (GA 24: 334/235 and 337/237–38). For Heidegger, the significance of this is that Aristotle's conception of time orients Dasein toward its horizons of possibility through the act of calculation. However, there is within this ontic counting of time the possibility of what Heidegger terms

“original time,” which opens up the possibility for the ontological understanding of time as temporality (GA 24: 342/241). While much of the last sections of the lecture course are devoted to a very dense summation of much of the material from *Being and Time*, it is clear that Heidegger is struggling to understand both being and temporality outside of Dasein’s constitution. In the last sections of the 1927 course, Heidegger tells his students that their aim is to clarify the understanding of being for beings that are not Dasein (GA 24: 412/291). Falling back on the familiar notions of handiness and projection, Heidegger struggles to understand what the ecstatic temporality that opens up original time might look like and states, in a manner much more similar to his later works, “[t]emporality exists – *ist da* – as unveiled, because it makes possible the ‘Da’ and its unveiledness in general” (GA 24: 437/307). Unfortunately, in the final moments of the course, even though Heidegger emphatically acknowledges that “[o]ntology is at bottom Temporal science” (GA 24: 461/324), his focus becomes fixated on the transcendental schema by which this original temporality appears. It is, as such, no surprise that Heidegger’s winter semester lecture course, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, would centrally focus on the imagination as the schema that makes “time” possible. It is thus here that Heidegger’s earlier reflections on χρόνος end.

III. THE TURN TO ANAXIMANDER AND TO ΧΡΟΝΟΝ

Beginning roughly in the mid-1930s, Heidegger starts to realize that the project of *Being and Time* was nevertheless still too trapped within the transcendental framework of occidental metaphysics to be able to adequately describe the way in which beings presence. Heidegger’s often struggling attempts to articulate a new way of thinking about how being occurs that is neither caught up in the perspective of Dasein nor inappropriately delimited by the Western (metaphysical) philosophical tradition beginning with Plato is recorded in his private manuscript *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (translated as *Contributions to Philosophy [of the Event]*). Here, Heidegger begins, if tentatively, to shift the understanding of χρόνος, which he continues to see as pertaining to ψυχή but which ultimately points back to φύσις, nature, or, in a more Heideggerian locution, the originary source of placing into appearance. Heidegger’s shift in thinking of χρόνος that is not dependent on Dasein but is instead part of the way in which beings themselves come to presence is first explored in his 1932 summer semester lecture course *The Beginning of Western Philosophy (Anaximander and Parmenides)*. In offering his own translation of Anaximander’s fragment, Heidegger reads the second half of the six-line fragment that inaugurated the Western philosophical tradition as: “it says that the reciprocal bestowal of compliance and correspondence, which indeed characterizes appearance, happens according to the measure of time” (GA 35: 15–16/13). It is time that stands in closest connection to the way in which beings come into appearance and withdrawal, or disappearance and concealing, “time lets disappearance happen” (GA 35:18–19/15). Heidegger links being and time as φύσις. Time, as χρόνος φύει, allows the concealed to emerge as “self-unfolding, self-presentation in the open, self-showing – appearance” (GA 35:19–21/16). Time is the allocative power to measure out to beings their Being, outside the realm of calculation, and place before in the present, take back in the past, and hold back in the future.

Five years after writing the *Beiträge* and almost a decade after his initial interpretation of Anaximander's saying, Heidegger would criticize the *Beiträge* for nevertheless remaining still too transcendental and would attempt to think the grounding of being again in *The Event*. In section 89 of *Das Ereignis*, Heidegger explicitly links τὸ χρεών (necessity) and χρόνος (GA 71: 65–66/53), although with almost no further commentary. Heidegger would finally trace out this suggestive connection five years later, after a nervous breakdown associated with the denazification commissions and in the same year in which he would pen the *Letter on Humanism*. Heidegger revisits the Anaximander fragment and the connection between τὸ χρεών and χρόνος in his unpublished lecture course *Der Spruch des Anaximander* (GA 78). It is here, in 1946, that we see both Heidegger's most sustained treatment of χρόνος since *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* course almost twenty years prior. Instead, the tenor of time in the unpublished lecture course shifts its focus from the horizontal way in which Dasein encounters itself to the way in which being itself comes to presence as time. As Heidegger describes it in *Der Spruch des Anaximander*, "time is that which brings forth the presencing of what is present each to its time, that is, as the bringing forth in their respective abiding-while. The actual essence of time: the Whiling" (*Die Zeit als das Zeitigende des Anwesens des Anwesenden je zu seiner Zeit, d.i. als das Zeitigende der jeweiligen Weile. Das eigentliche Wesen der Zeit: das Erweilnis* [GA 78: 198]). Heidegger understands χρεών both as a need or requirement and thus as an allowance or "allotment" in such a way that χρεών is that which essentially allows being-present as its own proper abiding-while (*als einbehaltendes Wesenlassen des Anwesens als Viele* [GA 78: 135]). Interpreted ontologically, τὸ χρεών is thus presencing itself (*die Anwesenung selbst* [GA 78: 125], also *das Wesende im Anwesen des Anwesenden* [GA 78: 135]) into the abiding-while (*das Weile*), where χρόνος is the allotment and compliance into Whiling (*der als Erweilnis fùgenden Zu- und Einweisung* [GA 78: 201]), or more simply the bringing forth into the abiding-while (*die "Zeit" im Sein als der Zeitigung der Weile* [GA 78: 201]). Heidegger speaks explicitly against the notion of time here as a form of counting or a series of one after another. Time here is understood in its ontological register as an allotment of presence. This allotment, as τὸ χρεών, can be understood as a need or allowance and is intimately bound with χρόνος as the time-space of each being's being.

IV. CONCLUSION

Just as Heidegger's conception of being shifts from his earlier works through to his later, more mature work, so too does Heidegger's understanding of time. I have attempted to show here, through an analysis of Heidegger's reflections on the ancient Greek word χρόνος, just one way in which we can hermeneutically trace Heidegger's own development with regard to the concept of time. While Heidegger's earlier reflections on time are centered on an understanding of the way in which Dasein horizontally interprets itself, his later conception of time shifts to a nontranscendental, nonmetaphysical way in which time is understood as the allotment of being to each particular being-present as Whiling, understood through the ancient Greek τὸ χρεών of Anaximander. Central to understanding Heidegger's conceptual shift is the way in which he analyzes the Greek understanding of χρόνος. His earlier thought centers on the traditional reception of the philosophical understanding of χρόνος via Aristotle (as well as Plotinus and Simplicius). It is only

through Heidegger's reevaluation of the term, via Sophocles and ultimately Anaximander, that we see Heidegger offering a subtly, and importantly, different interpretation of both χρόνος and his own views on time. Much in the same way that Heidegger's later conception of being is not a reversal of his earlier thoughts on being but rather a nonmetaphysical elaboration, χρόνος as τό χρεών distinguishes the way in which the mature Heidegger reconceives time outside of a transcendental and metaphysical thinking. While much of my analysis has been necessarily brief and cursory, it is my hope that these brief remarks serve to illustrate two things: first, the way in which we can methodologically trace the developments in Heidegger's thought, with reductively deflating them, through his own examination and interpretation of different thinkers in the tradition over his whole career; and second, and perhaps more important philosophically, how we must further consider Heidegger's evolving thoughts on time alongside his elaboration of being.

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THE POLIS-ANIMAL: ON ARISTOTLE'S PROVOCATIVE POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Three terms in this title are not self-explanatory; the fact that I use them entails a thesis in each case.¹

“Anthropology” is, according to a very learned encyclopedia (the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*) and the author of the relevant article (none other than Odo Marquard), a neologism of the modern period.² That may be true of the word itself; it is nevertheless, as far as the history of the concept is concerned, false. Systematic reflection on the ἀνθρώπινα, matters pertaining to or having the nature of the human, begins much earlier – as so often in philosophy, with the Greeks. Among them, it is the “master of those who know,” Aristotle, as Dante will say, who will set the decisive standards.

The next term, “animal,” sounds intentionally provocative but also involves a thesis. According to Aristotle, human beings are in this context part of the continuum of nature to the extent that they do not own exclusive rights to the political. Within the animal world, they are not, as astonishing as that may seem, the only political beings. Human beings are thus not being reduced here to mere animals; instead, a part of the animal realm is enhanced in status by being lifted up into the dimension of the political.

Why, finally, the third term, “polis-animal”? The answer is that, in the usual translation of Aristotle’s well-known ζῶον πολιτικόν as “political animal,” the greater provocation is lost. The word “polis,” incidentally the first noun of the relevant text, the *Politika* or “Politics,” is directed against a widespread but, with all due respect, nevertheless trivializing understanding.

The following reflections are an attempt to pursue this program of three theses by means of a renewed interpretation of the *locus classicus*, chapter I 2 of that text whose currency, at least as far as its political anthropology is concerned, has continued unbroken since its rediscovery in the thirteenth century down into the modern era and even until

¹ This is the revised version of an address given to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Prof. Ernst A. Schmidt, to whom I am grateful for a number of extremely helpful suggestions.

² O. Marquard, *Anthropologie*, in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter (Schwabe: Basel, 1971), 186; available online.

today: Aristotle's *Politics*. I will thus undertake a microanalysis, but one that is occasionally enriched with macroanalytical excursions on the one hand and with systematic remarks on the plausibility of Aristotle's arguments on the other.

In the above-mentioned chapter I 2 of the *Politics*, we find Aristotle's second fundamental anthropological definition, the ζῶον λόγον ἔχων. In order not to obscure its provocation, I translate it as the "logos-gifted" animal and introduce at the same time a fourth thesis: in order to understand the polis-nature of the human, we must not ignore logos-giftedness, since it is on account of this second anthropological definition, I argue, that human beings are not destined for just any form of community. On account of their logos-giftedness, the social nature of human beings is capable of different levels of realization and only achieves its definitive consummation in that community of which subhuman beings are not, and many human societies are not yet, capable. It is the form of society we know of from the Greeks, their specific form of community: the polis.

I will attempt to develop and argue for these four theses in five steps, to which I append, as a sixth step, a brief conclusion.

1. A PRELIMINARY REFLECTION WITH CONSEQUENCES

As in his other texts, Aristotle does not waste time with introductory remarks. He begins immediately with a πᾶσα- or all-statement, here a preliminary reflection on the nature of the political (πολιτικόν). The systematic significance of this initial statement is frequently ignored. The preliminary reflection, chapter 1 of the *Politika*, contains an explicit and an implicit thesis.

According to the introductory statement, the polis is a community (κοινωνία) for the sake of a certain good (ἀγαθοῦ τινος ἕνεκεν), but only with regard to its general class. As a result, the subsequent anthropological definition of the human as an *ens sociale*, even when one adds the good (ἀγαθόν), is for Aristotle correct, but at the same time, due to its evident under-determinacy, also false. Without mentioning him by name, our philosopher rejects Plato's thesis that political government (πολιτικόν) is only quantitatively different from that of a king (βασιλικόν), a household manager (οικονομικόν), or a master of slaves (δεσποτικόν) according to whether there are more or fewer subjects. In fact, there is a difference of εἰδή, of kind.

The full explanation of this point is only given in the next chapter, chapter I 2, so that Aristotle's first chapter is merely a preliminary sketch. It nevertheless introduces a particular point that, while still not providing a sufficiently specific criterion, points well beyond the merely quantitative position and for the first time alludes to the more provocative thesis contained in the πολιτικόν of the title. In accordance with their polis-nature, human beings are not satisfied with just any political community; instead, they desire a community whose members undertake something that is not merely missing in the other forms of human governance but that is in fact excluded by their very nature. Citizens in the full sense of the word, citizens who are in no sense subjects, are so essentially equal and free that they rule (ἄρχειν) and are ruled (ἄρχεσθαι) in turn.

In this alternation, an implicit thesis comes into play that is seldom made sufficiently clear in interpretations of Aristotle's political anthropology. Regardless of which of the two alternate forms states take, "monarchic" or "political", all have a common

element, a generic characteristic to which Aristotle does not, however, point directly. Communities necessarily entail a form of rulership, an ἀρχή, which, since it is necessary, has anthropological status.

This situation, an essential characteristic, is nowhere doubted by Aristotle, but it is also nowhere developed or argued. I suspect that one reason for this argumentative deficit may lie in the Greek understanding of ἀρχή: used in the context of politics, the term is understood less in terms of force or compulsion and more in terms of order and control.

According to the first dictionary of philosophical terms, book Delta (V) of the *Metaphysics*, indeed its very first chapter, the term is by no means merely, and in fact not even primarily, to be understood politically. Αρχή, Latin *principium*, in English “beginning,” “origin,” “principle,” and “government,” is according to Aristotle the first thing on the basis of which something else exists or comes to be or is recognized (*Met.* V 1013a 18–19). It designates both a temporal and a spatial beginning; it is the term for the four causes (αἰτία), the three notions of substratum (ὑποκείμενον), privation (στέρησις), and form (εἶδος); further, the principles of proof; and in the practical, specifically political realm, the office, which is related to government but in which control and order are foregrounded. Here the concern is sometimes with the holder of office and government (*EN* IX 6, 1167a 31) but mostly, however, with office and government directly.

Where there is no ἀρχή, what is primarily perceived is disorder, lack of leadership, and lawlessness, not freedom from coercion. Like Homer (*Iliad* II 703 and 726), Herodotus (*Histories* IX 23), Euripides (*Hekabe* 607; *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 914), and Plato (*Republic* VIII 558c and 560e), Aristotle, too, sees in ἀναρχία, literally “absence of rule,” no opportunity for political freedom but rather a reason for military and political downfall (*Pol.* V 3, 1302b 27–31). He takes lack of government to be just as undesirable as a ship – the classic simile for the state in miniature (*Pol.* III 4, 1276b 20ff.; cf. Plato, *Republic* VI 488a ff.) – sailing without a captain.

Let us return to the preliminary reflection. According to the well-known theory of the forms of states laid out in books III and IV, those constitutions are legitimate that serve the common good, and those are illegitimate that serve the good of the ruler. On this criterion, a large, multiethnic empire such as Persia can be entirely legitimate, especially if at its head there is an exemplary ruler such as the Cyrus described in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*.

Although in his model of a demopolis inspired by Athens’s democracy, the Stanford ancient historian and political scientist Josiah Ober equates “autocratic” and “tyrannical”, there is no doubt that the kind of rulership exercised by a prince or sole ruler, to the extent that it serves the subjects, is not an illegitimate τυραννικόν, “tyranny”, but rather a legitimate βασιλικόν, “monarchy.” However, it is not a πολιτικόν, a political form of rulership, for in order to be this, it would have to recognize the first criterion of legitimation in the theory of constitutions, in the more rigorous form given in *Politics* I 1: in addition to the requirement of the common good (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον), ruling and being ruled must alternate – a practice that excludes any form of lifelong rulership on the part of a single person.³

³ O. Höffe, “Kann Demokratie ohne Liberalismus funktionieren?” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, March 2, 2018, 24. See J. Ober, *Demopolis. Democracy Before Liberalism in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Here, in parentheses, a remark on present circumstances. In elections, and in a direct democracy in referenda as well, the citizens actualize the principle of democracy – namely, that all state authority is grounded in them, so that they are the real sovereign. In so doing, they document for parliamentarians and their laws that the “rulers” in a democracy, the office holders, both constitutionally and in political reality at the appointed time, both when they are elected and when they are not, are in the position of the ruled.

Despite this common element, however, and leaving other things aside, modern democracy differs significantly from a true citizen republic in Aristotle’s sense. The requirement that ruling and being ruled alternate is scarcely compatible with the long periods in office common in many places and with the possibility of repeated reelection. Even if modern constitutional democracies come close to citizen republics in some respects and even if the fact that someone can be a part of the government for many years or even head it or that one and the same person is allowed to be a member of parliament for more than a decade may have some advantages on account of the experience people gather in the course of time – this nonetheless obviously contradicts the idea that the office of rulership is exchanged for the role of the ordinary citizen. The occupational makeup of parliaments, too, falls short of the idea of a citizen republic: there is an overrepresentation of lawyers, teachers, and various kinds of officials and a lack, for example, of craftsmen, architects, doctors, and businessmen, not to speak of simple postmen or clerks, and indeed the decision for a career in politics is made very early in life and then determines the life that follows.

But back to the Greek πόλεις. They are, as one knows, state or state-like communities that emerge in the constricted localities on the Aegean coasts. They are walled cities, with fields outside the gates and frequently, as in the case of Athens, with a harbor that enables sea trade.

None of this, of course, is decisive for Aristotle’s initial reflections, although, as the final books show, it is presupposed as self-evident. According to Aristotle’s specific definition of the political, a normative concept, all that is needed is – in slightly modernized terms – a population of free and equal citizens who constitute themselves as a community of rulers and ruled in turn and in which no citizen, no matter how intelligent or wealthy, holds authority in principle over any other. The only legitimate authority is the authority of an office that is both given and received temporarily and only for a short time.

A genuine citizen republic of this sort is an ambitious project, and there is no question of its being realizable under all possible conditions. There are probably at least two social and historical prerequisites. In comparison with today, although there is binding legislation so that one can speak of the rule of law, there is very much less legislation altogether. In particular, there are no professional judges or lawyers, a circumstance that, from a democratic perspective, is to be taken positively. Since there are no legal experts, the citizenry is not, as far as legal or political questions are concerned, strictly divided into two groups: specialists and laypeople. Other elements of the incipient expertocracy of our democracies are lacking as well: a true citizen republic knows neither specialists for religion, no priests or rabbis or imams – it was of course a citizen jury that pronounced Socrates guilty of ἀσεβεία, godlessness, and for this reason condemned him to death – nor a professional military (although there are elected generals) or economists. There is

certainly no ministerial bureaucracy or the innumerable advisory committees we know today. Only medicine, organized like a guild, knows professionally trained experts. For all other subject areas, the citizen republic assumes two things: that every citizen capable of making a judgement also possesses the knowledge necessary to do so, and that the latter is fortunately not all too extensive.

As a result, Athenian democracy in its best period is a self-government of those concerned (excluding of course women, slaves, and μέτοικοι, or resident foreigners) – that is, a citizen republic in the literal sense of the word to a much greater degree than is the case even for a country as rich in direct-democratic elements as Switzerland. Leaving modern-day referenda aside, everyone admitted to citizen status in Athens is essentially equal to an extent that is hard to imagine today. The fact that some citizens at the time enjoyed a certain advantage by virtue of their having been taught by the traveling sophists, a kind of itinerant teachers, is not unimportant, but it has less weight than today's difference in competence between simple citizens, the educated middle class, and professionally trained specialists.

Plato, descended from the affluent aristocracy and educated by the Athenian “master sophist” Socrates, abolishes the rigorous equality of the citizens in *The Republic* by introducing predestined rulers and requires in addition that these be competent not in law or economics but in philosophy, specifically in the theory of forms.

This contrast to democracy, as fundamental as it is radical, is in turn contradicted by Plato's “pupil” Aristotle just as fundamentally and radically. The foreigner with a “resident permit” in Athens but without political rights rejects Plato's philosopher-king thesis on principle and thus remains largely true to the democratic character of his time.

Let us look, as a kind of excursus, at the Western notion of natural law. Aristotle sets down its basic definition in his treatise on justice, book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in a few all too brief remarks. That which is right and just by nature, τὸ φύσει δίκαιον, is characterized by non-arbitrariness, here immutability (ἀκίνητον), and by universality in that it has the same force everywhere (*NE* V 1134b 18ff.). However, no further details about what might in fact satisfy these two requirements are given. I suggest that, in order to make up this deficit, the grounding of the polis in the sense of the citizen republic described above in natural law needs to be recognized as a kind of statement about natural law itself: it is universally valid and not subject to human arbitrariness that human beings come together on the basis of a “natural” reciprocity at all and that this coming together achieves its “natural” consummation in a government of free and equal citizens.

2. THE MAIN ARGUMENTS

The arguments for the theses contained in the preliminary reflection follow, claims Aristotle, in the next chapter: chapter I 1 of the *Politics* develops, in a sense, the set of argumentative specifications that chapter I 2 must fulfil. Here, without drawing attention to it, Aristotle very slightly shifts his position.

The polis-nature is demonstrated together with three other claims: that the polis is the perfect society (1252b), that it is natural (1253a 2; cf. a 18–19), and that, in addition, it is naturally prior to the house and individuals (1253a 19; cf. a 25). Corresponding to this fourfold thesis, four extremely dense sequences of arguments are found there. These

ought – and this is Aristotle’s implicit claim – to justify, among other things, the claim that the difference between the forms of rulership is not quantitative. The method used to do this – described as “usual” – is of an analytic-synthetic nature, combining dissolution and composition: the composite, the polis, is dissolved into its smallest parts and then put back together again (*Pol.* I 1, 1253a 17–23).

If one concentrates on the first two sets of arguments, Aristotle’s justification for the polis-nature seems very much shorter than that offered by Plato in the *Republic*. Nevertheless, human beings’ social nature is discussed in much more detail and without needing to introduce the “moralistic” danger, decisive for the second stage of the polis in Plato, the motivation of *πλεονεξία*, the constant desire for more. In all of this, I see a sign of argumentative sobriety, of command of the subject, and of rhetorical elegance.

Aristotle begins with a notion that is already to be found in Plato’s first polis stage, the healthy polis – namely, that the individual is not self-sufficient (οὐκ ἀνάρκης) but instead needs numerous fellow humans (πολλῶν ἐνδεής: *Republic* II 369b). Aristotle, however, in accordance with his maxim *σῶζειν τὰ φαινόμενα*, extends Plato’s thought – oddly limited in the *Republic* to economics, the division of labor, and the comforts of life – to include more.⁴ He begins with two forms of mutual dependency in which a modest normative moment is announced – namely, the notion of fair exchange.

Due to an instinct-like drive (ὥρμη: 1253a 30), sexuality, a biological argument, man and woman join together. Because of their qualitatively different gifts, there is a steep hierarchy among human beings: lord and servant or slave work together, incidentally, according to Aristotle, for their mutual advantage. If one reduces this cooperation to its economic core and puts the problem of radical legal inequality to one side, it in no way contradicts Plato’s nonhierarchical thinking in the healthy polis.

The “four or five men” who come together in Plato’s elementary polis – a farmer for food, a builder for shelter, a weaver and a shoemaker for clothing (*Republic* II 11, 369b ff.) – are, in a somewhat more developed economy, the master craftsman or manager of a small business that is also usually hierarchically organized, even when those ruled or managed are slaves (almost) without rights. What is decisive from an economic perspective is what is announced in Aristotle’s τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν, a (hopefully present) competence (διανοία: understanding), an essential part of which is the foresight that sees beyond merely momentary needs (προορᾶν). For this reason, something that in politics is possible and from a normative perspective even mandatory – namely, the alternation of ruling and being ruled – is generally excluded in the commercial world, as it is in the world of the executive as well. Given the appropriate competence and in some cases on the basis of examinations, one can advance from being an apprentice to being a journeyman and ultimately a master craftsman, or from a simple employee to a manager, or from an inspector to higher levels of ministerial bureaucracy. But since here professional competence and ability are decisive, apprentices and masters, employees and managers do not alternate in their roles. Where, on the other hand, there is no need for a specialist competence that would define rank or status – namely, in being a citizen – a more than

⁴ O. Höffe, *Zur Analogie von Individuum und Polis (Buch II 367a – 374d)*, in Platon, *Politeia*, ed. O. Höffe (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

merely temporary hierarchy is excluded, and thus the alternation of ruling and being ruled is both possible and ultimately mandatory.

Elsewhere, a third social relation, that of (dependent) children to their parents, is added to the two relations of man and woman and lord and slave/servant (or master craftsman and journeyman or manager and employee) given in *Politics* I 2. According to Aristotle, the combination of all three of these relations, man and woman, parents-children, lord-slave or manager and subordinate, leads to the basic social and economic unit, the house (οἶκος, οἰκία). In the *Eudemian Ethics*, it already has a greater value on its own, which Hesiod, whom Aristotle quotes, had increased even further: *Works and Days* (405).⁵

The house is followed naturally by a second stage. Since the adult children go on to found their own families and households, a community of households of the same descent develops, a village (κώμη) in the sense of kin or clan. Finally, several such clans join together to form a polis, a community in which the decisive element is no longer blood ties but interest in a good life.

Aristotle's second sequence differs fundamentally from this first sequence of arguments, with its appeal to the threefold natural social impulses that are partly biological (man-woman, parent-child) and partly biological-economic (lord-servant/slave). In the second sequence, the logos-nature does the work of argumentation. Granted, what is decisive here is not language and reason in its entirety, and in particular not the aspect on which philosophers tend to focus, understanding. Instead, the concern is more, indeed exclusively, with the practical side, a practical rationality (I 2, 1253a 7–18).

The two sequences of arguments are, of course, not entirely different. Rationality already plays an accompanying role in the first set of arguments in the lack of reason characteristic of the slave and the lack of rational foresight (διανοία προορᾶν: *Pol.* I 2, 1253a 31–34) of the “natural lord” (φύσει δεσπότης). The aspect referred to there, however, is neither the only nor the most important respect in which the two fundamental concepts of Western anthropology, the polis-nature and the gift of the logos, are mutually entwined.

Let us examine Aristotle's second set of arguments more closely. It is prefaced with a thesis from the *Zoological Investigations* (*Historia animalium* I 1), to which I have already alluded: political beings can also be found below the level of the human, since by living together they, too, perform the cooperative activity named in the very first sentence of the *Politika* (κοινόν ἔργον: 487b 33–489a 10). The *Zoological Investigations* give as examples the bee, the wasp, the ant, and the crane; the *Politics* says more generally, “bees and other animals that live in herds” (1253a 8). Accordingly, the *Politics* does not retract the biological definition of the political but rather complements it with a comparison: human beings are “more political” (πολιτικόν μᾶλλον: *Pol.* I 2, 1253a 7–8).

This “more,” an increase of the political, could be interpreted quantitatively. Aristotle does not stress this, however, nor is he interested in what is understood as the genuinely political today: institutions, offices, and the struggle for power. What is important for him is instead the κοινόν ἔργον already contained in the biological notion

⁵ Simon Varga, “Hesiod's Political Anthropology,” in *Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy* 2, issue 1 (2018): 47–52.

of the political and envisaged in the opening sentence of the *Politics*. There, of course, it only has the status of a generic characteristic so that it appears as though Aristotle in the *Zoological Investigations* is satisfied with a weaker notion of the πολιτικόν, since the ἀρχή, and thus the alternation of ruling and being ruled, plays no role.

With respect to the common good, the dependability of cooperation is not the decisive point for Aristotle; if one observes conflicts, even wars of humankind, it is difficult to consider our species to be more cooperative than bees and ants. For Aristotle, the only thing that counts is quality: whereas the common good of subhuman animals is merely life itself (ζῆν), human society, although it may emerge for the sake of survival, continues for the sake of the good or fulfilled life (εὖ ζῆν; 1253b 29–30).

In the context of the practical logos, Aristotle distinguishes three stages, each of them coupled with a level of communicative ability. The first level, really merely a preliminary stage, is the ability to feel pain and desire; animals also have this ability, and it enables them to come together or warn each other of danger and thus to communicate with each other in an elementary way about beneficial and harmful things. Aristotle does not say this explicitly here, perhaps because he considers it to be a self-evident part of the common good among the corresponding animals. This preliminary stage of practical rationality makes possible in any case the political in its simple form, the survival (ζῆν) of the individual and the species.

With the next level, the first truly rational stage, with the ability not only to communicate about the beneficial and harmful (τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερόν) but also to think about it and thus to enter the world of reasons and the universal, of cognition and rationality. For this reason, what takes place here is not, as Michael Großheim has argued, “an extension of the temporal horizon into the future” but rather a qualitative increase.⁶ Without a doubt, the polis is a “communicative community,” but it is one that extends, not primarily the horizon of time but that of values; specifically by transcending the point of view of particular interests – and this is the third stage – it achieves the genuinely political dimension, a community not merely of good and bad but also of just and unjust (τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδίκον; *Pol.* I 2, 1253a 14–18).

It is here, incidentally, that we encounter one of the Aristotelian arguments against pure democracy: its lack of accountability to law (*Pol.* IV 4–6). The citizen republic, on the other hand, toward which human beings by nature strive, binds itself by law. For this reason, our constitutional democracies approach it, so that they realize the polis-nature that Aristotle posits to a considerable extent. As pointed out, however, they must not be so immodest as to believe that they ever approach a perfect realization of a citizen republic.

Against Aristotle’s political anthropology as it has been developed thus far, the objection suggests itself that here the state is being understood merely as a community of cooperation. If this objection were justified, chapter I 2 of the *Politics* would fail in its argumentational task. It would justify the genre of the political, the κοινωνία ἀγαθοῦ τινος ἔνεκεν, but not its character as an ἀρχή or form of rulership, and this is something no citizen republic can do without. It must also organize cooperation, resolve conflicts, and prevent

⁶ M. Großheim, *Zeithorizont. Zwischen Gegenwartsversessenheit und langfristiger Orientierung* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2012), 63.

freeloading, and for this it necessarily needs laws, institutions, and offices. As a result, not even the citizen republic is the special case of a community without dominion.

As it turns out, Aristotle's *Politics* deals in great detail with laws and obedience to the law, with institutions and offices, even with the same three branches of government we find in modern theories of the separation of powers: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary (*Pol.* IV 14). While the other two branches are given as a matter of course, the legislative appears to be lacking. Aristotle qualifies the first branch merely as "advisory" (βουλόμενον). Contrary to this designation, however, it is responsible for decisions in areas as fundamental as "war and peace, the making and breaking of alliances, and laws; death, exile, and the confiscation of property; and the appointment and inspection of officials" (14, 1298a 5–6). With this demanding catalogue of tasks, the advisory branch obviously amounts to a legislative, compared with modern parliaments even to a "legislative plus," although in the case of a democracy, as Aristotle stresses, "all the citizens decide about everything" (1298a 9–11), whereas officials are only allowed to make suggestions.

Since Aristotle is thus obviously familiar with branches of government and even with their modern threefold separation, it would be astonishing if his political anthropology were to discuss cooperation at great length but the use of force and rulership not at all. The genuinely political would in this case take on an apolitical character, and our philosopher would vote *per silentium* for something that would first be explicitly advocated in the modern period, in the age of the French Revolution. He would advocate anarchy in the literal sense, the lack of or freedom from rulership. Above all, were he to appeal exclusively to cooperation, he would not be able to achieve his argumentative goal: the reconstruction of the polis as the form of community natural to human beings. One cannot construct a social order with the right to coerce – in other words a state – on the basis of a merely cooperative social nature.

Before we grant this objection, we should look more closely at the text. There, Aristotle adds a third sequence of arguments to his considerations thus far. According to this third set of arguments, a person who lives outside of a polis is "eager for war"; further, he is a "beast"; and, not least, armed injustice is the worst of all (*Pol.* I 2, 1253a 6, a 29, a 33–34). With these statements, Aristotle rejects with all clarity the view that humans are merely cooperative, exclusively peaceful beings.

3. CRITICISMS OF ARISTOTLE AND COUNTERCRITICISMS

For centuries, Aristotle's reflections on the polis-nature are accepted almost without contradiction. But in the early modern period, they encounter growing criticism. If it were justified, a modern-day friend of Aristotle's would have to relativize the importance of the thesis of the polis-nature to intellectual and social history. It is, he would have to admit, a respectable claim but ultimately only the *via antiqua*, now superseded by the *via moderna*.

But what exactly, one must ask back, has been superseded? If the truly political form of government, the citizen republic, belongs to human nature as the consummate form of its life and the development toward it really does therefore possess anthropological status, then this cannot only be true of ancient human beings but not of modern ones. Instead

of attempting to rescue Aristotle's thesis, within limits, as the *via antiqua*, therefore, a really consistent critique would have to declare it to be false. In a third argumentative step, therefore, I will present the objections to Aristotle, examine their justification, and in doing so sharpen the profile of Aristotle's thoughts.

The sharpest objection is Thomas Hobbes's. Since he considers human beings to be characterized less by their social nature than by their propensity to conflict – one thinks of his formula, drawn from antiquity (Plautus, *Asinaria* II 4, 88), *homo homini lupus*, man is a wolf to his fellow man – he sees in political communities “not mere meetings, but bonds, to the making whereof, faith and compacts are necessary” (*De cive* I, n. 1). From this he derives, as a clear antithesis to Aristotle, the position that states are made not by nature but by art (*Leviathan*, “Introduction”). A further alleged error on Aristotle's part, and Hobbes's second objection, lies in the assumption that, in the state, not men should govern but the laws (*Leviathan*, ch. 46).

Later authors add to these two objections a third based on the theory of legitimation: that Aristotle derives the way human beings *should* live together from statements about the way human beings *are*, thus violating the is/ought distinction. A fourth objection states that human beings cannot be political beings for the simple reason that the corresponding communities only arose late in history.

According to a fifth objection, Aristotle compares the parts of the polis, both individuals and households, with organs, which are only capable of their characteristic functions in the context of a complete and living organism (*Pol.* I 2, 1253a 20–22). According to a sixth, here last, objection, Aristotle commits a “biologistic fallacy” when he claims that political communities, like plants and animals, develop “by themselves” without a conscious act on the part of human beings.⁷

I begin with the fourth, historical objection. It assumes a notion of φύσις, nature, that is influenced by modern physics – namely, that of a constant and to that extent static nature. Aristotle, however, argues on the basis of a fundamentally different, dynamic concept of nature, which, against the second objection concerning legitimation, combines descriptive and prescriptive moments. For Aristotle, unquestionably the greatest biologist before Charles Darwin,⁸ the concept of nature, a further concept central to his thought, fundamentally follows the pattern of biological processes. Ignoring this means falling prey to a naturalism that is plausible on modern-day assumptions but is foreign to Aristotle. In order to be able to accuse Aristotle of political naturalism, one must begin by taking account of a concept of nature that is oriented, not toward physics, but toward biology.

Aristotle's biological concept has several meanings, as do all the philosopher's basic concepts. According to the relevant part of the abovementioned dictionary of philosophical terms, *Metaphysics* Delta, φύσις first of all and according to the etymology of the word means the growing or coming-to-be of a corresponding thing; then, the principle of

⁷ For a discussion of more recent arguments against Aristotle's thesis that the polis is natural, see Ch. Rapp, “Der Staat existiert von Natur aus” – Über eine befremdliche These im ersten Buch der Aristotelischen Politik,” in *Menschennatur und politische Ordnung*, ed. A. Höfele and B. Kellner (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016), 45–78.

⁸ See A.M. Leroi, *The Lagoon. How Aristotle Invented Science* (New York: Viking, 2014).

growth itself, out of which the growing thing emerges; then, somewhat more abstractly, the efficient cause within it; further, the material cause, such as bronze in a bronze statue or, in objects that are not artificial but natural, the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire. Not least, φύσις also means the essence, the οὐσία, this however not in general but only with respect to natural objects.

In Aristotle, then, “nature” means, only slightly simplified, a development in which three viewpoints are crucial for political anthropology. “Nature” designates first of all the beginning and at the same time the internal motor of development, in a tree the seed; second, it means its normative goal and at the same time its essence, the fully developed, exemplary form, for example, of a free-standing tree in a park, such as a magnificent oak or willow, not a creeping pine; and finally, it means the course or process of the development, from the seed to completion.

According to the middle meaning, the goal, nature in *Politics* I 2 refers to the essence of human beings and their self-realization. Aristotle claims not that humans organize themselves everywhere and always in citizen republics but rather that the ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, the characteristic activity of a human being, is only fully realized within a corresponding polis community.

With respect to the organological objection, Aristotle does indeed compare the above-mentioned parts, for example, the relationship between man and woman, lord and slave, parents and children, to the organs of a living organism. He is, however, not advocating an organological understanding that would declare the state to be a hierarchically organized organism with qualitatively different functions, ruling and serving, and degrade individual human beings to mere component parts of a collective. The notion of the citizen republic as a community of free individuals who are not subordinated to each other but coordinated as equals on principle already contradicts this understanding.

Aristotle only uses the organic analogy to stress that, on the polis-nature thesis, both individuals and the prepolitical communities, the household and the village, have an essential relationship to the polis. With reference to individuals, this relationship is admittedly only essential for most, not for all, since according to Aristotle there are people who are incapable of living in a community and are like a wild animal (θηρίον), and in addition people who, due to an exceptional self-sufficiency, are like a god and who do not need the community (*Pol.* I 2, 1253a 27–29). With its characteristic wealth of experience, Aristotle’s thought thus knows both extremes: the deeply asocial and the truly transsocial human being.

Finally, Aristotle also does not succumb to the last-named, biologicistic objection. He speaks of someone who invented the polis and even praises him as the author of the greatest goods (1253a 31). In this, he approaches Hobbes, which is why the two thinkers do not represent an either/or contrast; the popular thesis of a simple alternative between the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* has no basis. Aristotle would grant Hobbes an element of artifice; he rejects, however, the idea that the political could be artificial in the sense of “not natural,” that it could represent an obstacle to the true consummation of the human. Instead, a crucial common element is revealed: like Hobbes, Aristotle opposes the notion that the state is a place that alienates human beings from their nature, whether by means

of luxury and decadence (as Plato claims about the second stage of the polis) or through the excessive limitation of their freedom (according to the anarchist critique of the state). Rather, the state is for both thinkers a form of society that is to the advantage of everyone.⁹

4. BROADENING THE POLIS-NATURE

One must not forget a further aspect of the polis-nature, although it is frequently ignored: friendship, to which we now turn as the fourth step in the argumentation. The *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is also intended as a political inquiry (*NE* I 1, 1094b 11), devotes more space to friendship than to any other single topic (two books out of ten). According to them, friendship belongs to the most necessary things in life, and not only in a general sense (*NE* VIII 1, 1155a 4–5). As a community for the sake of the good life, the polis, we are told, relies on “marriage connections [...] as well as brotherhoods, religious sacrifices, and the leisured pursuits of living together,” and these are all “the result of friendship, since the deliberate choice to live together constitutes friendship” (*Pol.* III 9, 1280b 36–39; cf. *NE* VIII 13). This claim, of course, presupposes that friendship is not limited, as Aristotle did not limit it, to the special case of “romantic,” entirely personal intimate friendship. Instead, “friendship” here means every kind of intentional but not institutionalized relationship.

Today, even smaller countries such as Austria or Switzerland with populations smaller than the larger German states such as Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, or North Rhine-Westphalia are enormous in comparison with a Greek polis. Athens, probably the largest ancient polis, had approximately 300,000 inhabitants. As a result, even a modest form of friendship can scarcely play the constitutive role that Aristotle assigns to it. Nevertheless, the notion of a civic friendship is not farfetched even today. This is not the place for a more detailed discussion, but one can think in this context of Germany’s widespread and intensive practice of voluntary service.

5. SOME CRITICISMS

I have attempted to show that Aristotle’s argumentation is, in its essential points, convincing even today, but it is not completely incontestable. In addition to a criticism of his thesis that there are slaves by nature, at least two critical points arise.

First, it is possible that the arguments we have discussed are in two respects not entirely coherent. On the one hand, the first sequence of arguments binds the polis to the ambitious goal of εὖ ζῆν, the good and fulfilled life. The second set of arguments, however, appears to be satisfied with more modest aims – namely, mutual advantage and a society of law and justice. On the other hand, not only the *Nicomachean Ethics* (X 6–9) argues that a form of life that transcends the polis, the βίος θεωρητικός, contemplative existence, realizes the goal of εὖ ζῆν most fully. The question of whether this double question amounts to an objection can only be decided by looking more closely at the way the two goals themselves are formulated.

Both formulations are adopted in the course of the *Politics*: the former, the good life, emphatically in chapter III 9 (e.g., in 1280a 32 and in b 33); and the latter in chapter III 12

⁹ On my assessment of the relationship between Aristotle and Hobbes, see O. Höffe, *Thomas Hobbes* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2010), 191–203.

(1282b 17: πολιτικόν ἀγαθόν τὸ δίκαιον). According to chapter III 9, ἀρετή, the personal excellence of the individual citizens, is decisive, whilst at III 12 we read that a state in the sense of a polis exists as long as the relations of the citizens among themselves are just, even if excellence is lacking. This can indeed be taken to be a certain incoherence.¹⁰

On the second part of the question, it is possible that, although the polis also bears responsibility for the education of the citizens, it need not be responsible for the ultimate form of happiness, that is, contemplative life. This could be argued if it were the case that the βίος θεωρητικός could only be lived by someone who was a rare exception in the sense of *Politics* I 2 – namely, a god (θεός: 1253a 29). Although this idea does not explicitly contradict the abovementioned conclusion of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (X 6–9), it is in a certain tension with it and with a passage in book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle writes that the contemplative life represents the highest form of human existence in its self-sufficiency, value, and intensity of living and that it needs neither external goods nor fellow citizens. The realization of this life, however, is possible not only for very few people but even for them only for a short time, in a single, completely fulfilled moment (*Met.* XII 7, 1072b 14 d). The godlike human being of *Politics* I 2 thus never exists in pure form; even the exceptional human being remains tied to political life. There are a number of further places where the *Politics* speaks not only of usual political life but also of an involvement with philosophy (I 7, 1255b 37; VII 14, 1334a 23 and also 32), although the exact interpretation of these passages is disputed.¹¹

Even if we leave this complicated situation to one side, the polis is not in itself responsible for virtue in its entirety. It is satisfied with the part whose fulfilment is owed to one's fellow human beings, so that the “common” virtue of the good citizen (πολίτης σπουδαῖος) is not the same as what Aristotle calls consummate virtue (ἀρετή τελεία: *Pol.* III 4, 1276b 16ff. and b 34).

From the position of modernity, reticence is in any case welcome. One has become increasingly skeptical about the obligation of the state to guarantee the happiness of its citizens. The fear is that a legal or state institution that attempts this will interfere inappropriately with the free interplay of social forces and the privacy of the individual, with the danger of developing illiberal tendencies.

In Aristotle, however, one must distinguish between a formal and a substantial definition of happiness. Formally, as that which is absolutely perfect or most goal-like (τέλος τελειότατον) and as the end that leaves nothing to be desired, as μή συναριθμούμενη and as αὐτάρκες, Aristotle's εὐδαιμονία is nothing but the horizon from which all common goals and interests receive their significance. It is therefore possible to agree with the philosopher's formal definition without adopting his substantial notion of happiness. One

¹⁰ For a more detailed interpretation of this and other passages, see the very learned commentary by E. Schütrumpf in four volumes, vol. 3, together with H.-J. Gehrke: *Aristoteles, Politik – Buch I*, ed., trans., and comm. E. Schütrumpf (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991); *Aristoteles, Politik – Buch II und III*, ed., trans., and comm. E. Schütrumpf (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991); *Aristoteles, Politik – Buch IV–VI*, ed., trans., and comm. E. Schütrumpf and H.-J. Gehrke (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); *Aristoteles, Politik – Buch VII–VIII*, ed., trans., and comm. E. Schütrumpf (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005).

¹¹ On the question of the importance attributed to the contemplative life in the *Politics*, see *Aristoteles, Politik – Buch VII–VIII*, ed., trans., and comm. E. Schütrumpf (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 127–38.

need neither reject two widespread forms of life, the life of pleasure (βίος ἀπλευστικός) and the life of business concerned with the accumulation of wealth (βίος χρηματιστής), nor accept that the βίος θεωρητικός is the full realization of rational nature. Although Aristotle concedes that the polis arises for mutual advantage (1252b 29ff.) and that this advantage is not abandoned when it continues for the sake of εὖ ζῆν, the point is not made sufficiently clear that a polis is also advantageous for those citizens who pursue strategies of living that run counter to the substantial definition of happiness. Citizens who live a life of pleasure or business can be very comfortable in the polis, just as the well-being of the polis will scarcely be diminished by citizens devoted to enjoyment or gain.

A second objection draws attention to a remarkable deficit that can admittedly be found in numerous political philosophers of the modern period as well, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Hegel. Treating it as a deficit may at first glance appear anachronistic, but from Aristotle's own perspective on society as a commonality of notions of advantage and disadvantage and of justice and injustice, the following objection is indeed justified.

Although common institutions do exist among the Greeks, such as the Olympic games or the Delphic oracle, common coins, commercial and military alliances, shared diplomatic relationships with entities outside of Greece, and indeed, despite dialectal differences, a common language and literary culture, there is no corresponding attempt to develop an intra-Hellenic community of law, cult, or culture that would transcend the individual polis. Not even the peace conference called by Philip II after his victory over Athens and Thebes in 338 BCE that led to a Panhellenic alliance with the goal of a general peace finds any mention in Aristotle.¹² The reason for this is presumably that, despite the shared institutions sketched above, Hellas knew no common ἀρχή, no government, and as a result was not a genuinely political unity. To Aristotle, the notion of a cultural nation would probably have been deeply foreign.

Rather than end with critical remarks, I prefer to close, sixth and last, with a provisional assessment guided by a question.

6. TO WHAT EXTENT, THEN, ARE HUMANS POLIS-ANIMALS?

According to the first, unspecific, understanding of πολιτικόν, "political nature" implies only the following: human beings do not become happy alone but only by living together with fellow human beings. The second, specific reading specifies the way of living together: humans do not achieve the full realization of their potential as social or political beings in sexuality or work alone, in economical "self-support" (cf. *Pol.* VII 6, 1326b 27–30), or in economic well-being, in taking a stand against lawbreakers, or in supporting domestic or international peace. All of these elements are entirely necessary but in no way sufficient conditions. It is indispensable to recognize these aspects instead of pushing them aside but at the same time to go beyond them by integrating the other aspects into an ambitious form of shared life.

¹² According to a letter to Alexander that survives only in Arabic, Aristotle allegedly developed the vision of a world state, a cosmo-polis with a constitution and a government and without war. See S. M. Stern, *Aristotle on the World State* (Oxford: Cassirer, 1968). The fact, however, that as rich a work as the *Politics* contains no trace of this idea among the numerous topics it addresses makes one skeptical that the Arabic text really was written by Aristotle.

In a first stage, the οἶκος, the household, human beings are dependent on living with their fellow human beings: they are social beings (*ens sociale*) on an elementary level. In a second stage, there needs to be a community of law and justice and of mutual advantage. The opportunities offered by living together are only fulfilled, however, in a community of free and equal citizens. Only where citizens organize their shared life themselves and in doing so alternate between ruling and being ruled do they become political beings in the full sense of the word (*ens politicum*).

In this sequence of three stages, each building upon the previous one, Aristotle's thesis of the polis-nature covers a wide spectrum. It begins almost unpolitically with the economic relations between households. It increases to the extent that, beginning with kinship relationships, the linguistic, cultic, and cultural community, law, and internal and external defense come into view. But the polis is only political to the greatest degree – and this is the more provocative thesis announced in the title of my remarks – where the community of advantage and law of free and equal citizens is realized in the alternation of ruling and being ruled.

Translated by Glenn Patten

HEGEL'S ROMANCE OF REASON

*The spirit helps me, suddenly I see counsel
And confidently write: In the beginning was the Deed!*
[Goethe, *Faust*]

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the great philosophic novel of modernity. It is Hegel's Bildungsroman, his novel of formative education modeled after Rousseau's *Emile* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. In Hegel's own words, it is a picture gallery that contains portraits of the human-divine mind and spirit – Geist in its various guises [808].¹ A hybrid of logic and storytelling, the *Phenomenology* chronicles the adventures of spirit in the course of its arduous journey to absolute knowing. This is philosophy in the form of science. In another of Hegel's many metaphors, the *Phenomenology* is our ladder to this exalted state.

My topic in this essay is one of the subjects portrayed in Hegel's gallery: Faust, the hero of Goethe's famous poem. In his lectures on fine art, Hegel calls it "the one absolutely philosophic tragedy." He elaborates as follows:

Here on the one side, dissatisfaction with learning and, on the other, the freshness of life and enjoyment in the world, in general the tragic quest for harmony between the Absolute in its essence and appearance and the individual's knowledge and will, all this provides a breadth of subject-matter which no other dramatist has ventured to compass in one and the same work.²

Faust comes on the scene in a section within Hegel's enormous chapter on reason. The section bears the title "The Actualization of Rational Self-Consciousness through Its Own Self." Its three subsections have the following dramatic titles: "Pleasure and Necessity," "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit," and "Virtue and the Way of the World." Each subsection deals with a specific claim to know the truth absolutely, that is, simply or without qualification. Each claim is embodied in what Hegel calls a shape or Gestalt of consciousness. The Gestalt for "Pleasure and Necessity" is Faust; for "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit," it is Karl Moor, from Schiller's

¹ Numbers in square brackets refer to the paragraph numbers in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

² *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, vol. 2 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 1224.

early play *The Robbers*; and for the Knight of Virtue, who appears in “Virtue and the Way of the World,” it is the Marquis of Posa, the noble schemer from Schiller’s *Don Carlos*.³

These three figures comprise what I call Hegel’s *romance of reason*: romance because the figures are Romantic idealists who make their individual hearts the measure of truth; reason because that is the stage at which these shapes appear along the path to science. The romance of reason is one of the most dramatic moments in the entire *Phenomenology*. It is a good example of how Hegel’s book functions, at one of its many levels, as a dialectical psychology, a study of human types. The romance of reason highlights the role that poets and poetry play in our journey to science. It also lays the groundwork for understanding both Hegel’s critique of Romanticism and his indebtedness to it. It helps us see how the *Phenomenology*, though critical of Romantic heroes and their cult of feeling, is in its own way a romance of reason.

To understand what Hegel means by reason and why Faust appears at this level, we must define a term even more fundamental to the *Phenomenology*: consciousness. The *Phenomenology* is the journey of consciousness. Consciousness here refers to a mode of human existence or Dasein, not just a mode of thinking. It is not only how I internalize the world in reflection but also how I comport myself in it, how I live.

Consciousness is the opposition of subject and object, I and It, the Here-Inside and the There-Outside. This is our natural – that is, uneducated or naïve – mode of being in the world. Perceiving and imagining are prime examples of this mode. The *Phenomenology* seeks to destroy the opposition of subject and object, to remove the distance between my thinking and all the things I think about. So long as I regard myself, my nonbodily spiritual interior, as separate from the things I think about, I cannot be said to know them: the required intimacy is lacking. Science, for Hegel, is this intimacy. It is the identity of subject and object, thought and being, self and world. This is another way of saying that the mind’s destiny is to find itself as the truth and substance of things.

Neutralizing the subject-object opposition of our natural consciousness may be compared to the following. It is as though Hegel in the *Phenomenology* seeks to convert us from the mode of onlooker to that of listener. He is shifting the metaphor for our relation to the world away from visual art and toward music. This is a move from looking at, as we do when beholding a painting, to *being one with*, as we are when listening to music. To think philosophically (that is, genuinely) is not to look at a picture-like truth from afar but to be one with the purely conceptual *movement* that makes all things what they are and binds them together within a fluid whole. This music-like movement is dialectical logic. Logic, for Hegel, is not a formal method, a cookie cutter that we apply to various kinds of intellectual dough. It is the life of the whole or, as Hegel calls it, the *soul* of all things.⁴ And to engage in logic, as Hegel understands it, to think dialectically, is the peak of human intimacy with this whole and the end of all desire. This analogy between dialectic and music suggests that the portraits in Hegel’s gallery are more like arias from

³ In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel refers to all three characters in the same paragraph (ibid., 1124–25).

⁴ See, for example, the following sentence from the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*: “This dialectic, then, is not an *external* activity of subjective thought, but the *very soul* of the content which puts forth its branches and fruit organically” (ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 60).

a Mozart opera or movements from a Beethoven symphony.⁵ To understand Faust, or Karl, or the Marquis, we must in a sense become one with the movements of their souls. We must enter their fluid spirit of certitude and move with them, even as we rise above them as phenomenological observer-listeners who grasp the dialectic that goes on, as it were, behind their backs.

Intimacy is the key that unlocks Hegel's chapter on reason.

As I said at the outset, the *Phenomenology* chronicles the adventures of the human-divine spirit in its journey to absolute truth. The first three main stages of this journey are consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason. The later stages need not concern us here. As a stage, consciousness has a narrower meaning than the one I noted earlier. It is the stage at which the subject places absolute truth in external physical objects – things. At the stage of self-consciousness, the subject reverses this stance and places the truth in itself. Self-consciousness first appears as radical egotism, the being-for-self that Hegel calls desire (*Begierde*). This is the violent self-assertion with which the individual self tries to make itself the absolute truth of all things and the lord of other selves.

After self-consciousness comes reason. Reason, as the unity of the previous two stages, combines consciousness and self-consciousness. To use Hegel's word, it is the *Durchführung* or interpenetration of thing and self, outer and inner, world and mind [394]. Reason, for Hegel, is not a mental faculty, not reason as we find it in, say, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is the phenomenon, the historical Dasein or being-there, of Man, the being that bends all things to his will. Reason is the unbounded self-confidence and Prometheanism of the modern age. This self-confidence underlies Machiavelli's effort to articulate the conditions of political mastery, Bacon's "knowledge is power," and Descartes's mastery and possession of nature through technology.⁶ At a later stage of the *Phenomenology*, this will to power, which is also the will to freedom, breaks forth in the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror [582ff.].

But let us draw back from these large implications and return to reason and its intimacy. Reason, as I have said, is the unity or interpenetration of self and thing, thinker and world. Like everything else in Hegel, it has three stages. In the first, the self seeks intimacy with the world by observing and categorizing the things of nature, especially living nature. In the second, the self acts on the world in order to appropriate it and remake it in the self's own image. This is the meaning of the title "The Actualization of Rational Self-Consciousness through Its Own Self." "Through its own self" means through its actions. Faust, Karl, and the Marquis all strive to realize their self-certainty in the realm of deeds. In its third, post-Romantic phase, reason, having abandoned its pretensions to reform the world, is civil society. This is the familiar realm in which everybody does his own thing. At this higher stage of intimacy – intimacy through act – I contemplate and enjoy my presumed absoluteness in my publicly acknowledged works, whether in the arts and sciences, or in investment banking, or in being a philosophy professor.

⁵ In his essay "Skoteinos, or How to Read Hegel," Theodor Adorno elaborates on the link between Hegel's dialectic and music (*Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993], 136–37).

⁶ The defiant spirit of Prometheanism is powerfully captured in Goethe's early poem *Prometheus*, in which the Titan proclaims, "I know of nothing poorer under the sun, than you, o gods!" (my translation).

All these claims to know my inner self as the truth of outer things, these efforts at intimacy, like almost everything else in the *Phenomenology*, fall to the ground and negate themselves. Each shape struggles heroically to prove its truth. In the course of that struggle, it destroys itself. It refutes its own claim, spontaneously and without the aid of a cross-questioning Socrates. The result, however, is not blank annihilation. On the contrary, self-destruction is also self-definition, the process by which a shape articulates itself and becomes fully developed. It is also a giving birth. The force that negates and undermines a claim to truth is the same force that generates the next higher claim, the next higher shape of consciousness, which rises Phoenix-like out of the ashes of the previous shape.

This amazing process of self-assertion, -destruction, and -reconstitution Hegel calls experience (*Erfahrung*). Its three logical moments are summed up in the German verb *aufheben*, often translated as sublimate. The verb can mean abolish, hold onto, and lift up. Sublation in Hegel's logic is the process by which something immediately given is negated, preserved, and lifted up into a higher unity.

Faust is the sublation of reason in its observational, scientific mode. He embodies, at the level of deeds, the modern self-confidence I mentioned earlier. Faust, whose name means fist, is a rebel.⁷ He rejects the universals that have so far filled and constituted his life – science, piety, decency, and moderation – in order to live at last as *this* single self-absolutizing individual who thinks as he likes and does what he wants. He rebels against being observant, in every sense of that term, and turns from scientific to carnal knowledge. He drinks in the spirit of denial and defiance offered to him by Mephistopheles, who at one point in Goethe's story proclaims, "Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!" (I am the spirit that persistently negates!).⁸ In the downfall of Faust, a new self-certainty will arise, the sublation of the first. This is Karl Moor. In his downfall, a third arises – the Knight of Virtue. With the downfall of this Knight, the romance of reason reaches its end.

As I noted earlier, reason is individual selfhood seeking truth through embodiment or incarnation. It is my certainty that as a self-conscious individual I am the truth of all things. Hegel calls this position *idealism* [232]. Reason is individual selfhood in the mode of worldliness. Its spirit is thoroughly secular and irreligious. In the romance of reason, the self incarnates itself or becomes worldly through deeds. These are the self's effort to achieve self-actualization or fulfillment. The goal of the rational self is to behold itself, contemplate itself, in some real, outwardly existing concrete thing that the self has done or accomplished. This beholding is the intimacy of self-in-other that is the defining characteristic of reason.

Faust is the first stage of the journey to the incarnation of reason, the interpenetration of pure spirit and living flesh. His story, as it appears in Goethe's poem, is well known. Some of it I have already recounted. Faust is disenchanted with science and all that is calm and celestial. Tired of being a pious observer, he craves the tumult and excesses of the nonscientific life. He yields to the Earth Spirit, who tempts him with the delicious prospect of forbidden fruit, the fruit of experience and voluptuous immersion in a life of

⁷ In the final version of *Faust*, the Chorus of Spirits plays on this meaning. They tell Faust, who has just cursed the illusions of the world, "You have destroyed the beautiful world, with powerful fist" (pt. 1, 1608–10) (my translation).

⁸ *Faust*, pt. 1, 1338.

sheer flux. He makes a bet with the devil, Mephistopheles, to the effect that if he should ever seek repose – say to the passing moment “Abide!” – he forfeits his life.⁹ Faust falls in love with Gretchen, whom he seduces, abandons, and unintentionally ruins. In order to be with her lover, Gretchen betrays her family and her religion and even accidentally kills her mother with a sleeping potion. She becomes pregnant, suffers public disgrace, and eventually goes mad and kills her baby, for which she is condemned to death. At a crucial moment, Faust witnesses the horror he has inflicted on his beloved.¹⁰

This is the story as it appears in Goethe’s completed version (short of the happy ending in which Faust and Gretchen are taken to heaven). In the version that Hegel knew when he was writing the *Phenomenology* – the so-called *Faust-Fragment* of 1790 – the story ends with Gretchen in the Cathedral, tormented by an evil spirit, surrounded by the ominous tones of the *Dies irae*, and painfully aware that she has killed her mother, that she is pregnant, and that Faust has abandoned her.

The plot of the *Faust-Fragment* reveals the point of Hegel’s title: “Pleasure and Necessity.” Faust pursues pleasure (*Lust*) as the means of gratifying his desire for self-actualization. His desire for sexual intimacy is from Hegel’s perspective reason’s desire for the interpenetration of self and thing, inner and outer, mind and world. But the pursuit of pleasure only incites the crushing force of necessity that destroys Gretchen, who is the intended truth and vessel of Faust’s self-certainty. Faustian consciousness thus undergoes experience in Hegel’s sense. In seeking one thing, it brings about its exact opposite.

Faust comes first in reason’s effort to incarnate itself because his self-certainty is the simplest and most immediate. He craves the immediate gratification of sexual union: he strives to make himself real and genuinely alive at the level of mere feeling. Hegel never makes this sexual aspect of Faust explicit. Indeed, his highly abstract language makes it very hard to see that the account is even about sex. But it is. This is the meaning of the self’s desire to find fulfillment, as Hegel says, “in” another individual [362]. In any case, to quote Faust, “Gefühl ist alles,” “Feeling is all.”¹¹ That is why Hegel calls Faust “the poorest shape of self-actualizing spirit” [363]. The *Phenomenology* began with the most immediate form of knowing: sense-certainty. This is the certainty that absolute truth lies in the sensuous *this* or here-and-now, what we call sense data [90ff.]. Faust recapitulates sense-certainty at the erotic level: he makes sense-certainty into sensual certainty. A true Romantic, he craves infinite satisfaction in the here-and-now, the isolated passing moment, of sexual pleasure. By renouncing all universals, he hopes to fulfill his desire to be *this* singular human self in every here and now, a self that is free of context and consequence.

Irony is at work here. Faust steps himself in the life of unreason, and yet this very denial is for Hegel a stage of reason. This is perhaps the best example in the whole *Phenomenology* of how spirit accomplishes its universal rational ends through the passions of forceful, self-affirming individuals – through their desires, folly, and fanaticism. Hegel sometimes calls this dialectical irony the *cunning of reason*.¹² Faust’s irrational desire, his unreason, is reason at a primitive, not-yet-educated stage. It is the necessary violence or

⁹ Ibid., pt. 1, 1699–706.

¹⁰ “Dungeon,” *Faust*, pt. 1, 4405ff.

¹¹ *Faust*, pt. 1, 3456.

¹² See Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 33.

rush with which active reason bursts on the scene or appears and which, when developed in subsequent stages, eventually gives rise to absolute knowing. Faust, as a stage of consciousness, is the impulse for this higher spiritual development. He may be the poorest shape of active reason, but his poverty is also a potential: it is the raw energy of active reason. Faust's feeling-centered narcissism shows us that the Romantic temperament, in its striving for the infinite, is a necessary condition for the emergence of philosophy in the form of science.

Were we to rest content with a moral condemnation of Faust, we would miss this point. We would fail to see that Faust's leap into carnality, immoral and destructive though it is, embodies a necessary stage in the education of the human spirit. For Hegel, this is what makes Goethe's poem a tragedy rather than a cautionary tale. Faust dares, and it is a great and heroic daring. He actualizes what all of us perhaps dream of doing, though we may not admit this to ourselves. If the whole truth of the human spirit is to be revealed and grasped, then subjectivity must have its day, make itself known, and suffer the consequences of its actions. Only in this way, according to Hegel, does spirit rise to self-knowledge – not by avoiding tensions and contradictions but by generating and enduring them. In the upper regions of the *Phenomenology*, there will be reconciliation between the individual self and all the universals Faust rejects. The dissonances of spirit will be resolved. But the path to that reconciliation is one of excess, tension, defeat, suffering, and even death. Spirit reaches truth by purging itself of all its errors, but it cannot purge what it does not experience to the fullest.

As we read Hegel's version of Faustian experience, we must remember that Hegel and Goethe shared, each in his own way, a devotion to science and reason. Hegel deeply admired his poet-scientist friend and no doubt regarded the Faust discussion in the *Phenomenology* as a tribute to their commonality. Hegel likes to quote (or rather misquote) the lines in which Mephistopheles says that the man who despises reason and science must perish – whether or not he's handed himself over to the devil.¹³ Goethe and Hegel agree on this point. Nevertheless, Hegel is claiming to be at a higher, indeed the highest, stage of thought. At this stage, the truth contained in poetic archetypes is made thoroughly rational and scientific. This is the stage at which great poems such as Goethe's *Faust* are rendered purely conceptual by the higher energy of philosophic thought.

Faust seeks union with Gretchen. This lowly but presumably charming girl is the means to his coveted self-actualization as a singular unbounded self-consciousness, a liberated human *this*. To quote Hegel, Faust wants “the intuition [*Anschauung*] of the unity of the two independent self-consciousnesses” [362]. This intuition, this claim to absolute knowing, is the feeling and rush of sexual gratification, the sinking of spirit into the flesh, although, as I mentioned earlier, Hegel never makes this explicit. Strictly speaking, it is not Gretchen that Faust desires. What he desires, from Hegel's perspective, is the union of his selfhood and hers, so that his may be fulfilled. It is not even quite right to say that he desires sex. In his rejection of all stifling universals, he desires the worldly

¹³ Hegel, no doubt quoting from memory, makes several changes in Mephistopheles's soliloquy at *Faust*, pt. 1, 1851–67. The most obvious is that he quotes only the opening and closing couplets. For another variation on this passage from *Faust*, see Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Preface.

knowledge he has never before experienced. He desires the sexual act as the realization of his self-certainty as a god-like individual.

For Hegel, desire (*Begierde*) has a negative meaning. It is the negativity of the self, the violence by which the self affirms its being-for-self or independence at the expense of the rest of the world [174]. The most blatant expression of this negativity is eating. Eating is the gratification of my desire to destroy external things in order to reduce them to my self-identity. It is a primordial mode of self-certainty. Eating reveals a deep truth. It reveals, symbolically, that the seemingly independent things around me are not solidly real after all but are only passing moments in a larger whole. In his discussion of sense-certainty, Hegel observes that animals know this deep truth, these mysteries, as he calls them, of bread and wine. They do not passively observe sensuous things but gobble them up [109].

At the level of self-consciousness, the stage that comes just before reason, the object of the individual's desire was ultimately not food but rather the recognition or esteem of another individual [178]. The self-conscious individual wanted the certainty of his own absoluteness realized, validated, by another objectively existing self-conscious individual. This drove him to meet that other self in combat. The goal was to subdue the other's estimation of himself as absolute and make that other subservient. As we know, this leads to the famous master-slave relation.

Faust is the return of self-consciousness as desire [362]. But desire now no longer seeks the death or simple subjugation of another self. It is not polemical but amorous or erotic. As Hegel emphasizes, Faust wants to destroy not Gretchen herself (although he will succeed in doing precisely that) but only her independence, her being *for herself*, someone apart from him. He wants an intimacy that destroys distance. Eating, too, destroys and aims at annihilation: I eat the apple and so consume it, that is, reduce it to nothingness. In the sexual act, by contrast, the other is preserved. To be sure, Faust wants to take something away from Gretchen – namely, her innocence. But Gretchen must remain a concrete, real, self-conscious being if she is to function as the embodiment and living mirror of Faust's narcissism – his certainty of his own absoluteness as *this* individual self. Rape is not an option, since Faust seeks intimacy in a melting of selves, a free flow. Gretchen must give herself to Faust, freely yield her independence and her innocence. She must be tempted to a reciprocal desire. That is to say, she must be seduced.

So far, we have looked at Faust's certainty and desire. We must now look at the truth of that certainty. This is the experience in which passing pleasure begets brutal necessity.

Hegel stresses the swiftness with which Faustian certitude destroys itself. He calls it "a sheer leap into its antithesis" [365]. The forces that bring about this destruction are Nature and Society. These are the Furies that Faust's audacity unleashes and that become his nemesis. Faust seeks sexual intimacy as an end in itself. He seeks infinity and freedom in the overpowering rush of self-feeling that is absent in, say, metaphysical speculation. In sexual climax Faust indeed may feel, briefly, that he is a god who has been released at last from the chains of debilitating age, dusty texts, and oppressive piety – that he is Prometheus Unbound. But this climactic rush of selfhood produces an unwanted result: a love child. Sexual pleasure here transcends itself in natural consequence: it goes beyond itself. Faust wanted to use sex as a means to his self-gratification as a singular human *this*. But sex gets the upper hand and uses him for nature's universal purpose of procreation.

In the realm of organic life, the joy of sex gives rise to the truth of sex, as lovers become parents. Faust, in short, is sublated. He aspired to be an erotic rebel and *Übermensch*, a singular godlike self who shook his fist at all such universals and commonalities as family, law, and religion. Nature, however, has no regard for such delusions of grandeur. It reduces Faust to the status of a generic male, a passing moment in the circle of life. Natural necessity, here, functions as a kind of fate. But it does not descend on Faust from above, as in Greek tragedies. Rather, it is Faust's own act that generates the offspring that will be the undoing of Gretchen, the unhappy medium of Faust's self-certainty. In consummating his certainty of himself, Faust negates that certainty. In the *Faust-Fragment*, the awareness of this negation is reserved for Gretchen, whose profound anxiety in the Cathedral is the negative truth (or as Hegel also calls it, the *Verkehrung*, or *inversion*) of what Faust intended. Hegel describes her tragic realization as follows: "Consciousness [...] has really become a riddle to itself [...]. The abstract necessity [...] has the character of the merely negative, uncomprehended power of universality, on which individuality is smashed to pieces" [365].

This self-negation, we must note, would be stable, fruitful, and happy if its goal were family. In marriage, which aims at concrete shared life as opposed to abstract, purely subjective feeling, lovers are on good terms with the universals Faust rejects and will their own sublation: they sacrifice their singular being-for-self, their independence, for the sake of a publicly recognized permanent bond and for the sake of children, who concretize that bond.¹⁴ But this is precisely the self-sacrifice and universality that Faust rejects. In addition to being undone by nature, Faustian certitude is destroyed by the customs and laws of human society – the very universals that Faust scorned. Faust wanted the experience and *Anschaung* of luscious union, a fantasy fulfilled. Instead, in the *Faust-Fragment*, he hears Mephistopheles taunting him with the heartrending picture of the abandoned Gretchen, whose peace and joy Faust knows he has destroyed.¹⁵ In the completed story, Faust will have to endure an even more graphic *Anschaung*: he will witness Gretchen in prison as a criminal soon to be executed.¹⁶

Hegel's account of the logical path that leads from pleasure to necessity is dense and hard to follow. Its central theme is the abstractness of Romantic feeling. Normally, we regard thinking as abstract and feeling as concrete. In this we are like Faust. Hegel shows us repeatedly in the *Phenomenology* that this view of thinking and feeling is mistaken – in fact, inverted. Faust wanted to escape from the dry bones of science, morality, and religion. He broke with the human community and asserted his this-ness through a quest for intense self-feeling. But this self-feeling, like the sheer this-ness of sense-certainty, is abstract. That is, it lacks solidity, ground, and content – a concrete *world*. The Romantic ego, by cutting itself off from the genuinely concrete objective relations within the moral realm, is similarly abstract. The pleasure Faust seeks is not pleasure in anything other than pleasure itself; Gretchen is merely a lovely means to that end. And so, the self that makes pleasure its absolute is empty: it is the sheer *nothingness* of undeveloped immediate singularity.

¹⁴ See Hegel's discussion of family and marriage in his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 199ff.

¹⁵ In the section titled *Wald und Höhle*, "Wood and Cave."

¹⁶ *Faust*, pt. 1, 4405ff.

Pleasure becomes harsh necessity because, as self-feeling, it is abstract or without a fixed content. Faust's quest in effect drains the objective world of its meaning and transforms it into a brutal implacable force that opposes private desire. That is all that universality can be at this "poorest level of self-actualizing spirit." But herein lies the central problem, as Hegel presents it. The self, as a thinking self, is universal as well as singular. To put this very simply, I experience myself not as this random bit of self-consciousness, this negligible ego, but rather as a being infinitely worthy by virtue of my inwardness or spirit. Selfhood is that which must be recognized and respected. The necessity that Faustian consciousness unwittingly generates is universality in which no thinking is involved or can be involved. As Hegel says, "It is what is called *necessity*; for necessity, fate, and the like, is just that about which we cannot say *what* it does, what its specific laws and positive content are" [363].

What Hegel wants us to see at this extreme point of Faustian experience is that, in seeking to make itself real through the sexual act, the self generates a universal that is empty and meaningless and that fails to match the universality and worth that I find within my self-consciousness. We can call this universality Law or Society, but from the perspective of pleasure-seeking consciousness, from the standpoint of Faust and Gretchen, these names can refer only to the external forces that crush desire and destroy inner peace. In short, if the self is to continue its search for universal meaning within the sphere of individual feeling, it must move on to a higher stage. To find its absolute, it must search for the unity of individual and universal in a higher shape of consciousness.

This higher shape is Karl Moor, who embodies the "law of the heart" [370]. He resolves the Faustian contradiction by unifying the extremes of individual feeling and universal order or necessity: Karl wants to reform society in response to the dictates of a well-meaning heart. At this new stage, the heart no longer seeks its absolute in something as immediately self-defeating and frivolous as illicit sex. On the contrary, this new shape is "the earnestness of a high purpose which seeks its pleasure in displaying the excellence of its own nature and promoting the welfare of mankind" [370]. In this move from Faust to Karl, Hegel takes us from private desire to social consciousness.

I wish I had time to complete the romance of reason. Faust, to be sure, is interesting. But the two shapes that come after him are even more interesting and psychologically more complex. I wish I had time to tell you about how Hegel unmasks social reformers who, like Karl, arrogantly claim to be the bleeding-heart liberators of oppressed humanity, and meddlesome idealists who, like the Marquis, claim, even more arrogantly, to be above self-interest, to know the hearts of other people, and to be the stage managers of world history.

I also wish I had time to tell you about the amazing things that happen once we are past the romance of reason. In these upper regions of the *Phenomenology*, where reason becomes spirit, the individual self is fulfilled in and through the communities to which it belongs: ethical and religious communities. Self-consciousness here becomes, in Hegel's phrase, "an I that is We and a We that is I" [177]. This is the intimacy of inner and outer, the concrete embodiment of selfhood, that reason sought but could not achieve. It is the resolution of the tension within Faustian consciousness. The key to this resolution, for Hegel, is none other than the Christianity that Faust rejects. The Incarnation – in German, the *Menschenwerdung* or "human-becoming" [748] – is the ultimate interpenetration of the

human and the divine natures, flesh and spirit. As the union of mortal life and immortal truth, it is dialectical *logic* in the form of a sacred *image*.

But I must content myself with a simple close. Hegel is notoriously hard. His abstract language, dizzying logic, grand claims, and obscure allusions dazzle and befuddle. But there is another side to him that all too often goes without mention. This is Hegel's imagination, which we have seen at work in Hegel's account of Faust. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is one of the greatest works of the philosophic imagination. It compels us not merely to read about the various shapes of consciousness but to enter imaginatively into the spirit of their certitude. Hegel invites us to see the world through the eyes of his characters – or rather to “hear” the dialectical music of their souls – and to grasp those characters as necessary moments and stages of our own self-knowledge, history, and self-identity. I can think of no better way to leave you than to quote one commentator's praise of the imaginative Hegel: “It was his peculiar gift to be able to project himself into the minds of other people and of other periods, penetrating into the core of alien souls and strange lives, and still remain the man he was.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Richard Kroner, from his introduction to Hegel's *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 9.

GOD AND HUMANITY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF ZYGMUNT KRASIŃSKI

There are few Polish thinkers whose philosophical output is assessed more differently than that of Zygmunt Krasiński. Among the many exceptional scholars and commentators who have discussed his work, there are those who decidedly appreciate the philosophical dimension of his writings (Tarnowski, Zdziechowski, Straszewski),¹ as well as those who may even emphasize the significance of philosophical contexts for interpreting his works² yet regard his philosophical position as ambiguous, indicating its derivative nature and eclecticism, or arguing that it constitutes merely an indirect expression of his poetic worldview (Kleiner, Chrzanowski, Janion).³ Perhaps Marian Zdziechowski is right in claiming that Krasiński, one of the greatest Polish poets, is also “the deepest philosophical mind born in Poland.”⁴ Or perhaps Arkadiusz Bałajewski, a contemporary scholar, is more accurate in his claim that “Krasiński was a philosopher only occasionally, but he was always a poet and would invariably attempt to develop his philosophical ideas first and foremost in literary terms.”⁵

¹ Cf. S. Tarnowski, *Zygmunt Krasiński* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2014), 374; M. Zdziechowski, “Filozofia Krasińskiego. Odczyt publiczny, wygłoszony w Krakowie 11 marca 1907 roku,” *Pamiętnik Literacki* 6 (1907): 46–60; the referenced paper by Zdziechowski later served as the basis for a study contained in *Wizja Krasińskiego: “Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego,”* in *Wizja Krasińskiego. Ze studyów nad literaturą i filozofią polską* (Kraków: Księgarnia S. A. Krzyżanowskiego, 1912), 33–99; M. Straszewski, “Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859),” in *Polska filozofia narodowa. 15 wykładów* (Kraków: Gebethner i Spółka, 1921), 264.

² Juliusz Kleiner represents this approach. Despite his ambiguous *assessment* of Krasiński’s philosophy, he is criticized today for excessively focusing on philosophical issues while *interpreting* works by Krasiński: “Juliusz Kleiner devotes a lot of space to Krasiński’s philosophy in both volumes of his monograph, which is evidently detrimental in terms of interpreting literary works” (A. Bałajewski, *Poezja „trzeciej epoki”. O twórczości Zygmunta Krasińskiego w latach 1836–1843* [Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2009], 38).

³ Cf. J. Kleiner, “Studia i fragmenty monografii z 1912 roku,” in *Zygmunt Krasiński. Studia*, ed. J. Starnawski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998), 96; I. Chrzanowski, “Osobowość Krasińskiego,” in *Krasiński żywy*, ed. W. Günther (London: B. Świderski, 1959), 15; M. Janion, “Krasiński a Hegel,” in *Prace wybrane*, vol. 2, *Tragizm, historia, prywatność* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 270.

⁴ Zdziechowski, “Filozofia Krasińskiego,” 46; Zdziechowski, “Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego,” 35. For more information on the reception of Krasiński’s works by Marian Zdziechowski, see J. Pyda, “Marian Zdziechowski jako czytelnik twórczości Zygmunta Krasińskiego. O filozoficznych uwikłaniach dziejów recepcji,” *Tekstualia* 3 (2017): 85–100 (all translations by the author of this article unless otherwise noted).

⁵ Bałajewski, *Poezja „trzeciej epoki,”* 63.

Contemporary research on Krasiński's oeuvre has in most cases followed the path set out by Alina Kowalczykova, who concludes that "along with the development of studies devoted to Polish Romantic philosophy, the position of Krasiński is clearly fading, which seems inevitable since Krasiński was not a philosopher."⁶ Contrary to this view, however, it needs to be pointed out that, regardless of how one assesses the value of his philosophical writings, there are at least two important reasons why the legacy of the "third Polish poet-prophet" can be analyzed in the context of the history of philosophy. Undoubtedly, Krasiński's explorations in this area at the turn of the 1830s and 1840s represent the mainstream of Polish philosophy in the period between the two great uprisings of 1830 and 1863. Further, Krasiński would develop his philosophical position in religious terms *in parallel* with August Cieszkowski, the latter providing the foundation for these elaborations in *Prolegomena do historiozofii* (Prolegomena to a Historiosophy). Still, it would be misguided to fully identify the views held by these two friends, although they certainly share a point of departure, fundamental assumptions, and some key claims.⁷ A closer examination of the courses taken by them in religious philosophy reveals vital differences between their positions.⁸ It is Marian Zdziechowski who contributed the most to an account of the divergences between the intellectual views of Cieszkowski and Krasiński, first in a paper titled "Filozofia Krasińskiego" (1907) and then in expanded form in a chapter of the 1912 book *Wizja Krasińskiego*, where he writes:

At the same time, there is a fundamental difference between Krasiński and Cieszkowski with regard to their views on the mutual relationship between two crucial elements of their spiritual personality – namely, religious feeling and the inquisitiveness of thought. The philosophy of Cieszkowski is marked by the desire to combine patriotic⁹ rationalism with Christianity. However, religiosity is in his case rather indirect and derivative – a product of upbringing, milieu, or habit and not an expression of the soul. In short, it was less firmly grounded than his philosophical fervour. [...] In Krasiński, on the other hand, the mutual relationship between religiosity and philosophical enquiry is different. The religious element would be of prime importance, constituting a bold flight of thought toward God and an explosion of powerful

⁶ A. Kowalczykova, "Poglądy filozoficzne Zygmunta Krasińskiego," in *Polska myśl filozoficzna i społeczna*, vol. 1, 1831–1863, ed. A. Walicki (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973), 308.

⁷ "His [Hegel's] influence persists, its presence felt both at the foundation of Krasiński's triunitary interpretation of historical progress, which he strongly defended, and in the basic source of this interpretation contained in the assumptions of a radically interpreted philosophical spiritualism. In light of these two key theoretical premises, Krasiński's position proves to be related in terms of ideas to the basic intentions underlying Cieszkowski's project of the history of philosophy, regardless of any minor differences between these two visions" (A. Wawrzynowicz, "Zygmunt Krasiński [1812–1859]," in *Historia filozofii politycznej, cz. II*, ed. P. Nowak [Warsaw: Fundacja Augusta hr. Cieszkowskiego, 2016], 383).

⁸ Some of these differences are analyzed by the author in an earlier article that attempts a parallel reading of Krasiński's *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* and Cieszkowski's *Ojciec nasz* in light of the idea about the Divine Kingdom on Earth (see T. Herbich, "Królestwo Boże jako zrealizowane pojęcie ludzkości w koncepcjach Zygmunta Krasińskiego i Augusta Cieszkowskiego," *Filo-Sofja* 1 (2016): 53–72).

⁹ In this passage from *Wizja Krasińskiego*, we encounter "pantheistic rationalism" in place of "patriotic rationalism" (Zdziechowski, *Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 36).

individuality suffused with the spirit of Mickiewicz, sharing his premonition that the greatness of humanity is determined by its unity with God. Thus, Krasiński would daringly climb upward, aware that religion forms the path toward spiritual heights. As a result, he would not try to bring religion closer to philosophy, but, on the contrary, he would explore philosophy in order to establish a firmer foundation for religion.¹⁰

Even if Zdziechowski's assessment cannot be uncritically accepted (he seems to simplify the problem of Cieszkowski's approach to the legacy of Hegel and "philosophical rationalism"),¹¹ he nevertheless managed to capture something quite significant for the intellectual relation between Krasiński and Cieszkowski. A similar position on this issue, though less extreme, is represented today by Andrzej Wawrzynowicz, who argues that, out of the two attempts to synthesize philosophical and religious discourse, the one by Cieszkowski "ultimately tips in favor of a perspective rooted more firmly in logic and philosophy," while the one by Krasiński "displays, in comparison, a much stronger inclination toward a standpoint rooted in eschatology and religion."¹² At the same time, it needs to be underscored that Zdziechowski does not merely seek to distribute accents between philosophical thought and religious vision differently but wishes to reveal a deeper difference between the two thinkers' intellectual positions, which ultimately turns their works into vehicles of different worldviews. Zdziechowski's remarks about the divergences between Krasiński and Cieszkowski reveal their full implications when he concludes that the strong tie between the Polish poet and Schelling, which simultaneously moved Krasiński further away from Hegel and his disciples, was premised on "a deep understanding of the power of evil in this world": "[i]n the souls of Schelling and Krasiński, the mighty Romantic individualism, manifesting in the grand scale of infinite, unsatisfied desires, would collide with a deep predilection for pessimism."¹³ According to Zdziechowski, the two authors' philosophies of history also differ fundamentally:

It is only Schelling's broad view of human destiny – eschatological and not historical – that sheds light on Krasiński's longing for the moment when "Heaven would be all around us." The synthesis of history outlined by Cieszkowski was not the alpha and omega to him but a part of universal development, the world rushing toward the fullness of time, toward the revelation of God as Spirit.¹⁴

¹⁰ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 47; Zdziechowski, *Wizya eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 36–37.

¹¹ For more information about Cieszkowski's complex attitude to Hegel and its evolution in time, see S. Pieróg, "Dialektyka i Objawienie w historiozofii Augusta Cieszkowskiego," *Nowa Krytyka* 3 (1993): 77–100.

¹² Wawrzynowicz, "Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859)," 384.

¹³ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 51; Zdziechowski, *Wizya eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 44–45.

¹⁴ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 54; Zdziechowski, *Wizya eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 60.

Krasiński's treatise *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* (On the position of Poland from the divine and human perspectives) can thus be studied as a text that provides an alternative elaboration of Cieszkowski's original project in the area of the philosophy of history (even if it does coincide with *Ojciec nasz* [Our father] in many respects), fleshing it out as religious philosophy. A comparative analysis of the two works helps to better grasp the specificity of positions developed by Cieszkowski and Krasiński. The relation between them can be further illuminated by recalling the figure of Konstanty Danielewicz¹⁵ and his ideas, thus providing a fuller picture of this current within Polish philosophy during the period between the two great uprisings – a picture that could be metonymically tied to *Prolegomena do historiozofii*. Nevertheless, significant disparities emerge within the movement defined in this way.

It needs to be underlined that arguing in favor of Krasiński's departure from Cieszkowski led Zdziechowski to conclude that the work of the "third Polish poet-prophet" at the turn of the 1830s and 1840s cannot be reduced to a reflection of either the "philosophical views of Cieszkowski" or the views of "Hegel, who gave rise to Cieszkowski."¹⁶ Thus, by decidedly differentiating Krasiński from Cieszkowski, Zdziechowski aims to distinguish the Polish poet from Hegel. This was supposed to be confirmed by the reason why Krasiński enthusiastically embraced Cieszkowski's *Prolegomena do historiozofii* – the former deemed this book to be a confirmation of his own premonition that "Hegel's position has already been overcome," while the one who "pushed Hegel's thought further, amending his philosophy of history and entirely overhauling its absolute dimension is [...] August Cieszkowski."¹⁷ Zdziechowski's account of the fundamental discrepancy between the positions of Hegel and those of Krasiński is supported by his interpretation of the first part of *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* (titled "O Trójcy w Bogu i o trójcy w człowieku" [On the Holy Trinity and the human trinity]) – the only part published prior to Zdziechowski's paper, that is, in 1903.¹⁸ Zdziechowski argues that, with regard to Hegel, the Polish poet took the path of Schelling, who "wished to steer human thought back toward God, make it bow before Him, and force it to recognize that its power depends on the splendor of superior divine thought."¹⁹ This does not necessarily confirm that Schelling directly influenced Krasiński but merely that the intellectual course taken individually by the two converged to some degree:

¹⁵ Cf. A. Wawrzynowicz, "Filozofia woli Konstantego Danielewicza," *Kronos* 2 (2013): 213–25; K. Danielewicz, "O odbiciu się historii w poezji," *Kronos* 2 (2013): 226–27; K. Danielewicz, "Historyczna zasada: Jako rozłożona na przestrzeń widzimy ludzkość w czworakiej głównej towarzyskiej postaci," *Kronos* 2 (2013): 228–33; K. Danielewicz, "O woli," *Kronos* 2 (2013): 234–257.

¹⁶ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 47; Zdziechowski, *Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 36.

¹⁷ Z. Krasiński, "List do Edwarda Jaroszyńskiego z 21 II 1840," in *Listy do Augusta Cieszkowskiego, Edwarda Jaroszyńskiego, Bronisława Trentowskiego*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988), 51. Zdziechowski also refers to this passage. Cf. Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 46; Zdziechowski, *Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 35.

¹⁸ Cf. Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 46; Zdziechowski, *Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 48–60, where Zdziechowski discusses more broadly *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów*.

¹⁹ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 48; Zdziechowski, *Wizja eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 39.

We can thus speak not of the spiritual descent of the Polish poet-prophet from the German thinker but rather of a similarity that would not necessarily constitute an expression of influence. Schelling's ideas could have descended "out of thin air"; what resembles them in Krasiński could also be the natural manifestation of his spirit.²⁰

It does not seem like a coincidence that it was the first part of the posthumously published work by Krasiński that led Zdziechowski to the above conclusion. In this part, Krasiński introduces concepts that lie at the foundation of his philosophical system. The dialectical interpretation of relations between key concepts – being, thought, and life (or spirit) – can be tied to both Hegel and Cieszkowski. However, drawing on the differentiation (outlined in the letter to Jaroszyński, quoted above) between a philosophy of history, whose Hegelian form was "amended" by Cieszkowski, and a philosophy of the absolute, which the latter "overhauled" – a differentiation that seems to reflect Krasiński's views on how to go beyond Hegel – one could argue that, already at the fundamental level of assumptions in Krasiński's system, dialectics is radically limited to the domain of history, whereas in the sphere of the absolute it yields before an entirely different mode of thinking, whose basic symbol is the triunity from which dialectics arises:

Important note. When we speak of the Holy Trinity, one should bear in mind that each of its Persons contains the other two: *absolute being* contains absolute thought and thus absolute life, while *absolute life* contains absolute being and absolute thought. Hence their eternal concurrence and perfect balance; hence not three Gods but one will in three persons, and a single God! [...] It is only in temporal history that they are separated and distinguished, entering the stage of world history at different moments. There is the first age of Jehovah; the second, of Christ; and the third, which sees the manifestation of the complete union of the first and second, of the Holy Spirit. Still, it is invariably a single will and one God.²¹

Restricting dialectics to the sphere of the philosophy of history entails a conscious rejection of the belief that the former constitutes an ontology or "an account of being conceived as a 'movement of the concept' or a 'movement' of thought with the goal of attaining absolute self-knowledge."²² Stanisław Pieróg draws attention to the fact that the initial omission of "the relations between Hegel's dialectics and Hegel's metaphysics" – which made it impossible to "apply the 'dialectical method' to the construction of a new, non-idealistic, spiritual and activist metaphysics"²³ – was gradually overcome by Cieszkowski, in the course of which the project of a philosophy of history evolved toward religious philosophy. The way in which Krasiński developed his philosophical

²⁰ Zdziechowski, "Filozofia Krasińskiego," 50; Zdziechowski, *Wizya eschatologiczna Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, 43.

²¹ Z. Krasiński, *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów*, in *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. 7, *Pisma dyskursywne*, cz. 1 (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2017), 241–42.

²² Pieróg, "Dialektyka i Objawienie w historiozofii Augusta Cieszkowskiego," 87.

²³ *Ibid.*, 88.

position seems to stem from the very same belief about the impossibility of reconciling the dialectical method (when deployed in Hegel's way) with the intention to construct a spiritualist metaphysics. Krasiński's thought did not have to go through this process the way this occurred in the case of Cieszkowski. The Polish poet understood that Hegel's dialectics should be radically restricted because it would otherwise entail absolute idealism, precluding the development of a spiritualist philosophy of action.

In this context it is worth recalling the following view formulated by Maria Janion: "The reception of Hegel's historicism could be only partial in the case of Krasiński because it would be fundamentally limited by the Christian, nonhistorical vision of the world, which facilitated the reception of only some ideas."²⁴ It seems unnecessary to demonstrate here that – contrary to what Janion claims – the Christian vision of the world *is* in fact historical. However, it seems that the key aspect of the above quotation would be revealed upon substituting "historicism" with "dialectics." The nondialectical character (in Hegel's sense) of the Christian vision of the world is rooted in the distinction into the eternal and the temporal: "the Holy Trinity" and "the human trinity," or the absolute and the historical. *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* is certainly not free from the influence of Hegel, but Krasiński's awareness of this allows him to simultaneously turn toward other modes of thinking, which can be identified – as Zdziechowski does – with the views held by Schelling toward the end of his life (despite all the differences between the two). It is of paramount importance here to note the overall construction of Krasiński's argument: that which is dialectical in Hegel's terms becomes transplanted into trinitarian thinking.²⁵

Of all components in his system, Hegel's philosophy of religion sparked the greatest controversy among Polish philosophers in the period between the two uprisings, eliciting a solidary reaction. This is certainly confirmed by Cieszkowski's *Ojciec nasz*, but further evidence can be traced in works by other Polish intellectuals operating at that time. In his Paris lectures, Adam Mickiewicz argues that "Hegel and his school keep donning Christian formulas, often discoursing about the eternal Word or original sin, although they understand these terms differently than orthodox Christians."²⁶ After the development of modern philosophy eradicated both the world and humanity from thought, Hegel – as Mickiewicz claims – eliminates God²⁷ and installs in his place the deified state.²⁸ In the poet's view, Hegel is a central figure in "Europe's political and philosophical march," which "basically opposes the political and religious march of Poland."²⁹ Another example

²⁴ Janion, "Krasiński a Hegel," 297.

²⁵ As Jakub Pyda rightly notes, "the axis, central point, and antecedent of all philosophy-related considerations of the poet is the question of God," while "the problem of God logically precedes the philosophy of history and national issues, as is clearly reflected in the structure of this treatise" (J. Pyda, "Filozofia Boga Zygmunta Krasińskiego? Wokół traktatu *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów*," in *Zygmunt Krasiński. Życie czy literatura?*, ed. A. Markuszewska [Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2019], 188–89). Cf. also Wawrzynowicz, "Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859)," 386–87.

²⁶ A. Mickiewicz, *Dziela*, vol. 9, *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs drugi*, trans. L. Płoszewski (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1997), 387.

²⁷ Cf. A. Mickiewicz, *Dziela*, vol. 10, *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs trzeci*, trans. L. Płoszewski (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1998), 209–10.

²⁸ Cf. A. Mickiewicz, *Dziela*, vol. 8, *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs pierwszy*, trans. L. Płoszewski (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1997), 593–95.

²⁹ Mickiewicz, *Dziela*, vol. 8, 595.

is provided by Karol Libelt, who describes the relation between religion and the philosophy of pure reason in the following terms:

In general, therefore, the position taken by the philosophy of pure reason with regard to religion is as follows: initially, the dualism of *faith* and *reason* was formed, then it was abolished either by entirely disregarding religion or – to once again employ the apt comparison drawn by Michelet – by reforging religious dogma into philosophy. This process was furthered with care and caution, as befitted the period and its circumstances, until intelligence grew strong enough to suffer its ultimate consequences – namely, the complete dissolution of all religious forms, and the exchange of the dogmas of faith for only rational concepts.³⁰

According to Libelt, the philosophy of pure reason has thus caused a substantial crisis in spiritual relations: “On the other hand, I would say that the world of spirit is not so much destroyed but dissolved insofar as its eternal foundation – the persons of God and the immortality of the soul – are either entirely negated or transformed into an *abstraction* in accordance with the thinking reason.”³¹

Among the Polish thinkers who squared up to Hegel, an important place is certainly held by Zygmunt Krasieński. His treatise *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* can be read as an original response to the dilemmas posed by Hegel and his continuators before Polish philosophers. It is at least for this reason that it becomes worthwhile to consistently subject this work to strictly philosophical analysis.

³⁰ K. Libelt, “Samowładztwo rozumu i objawy filozofii słowiańskiej,” in *Samowładztwo rozumu i objawy filozofii słowiańskiej. O miłości ojczyzny. System umnictwa. O panteizmie w filozofii* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2014), 217.

³¹ Libelt, “Samowładztwo rozumu i objawy filozofii słowiańskiej,” 140.

EDWARD ABRAMOWSKI: BETWEEN EPISTEMOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND METAPHYSICS

Edward Abramowski practiced philosophy in the era of the antipositivist turn, and his work reflects the structure of ideas characteristic for this epoch.¹ This emerges with particular clarity in two studies: *Teoria jednostek psychicznych* (Theory of mental units, 1895, published in 1899) and *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy* (Sources of subconsciousness and its manifestations, 1914).² Abramowski would enter into discussion with psychologists and philosophers active in the last quarter of the nineteenth century – Wilhelm Wundt, William James, and Henri Bergson, among others – criticizing the positivist account of the psyche, developing his own concept of the subconscious, and justifying the construction of a metaphysics based on data obtained from internal experience. The structure of ideas characteristic for the antipositivist turn is nevertheless quite complex, which is confirmed by Abramowski’s heritage, where opposing tendencies meet – for example, Kantism and naturalism, the latter subsequently tied to a philosophy of life. Depending on the context, it is possible to observe in his case either a departure from positivism or a continuity of inspirations. Those who associate the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with antipsychologism and the rejection of psychophysical parallelism may be astonished to learn that Abramowski consistently embraced psychologism and supported the parallelist position.

At the outset of *Teoria*, Abramowski declares his intention to undertake an epistemological criticism of the foundations of positivist psychology from the perspective of phenomenalism. It would be specifically a post-Kantian phenomenalism based on the assumption that human knowledge is limited to the world of phenomena, with the concept of “things in themselves” designating the final frontier of all thought. Abramowski would in fact argue that he is entirely indifferent to the question of “being in itself” and “external

¹ See S. Borzym, “Abramowski, filozof epoki modernizmu,” in E. Abramowski, *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, ed. S. Borzym (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980), LIII.

² E. Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych (Przyczynek do krytyki psychologii współczesnej)*, in *Pisma filozoficzno-psychologiczne*, ed. A. Dziedzic and W. Kruszewski (Warsaw: Fundacja Augusta hrabiego Cieszkowskiego, 2016), 1–117; E. Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy (Psychologia postrzeżenia i stanów bezimiennych)*, in *Pisma filozoficzno-psychologiczne*, 121–301.

reality.”³ Phenomenalism is identified here with the claim that “the positive value of existence can be ascribed only to that which is thinkable; it possesses this quality *because* it is possible in thought.”⁴ In the domain of psychology, phenomenalism – or “the principle of the phenomenon” as Abramowski terms it – would be synonymous with the thesis that the object of inquiry consists in mental phenomena, that is, states observable in internal experience, or conscious ones. This would preclude the existence of unconscious mental phenomena since it would be highly unreasonable to claim that there exist phenomena that do not manifest to us because “they are not acknowledged in introspection.”⁵ Arguing that “the hypothesis about *unconscious* mental phenomena, which persists in science since Leibniz, is devoid of any logical sense,”⁶ Abramowski would embrace the model proposed by the psychology of consciousness, which was widespread in his time. Simultaneously, however, in order to consolidate phenomenalism, he would polemicize with positivist psychology, specifically with the claim that complex mental phenomena are the product of synthesizing simpler elements: mental atoms, simple sensations, or “pure sensations” as Wundt called them. From the perspective of Abramowski, both the representatives of associationist psychology in its many forms (including John Stuart Mill, Hippolyte Taine, Herbert Spencer, and Alexander Bain) and Wilhelm Wundt, who developed an anti-associationist theory of apperception, would contradict evidence obtained in introspection, thus defying the assumptions of the psychology of consciousness. Abramowski draws attention to the fact that in internal experience we do not identify the existence of any mental atoms or processes of assembling them into larger wholes, processes that the associationists imagine as either mechanical or relying on some kind of chemical fusion, while Wundt regards them in terms of creative apperceptive synthesis. Introspection invariably reveals wholes that have shape, color, or texture; we never experience isolated sensations connected with sight, touch, or hearing. The idea that there are mental components that are synthesized into complex states of consciousness involves postulating the existence of both a mental reality inaccessible to introspection and latent cognitive processes, which would in turn entail the existence of unconscious mental phenomena.

Rejecting atomism on the grounds that it is not faithful to internal experience brought Abramowski close to other theories developed toward the end of the nineteenth century by Henri Bergson, William James, or Gestalt psychologists – theories that would oppose associationism and Wundt’s psychological analysis by confronting them with direct data identified in consciousness, constituting an integral stream or containing “gestalt qualities.” In fact, two arguments developed by Abramowski in *Teoria* against the atomists resemble the approach taken by Bergson and James. Abramowski would emphasize the specific character of conscious phenomena that change in time. According

³ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 4. Most probably Abramowski borrowed the concept of phenomenalism directly from the Geneva professor Jean-Jacques Gourd (1850–1909), author of the well-known study *Le Phénomène. Esquisse de Philosophie Générale* (1888). See K. Krzeczowski, *Dzieje życia i twórczości Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Spółdzielczego Instytutu Naukowego, 1933), 21 (all translations are by the author of this article unless otherwise noted).

⁴ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*

to him, the synthesis of basic sensations – postulated by the atomists – assumes the possibility that several mental states can coexist, which would be possible only if they were spatial in character. Meanwhile, unlike the quantitative and spatiotemporal physical phenomena, mental ones are temporal and qualitative.⁷ Abramowski also points out that proponents of mental atomism can also be found to be guilty of the intellectualist fallacy. He regarded the idea of pure sensations existing in the early stages of the cognitive process to be erroneous because this would entail identifying something abstract with the original mental reality. After all, terms such as “redness” or “hardness” are merely concepts abstracted from specific sensations.⁸

Still, Abramowski ascribes the greatest significance to phenomenalist argumentation, thus entering into debate with the atomists regarding the philosophy of science. He argues that atomism violates “the principle of the phenomenon” when applied to psychology as a science of mental phenomena; atomists would speak of unconscious mental elements or of a world beyond the senses, thus making metaphysical claims. Basic sensations are deemed in *Teoria* as constructed analogously to Leibniz’s monads. The fact that the very proponents of atomism admit that we never experience either the elements themselves or the processes of their synthesis and that the existence of these elements is merely hypothetical was regarded by Abramowski as proof of plain intellectual inconsistency.

Atomists would argue that the task of psychology is to analyze states of consciousness in order to establish their fundamental components and discover the principles of their synthesis. The hypothesis of psychological atomism regarding these components and their synthesis is modeled on natural sciences such as physics or chemistry. As the founder of physiological psychology, Wilhelm Wundt regarded simple and pure sensations to be theoretical entities that need to be assumed if psychological theory is to constitute something more than mere description or induction-based generalization. As theoretical entities, mental atoms would have a status analogous to atoms identified by physics, Wundt claims.⁹ Meanwhile, the phenomenism outlined in *Teoria* undermines the legitimacy of some of these hypotheses, specifically ones about the existence of simple mental elements or the occurrence of unconscious mental processes, on the grounds that they do not meet scientific criteria. According to Abramowski, if a hypothesis is supposed to explain data obtained from internal experience yet no mental atoms exist within it, then the psychologist who postulates their existence is formulating a metaphysical thesis inadmissible in science. At the same time, this concerns the debate about possible ways of making psychology a science. Abramowski favors rejecting metaphors and associations borrowed from physics or chemistry, emphasizing that mental phenomena have their own unique character. He argues that the atomists would arbitrarily import knowledge from the area of the physiology of the senses – for example, about the emergence of the sensation of whiteness when watching a multicolored wheel turning quickly – into psychology, insisting that every physiological stimulus has its mental counterpart in the form of the sensations of individual colors. Thus, the atomists would in fact regard solely physiological processes

⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁹ For more information on Wundt’s concept of scientific theory, see K. Danziger, “Wundt’s Psychological Experiment in the Light of His Philosophy of Science,” *Psychological Research* 42 (1980): 109–22.

as mental, while the unconscious would be describable only in terms of unconscious physiological processes – not represented mentally in any form – in which one receives and processes sensual stimuli.

Abramowski's original proposition reverses the direction of thinking espoused by proponents of positivistic psychological analysis. Instead of assuming that the mind conducts an unconscious synthesis of basic mental elements, it needs to be recognized that the smallest unit of mental life ("the mental unit") is the entire currently given moment of consciousness. This moment would not be the product of unconscious mental synthesis but an all-encompassing mental counterpart of polysensory physiological stimuli that do not have their individual representations in the psyche and in consciousness. Thus, a mental unit can consist of

seeing either an entire landscape or its single detail, hearing a single tone or a melodious chord, or din, feeling the ordinary touch of skin or experiencing amorous rapture, experiencing the simplest, isolated stimulus originating outside or a certain group of stimuli that are mutually interdependent. After all, consciousness does not alter its degree of complexity depending on what it perceives; the moment remains homogenous regardless of the diversity of its origins.¹⁰

In Abramowski's view, the conscious moment is in fact "illusory": unable to keep pace with all physiological events in terms of representing them, it merely constitutes their specific and shared mental correlate.

As outlined in *Teoria*, the cognitive process begins with a moment of consciousness: the shared mental counterpart of the organism's life as a whole subjected to the operation of physiological stimuli, a counterpart that changes whenever some kind of shift occurs in the environment understood as a source of both external and internal stimuli, thus including coenesthesia, that is, the general sense of the body. The cognitive process does not commence with a synthesis of elements but with an analysis of the conscious moment; its first stage is "recognition": the process of unconscious, physiological comparison made between currently experienced stimuli and those recorded in memory. Perception requires comparing a given sensation with its notional trace inscribed in memory, which makes the former dependent on the latter; the object of perception can be perceived because it resembles something already known. Sensory data are initially systematized in accordance with a physiological key, transforming regardless of conscious cognitive effort, top-down attention, and even more so, conceptual categorization. They assume the form of "simple associative chains, aimless and open-ended."¹¹ The direct data of internal experience are collectively termed "intuition" by Abramowski. In the context of sensations that comprise the contents of consciousness (constituting a possible object for further elaboration by attention and thought), he employs terms such as "the intuitive character of

¹⁰ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 55.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

consciousness”¹² or “the sensing consciousness.”¹³ The term “sensation,” which describes the “intellectually unprocessed state of consciousness,”¹⁴ has its roots in French literature and translations into French, which Abramowski consulted.

In Abramowski’s theory, the act of cognition, in which the subject elaborates the passively imposed intuitive material, is called “apperception” or the “apperceptive act.” Just as in Wundt’s psychology, the concept of apperception denotes an entire spectrum of activity, including that of attention and thought as well as acts of will.¹⁵ Abramowski regards the creation of “purposeful and closed”¹⁶ content systems as well as the effort of thought and discursive consciousness as demonstrating the “apperceptive character of consciousness” or the “apperceptive aspect of consciousness.”¹⁷ In *Teoria* he attempts to describe the apperceptive transformation of intuitive “feelings” into perceptions and judgments, the initial apperceptive act consisting in the separation of stable elements in the mental moment and the determination of the direction of associations. The last part of the book, where Abramowski analyzes rules of logic in the light of his “mental units” theory, constitutes an original manifesto of psychologism in logic; he would pursue this topic further in the 1915 “Przyczynek do psychologii myślenia logicznego” (Contribution to a psychology of logical thought).

What follows does not account for specific difficulties with the argumentation developed in *Teoria*, where Abramowski reconstructs the physiological and psychological process of cognition. In many cases, they stem from unclear phrasing, as pointed out already by the book’s reviewers shortly after it was published. However, it seems more significant to grasp the basic parameters of Abramowski’s position, as outlined in *Teoria*, and to indicate certain problems arising from tensions between phenomenalism, introspectionism, and scientific naturalism.

The general idea developed by Abramowski is clear: in order to furnish an alternative to the positivist concept of human psyche, it becomes necessary to introduce to psychology (and further to social philosophy) an active cognizing subject who intentionally transforms his or her own experience. Abramowski does so, for example, by openly referring to Wundt’s voluntarist theory of apperception, at the same time relieving it of its entanglement in mental atomism.¹⁸ One circumstance that has particular bearing on the psychology of cognition developed in *Teoria* is the fact that attention not only elucidates that which has been given structure in the course of unconscious physiological processes

¹² Ibid., 90.

¹³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵ Abramowski (just like William James) considered acts of top-down attention (which entails some effort of choice) to be acts of will; see *ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶ Ibid., 95.

¹⁷ Ibid., 115.

¹⁸ Abramowski can thus be situated within a broader current that could be called “the psychology of apperception.” Its representatives would oppose the associationist model of psyche and emphasize the subject’s activity in the cognitive process as well as the role of attention and will. For these purposes, they would use the post-Wundtian (in this context) term “apperception.” See, for example, W. Pillsbury, “A Study in Apperception,” *The American Journal of Psychology* 3 (1897): 315–93; G. F. Stout, “Apperception and the Movement of Attention,” *Mind* 16 (1891): 23–53. Cf. also other concepts of apperception, e.g., T. Lipps, *Einheiten und Relationen: Eine Skizze zur Psychologie der Apperzeption* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1902).

but also actively transforms the original moment of sensation. From Abramowski's point of view, positivist psychology disregards this creative role of an active cognizing subject, while theories that acknowledge it – such as Wundt's – are riddled with inconsistencies.

At the same time, doubts arise regarding the way in which the psychology of cognition is tied in this context to post-Kantian phenomenism. It remains difficult to establish the actual relationship between Abramowski's phenomenism and the introspective method regarded in *Teoria* as a consequence of “the principle of the phenomenon.” In his treatise, Abramowski expresses the belief that his psychology of cognition, in contrast to the atomists, is actually rooted in introspection. However, when he discusses the emergence of the concept of “grass,” he performs an imaginary, theoretical operation of disconnecting memories from perception with the aim of reconstructing “the first moment of conscious sensation.”¹⁹ He describes this moment as “a homogenous nebula formed by some unnamed sensation, which does not correspond to anything we know as perception, notion, or concept.”²⁰ The object of cognition is the product of the transformative activity of the cognizing subject; nevertheless,

we may never learn about that initial moment or the living present; whether it contains in itself something that would correspond to the configuration of qualities perceived in the act of thought such as certain colors, shapes, distances, and resistance; we may never know this for the simple reason that nothing can become the object of our cognition if it had not been elaborated by the mental apparatus; hence the beginning of thought, or its point of departure, cannot be directly accessed in the moment when it emerges. We regard it always from the perspective of the final, developed thought, when it appears like a shadow of a bygone yet unknown reality.²¹

Although Abramowski accuses the atomists of seeking the origin of experienced states of consciousness in an unknown mental reality, he himself admits that this moment of consciousness, not yet processed by attention, remains unrevealed. By arguing that intuitive content, prior to being transformed by attention and thought, constitutes “a consciousness that is unaware [...] of what it contains,”²² Abramowski is inclined to perceive intuitive data as conscious and available to introspection, although he simultaneously claims that we do not know what we are conscious of and what we discover in introspection.

The following question arises in light of the above: From where does Abramowski really derive his account of the initial moment of consciousness as a simple mental counterpart of the organism at a given time? It turns out that introspection proves less useful in addressing this than certain results from nonpsychological sciences, specifically physiology and the branch of linguistics that studies language acquisition. Just as in Wundt, introspection is not as important as establishing a methodological link between psychology and physiology. It is well known that Wundt strove to make psychology scientific by

¹⁹ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²² *Ibid.*, 60.

studying mental phenomena alongside their physiological correlates. He could experiment with the latter in the controlled environment of the laboratory and then describe the results in quantitative terms.²³ Despite criticizing Wundt, Abramowski does not reject the paradigm of physiological psychology: in his view, psychology serves as a bridge between physiology and human psyche, facilitating the development of a reliable science about human life, a science that would treat internal and external phenomena as a single process. The ideal of an integrated knowledge that emerges from these considerations is certainly of positivist provenance, but in the case of Abramowski it evolved into a philosophy of life. This is particularly clear in his desire, expressed in 1912, to fuse biology and psychology “into a single life science, life not classified in arbitrary terms but integral, total, and unified – the way it really is.”²⁴

In both his theoretical explorations and his laboratory experiments, Abramowski treated physiological data as confirming his psychological theses. Physiological observations convinced him that there are no mental atoms, while the first moment of consciousness is a mental counterpart to the entire organic environment. After all, specific sensory stimuli are always accompanied by stimuli from other senses, jointly shaping the overall state of the organism, along with muscle tension, skin conductance, breathing, and blood circulation. Further, the claim that the initial moment of consciousness is simple, while differentiation arrives only with thought and concepts, would be confirmed in his view by studies carried out by Romanes and Müller, who examined language acquisition among children as well as languages spoken by primitive peoples. These studies demonstrate that the first or primitive concepts describe a whole range of contents and circumstances existing at a given moment, while the precision of thought stems from mind development proceeding from the original generality of concepts toward their greater differentiation.

In other words, although Abramowski tied phenomenalism to introspectionism at the very starting point, he was unable to consistently demonstrate that his own psychological hypothesis was based on data derived from internal experience. Belief in the crucial role of acts performed by the cognizing subject supplanted the conviction about introspective access to the material that emerges passively in consciousness. The psychology of cognition proposed by Abramowski, in which a crucial role is played by the concepts of intuition and apperception, is indebted to two traditions: the empiricist crusade against substituting intellectual constructions with experiential data, and the conviction – derived from Kant – that the cognizing subject conceptually forms the object of cognition. As an empiricist,

²³ One of the key theoretical assumptions here is the heuristic principle of psychophysical parallelism. It would correlate the emergence of mental and physiological phenomena, rejecting interactionism, which is impossible to prove scientifically, especially in light of the physical law about the universe’s total energy remaining constant. It is worth emphasizing that Abramowski would not question the principle of psychophysical parallelism, which he defends most extensively in *Dusza i ciało. Prawo współrzędności fizjologicznej rozpatrywane ze stanowiska teorii poznania i biologii* (Warsaw: Druk. J. Sikorskiego, 1903); he also addresses this question in the French work *L'Analyse physiologique de la perception* (Paris: Bloud, 1911). Key theses of *Dusza i ciało* are reiterated in “Oddech jako czynnik życia duchowego,” in *Prace z psychologii doświadczalnej/L'année Psychologique Polonaise* (Warsaw: Instytut Psychologiczny, 1913).

²⁴ E. Abramowski, *Podświadomość i reakcje organiczne*, vol. 3 of *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią* (Warsaw: Księgarnia E. Wende i S-ka, 1912), IX.

Abramowski argues that psychology is a “biological, observation-based”²⁵ science, while the atomists commit the sin of intellectualism. Further, he claims that the atomists mistake their own abstractions for reality; however, phenomena cannot be identified with intellectual constructions; instead, they are that which exists prior to becoming the object of thought. “Psychology,” he writes, “is an experimental science and as such should deal with facts that are just as independent of our modes of comprehension as those studied by experimental science.”²⁶ He goes on to directly call these independent facts “natural.”²⁷ However, this belief is undermined in *Teoria* by certain theses inspired by Kant. First, Abramowski concludes that intuitive data are discerned only after they are apperceptively processed. Second, he undercuts any belief in the accessibility of natural facts by declaring that “in order to analytically establish a certain psychological fact, it is primarily necessary to learn how far analysis may extend [...]. Introspection itself is insufficient here – as an experimental tool it is too closely tied to the object of study and for this reason is liable to fall victim to many illusions; thus, analysis must necessarily focus on the nature of the hypothetical concept of the ‘element.’”²⁸ Abramowski seems to acknowledge that every concept of “mental units” – both his own and the one developed by the atomists – is a theoretical construction rooted in certain epistemological assumptions and not the result of simply recalling evidence obtained in introspection. He thus seems to vacillate between faithfulness to internal experience, awareness of the limits of introspection, and belief in the inevitable character of the theory that provides a framework for interpreting data from consciousness.

One additional challenge is posed by the fact that phenomenalism functions in Abramowski’s theory as a pretext to perform two operations: to carry out a specific psychologization of the Kantian model, and to formulate the thesis about the existence of a transcendental subject. As a result, the concept of the mental phenomenon becomes blurred. Abramowski defines phenomena as content whose origin is different than thought itself but that can become the object of thought. In psychology, a phenomenon is the moment of consciousness, or the self-imposing of intuitive data that are the subject of apperceptive processing. Apperception would in turn constitute the “negation of a phenomenon.”²⁹ This negation involves both psychological analysis, which directs the chaotic courses taken by intuition, and the operation of concepts, thus summoning the idea of a transcendental subject that conditions all phenomena yet remains logically anterior to them – Abramowski writes in this context about “pure apperception”³⁰ and the “transcendental subject.”³¹ Still, by claiming that “apperception cannot exist in any place, it does not have a phenomenal existence, and appears only as a negation,”³² Abramowski reaches a problematic situation where it becomes necessary to deny the status of mental

²⁵ Abramowski, *Badania doświadczalne nad pamięcią*, vol. 3, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ E. Abramowski, “Zagadnienia socjalizmu,” in *Filozofia społeczna. Wybór pism* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), 227.

²⁸ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 104.

phenomena to acts of apperception – for example, attention, thought, and will. Still, he already applied the concept of phenomenon to intuitive data, that is, the object of apperception. The psychological study of attention and thought processes would thus prove untenable, and yet Abramowski was interested in the psychology of logical thinking and studied manifestations of will in a psychological laboratory toward the end of his life.³³

His later reflection on the object and process of cognition focused primarily on the theme that is not satisfactorily developed in *Teoria* – namely, the question of the mental existence of intuitive contents, which would have to be deemed conscious by definition but which are unknown as such if they have not been subjected to apperceptive processing. In *Teoria*, Abramowski discusses unnoticed “mental moments,” which we are unaware of and are passed over by attention and memory, although they do possess “their own real existence as something consciously experienced.”³⁴ In the article “Dwulicowy charakter spostrzeżeń” (The twofold character of perceptions, 1898, later incorporated into *Źródła*), he foregrounds the problem of the mental existence of disregarded intuitive contents or the kind that would be located at the threshold of thought. In this text, Abramowski upholds his negative opinion about the existence of unconscious mental phenomena, but he clearly emphasizes that unnoticed mental contents qualitatively affect the moment of consciousness, which can be demonstrated even if it remains problematic to explain what this actually involves. Contents unprocessed by attention are therefore available to us in some form that goes beyond thought, constituting “that which is unknown in perception” – the aspect of perception that remains unknown to introspection, which normally encounters material processed by attention and thought. In time, Abramowski would write more and more about contents that have been left apperceptively unprocessed – that is, “nameless” – that elude definition and conceptual categorization. Accordingly, he modified the position developed in *Teoria* by acknowledging the possibility of introspectively reaching the kind of content that arises in the experiencing consciousness but was not processed by attention. Such access certainly proves difficult and requires special external conditions or the state of passive contemplation, but it becomes feasible in situations in which attention is suspended for some reason.

The belief that the intuitive, experiencing consciousness equals consciousness *par excellence* – that is, constitutes a mentality available to introspection though different from apperceptive consciousness – lies at the foundation of Abramowski’s concept of the subconscious. He would nevertheless deny the existence of unconscious mental phenomena, believing that they must be available to introspection; thus, intuitive contents that were not given apperceptive form could not be considered as unconscious. Initially, Abramowski referred to them only descriptively but later developed the term “quasi-unconscious,”³⁵ finally settling for “the subconscious.” By calling nonconscious mental

³³ The problem of introspective access to intuitive data and lack of apperceptive phenomena was addressed, in a different context, by Kazimierz Twardowski in his review of *Teoria jednostek psychicznych* published in *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 1 (1900): 77.

³⁴ Abramowski, *Teoria jednostek psychicznych*, 6. It is also puzzling that Abramowski did not attempt to develop in *Teoria* any explanation of hypnotic states, although he devoted attention to them in the context of studies on the relation between image-based contents and the organism’s motoric reactions.

³⁵ See E. Abramowski, “Świadomość zapomnianego,” *Sfinks* 1 (1908): 130.

phenomena “subconscious,” Abramowski followed in the footsteps of psychologists and psychiatrists from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as William James, Joseph Jastrow, or Pierre Janet. For Abramowski, the subconscious is, as it were, a second kind or level of consciousness, where mental contents exist in the form of unspecified feelings. That which is mental would be available to introspection in two forms: the “intellectual,” or apperceptive, and the “a-intellectual,” or that of feeling – that is, existing under the threshold of intellect. This concerns, first, the kind of content that currently remains beyond the scope of attention or is coming into the foreground in situations when attention ceases to operate either purposefully (through willful, intensive focusing that causes attention to become fatigued, creating a mental void) or for other reasons, such as due to difficulty with grasping a sudden or fleeting impression, strong emotional reaction, hypnosis, or hypnagogic state. As a result of suspending attention, the pre-mental aspect of perception is revealed, accompanied by a subjective sense of weirdness, novelty, or beauty pertaining to the object. Abramowski believed that the ability to perceive reality in this way is what distinguishes artists and that every experience of beauty demands that the activity of intellect be suspended. All states in which we intuitively experience reality instead of perceiving it – thanks to the operation of apperception – are referred to by Abramowski as “agnostic states,” while factors that elicit them, as “agnostic factors” (agnosia implies lack of knowledge or intellectual recognition of a given content).

First and foremost, however, Abramowski employs the concept of the subconscious in the context of that which is forgotten. In the article “Dwulicowy,” he formulates the following thesis, which he later attempted to demonstrate experimentally: memory contains “feeling equivalents” of perceptions. The point is that memories exist in the form of feelings, that is, not as images or concepts; memories are contents reduced to a nameless state regardless of whether they were apperceptively processed or simply went unnoticed prior to being forgotten. The idea that the subconscious takes the form of “feeling equivalents” is placed by Abramowski within a previously assumed methodological framework, accounting both for the coexistence of mental and physiological processes and for the claim regarding introspective access. Because Abramowski argues it is the entire body that acts as the physiological correlate of mental contents – since intuitive and apperceptive mental states are reflected in reactions observable in circulation, muscles, breathing, and skin – the entire body would also be the correlate of some “latent memory.” This is why the mental availability of subconscious contents is made possible by coenesthesia, that is, as part of the awareness of oneself and one’s body as well as its internal functions and general condition. Abramowski was convinced that, thanks to organic recording and bodily memory, all experienced moments accompany us also in mental form, constituting the subconscious background to our temperaments, thoughts, and emotions, thus affecting our behavior.

Źródła offers insight into the theoretical and experimental context of the concept of the subconscious as developed by Abramowski. Accordingly, aiming to underline the consequences of the division of mental contents into nameless and intellectual, Abramowski continues the considerations begun in *Teoria* regarding the creative role of attention in the process of cognition. He polemicizes not only with associationists such as James Sully, or the concept developed by Ribot (who regards the state of attention to be abnormal and

impossible to sustain), but also with William James. In Abramowski's view, none of these theories grasp the nature of attention, its role in the act of cognition, and the specificity of its operation, which consists in the transformation of analyzed material. Abramowski defends his concept by discussing questions related to perception, which were popular in the second half of the nineteenth century (such as the problem of sensory illusions), and by invoking the results of laboratory experiments conducted at the time by French, German, and American psychologists and physiologists. Writing about the subconscious, in turn, he refers to studies in psychopathology, popular at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that address issues such as multiple personality disorder, hysteria, hypnosis, and other, trance-like, "somnambulistic" states, based on theories developed by Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet. Primarily, however, Abramowski summarizes his own experiments, mainly ones concerning memory (he conducted them first in Geneva and Paris and then in Warsaw in a special laboratory he established in 1911). Thanks to his experiments regarding the process of recognizing forgotten contents, Abramowski has drawn attention to the phenomenon of "generic feelings." This concerns the sense of recognizing a certain word or image, facilitating identification of the broad "type" of forgotten content to the extent that it becomes possible to reject false suggestions made by the experimenter, but still not allowing one to recall that specific content in adequate, intellectual form. Abramowski believed that he managed to experimentally confirm the nameless character of memory contents; it is for this reason that he formulated the hypothesis that "generic feelings" of forgotten contents constitute the key to the understanding of both aesthetic and mystical experiences.³⁶

One characteristic feature of Abramowski's approach to the question of the subconscious is that he would seek a latent, positive potential in the psyche without focusing on developmental obstacles and pathologies, such as situations when subconscious content is dissociated to the extent that it causes dysfunctions in the individual. From this perspective, both aesthetic and mystical experience appear as enriching. As for the former, this issue first emerged in 1898 in the text "Co to jest sztuka?" (What is art?), where Abramowski argues that experiencing beauty is conditioned upon suspending attention, which facilitates coming into contact with the pre-intellectual aspect of perception. He would emphasize the circumstance that suspending attention entails going beyond the egotistic and possessive cognitive "I" that focuses on the struggle to survive; this is also the reason why experiencing beauty makes it easier to partake in a sense of fraternity. As for the mystical experience, Abramowski draws attention to the fact underscored by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* – namely, that prayer, especially mystical contemplation, replenishes internal energy, boosts cheerfulness, catalyzes "moral transformation," and increases the willingness to act.³⁷ Although Abramowski draws on James and studies of mysticism, referencing figures such as Teresa of Ávila or John of the Cross, he had the ambition to examine on his own the claims about real psychological results of contemplation. For this purpose, he studied prayer among religious people

³⁶ Abramowski refers to mystical experiences also as "religious" (probably following James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*), as is clearly visible in the title of chapter 11 of *Źródła*: "Stany religijne" (Religious states).

³⁷ Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy*, 285–86.

using the questionnaire method. Abramowski also followed in James's footsteps insofar as he regarded the existence of the subconscious as offering a psychological and scientific yet nonreductionist explanation of mystical experiences. He would attempt to elucidate contemplative states (both ordinary and deep) within his own theory. The concept of mind developed on the basis of amended theses from *Teoria* was supposed to account for the very possibility of entering different, contemplative states of consciousness and studying their characteristics.

Abramowski regarded contemplative focus as passive or agnostic, in contrast to the active intellect that involves conscious effort. The fact that people who experience mystical revelations have the sense that they commune with great truths yet cannot fully express that experience is explained by Abramowski in terms of the above-mentioned "generic feelings." Difficulties with intellectual categorization of information provided solely in nameless form is similar – he argues – to many other cases he encountered in the course of his studies of memory. According to the theory outlined in *Źródła*, prayer and deep mystical states activate latent memory, "cryptomnesia," which is available in the form of "generic feelings." The praying person would first encounter contents from their own subconscious.³⁸ Second, Abramowski argues, deep contemplative states reveal memories that belong to the entire species and even to the entire process of natural evolution. According to the principle of psychophysical parallelism, since evolution shapes the body, it must also leave a mental imprint in the subconscious. The "cryptomnesiac storm" that recalls the memory of a shared biological heritage – which occurs during mystical experience, Abramowski argues – would also explain the "pantheistic character of religious experience,"³⁹ that is, the sense, frequently described by mystics, that the world is contained in God and that all creatures form a single unity. At the same time, however, Abramowski would not limit himself to a psychological reduction of mystical experiences; ultimately – he argues, echoing James – the subconscious allows people to come into contact with nonhuman reality. This is because mystical experience can facilitate "retrograde experiencing," which goes back to the beginnings of evolution, "in the direction of the unknowable, the thing in itself."⁴⁰ This theme is further elaborated in "Przyczynek," where we read that mystics approach "the ultimate experience of the limit comprised by the 'thing in itself'; there, all divisions and dualisms (such as subject-object) cease. This is the reason why we can claim that mystical experiences are metaphysical, while the intuitive certainty they derive in this way are truths of the 'noumenal' reality and not the phenomenal one."⁴¹

An elaboration of the psychology of nameless states ultimately led Abramowski to reformulate the phenomenalism declared at the outset of *Teoria*. In the final chapter of *Źródła*, titled "Rzeczy pozaumysłowe" (Extra-intellectual objects), he polemicizes with the kind of understanding of the concept of noumenon that reduces it to a border concept

³⁸ Ibid., 271.

³⁹ Ibid., 289.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ E. Abramowski, *Przyczynek do psychologii myślenia logicznego*, in *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, 540.

or a “simple negation of the entirety of experience.”⁴² Abramowski came to regard the part of perception that is unknown to apperception as “the thing in itself” that manifests in experience. He emphasizes that the noumenon is experienced through the mediation of phenomena, hiding in the mental material under the threshold of intellect.⁴³ This position is close to the “philosophy of common sense,”⁴⁴ undermining the formerly declared lack of interest in the existence of “things in themselves” (in *Teoria*). Abramowski would argue at the same time that the forgotten “is in its pure form practically identical with the ‘thing in itself.’”⁴⁵ Studies on the subconscious finally led him to believe in the possibility of experimental or experiential metaphysics.⁴⁶ This was accompanied by the conviction that access to “things in themselves” is made more difficult by the progression of the process in which intuitive material is apperceptively elaborated; the more concept based human knowledge is, the more it loses contact with external reality. In this respect – as Abramowski argues in his 1917 lectures on experimental metaphysics titled *Metafizyka doświadczalna*⁴⁷ – Kant was right in his critique of metaphysical theories constructed on the basis of concepts.

⁴² Abramowski, *Źródła podświadomości i jej przejawy*, 165.

⁴³ Tying “phenomenon” to “the thing in itself” inclined Abramowski to introduce the concept of an “ontological phenomenon.” See *ibid.*, 301.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁴⁷ E. Abramowski, *Metafizyka doświadczalna*, in *Metafizyka doświadczalna i inne pisma*, 516–17.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF *THEASEIS* BY WINCENY LUTOSŁAWSKI

The intellectual path of the Polish philosopher Wincenty Lutosławski – born on June 6, 1863, in Warsaw – is not winding. It is very straight. The philosopher lived for 91 years, but from the turning point when, on April 9, 1885, while reading Plato as a student at Dorpat University, he suddenly experienced a spiritual shock, a philosophical conversion that he himself called a “discovery of the Self,” he became a Platonist, following the ancient Greek teachings about the soul, and the direction of his views was established once and for all. “I suddenly felt an eternal and immemorial spirit, completely different from the body, therefore immortal and indestructible, and therefore immaterial,” Lutosławski describes the breakthrough moment of “discovery of the Self” in his autobiography, *Jeden łatwy żywot* (One easy life).¹ From this experience at the age of 22, the philosopher held throughout his life to the indestructibility of the self, to the immortality of the soul, to the infinite development of each individual, and to the superiority of spirit over matter and knowledge over blind faith. Lutosławski called his own worldview spiritualism, using the English neologism “theasy,”² and avoided the phrase “a philosophical system” because it was associated with Hegel, whose idealism he battled. Lutosławski’s philosophy remained consistent and unchanged in its foundations until his death on December 28, 1954.

In the typescript of Lutosławski’s unpublished intimate diary, which is currently kept in the Archives of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Kraków together with most of his legacy, one can find a short fragment that should be treated as a testimony to the truth being understood by the philosopher in the spring of 1885: “I exist, I am a Self, that is a soul temporarily connected with the body. [...] Everything that is spiritual is within the Self and remains within it. [...] Death is a corporeal matter and does not concern the Self.” Lutosławski

¹ W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy żywot* (Warsaw: F. Hoesick, 1933; repr. Drozdowo: Muzeum Przyrody w Drozdowie, 2004), 109.

² “We have in neither English, French, Italian, nor Spanish, a simple term for what a German calls *Weltanschauung*, a Pole *Światopogląd* [...]. Such a term is increasingly needed as the interest in metaphysical speculation grows [...]. There is a rare Greek word [...] used by the philosopher Porphyry in his work *de Abstinentia* [...]. This word is *θεασις*, meaning ‘the act of vision,’ ‘or contemplation.’ It is akin to ‘theory’ and might well express ‘view of existence,’ ‘synthetical conception of the whole.’” See W. Lutosławski, *The Knowledge of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930; repr. 2015), 2–3.

discovered the immortality of the Self and identified the Self with the immortal soul. The term “self” itself does not appear explicitly in the literature of ancient Greece, but issues related to consciousness, mind, person, and finally the soul (Greek ψυχή / psychē) are alive in Greek literature and philosophy since Pythagoras of Samos (582–493 BCE). He was the first thinker to understand the superior role of the immaterial in the universe and to appreciate the importance of the individual soul in knowing reality. The Pythagoreans spread the belief in the journey of souls, called metempsychosis (μετεμψύχωσις / metempsychōsis), in Greece.

Until this sudden philosophical shift, Lutosławski remained a materialist in a positivist spirit. Until the age of 12, he was home schooled in his noble family estate in Drozdowo, surrounded by French teachers. Later he attended the German gymnasium in Mitau (modern-day Jelgava in Latvia). He abandoned the Catholic faith in which he was brought up. After graduation from high school, he entered the Riga Polytechnic, where he studied chemistry. In Riga, the multit talented Pole was noticed by Wilhelm Ostwald (the future Nobel Prize winner). Ostwald persuaded Wincenty to continue his chemistry curriculum at the famous Universitas Dorpatientis. In Dorpat (today’s Tartu, Estonia), besides chemistry, Lutosławski also began to study philosophy under the guidance of metaphysician Gustav Teichmüller (1832–1888). His “discovery of the Self” took place in this city famous for its intellectual atmosphere, often labeled the Heidelberg of the North in the nineteenth century, which would turn out to have a profound influence on Lutosławski’s intellectual path.³ From 1887, Lutosławski, a graduate in chemistry and philosophy, devoted himself to researching Plato. He continued his work in the largest libraries in Europe – in Berlin and Paris – but he valued the British Museum Library in London the most.

After twelve years of strenuous research, the Polish scientist published a work in English in London: *The Origin and Growth of Plato’s Logic* (1897), today considered a classic. The applied innovative method of studying the literary style, *stylometry*, along with the technique of logical comparisons led Lutosławski to an objective certainty on a level unprecedented in the history of research on the chronology of Plato’s works. “The greater consensus which exists today about the chronological sequence, itself considerably different from that just mentioned, can rightly be claimed as the achievement of the stylistic method.”⁴ The young, 34-year-old Wincenty was the first to determine the proper chronology of Plato’s works in *Plato’s Logic*. He proved several fundamental theses for the history of philosophy: (1) Plato’s last works were *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, *Critias*, and *Laws*; (2) Plato abandoned the theory of ideas in the writings of his late period, at least in the form in which it was exposed in the middle

³ Pierre Hadot, a researcher of ancient spirituality and author of *Philosophy as a Spiritual Exercise*, noted, “The ideas of revelation and inspiration have always played a great role in the Greek philosophical tradition.” The exercises called by Hadot “spiritual” (French: *exercices spirituels*) were related to the self in ancient philosophy, namely, as “an act of focusing the Self on itself, in which it discovers that it is not what it thought it is, that it does not connect with the objects with which it has become attached.” See P. Hadot, “Teologia, egzegeza, objawienie i Pismo w filozofii greckiej,” in Platon, *Eutyfron* (Warsaw: Fundacja Augusta hr. Cieszkowskiego, 2015), 299.

⁴ L. Brandwood, *The Chronology of Plato’s Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

dialogues of *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*; (3) in *Parmenides*, Plato began the reform of the teaching of ideas. The dialogue *Theaetetus* was written by Plato after *Phaedo* but before *Parmenides*.

Lutosławski's chronology is still considered unflawed and universally acclaimed in science, confirmed by computer at the end of the twentieth century.⁵ The very famous method of stylometry, largely based on statistics, is also used today in philologies other than classical and even in musicology. In order to examine the changes in Plato's style, Lutosławski created special tables (called *tables of peculiarities*) in *Plato's Logic* in which he transparently enumerated the peculiar words used by Plato in his various works (he analyzed twenty-two in total).⁶ The researcher from Poland distinguished various categories among these bizarre words: accidental, repeated, important, and very important. For example, according to his calculations, Plato's *Laws*, which has long been rightly considered his last work, contains 175 accidental, 176 repeated, 37 important, and 20 very important peculiarities.⁷ Lutosławski counted how many of the 500 characteristics of Plato's late style occurred in each dialogue. "By counting how many of the characteristics of later style occurred in each of the other dialogues Lutosławski thought he could determine their degree of stylistic affinity to the last group and so arrive at a chronological sequence."⁸

The understanding of Plato's philosophy after Lutosławski's speech and the international success of *Plato's Logic* – a success additionally confirmed by a second edition in 1905 – was never the same. Establishing the order of the works from the *Corpus Platonicum*, Lutosławski noticed that over the years Plato was moving away from the idealism that he himself had created in the middle period. His philosophical thought evolved toward the theory of the individual soul, inaugurated by Pythagoras of Samos. Plato began to understand the soul as a real being, then he came closer to the spiritual theories that henceforth echo in his works, such as the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. According to Lutosławski, Plato was to rethink the ontological status of ideas by turning to the theory of the soul, based on the feeling of the individual self. "Anybody who reads the *Laws* must notice the entire absence of the earlier theory of ideas as known from *Phaedo* and *Republic*. [...] It is very strange that in the whole discussion about the traces of the theory of ideas in the *Laws* nobody cared to distinguish between the earlier self-existing ideas and the ideas as known from the dialectical dialogues, where they appear as existing only in souls,"⁹ Lutosławski describes. Plato's answer in the middle period was that eternal ideas exist objectively in the world of ideas, which is different from this world. But the late Plato's answer was different: ideas exist only in souls.

The actual meaning of *Plato's Logic* was, according to the author himself, in proving that Plato's philosophy evolved from the theory of objective ideas to spiritualism, treating ideas as concepts produced by the Self. Plato's thought turned out to be dynamic

⁵ G. R. Ledger, *Re-counting Plato: A Computer Analysis of Plato's Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁶ W. Lutosławski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic: With an Account of Plato's Style and of the Chronology of His Writings* (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1905).

⁷ Lutosławski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, 491–516.

⁸ Brandwood, *The Chronology of Plato's Dialogues*, 124.

⁹ Lutosławski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, 491, 492.

and variable. There are many indications that Plato abandoned idealism and proclaimed individual souls as real substances in his late fifties and sixties. This transition in Plato's philosophy went unnoticed for twenty-three centuries of existence in the reception of Platonism, which was due to the lack of knowledge about the order in which the works of *Corpus Platonicum* were written. As Werner Jaeger recalls,

Such a result of philological research must have finally shaken Schleiermacher's chronology of Plato's writings because it turned out that many dialogues that he considered early due to their methodological issues and because they constituted an introduction to the building of Platonic philosophy actually come from the end-stage period of the philosopher's life. This gave rise to a far-reaching revision of views on the entirety of Plato's philosophy.¹⁰

Lutosławski lamented over time that his name was identified with the chronology of Plato. Early success overshadowed his other achievements. "I was branded for life as a researcher of Plato and the creator of stylometry. And I was under the illusion that I would gain more recognition – as an independent philosopher and thinker."¹¹

To satisfy the will of Lutosławski himself, who wanted to become noticed not only as a researcher of Plato but also as a creative thinker with his own worldview (*światopogląd*), I would like to present here another of Lutosławski's achievements, which is likely to find its own place in the history of philosophy: the classification of θεάσεις.¹² The classification of unified conceptions of reality, the "synthetic view of the whole of existence," proposed by Lutosławski describes six θεάσεις (which Lutosławski translates into English as "theasy," "theasies" in the plural). These views on the world are materialism, idealism, pantheism, spiritualism, mysticism, and messianism (the last being the final synthesis). The first attempt to describe this classification was probably an article by Lutosławski published in *Przegląd filozoficzny* (Philosophical journal) in Polish in 1928.¹³ The philosopher gave the fullest description of his original classification only two years later, in the English work *The Knowledge of Reality*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1930 and reissued in 2014 (first paperback edition).

The core of *The Knowledge of Reality* is the discussion of six philosophical θεάσεις. As the Cambridge publishers assure while introducing Lutosławski's work in the twenty-first century, "Numerous aspects of reality are discussed in an effort to form unified conception of it, from the material world through to abstract spirituality. This book will be of value to anyone with an interest in metaphysics and the development of

¹⁰ W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, tr. Marian Plezia and Henryk Bednarek (Warsaw: Fundacja Altheia, 2001), 636.

¹¹ Lutosławski, *Jeden latwy żywot*, 225.

¹² *θέσεις* is a rare Greek word used by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry of Tyre (234–305) in his work *de Abstinencia*. Porphyry wrote original works on a wide variety of topics, ranging from music to Homer to vegetarianism.

¹³ W. Lutosławski, "Klasyfikacja poglądów na świat," in *Przegląd filozoficzny* 1–2 (1927): 107–12. See W. Lutosławski, *Une classification des théasies: (conception de la réalité)* (Warsaw: W. Weryho, 1928).

philosophy.”¹⁴ In the preface to this work, Lutosławski states that he outlined the course of metaphysics, to which he remained faithful since the age of 22. He first presented this outline of metaphysics as an academic teacher at the University of Kazan between 1890 and 1893, then as a lecturer at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in 1899–1907, as well as at the universities of Lausanne and Geneva (1912–16) and at the legendary Paris Sorbonne (1919). A course of metaphysics in a similar form by Professor Lutosławski was also presented at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius (1919–29), where he lectured for the last decade of his academic career, before his retirement. According to Lutosławski, each view of the world is based on a generalization. The nature of this generalization depends on the cognizer and largely on the stage of development at which the individual finds himself. The Polish philosopher in his classification assumes that views of the world such as spiritualism, mysticism, or messianism are the highest levels of development of philosophical thought.

In turn, materialism, idealism, and pantheism, already well-known in ancient Greece, were considered lower levels in this classification.¹⁵ They were overcome in the past, but they constantly return in history, only by changing their form. Materialism is presented as the oldest, most natural but at the same time the shallowest and least true way of perceiving reality. A materialist is the type of person who values sense cognition the most. He only trusts what he sees, hears, feels, touches, or tastes. But the senses allow a person to know only what is material. No wonder, then, that a man of the senses, who knows the world only sensually, is a materialist. The oldest materialistic theory of existence was created by the first Greek philosopher, Thales of Miletus (624–546 BCE). He recognized that everything that existed in the universe was made of water, consisted of water, and returned to water. Other philosophers of nature after Thales should also be considered materialists, including Anaximander (610–546 BCE) and Anaximenes (585–525 BCE). A mature, materialistic system in ancient Greece was the atomism of Democritus of Abdera (460–370 BCE), being the view of the world in which everything was made of tiny particles of matter – atoms. The materialistic theory of being was recognized by the founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium (335–263 BCE). There were many continuators of materialism in modern Europe.

A reaction to materialism in Greece was the view of the world developed by Plato when he was around the age of 40. This view of the world of Plato’s from the middle period of his creativity is called idealism. “Idealism means recognition of ideas as the only reality. Plato was an idealist when he wrote the *Banquet*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*.”¹⁶ One of the arguments in favor of idealism is the identity of the concepts discovered by Plato: neither are two grains of sand the same, nor are two drops of water equal, but the very idea of identity or equality is the same in all minds. In Lutosławski’s classification, an idealist is

¹⁴ W. Lutosławski, *The Knowledge of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930; paperback repr. 2014).

¹⁵ Some few thinkers before Lutosławski attempted to deal with the problem of classification; see Ch. Renouvier, *Esquisse d’une classification systématique des doctrines philosophiques* (Paris: Au bureau de la Critique philosophique, 1885); E. Naville, *Les systèmes de philosophie: ou Les philosophies affirmatives* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1909).

¹⁶ Lutosławski, *The Knowledge of Reality*, 99.

a man of thoughts, not a man of senses only. He prioritizes understanding reality through concepts rather than the senses. “The man of ideas belongs to an altogether different type from the man of sensations. It commonly happens that if the former gets enthusiastic over his ideas, he proceeds to a false generalisation similar to that of the materialist, and seeks to explain everything by eternal ideas.”¹⁷ Plato in his middle period believed that this common idea must have a separate existence – it exists somewhere in another world. Only at a later stage of development did he come to the conclusion that ideas exist only in souls.¹⁸ Therefore, according to Lutosławski, Plato was the creator of two great views of the world: idealism and spiritualism.

Both of these historical views are clearly anti-materialist in their character, but they differ from each other. In Lutosławski’s criticism of Plato’s idealism, one can see a criticism of both Hegel and the declining Hegelianism in the second half of the nineteenth century. To the Polish spiritualist, the primacy of thought over matter, while ignoring other aspects of being, leads idealists of all times to choosing false paths. All idealism consequently leads to the denial of freedom and the creativity of the Self, to the subordination of the individual to the ideas. Life for an idealist can be summed up in a simple formula or doctrine, and all the varieties of Self do not need to be taken into account. Meanwhile, in the human Self, there are other elements existing next to ideas. Life cannot be summed up into a one-sided, universal, perfect philosophical concept. In addition, people absorbed in one idea are dangerous, according to the philosopher, because idealism such as the Platonic or Hegelian usually leads a person to blindness and political or religious fanaticism. The fanatic idealist is then able to kill and torture others, and even himself, so that his idea and his idea only prevails over others. A negative example of the consequences of idealism is Plato’s *Republic*, where the Greek philosopher proposed a totalitarian system affecting all spheres of life, including family and private life. The state would break family ties, separate children from their mothers, all in the name of the one idea dangerous in practice: perfect state organization.

Lutosławski points out that in the history of thought idealism is a reaction to materialism, but it also has a lot in common with it. Both of these views on the world were created in Greece in close proximity. Both of them reject religious dogmas and authorities. Neither of these views demands the existence of the immaterial, independent, and immortal soul that spiritualists talk about so much. The third view in Lutosławski’s classification, created in Greece after idealism but before spiritualism, is pantheism. A pantheist is a man who discovers in his own consciousness – apart from sensual evidence and ideas – feelings and emotions, to which he assigns a primary role. “Real existence for the pantheist is neither material nor ideal, but essential oneness,”¹⁹ explains Lutosławski. The pantheist feels the unity of the world of senses and thoughts, matter and intellect, and, going further, the unity of the entire universe. “Such men seek reality first in matter, then in ideas, finally in the unity of the Whole.”²⁰ The birthplace of pantheism is ancient Elea in southern Italy, where Xenophanes (580–480 BCE) and Parmenides (540–470

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See W. Lutosławski, *The World of Souls* (London: Dial Press, 1924).

¹⁹ Lutosławski, *The Knowledge of Reality*, 109.

²⁰ Ibid., 113.

BCE) were active – Parmenides, who was the teacher of Zeno of Elea (490–430 BCE). Pantheism is characterized by the belief that god, if there is one, is in everything, and everything that exists is god. In modern Europe, the pantheistic traditions were revived by Spinoza (1632–1677). Spinoza’s thought played a large role in the development of French and German pantheistic thought.

The fourth worldview is built on the existence of an immaterial self. It is spiritualism. “Many philosophers tried to make the Self the starting point and the basis of their worldview – and few managed to do so,”²¹ Lutosławski explained in his earlier work *Logika ogólna* (General logic), published before World War I in Kraków, the city where he spent the last twenty years of his life. As a spiritualist, he explained there the problem of the existence of the soul, which he identified with the self, that is, the sense of his own self: “My inner self is not my hand, not my eyes, not even my brain or my nerves, but it is only my will, my aspirations, which differentiate me from other personalities”; “My consciousness presents itself to me as it is, and this is the only example known to me of real existence, directly revealed to me.” Lutosławski consistently considered the fathers of philosophical spiritualism to be Pythagoras, Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, and Maine de Biran; the last he recognized to be the greatest metaphysician of the nineteenth century. Biran started out with materialistic physiology, but over time, thanks to meditation and his deep reading of Rousseau and Pascal, this inner-life-focused Frenchman came to philosophical conclusions quite contrasting to those of the materialists or pantheists. He discovered the spiritual dimension of reality. His philosophical psychology henceforth had an introspective character: investigation of himself.

With his *cogito* theory, Descartes occupied the most important place in the intellectual development of Maine de Biran. He understood the Cartesian *cogito* not only intellectually (*cogito, ergo sum* – I think, therefore I am) but also as a voluntarism (*volo, ergo sum* – I want, therefore I am). His philosophy was also greatly influenced by Pascal with his pre-existentialism, as well as by Leibniz’s monadology. Maine de Biran is considered a father of modern spiritualism, which became the national philosophy of France. His work has had an enormous influence on the development of French philosophy: Henri Bergson called him the greatest French metaphysician since Descartes and Malebranche, Jules Lachelier referred to him as the French Kant, and Royer-Collard called him simply “the master of us all.” From Ravaisson and Bergson through to the phenomenology of major figures such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Henry, and Paul Ricoeur, Biran’s influence is evident and acknowledged as a major contribution.²² Lutosławski referred to his own worldview, as mentioned at the beginning, as spiritualism, but at the same time he interchangeably used terms such as individualism, eleuterism, and sometimes also personalism. Personalism is an intellectual stance that emphasizes the importance of human persons, but personalism is also most of the time used to mean hominism (a human-centric stance and worldview).

²¹ W. Lutosławski, *Logika ogólna* (Kraków: Gebethner i Spółka, 1907), 18.

²² See Maine de Biran, *The Relationship between the Physical and the Moral in Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Ever since Lutosławski made the “discovery of the Self” on April 9, 1885, he invariably advocated that in nonmaterial consciousness, which cannot be destroyed, there is another important element in addition to sensory data, thoughts, and feelings: will. It is the will that individualizes a person because each will is individual, distinctive from others. The will of one’s self can come into conflict with other wills. It is also characteristic of the will that it can be systematically trained and developed indefinitely. The Polish thinker believed that the most important principle in the development of willpower was that all successful attempts increase willpower, while unsuccessful attempts may reduce, diminish, and in the end overpower it.²³ Lutosławski regarded as true that the four levels of human thought, framed into four synthetic *θεάσεις* – materialism, idealism, pantheism, and spiritualism – can be used to describe the entire history of intellect in humanity. Materialism came first in the history of mankind but was overcome by Plato’s more true idealism. The synthesis of these first two *θεάσεις* became the third great view of the world known in Greece as pantheism. Only by getting to know oneself, observing consciousness, examining one’s inner life, and exercising the will could it become possible to “discover the Self,” which gave the opportunity to rise to the fourth level of enlightenment. And this fourth level was spiritualism. Spiritualism was the discovery of the inner life, an attempt to transfer metaphysics from the outside to the inside of the world – from the land of objective ideas to the world of a subjective self that thinks, feels, and decides.

Spiritualists are people of will and action, aware of their own Self, which, according to them, should be identified with the soul. They have something to do with pantheists, that is, people of feeling, because inspirations and emotions are also important for spiritualists. Idealistic philosophy does not yet perceive many aspects of reality that are later recognized by spiritualism, associated more closely with the sphere of thought, as well as with the volitional side of man. According to Lutosławski, spiritualism is a more complete and truer view than idealism. Plato managed to obtain a spiritualist worldview after overcoming the errors of idealism. Spiritualism is – and it is worth emphasizing – the fruit of the mature years of Plato’s reflection, and idealism is only a temporary understanding of reality in the middle period of Plato’s development. “This conclusion of latest Platonism is Plato’s greatest discovery, far more important in philosophy than his discovery of the fixity of ideas,” says Lutosławski, and he explains,

He is the first idealist and has given rise to a long succession of idealistic philosophers from his own time to that of Hegel. But in his later stage of thought he anticipated that new course of philosophy which led Descartes two thousand years later to seek the origin of all knowledge in individual consciousness, and Kant to seek in the categories a priori forms of all appearances.²⁴

In the history of philosophy, however, spiritualism wrestles with pantheism. Their struggle leads to another synthesis: mysticism. Mysticism is grounded in “discovery

²³ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli* (Warsaw: Gebethner i Wolff, 1910).

²⁴ Lutosławski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato’s Logic*, 525.

of God.” Mysticism, according to Lutosławski, is the fifth *θέσις* initiated by Plotinus (205–270). The greatest philosophical authority for Plotinus was Plato, but the third century CE philosopher was also well acquainted with the works of Aristotle, as well as with commentaries on both great philosophers. For Plotinus, man is a divine being, and the most important task of philosophy is to make man fully aware of this supreme fact and to restore the individual’s true Self. The goal of human life is to rise to a mystical union with the One.²⁵ According to Lutosławski, the mysticism of Plotinus was primarily influenced by the late Plato, which for modern readers, aware of the chronology of the dialogues, becomes more noticeable and acknowledged. Mysticism as a view of the world gained its full expression only in Christian theology, especially for medieval mystics who experienced spiritual ecstasy.²⁶ “Genuine ecstasy is the union of two distinct beings, and all the Christian mystics insist on that aspect of their ecstasy. Therefore mysticism, though apparently resembling pantheism in the conception of the perfect unity of the universe, establishes this unity in a living personal God who has created the universe and is distinct from all creation.”²⁷

The sixth and final view of the world in Lutosławski’s classification is messianism. It is a view that highlights the national elements of the self, showing the relationship between self-similar souls. “The Messianist is the man of active love and as the most intimate groups of souls are called nations, the active love of the Messianist becomes national consciousness,”²⁸ explains Lutosławski. If we assume that spiritualism arises from the discovery of the Self and mysticism from the discovery of God, then messianism is unquestionably connected with “the discovery of the nation.”²⁹ The messianic worldview was created only in modern times; it exposes the awakening of national consciousness, especially visible in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Lutosławski, it is the “final synthesis.” Messianism takes what is most important from all the *θέσεις*. However, messianism is not just a theoretical generalization; it requires action. “Messianism has been called a philosophy of action; and indeed it has more immediate applications to practical life than have the great philosophies which have preceded Polish national thought – materialism, idealism, pantheism, spiritualism and mysticism,” Lutosławski explains in *The Knowledge of Reality* and adds, “It is not a merely theoretical doctrine which can easily be translated from one language into another, but it is chiefly a peculiar attitude towards life as a whole, adopted by many individuals who are united in a common endeavor.”³⁰

Lutosławski saw his great predecessor in Plato, whom he interpreted not idealistically but spiritually. Above all, however, he associated his worldview with the Polish messianists of the nineteenth century: August Cieszkowski (1814–1894), Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849), and Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859). He considered Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński (1776–1853) to be the father of Polish messianism, but he

²⁵ P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard* (Paris: Plon, 1963).

²⁶ See W. Lutosławski, *L’extase mystique* (Paris: Hermann, 1937).

²⁷ Lutosławski, *The Knowledge of Reality*, 133.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

argued with his philosophy, rejecting the content and form of Wroński's most important works. Writing about messianism, Lutosławski tried to prove that this was a view of the world dear to Poles; he often called messianism "the Polish national worldview." Messianism assigns to both individuals and nations a mission toward humanity. At the same time, messianism has a universal and global meaning. The goal of the messianist becomes the transformation of political and social relations in such a way that they become the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth, ensure peace and harmony, and also serve the union of humanity. "If the application of metaphysics, or the knowledge of Reality, to social and political activity became as universally recognized as the application of mathematics to practical engineering, then the progress towards the goal would gain immensely in speed and efficiency."³¹

³¹ Ibid., 190.

AESTHETIC EMANCIPATION IN THE ESSAY “ARIEL” BY JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

The essay “Ariel” by José Enrique Rodó – an Uruguayan essayist and philosopher, who developed the first original Latin American ideology – is one of the key texts in the history of Latin American philosophy. It was published in 1900 in 700 copies by the Dornaleche y Reyes publishing house, and subsequent editions followed rather quickly, given the Latin American standards in this area. Still, two decades had to pass before it was made available across the continent, finally becoming a huge success. Widely read and commented upon, it made its way into high school and university curricula, laying the foundations for modernizing South America in accordance with the principles of the ideological movement called *arielismo*. Today, it is mainly interpreted as a text about Latin American identity since it narrates the story of both Americas using the figures of Ariel and Caliban from William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Ernest Renan’s *Caliban: Suite de “La Tempête”* as well as answering crucial and still relevant questions about issues such as the place of aesthetic experience in social reality.

Although this essay is often considered to represent the conservative tradition – one that is antidemocratic and anti-Latin-American insofar as Rodó would seek to establish the cultural framework of his community by drawing on the heritage of ancient Greece and Christianity – it should be subjected to new, more inspiring interpretations. A crucial source for studies of identity, “Ariel” can be read as an outline of an emancipatory project, which should not be surprising if one takes into account that Rodó’s greatest hero – in the sense given to this term by Thomas Carlyle – was Simón Bolívar, El Libertador.

Rodó’s project is emancipatory in many respects: politically, because it proposes an approach different from those advocated by previous thinkers, who would focus predominantly on gaining independence; socially, by postulating liberation from the influence of North America; and aesthetically, which seems to be the project’s most modern aspect from today’s perspective.

FREE TIME IN THE SERVICE OF AESTHETICS

In his interpretation of the history of culture, Rodó considers the Greco-Roman tradition to be the crucial stage in its formation. For this reason, he extracted elements from this period that he considered useful for his own project. One such fundamental figure is

that of the classical *otium*, which he argues should be revived today. “Noble leisure,” Rodó claims, “was the investment of time that they [the ancients] expressed as a superior mode of life opposed to commercial enterprise.”¹ Defining *otium* in this way reveals his intention to isolate the kind of space for human existence that would be thoroughly separated from economic processes, which he viewed as closely and necessarily connected with specific, utilitarian purposes. The economic context in turn leads to the question of work – an important element in Rodó’s analyses. As he argues, *otium* plays a function similar to that of “free play” discussed by Jacques Rancière, who follows in the footsteps of Immanuel Kant. “Play’s freedom,” Rancière writes, “is contrasted to the servitude of work.”² Therefore, those who practice *otium* liberate themselves from the burden of work. On the other hand, however, Rodó emphasizes that the condition of the modern subject – defined through work – does not necessarily entail rejecting the internal freedom facilitated by devotion to *otium*. “Even within material servitude,” he concludes, “the inner self, the self of reason and sentiment, may remain free. Do not, then, use the excuse of commitment to work or responsibilities to justify the enslavement of your spirit.”³ Notably, the terms that Rodó employs directly invoke the figure of the classical slave, who becomes here a metaphor of Latin American colonized subjects. Free time and the internal emancipation it entails can liberate people from all ties that bind their reason. This project seems to embrace freeing Latin America from the fetters of North America, which colonizes the former’s minds by infecting them with *nordomanía* – a love for the North.

Assuming that the ancients considered free time to consist in “the wise use of leisure, which they held as the highest example of rational life – thought freed from any ignoble yoke,”⁴ Rodó appears to be just one step away from developing the fundamental thesis of his project. Free time becomes the space where beauty can be admired disinterestedly – that is, in a way that never seeks other goals besides contemplation itself. Although Rodó refers to Kant’s moral theory and not the aesthetic one, it seems that the concept of purposiveness without purpose, which originates in the latter, does echo strongly here.

Considering aesthetic issues as central problems for creating a new community – since “Ariel” directly addresses how “this America we dream of”⁵ is supposed to look – Rodó is compelled to lay the foundations for an aesthetic theory that would be based on the concept of “good taste,” which he defines as the ability to differentiate beauty from ugliness. As he argues, however, this does not concern merely care for external aspects:

Cultivating good taste does not only mean perfecting an external form for culture, developing artistic ability, and nurturing with supreme delicacy an elegance in civilization. Good taste is also “judgment’s firm reign.” Benjamin-Constant Martha has defined good taste as a second consciousness that orients us and returns us to the path when the first fades or vacillates.⁶

¹ J. E. Rodó, *Ariel*, trans. M. S. Peden (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 47.

² J. Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. S. Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 31.

³ Rodó, *Ariel*, 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

By referencing Martha, Rodó suggests that aesthetic consciousness is a second consciousness that constitutes an alternative to reason. If so, “beauty and taste (just like the ability to judge what is beautiful) expand the perspective on the world, broadening the horizons of reason and reinforcing morality.”⁷ Good taste therefore becomes a tool of emancipation since it can liberate us from the hegemony of reason, which is possible because aesthetic judgement emerges as another form of cognition, one that is distinct from reason.

AESTHETICS IN THE SERVICE OF MORALITY

Following in the footsteps of Plato, Rodó acknowledges the connection between the good and the beautiful. Consequently, his project combines the fields of ethics and aesthetics, opening a shared space of care. One particularly stimulating element of this theory is not so much the attempt to consolidate morality but rather the underlying assumption made by Rodó with regard to anthropology. The human subject, he argues, is naturally inclined toward the beautiful. It is this predisposition that Rodó emphasizes without developing a similar thesis about the existence of an analogous inclination toward the good. In this light, the aesthetic predisposition emerges as primary and as such needs to be utilized in order to help humanity develop an ethical sense. Although the categorical imperative provides sufficient reason to do good, it can be reinforced with beauty, providing additional justification of morally laudable deeds. Still, as Rodó stresses, “Even if love and appreciation of beauty did not respond to some essential need in rational man, or if they were not in themselves deserving of cultivation, a higher morality would dictate a culture of aesthetics simply in the best interest of society.”⁸

It is only by combining aesthetic and ethical issues that one can formulate the question of aesthetics as primary for the community. Rodó often points to the natural and inseparable connection between these two domains, which in his view cannot be considered separately. It seems that this could lead toward the aestheticization of virtue, which may have been inspired by the classical tradition. In Rodó’s view, virtue is a divine art and the object of aesthetic contemplation: “He who demands that good and truth be expressed with sternness and severity is a treacherous friend to truth and good. Virtue is also a form of art – a divine art: she smiles upon her daughters, the Graces.”⁹ On the other hand, it is possible to observe the opposite tendency – namely, the one to make aesthetics moral by arguing that the beautiful must lead to the good. Although it is not true that the two, beauty and the good, are always identical, the ability to make sound aesthetic judgments helps one to arrive at appropriate moral conclusions. It is therefore clear that, in Rodó’s view, efforts to develop an aesthetic taste must necessarily foster the ethical attitude. Lack of good taste would thus essentially limit one’s ability to decide what is morally right. However, this does not work the other way round, as is clearly confirmed by the ascetic and Puritan traditions. In this perspective, aesthetic values ultimately emerge as ethical.

⁷ J. Di Marco, “*Ariel* y la formación estética,” *Diálogos* 10, no. 1 (2006): 18 (all translations by the author of this article unless otherwise noted).

⁸ Rodó, *Ariel*, 49.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Invoking Kant, the Uruguayan thinker further elaborates his interpretation:

As humanity advances, moral law will increasingly be considered as an aesthetic of conduct. [...] When symbolizing his ethic, Kant, in Stoic severity, could say, "I dreamt and thought that life was beauty, / I woke and saw that life was duty." He overlooked, however, the fact that if duty is the supreme reality, the object of his dream is contained within it, because with the clear vision of goodness, awareness of duty will give him the satisfaction of beauty.¹⁰

In this way, Rodó liberates aesthetic experience, establishing an "aesthetic of conduct," which consists in deriving pleasure from the harmony that accompanies morally right choices. As a result, it becomes possible to contemplate beauty without contemplating art. Rodó establishes an aesthetics of the everyday, rescuing the aesthetic experience from the confines of gallery space, making it autonomous from the contemplation of artworks, and postulating that this experience become shared by all existing subjects. Ultimately then, aesthetic experience becomes commonplace and universal.

AESTHETICS IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY

According to Rodó, if the relation between aesthetics and ethics concerns everyone, it must also affect entire societies. As he notes, the separation of these two spheres always leads to distortions, as in the case of North America. Lack of internal freedom guaranteed by *otium* becomes a problem for all communities that place the aesthetic sphere outside their scope of interest. "Emerson and Poe, in that situation [in North American culture], are like plants cruelly uprooted from their natural soil by the spasms of a geologic catastrophe."¹¹ Were this sphere characterized by actual internal freedom, it would be capable of outlining a space where art would be possible. If there is a necessary relationship between aesthetics and ethics, North American society sentences itself to ethical feebleness and forgoes the aesthetic of conduct.

As part of his project, Rodó wishes to contrast the North American model with Latin American society. Accordingly, he must strengthen the position of artists and demonstrate that art and aesthetic experience are indispensable for the liberation of any community. Rodó achieves the former goal by developing the figure of the elite. The new aristocracy must be one of the spirit insofar as the combination of ethics and aesthetics necessitates that its representatives lead the way not only in terms of virtue but also in the aesthetic sphere, perhaps even by creating it. Additionally, the elite must develop creative interpretations of ideas imported from the West, acting not as a meritocratic ruling class that possesses knowledge, as has been customarily assumed, but rather as a group of artists taking spiritual leadership in the community, primarily with regard to aesthetic questions, not just ethical ones. Just as Plato's city-state was supposed to be ruled by a philosopher king, Rodó's community should be governed by an artist king.

¹⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹¹ Ibid., 81.

In this aspect of his project, the Uruguayan essayist aptly identifies one problem that emerges in the context of art in modern culture. Modernist artists changed their place in society by becoming doubly excluded. On the one hand, the community marginalized them, limiting their influence in political life, but on the other, they distanced themselves from society, becoming excluded from the economic world, just like Rodó himself. He wished to stop this process, not only by offering the artists a new place in society in an attempt to reintroduce them as an essential component of social life, but also by making the far more radical gesture of restoring meaning to art itself. In his project, art is not art for art's sake, as advocated by Rubén Darío, another Latin American modernist, but becomes a crucial element in social and political life. If we accept the interpretation that the task of the new aristocracy of the spirit is to creatively interpret imported ideas, while the new aristocrats themselves should be artists, it turns out that art – the realization of their creative interpretations – is actually the basis for developing both a new community and a new, free subjectivity.

AESTHETIC EDUCATION

In order to defy the North American model of life, Rodó argues, it is paramount to restore the artists' place in society and demonstrate that aesthetic experience is an important element of collective life – one that actually has the power to liberate communities. The second of these two goals could be realized by implementing the idea of aesthetic education. It should be universal and geared toward developing good taste, which is crucial for the proper formation of the aesthetic sense. The proposed interpretation of the relationship between aesthetics and ethics assumes that the two should always go hand in hand. It is one of the few points in Rodó's project that specifically indicates the manner of introducing postulated changes. As he claims, universal aesthetic education is the direct responsibility of the state, which should wield the tools necessary to provide every citizen with similar conditions for personal growth.

Understood in this way, education would contribute to a multifaceted perfection of subjects, thus helping to achieve one of the more important goals of Rodó's project: to educate multidimensional individuals whose activity would not be limited to utilizing just a portion of their potential, as is the case in the capitalist society of North America, where specialization of labor is gaining significance. "Aesthetic education has a pragmatic meaning because it shapes an integral and nonexcluding personality, at the same time curbing utilitarianism."¹² Rodó saw aesthetic education as a specific path that enriches and liberates the subject. As the expected product of aesthetic education, good taste allows one to derive pleasure from standing in the presence of beauty. This kind of pleasure constitutes a value in itself and has no purpose, which places it outside the logic of capitalism. First and foremost, however, aesthetic education is a mode of self-perfection. "Modernity identifies two possibilities: the first, which is progressive and development oriented, involves molding humans in strictly technological and scientific terms, while

¹² Di Marco, "Ariel y la formación estética," 19.

the second is based predominantly on cultural aspects (as well as aesthetic, political, or religious)."¹³ Rodó opted for the latter.

Upbringing constitutes not only an obvious means of opposing certain liberal patterns imported from North America but also the condition for the emergence of all aspects discussed above. Contrary to widespread opinions about Rodó's text, it is in fact grounded in social and economic reality. He was aware that a lack of appropriate steps taken by the state – such as failure to introduce universal education – could cause his postulates to be unfeasible. As an academic, he was involved in educational activities throughout most of his life. Before he set off to Europe, he was escorted by crowds of young people, making him the perfect example of the idea that only active engagement in educating young Latin Americans can bring about the expected change. Indeed, all representatives of *arielismo* would share this sentiment.

Were one to seek those elements in Rodó's project that would lend credence to the actual development of new elites, they would have to be universal education and aesthetic education. This is where the emancipatory potential of his thought is revealed. Rodó promoted equal access to art and aesthetic experience in Latin American society. Developing the aristocracy of the spirit is merely a consequence of guaranteeing equal access to art. Rodó explicitly addresses this in a passage where he defines the new democratic equality as "a future equality gained by ascent to a common standard of culture."¹⁴ In this light, Rodó's project emerges as thoroughly humanistic since he wishes to form a kind of community where art would not only become the object of special care but would also be shared by all of its members. Still, yet another form of emancipation is made possible here because aesthetic experience is supposed to be not only more frequent but also guaranteed – as it were – to all members of the community since all of them would receive the kind of education that helps to formulate aesthetic judgments. Consequently, a common ground for agreement would be prepared for all members of society, laying the foundations for an entirely new community.

A NEW COMMUNITY OF SENSE

Rodó perceives democracy as a synonym of the aristocracy of the spirit, while the aristocratic spirit itself would be developed by practicing good taste as well as cultivating beauty and refinement. Democracy should be reevaluated and oriented toward citizens who think, work, and feel like artists (artists of their own self and artists of the society: every subject as an ideal; society as a harmonious entity). Would this kind of democracy be inclusive? Could it be expanded to the entire community?¹⁵

These questions, posed by one scholar of Rodó's work, indirectly enquire about the real emancipatory potential of his project. Framed in this way, the question inclines one to broaden the scope of discussed issues and examine how the domain of the political is modified as part of the project outlined in "Ariel."

¹³ D. Scavino, "El Mesías de Rodó o la figura de una modernidad alternativa," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 39, no. 77 (2013): 237.

¹⁴ Rodó, *Ariel*, 67.

¹⁵ Di Marco, "Ariel y la formación estética," 23.

Jacques Rancière – referred to above due to his interpretations of Kant and Schiller, whose thought is so visible in Rodó’s work – aims to demonstrate that the field of aesthetics is in fact thoroughly political. Moreover, he argues, separating the two is outdated and misleading because these spheres permeate: actually, the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics are not that far from each other. This claim invites the conjecture (which Rodó would probably share) that there also exists an aesthetics of ethics, insofar as these two domains are inseparable within his theory.

Although Rodó does not refer directly to the division into matter and form employed by Rancière – who demonstrates how Kant and Schiller contributed to the great aesthetic revolution, which has mobilized free play and appearance to abolish the old distribution of the sensible – both thinkers arrive at similar conclusions. By taking their cue from German philosophers (as Rancière does) or developing original reflection (like Rodó), both authors establish the aesthetic experience as the most egalitarian. Rodó’s proposition also echoes the revolutionary aspect of interpretations developed by Rancière: “The aesthetic suspension of the supremacy of form over matter and of activity over passivity makes itself thus into the principle of a more profound revolution, a revolution of sensible existence itself and no longer only of the forms of State.”¹⁶

Although this passage refers to an entirely different historical and social reality, it does seem to describe the consequences arising from “Ariel.” First of all, Rancière makes it clear that the emancipation brought along by eighteenth-century aesthetic theories stands in opposition to the program of political liberation implicated by the Enlightenment. Additionally, he emphasizes that actual revolution (or real emancipation) can occur only at the level of deeper structures of subjectivity. This is also the perspective assumed by Rodó, who noted the insufficiency of the liberation achieved so far by Latin American communities. Liberation of states, which gave rise to independent republics, does not necessarily lead to personal emancipation. Subjugation still remains a discernible feature of Latin American subjectivity. Many Latin American thinkers and politicians have drawn attention to this problem. One figure who explicitly voiced this was the writer, thinker, and political activist Esteban Echevarría. Unlike Rodó, however, none of these critics could suggest a complex solution:

Some [politicians] wanted nothing more than to reinstate the Spanish order without Spain; others, when already in power, argued that Latin Americans should be first groomed for freedom and that dictatorship is necessary to complete this process. In 1810, Echevarría told the people that they have become sovereign and were no longer limited by anything. However, it was only a means of winning their support. As it soon turned out, they were not prepared to exercise their freedom since they lacked civic and cultural competences. In the end, “Enlightenment” emancipators could not come up with a different solution than tyranny.¹⁷

¹⁶ J. Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 32.

¹⁷ L. Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1976), 98.

In *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, Rancière directly connects aesthetic revolution with freedom and emancipation:

The scenario depicted by aesthetic revolution is one that proposes to transform aesthetics' suspension of the relations of domination into the generative principle for a world without domination. This proposition entails an opposition between two types of revolution: against political revolution *qua* revolution of State in which the separation between two humanities is *de facto* renewed, it asserts revolution *qua* formation of a community of sense [*sentir*].¹⁸

The matter outlined in the above passages is inspiring because it allows us to regard Rodó's project as an attempt to create a new community of sense. Aesthetic education was supposed to contribute to this goal. At the same time, he would try to separate a field for egalitarian dialogue in the sphere of art, where it is not common to encounter such potential.

In Rodó's view, free human beings differ from slaves insofar as they have the time necessary to engage with matters of art. What arises from this approach is not that the sphere of freedom has moved from politics to aesthetics but that – on the contrary – politics has been transported into the domain of aesthetics. In light of the above analyses, it becomes possible to assume that this is the kind of shift that Rodó was after. As a matter of fact, he would not speak directly about the ways in which new Latin American subjects could participate in the political life of the community. He nevertheless devoted a lot of space to analyses of their activity in the fields of art and aesthetic experience. If free citizens have been capable, up to this point, of taking part in public discussions on issues related to the community, free subjects would now be characterized by having the time to speak out on matters of art. Thus, the center of gravity in Rodó's project is shifted as classically understood politics moves into the sphere of aesthetics, which becomes the space where real democratic equality can be realized fully and freely.

¹⁸ J. Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, 36–37.

THE APOCALYPTIC DEVIANCE

1

Madness is an intriguing topic. And nothing more. The attempt to grasp its essence and mechanisms turns impellent only when one perceives its proximity and it is regarded as a real risk. Otherwise, a rational – distant, cold, and possibly unprejudicial – analysis of madness lacks passion and turns into a purely intellectual amusement. Man is indeed unable to descend into madness voluntarily, as if coercion were one of the most prominent features of that enigmatic state of mind. In order to study madness properly, it seems that one should have already found the difficult equilibrium between urgency and detachment that by its nature the investigated object cannot grant.

Italian culture of the second half of the twentieth century has been considerably influenced by the ideological and psychiatric debate concerning the ontological status of madness, its social or natural origins, the way it should be managed, the political function of asylum and of the very sciences of the psyche, and, finally, the relationship between madness, law, and civil rights.¹ Italy was indeed the first country to abolish the asylum. Norbert Bobbio claimed that Law 180 from 1978, thanks to which – at least from the legislator’s perspective – madness ceased to be regarded as a public danger, represented the only true reform that has ever occurred in Italy.²

The main idea on which the reform was grounded rested on the ideological supposition according to which madness cannot be either comprehended or healed until the bodies of madmen are kept subdued and prevented from showing who they truly are. Even if it was established in order to separate madmen from criminals and the poor, the asylum was not a therapeutic institution but merely a repressive one. Moreover, the very existence of the asylum hindered psychiatrists from raising the question of whether madness was a disease or just an always possible human condition. Until both madness and the asylum were regarded politically – as a threat to the social order and as a separate place in which to lock up those who basically do not play by the current social rules – and laws, sciences, and institutions were all employed as tools for political goals, madness could only remain unthinkable.

¹ M. Donnelly, *The Politics of Mental Health in Italy* (London: Routledge, 1992), 29; D. Lasagno, *Oltre l’istituzione. Crisi e riforma dell’assistenza psichiatrica a Torino e in Italia* (Turin: Ledizioni, 2012); V. Babini, *Liberi tutti. Manicomi e psichiatri in Italia: una storia del Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), 205–6; D. Forgacs, *Italy’s Margin. Social Exclusion and Nation Formation since 1861* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 256.

² J. Foot, *La “Repubblica dei matti”. Franco Basaglia e la psichiatria radice in Italia, 1961–1978* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2014), 283.

According to Franco Basaglia, the “psychiatrist-philosopher” who more than any other fought, through both his writing and his actions, for the liberation of madmen from the repressive chains of the asylum, the relationship between the patient and the psychiatrist one finds in an institution replicates the social relation of power between the hegemonic class and the oppressed. The reform that shut down the asylum was thus grounded in the sincerely Marxist interpretation of social life and history. Basaglia regarded both the former and the latter as spaces in which the clash between classes takes place. Consequently, he understood the very category of madness – meant as a deviation from the norm – as nothing more than another way to hinder the oppressed from gaining freedom and from abolishing an unjust social system, which basically identified deviance with disobedience. In itself – that is, when analyzed without referring it to a political-economic discourse – madness does not exist, or it might be something totally different and incomparable to what we now think of it.³ Accordingly, psychiatry as a science should be considered a political laboratory in which discourses about madness, having no reference in reality, both bare and utopian, are fabricated in such a way that the hegemonic class can retain the ability to punish both voluntary and involuntary transgressors of the order it imposes by excluding them from the norm that psychiatry itself establishes.⁴ Finally, according to Basaglia, the asylum was used as a social dump into which those who could not be exploited by the system were systematically put away. The asylum thus functioned as a tool for the defense of the “healthy” from the “ill,” of the strong from the weak, of the normal from the deviant. Yet given that nobody is ontologically excluded from the risk of madness, poverty, and exclusion – given that deviance is intrinsic to the norm – Basaglia was sure that only the needs of the latter are universal.

Thus, if madness falls into the realm of the political struggle and functions as one among the linguistic tools the power employs in order to perpetuate itself, the preliminary therapeutic action has to be political rather than technical or scientific. The goal of politics, indeed, should not be to produce and maintain the exclusion but, quite the contrary, to generate inclusion within a broader order. The fact that the state did not pursue its own strengthening through inclusion in social life of as many citizens as possible testifies to the fact that its final aim was not even political but merely economic and private: to potentiate the dominion of capitalism and of the hegemonic class.

By discovering the political status of madness (an individual is normal as long as she behaves according to the rules established by the hegemonic class, as long as she works and contributes to the stability of the social order,⁵ as long as she can be used), Basaglia intended to rethink mental health by grounding the reflection in the fact that the original human condition is not one of health and normality (man is always both sick and healthy, deviant and normal), and the absolutization of one pole – the fragmentation of men – is essentially what makes them, as social animals, sick. The binary division rooted in opposite categories is what makes society unhealthy and split into antagonist classes. The fact that there is a social class ontologically unable to fight – the inoperative class of

³ F. Basaglia, *Conferenze brasiliane* (Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2000), 10.

⁴ F. Basaglia, *L'utopia della realtà*, ed. F. Ongaro Basaglia, intro. M. G. Giannichedda (Turin: Einaudi, 2005), 147; P. A. Rovatti, “A cavallo di un muretto. Note su follia e filosofia,” *aut aut*, no. 285–286 (1998): 5–14.

⁵ Basaglia, *L'utopia della realtà*, 278 and 286.

madmen – unveils both the contradiction of the social order and its essence. In a healthy society, there will be no black sheep, and human value will be able to transcend the polarizing categories at the base of modern societies. Madness is, ultimately, a different experience one cannot judge according to an inherited binary classification.

Paradoxically, the thinker who more than many others had concretely fought for the emancipation of madmen and for their chance to become masters of their own different experience ultimately could not but come to the conclusion that madness – being a condition without substance – is irrelevant. It is politics – the sphere of life devoted to the assignment of substance and identity to persons and actions – that makes it relevant. If so, then the political use of madness, which we find both in the institutional violence of the state and in the antipsychiatric movement, is incapable of aiming at the comprehension and cure of madness: madness is always exploited for rational goals, be they revolutionary or conservative.

2

A different approach to the topic was advanced in the same years by Ernesto de Martino and, as far as I know, has not received due attention on the part of political philosophers. De Martino incorporated his analysis of madness into his investigation into cultural apocalypses, to which he devoted the last years of his life. Having previously studied the permanence of pagan mourning rituals deep into the Christian era, de Martino realized that hegemonic culture is unable to impose its practices onto the oppressed and to establish a uniform pattern of behavior: while Christianizing the old, pagan mourning ritual, that is, while changing its semantics, Christianity remained incapable of eradicating a practice that was not compatible with the new ideology of death, according to which death has already been defeated by the incarnation of Christ⁶ and is not an event anymore but merely some kind of sleep. What then persisted at the core of the old, pagan practice, even though it may have been concealed in Christian formulas? Is it possible that all parts of the world that underwent Christianization never understood or had faith in the irruptive novelty of the Christian message?

In order to sketch an answer to this question, we have to broaden the field of inquiry. According to de Martino, the residual spirit of the ancient mourning ritual can also be found in festive institutions of the great historical religions, which tended to iterate periodically the end of the world by referring it to the myth of cosmic regeneration; in modern secularized apocalypses; in the psychopathological apocalypses and the subjective, “deviant” experience of the end of the world. The merely exterior, semantic resemblance between such a heterogeneous group of apocalypses – all refer to the great image of the end of the world – is traced back to a principle.⁷ Man experiences the end of the world when he lacks the forces to transcend the actual condition, and the ethical tension falls apart. While nature is lazy and loves cyclicity and repetition,⁸ men cannot constantly repeat their movements. Man is a transcending animal, and his nature coincides with the

⁶ E. de Martino, *Furore Simbolo Valore* (Milan: il Saggiatore, 2013), 150–51.

⁷ E. de Martino, “Apocalissi culturali e apocalissi psicopatologiche,” *Nuovi Argomenti*, no. 69–71 (1964): 105–41; 113.

⁸ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo. Contributo all'analisi delle apocalissi culturali*, ed. C. Gallini, intro. C. Gallini and M. Massenzio (Turin: Einaudi, 2002), 224.

“transcending ethos.”⁹ This is the reason why he is obliged to go beyond pure naturalness and live as a cultural animal, to detach himself from nature through operativity yet without losing the original bond with it through the total artificialization of social life.¹⁰ Madness, like other forms of apocalypses, appears to be an exasperation either of naturalness or of artificiality: either as a return to the state of nature, where man has never been, or as a total separation from it, which gives birth to a social life no longer regulated by natural necessities.¹¹ Man constantly faces two apocalyptic deviances: the first one consists in the fact that a culture or a person actually believes in the imminent end of the world, stops operating, producing material and spiritual goods, and devolves to the repetitive laziness that characterizes nature; the second one, on the contrary, consists in the fact that a culture feels absolutely safe from ending and keeps on moving without questioning its own meaning and direction. Man’s world is always ending, and man is always called to start his world anew by transcending the end he continuously faces: the only time man knows is the end-time, and the only way out of the end-time – the only way to reiterate it, renew it, and turn it into “normal” time; to transcend the Kairos into the Kronos – is operativity. In other words, the apocalyptic representations of the end of the world that we find in myth, the religious imagination, and psychopathological imaginary are substantially unreal, and yet they convey a human need:

Man passes from one world to another because he is the moral energy that survives the catastrophes of his worlds by always regenerating new ones. But this energy involves the risk of collapse, the experience of the end of *the* world (not of *a* world): such an experience, which points at the end of being, depersonalization, the loss of the world, the crisis of presence, is normally hidden in the sense that it always has to be hidden anew, and such a concealment is cultural life itself. The cultural effort is merely able to reflect the necessity of this negative moment, of this eccentricity that madness lays bare.¹²

De Martino interprets both madness and politics, culture and philosophy, institutions (as mourning rituals) and the law starting from praxis – the fatherland of human operativity – and from the kairological risk of the collapse of praxis. Man does not simply live in the world; he inhabits the world made of his own actions and of the coherent and readable meanings his community attributes to them. Man is a being called to produce the domesticity of his world and to make it knowable and familiar. In de Martino’s vocabulary, the apocalypse is the common name that expresses the fear of losing the domesticity of the world: of becoming strangers in the cosmos, incapable of action, and

⁹ A. Buttitta, *Ernesto de Martino e la fine del mondo*, in *Dell’apocalisse. Antropologia e psicopatologia in Ernesto de Martino*, ed. B. Baldaconi and P. Di Lucchio (Naples: Guida, 2005), 57–66.

¹⁰ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 624–25.

¹¹ According to de Martino, every human society needs a sexual pedagogy (norms, taboos, prohibitions) because sexuality is our bond with nature. E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 624–25.

¹² *Ibid.*, 631 (my translation).

of starting to “live” in the kairological inoperativeness in which man is actually similar to animals and plants.¹³

Given that the apocalypse teaches man that his world is never secure from such risks, it can turn useful, and, when its cultural function is properly understood and the emotional energy it releases is governed, it does not share pathological features, even if every form of apocalypse can turn deviant in any moment of time. To make the apocalypse normal – to normalize the fear without eliminating it – is the cultural and philosophical work man has to carry out.

3

Man lives to do something. His life is not just simply living that cannot end. His being is at one with the praxis by the means of which he makes the world usable and significant. This is exactly the main reason why the human world dwells in the permanent crisis of its own presence and is always about to break down. In some psychopathological experiences, in grief, and in cultural apocalypses, familiar things cease to be present as themselves and become irrelevant or overwhelming. When things lose their usual measure, man is unable to manage them and produce further significance through their employment. His ethical energy appears obstructed. In the experience of the loss of the world, a common event, such as the death of a dear person, assumes the aspect of a cosmic catastrophe man is unable to overcome by his own forces; then everything becomes irrelevant or overwhelming, and all activities turn meaningless because we miss the one who gave meaning to the actions we performed in the world and through which we built that world as a usable common space. When a relation with a person comes to an end, we enter into the void generated by the collapse “of all relationships we had with her, that is, the collapse of a world that we continuously related to her.”¹⁴ The loss of someone, given the bonds we had with that person, implies that we, too, lose our presence in our world, which, being deprived of one of its most important operative centers, stops being obvious and normal. The end of the world is the end of a continuity.

Such fluctuation between irrelevance and overwhelmingness paradoxically represents a normal experience. Continuity is ontologically always at risk. Rituals and institutions absolve this ever-potential crisis: they help us reintegrate ourselves within the “new” world by providing us with cultural instruments that enable us to identify the new world with the old one.¹⁵ By doing so, the world once again assumes a familiar face, and we, as operative presences, become capable of praxis.

The most obvious example of overcoming the apocalyptic stasis can be found in the ecclesiastic institutionalization of the apocalyptic fever that inspired primitive Christian

¹³ Agamben, by trying to rethink politics and ontology starting from the idea of inoperativeness (see G. Agamben, *L'uso dei corpi*, Homo sacer 4, pt. 2 [Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2014], 21–47; and G. Agamben, *Karman. Breve trattato sull'azione, la colpa e il gesto* [Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2017], 100–140), comes to the same conclusion, even if his and de Martino's evaluations are opposite. As far as I know, only Alessandro Portelli attempted to relate Agamben and de Martino. See A. Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 203–30.

¹⁴ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 91–92 (my translation).

¹⁵ E. de Martino, *Fuore Simbolo Valore*, 157–58.

groups. By organizing, structuring, and transforming into charitable works the idleness that the apocalyptic expectation promotes, the end of the world these groups announced was indefinitely procrastinated; time was open to the operative history of evangelization, social support of the weak, and redemption; the anarchy of individual crisis was put under social and cultural control and was endowed with “duration, manner, and sense.”¹⁶ The same can be said with regard to Marxian apocalypse and its reintegration into the social order of the paradoxical Communist State.

What is at stake in every form of apocalyptic deviance is the very political essence of human nature. Man’s operations are never operations in themselves, separate from the cultural meaning and significance others attribute to them.¹⁷ My presence in the world is unthinkable without your presence in our common world, without sharing a world, and without renewing its usability through common actions and mutual communication. The loss of the world is thus the loss of the city we share and of its history. The city, indeed, was built by many generations, and it contains the operations, values, and ideas of unknown and forgotten ancestors. We are able to move and live only because we have inherited the world we recognize and in which we perceive ourselves as free agents. The obviousness of the world, meant as the operative and meaningful background of today’s actions, involves

a great act of humility, that is, trust in the obviousness of a fatherland that includes an infinite history of the action of human domestication, of implicit communitarian projects, sedimented through generations and in tradition, and that comes to us, here and now, from the most remote past through the everlasting pedagogy of social life, the family that raised us, the masters that we have chosen. By this great trust placed in the actions of others, a background is built, the horizon, the fatherland, the soil, the root.¹⁸

Contrary to the idea that guides apocalyptic deviance, man is never alone and is able to overcome his actual situation with his own forces – all his actions are based on the actions of others, every little thing contains the history of mankind: “The world is the living history of others within us.”¹⁹

The apocalypse is finally disclosed as the collapse of political memory: when we forget that the fatherland of action is not something that we have constructed all by ourselves but is something that we have received and are called upon to pass down and take care of.

From this perspective, madness turns out to be the bare crisis of one’s presence in one’s own world. During such a crisis, man experiences the inability to act and, through

¹⁶ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 382 (my translation). It would be interesting to interpret de Martino’s conception of the institution meant as a complex series of techniques allowing men to cope with existential angst in accordance with Schmitt’s conception of *katéchon*. Massimo Maraviglia (contra Taubes) argued that *katéchon* operates in Schmitt’s thought as the principle of the renovation of forms. See M. Maraviglia, *La penultima Guerra: il “katéchon” nella dottrina dell’ordine politico di Carl Schmitt* (Milan: LED, 2006), 287–88.

¹⁷ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 95–96 (my translation).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 528 (my translation).

action, to transcend the crisis of the domesticity of the world.²⁰ Madness is being nowhere and with no one. As a loss of *praxis*, as an always threatening and thus normal deviance implied in the transcending ethos, it expresses a relevant truth, given that it unveils the familiar and yet extreme cultural possibility man is accustomed to in every epoch and each day but, at the same time, can never become accustomed to.

4

In order to illustrate the nexus between action on the one hand and the condensation of cultural memories and the past domestication of the world on the other, de Martino seeks help from the familiar example of walking. Even if walking appears as an individual motion that an individual body carries out, divided both from cultural memory and the practical life of the city, nevertheless, “We never walk alone, but we do so along with the whole of personal and human history of the science of walking, being sustained, so to speak, by this history and by the efforts, inventions, and learning that it involves. The adult man certainly does not normally have any need, in order to walk, to know this history in practice: he just walks.”²¹ Yet, if we were to totally forget this history, we would be unable to walk: the always practically forgotten and yet always practically operative knowledge of walking is present in every human step: “Only because each time we walk we do not need to reinvent walking, and only because the history (personal and human) of this ability became for us an obvious duty, which is realized almost by itself, can we overcome mere walking while walking: for instance, we can converse with a friend while walking.”²² Man walks in the world in which walking is something familiar because forgotten generations had domesticated and passed down the mastery of walking and the whole series of operations one has to exert upon oneself in order to become able to walk on one’s own legs. Only because in every little step we walk together with ghosts that crowd our cultural memory are we able to transcend pure walking and make of it a tool for the achievement of transcending goals: the ghosts of our common past that we carry within ourselves while we walk are actively helping us reach this goal. And by continuing to walk, man passes down to coming generations a world in which walking is a familiar activity: he ensures that human history will endure and makes the operations and inventions of the past still operative, so that the transcending ethos will remain present in the future as well. By remembering them, by renewing them through the practical actualization of the memory, and by not substituting them with technical surrogates, he gives them new life and makes them emerge from a too obvious familiarity so that their practical meaning can be truly valued. And he in his turn becomes a friendly ghost.

As in all human activities, man faces a double and opposite danger when remembering the historicity and commonality of walking. On the one hand, when a person is exaggeratedly focused on the memory an activity contains, she stops walking and falls into inoperative contemplation, so that each and every one of her steps appears as a product

²⁰ Basaglia’s, Derrida’s, and Foucault’s ideas of madness all refer to the supremacy of language and history over praxis. See D. Cosenza, “Il difficile confine normalità/follia: critica della ragion clinica,” in *La cura della malattia mentale. I. Storia ed epistemologia*, ed. A. Civita and D. Cosenza (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 248–91.

²¹ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo*, 617 (my translation).

²² *Ibid.*, 617–18 (my translation).

of the past. Her steps lose meaningfulness, and the activity turns into a mechanical operation, deprived of the person meant as its operative center: why should one walk, when walking is not one's own work? On the other hand, the radical oblivion of the commonality of every activity, of the fact that we have learned all we know from others, pushes man into false loneliness, in which every step is meaningless as well, given that it does not communicate anything to others and does not include and carry others. Human praxis can be lost because of the crisis of presence and because of the loss of common background by means of catatonia and, on the contrary, by means of the excess of deregulated motion. Both in disorder and in motionlessness, the action cannot be carried out.

Every action contains an anamnesis and is the practice of anamnesis. Yet the very anamnesis of the practical nature of the human being requires a limitation as well that one cannot deduce from an abstract norm. The measure of an anamnestic practice is itself practical and historical and has to be continuously adapted to different political circumstances, changing costumes, and current practices. This is the reason why the measure requires a symbol that both keeps the ghosts at a distance and makes us capable of remembering them. The modern world, marked by the loss of the symbolic feature of reality, reduces every activity to its purely material and mechanical character. Consequently, it is harder to remember the collective effort of mankind inscribed in all human practices and to transcend the meaninglessness of one's individual actions. The symbol of bread best illustrates what characterizes the typically modern apocalyptic deviance and the social reality that feeds it:

If starvation is a threat, it is as well eating alone: the bread that feeds us as a food can be lost also when its valorization as a food to be eaten together has been extinguished. The eucharistic symbol thins bread into the host, and bread loses every corporeal and nutritive significance to the exclusive advantage of a different nutrition, which distinguishes man from animal. The modern world is right when it directs its attention to those who do not have "bread," to the starving millions: on the other hand, [we should pay] attention to the replete self-service of our metropolises, where bread can be "lost" in a different sense because, despite the crowd of individuals chewing and swallowing all by themselves, there is no feast and there is no companion. [...] If we comprehend the reason why the body of the Lord hid the bread made of fatigue and destined for the nutrition of the body, the problem still remains: how to find the bread of the feast and how to communicate, through its immediate human meaning hinting at peasants and bakers, with the whole real community, before which we ought to give testimony on behalf of man.²³

The loss of the symbol is at one with the loss of the obvious political character of human nature: the symbol hints at the memory of all the historical practices an object contains. The function of culture is to remember: to produce symbols that allow men

²³ *Ibid.*, 616–17 (my translation).

to recall their own nature, which coincides with the transcending ethos. Thanks to culture, man does not precipitate into the unfamiliarity of the world, which forces him to meditate on every single step but remains able to transcend his current practices by transmitting them to others. This transcending, on both the individual and the political level, is an anamnesis and needs to be carried out with prudence – that is, it has to contain the anamnesis of the measure, which cannot be deduced from an abstract norm but only from the reflection upon the polarizing and extreme modalities through which a world can be lost.

Given that the human world is always about to end, culture and philosophy teach the art of fear, which is equivalent to the art of courage: a basic political virtue. Thanks to culture and philosophy, we learn what we should fear and what we should not, how to govern our needless and useful fears, and how to think in order to be able to recognize them; how to distinguish one's own fears from those we have inherited or assumed by osmosis while living in the community; why one should fear oneself more than others, the present more than the future, one's error more than the common opinion. Fear turns useful when it is not feared any longer but is still present as a memory. The fear we face with courage is indeed good. The freedom from fear – that our biopolitical structures try to impose and celebrate,²⁴ without being able to realize it – is the most frightening utopia, identical with the psycho-apocalyptic fear of the end of the common and domestic world: it designates an almost complete forgetfulness of self, an amnesia of praxis, which by nature involves the transcending of fear through its courageous anamnesis.

5

Now we can turn back to the abolition of the asylum. The asylum reduced madness to a purely material and symbol-less mental deviance from the norm, which was thus alienated from praxis. Modern madness was in its turn based on the oblivion of the practical nature of man: upon the extrapolation of bare, biological nature from the fatherland of action. It was studied as a nonpolitical condition. Yet, as a purely technical institution, the asylum still operated in the anti-apocalyptic sense, given that it tried to arrest the collapse of the world some patients experience in their psychopathological imaginations and at least partially attempted to bring them back into the city and to “normal” operativity.

De Martino's practical inquiry into the function of fear, culture, and madness allows us to reevaluate psychiatry as well. The aim of every science ontologically deprived of a symbolic element is not to heal or to be solicitous: nobody can be healed only by virtue of someone else's actions. Healing implies taking care of oneself and, given the political nature of the human constitution, it cannot rely upon the actions of a single individual (the technician of the soul) because it by necessity involves the memory of the community.²⁵ Psychiatry can at best arrest the decomposition of one's world, but the healing process – the transcending of the crisis of presence – has to involve the activity of the patient.

²⁴ See G. Agamben, “The Work of Man,” in *Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life*, ed. M. Calarco and S. DeCaroli (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1–10.

²⁵ On the notion of community (in Roberto Esposito's sense) in Basaglia's thought, see A. Sforza Tarabochi, “Affirmative Biopolitics and Human Nature in Franco Basaglia's Thought,” *Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 16, no. 3 (2011): 85–100.

In this not-ideological sense was the abolition of asylums a step toward the useful reintegration of apocalyptic deviance into modern society: it made the apocalypse more present and the fear of the end of the world at once more common, more political, and less dangerous. The abolition of the asylum opened up, at the heart of the city, a space for the practice and anamnesis of care, but, given our natural laziness, we have made use of it only to a certain extent.²⁶

6

De Martino died before completing *The End of the World*. This material fact can be interpreted as a symbol. As he is ruled by time, man cannot transcend his own condition: he is unable to overcome his transcending nature and bring being to completeness. A single individual lacks time and memory to grasp the essence of culture and to produce a systematic work that will solve all human aporias related to the fear of death and meaninglessness. Both human knowledge and praxis are thus political and involve the work of generations, their mutual trust, and communication.

Is it not indeed a sign of “normal madness” to rest on the belief that we have come to the truth and to hinder ourselves from transcending our actual, all-too-imperfect knowledge? Is that not the very moment in which a world begins to end? As long as we think we know our world, we fear its collapse, and we turn life into the fight for the peace of our certainty, be it land, a value, an idea, a fear, bread, or bare life. If we have inherited the world, we have inherited all the errors of the past and of the present that we cannot simply transcend without drowning our world in the amnesia of the good and the collapse of politics.

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²⁶ On this, see *The Years of Alienation in Italy: Factory and Asylum Between the Economic Miracle and the Years of Lead*, ed. A. Diazzi and A. Sforza Tarabochia (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

CRISIS AS ART OF GOVERNMENT, PRECARIAT AS FORM OF LIFE

1. THE *DISPOSITIF* OF CRISIS

“There is a crisis; there is no alternative.” This now familiar phrase has served governments across the globe as a simple rationale to justify and legitimize unpopular political and economic decisions, which have the quality of being exceptional decisions that occur beyond common parliamentary and political procedures. This phrase is used by elite technocrats who justify their actions on the basis of a sort of absolute necessity. But such phrases are not just a rhetorical strategy because they also express a particular *art of government*. If we are to grasp how crises operate as an art of government in our time, we need to move beyond the modern conceptualization of the term.

In the conclusion of his 1982 text on the concept of crisis, Reinhart Koselleck traces his etymological analysis of “crisis,” including its various permeations and twists, through different disciplines and domains. When compared to its original sense in ancient Greek, the term has lost most of its depth. Indeed, it would seem that its wide diffusion and success are due precisely to its indeterminacy. Koselleck’s analysis of the concept of crisis arrives at the following conclusion: “Not only can ‘crisis’ be conjoined with other terms, it is easy to do so. While it can be used to clarify, all such coinages then require clarification. ‘Crisis’ is often used interchangeably with ‘unrest,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘revolution,’ and to describe vaguely disturbing moods or situations. Every one of such uses is ambivalent.”¹

For Koselleck, the idea of crisis we have handed down from modernity is, therefore, moldable according to its applications and to other concepts, which in turn may be linked with it. The association conflict–crisis is a case in point: the concept of crisis would acquire the meaning of conflict and would be shaped and permeated by it.

My intention in this paper is not just to reverse this thesis but also to demonstrate that the widespread diffusion and pervasiveness of “crisis” – a legacy of its passage through modernity – are not signs of its semantic vagueness: “Thus the term [crisis] never crystallized into a concept sufficiently clear to be used as a basic concept in social, economic, or political language, despite – or perhaps because of – its manifold meanings.”² Rather, they denote *the maximal effectiveness of its dispositif*. The term “crisis” is only vague when treated as a “concept,” but when viewed as a “dispositif,” we

¹ R. Koselleck, “Crisis,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (2006): 399.

² *Ibid.*, 367.

must examine it according to entirely different criteria, which are more commensurate with our contemporary crisis. With the recent crisis originating circa 2007, there are some marked peculiarities that cannot be reduced to the “technical” senses found in the typical economistic search for an equilibrium – that is, the “classical” scheme where the crisis of capital can only be fixed by rebalancing and thus recovering the economy. This crisis has been defined rather as “endless” or within the horizon of “secular stagnation,” which, without interruption, dates back at least to the 1970s. The examination of crisis today as a “concept” (“what is it, what does crisis mean?”) leads us to ignore its effectiveness, pervasiveness, and permanent duration; rather, the question that should be asked must address crisis as a *dispositif*: “How does crisis work, what is its function?”

In this paper, I am employing the term *dispositif* (translated as “apparatus” in English) in its tripartite definition given by Giorgio Agamben drawing on Michel Foucault:

- a. [An apparatus] is a heterogeneous set that includes virtually anything, linguistic and nonlinguistic, under the same heading: discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, police measures, philosophical propositions, and so on. The apparatus itself is the network that is established between these elements.
- b. The apparatus always has a concrete strategic function and is always located in a power relation.
- c. As such, it appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge.³

A *dispositif* is thus a relation. It is a type of “social relation” that arranges and places individuals into a relation with each other in and through the marketplace and the means of production. The social relations of production, à la Marx, function through “dispositives.”

As a *dispositif*, crisis has become an *art of government*. Only from an analysis of the functionality and operations of crisis, of how it orders and arranges heterogeneous elements and discourses, can the dominant form of power and the process of subjectification be defined. Indeed, while the subject-people arose from a *crisis of citizenship* and the working class established itself from a *crisis of the Fordist economy*, the current crisis does not resemble any of the historical formations of past crises. Therefore, we must identify the nature of *this* crisis in order to indicate what kind of political subjectification it makes possible and what kind of conflict it brings with it. If power in contemporary society and in the capitalist modes of production determines a biopolitical order, then *the current crisis configures itself according to a biopolitical paradigm, and the precariat is the form of life that has emerged from it.*

2. KRISIS

As a matter of fact, the current configuration of crisis has very ancient roots. It seems appropriate then, in order to fully understand the semantic range of the word “crisis” and its complexity, to begin with its ancient Greek etymology. Koselleck also proceeds

³ G. Agamben, “What Is an Apparatus?” in *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2–3.

in this way. In ancient Greek, *krisis* means “distinctive force, separation, division” but also “decision, resolution, judgment, election, choice.” It is precisely from this semantic complex that I draw the “purest” configuration of the crisis: the “choice” between one aspect rather than another, between which the “separation” of the *krisis* “distinguishes” – in the attempt to “solve” the crisis, to “decide” about the crisis – is by no means a way out of the crisis, but it remains inside it as its constitutive element. This arrangement of the semantic spectrum of the crisis comes to the surface in the different environments and contexts where its *dispositif* is applied and is at work. Certainly, as Koselleck points out, we must carefully consider the “historicity” of the concept, the changes and transformations it has undergone through the ages, and the specific lexicons in which it was introduced. To explore this, I will offer a “genealogy” of the notion of crisis to bring out not so much its meaning but rather the “uses” and the “knowledge” it has shaped. In this manner, we will find that the neoliberal form of crisis is somewhat different than the way crisis was conceptualized in modernity. It is more closely aligned with the premodern sense and use of the term. This genealogical reconstruction of crisis reinscribes the “biopolitical crisis” of the neoliberal art of government back into the historical trajectory of the term “crisis,” in which the “modern difference” marks just a brief parenthesis.

It is worth noting that one of the regions where the concept of crisis appears most frequently today, economics, only began to absorb it into its lexicon in the nineteenth century. It is no coincidence that this happened at a time – the same time of which, according to Walter Benjamin, as we shall see, Paris was the capital – when economic knowledge was laying the foundations for its future hegemony. Nor can it be only a suggestion that – as proof of a “matrix” that persists over time – the economic use of the word “crisis” recalls the medical meaning the term had when it first appeared in the ancient Greek world (“disease,” “imbalance,” “diagnosis,” and at the same time “prognosis”):

From the 1840s on, the economically-based concept of crisis permeates the growing literature of social criticisms [...]. “Crisis” was well suited to conceptualize both the emergencies resulting from contemporary constitutional or class specific upheavals, as well as the distress caused by industry, technology, and the capitalist market economy. These could be treated as symptoms of a serious disease or as a disturbance of the economy’s equilibrium.⁴

Further, in 1754, under the entry *Crise* by Théophile de Bordeu in Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, “crisis” appears only as a “medical” word, which draws on the forensic meaning of *judgment* – according to the definition proposed by Galen on the basis of the teaching of Hippocrates’s school. In medicine, the “judgment” concerns the course of an illness, which becomes “critical” when it reaches the stage of the struggle, of the conflict between life and death:

⁴ Koselleck, “Crisis,” 81.

Galen tells us that the word *crisis* is a forensic term that physicians have adopted, which means, strictly speaking, *judgment*. Hippocrates calls *crisis* every change that leads to a disease. He also states that there is a *crisis* in a disease when it gets serious or decreases considerably, when it degenerates into another disease or ceases altogether. Galen claims, almost in the same sense, that the *crisis* is a sudden change of the disease for better or for worse; this has meant that several authors have considered the crisis as a sort of struggle between nature and disease; struggle in which nature can win or perish: they have also argued that death can sometimes be considered as the crisis of a disease.⁵

Furthermore, in ancient Greece, the term “crisis” also appeared in the political lexicon, for example, in some significant passages of Aristotle’s *Politics*, such as the following one: “The virtue of justice is a characteristic of a state; for justice is the arrangement of the association that takes the form of a state, and the virtue of justice is a judgment [*krisis*] about what is just.”⁶ In the Aristotelian context, *krisis* is the “judgment about what is just” (and what is not) that involves the “decision” aimed at establishing or maintaining the political order understood as balance, harmony, measure. By analogy with his medical meaning, once an imbalance occurs in the body (organic and political), the crisis “decides” the path to be followed in order to stabilize vital functions and restore order: diagnosis and prognosis, *discernment and judgment*. The crisis thus involves the identification of a criterion that will save the individual and political body from death, restoring their “health.” In the critical situation, distinction and division determine the two possible courses of the disease: to death or to health. The decision is therefore mandatory: in favor of healing and the recovery of health.

3. MARX AND ENGELS’S THEORY OF CAPITALIST CRISES

Within the dispositif of the crisis, conflict is a symptom of the “disease” that has infected the order; yet it simultaneously represents the first stage of a possible recovery, since it entails discernment and distinction, in the critical condition, between a healing and a deadly path. Hence, conflict is the condition of the possible “decision,” which – this is the key point – cannot but be directed toward health, toward the preservation of life. Crisis thus establishes a mutual dependence between order and life: life can be preserved only within order. The exit from the crisis – that is, its solution – can only be a restoration of the order prior to the disease: health and life. It is through this semantic spectrum that the concept of crisis enters modernity – that is, already implying a certain idea of conflict as functional to restore order.

In his etymological and genealogical reconstruction outlined in “Crisis,” Koselleck writes that the “use of the concept of crisis is meant to reduce the room for maneuver, forcing the actors to choose between diametrically opposed alternatives.”⁷ The concept

⁵ T. de Bordeu, “Crise,” in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. by D. Diderot and J. B. D’Alembert (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1966), 471 (my translation).

⁶ Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 4.

⁷ Koselleck, “Crisis,” 370.

of crisis may offer no clearer alternative: life or death. Indeed, there is no alternative. If the “normal” condition is health, which crisis and disease jeopardize, to decide for life is to decide for the preexisting order. It is the forced decision of the crisis – and the idea of conflict it implies – that takes place in the economic discourse: economic crises reveal in the highest degree the imbalance and the difference between a healthy and a sick condition of the market within the capitalist system and therefore very clearly indicate their solution. The assumption is of course that safeguarding and strengthening the condition of health means allowing for the survival and existence of the system and order. A disposition of opposed alternatives that do not lead to a final decision but to a forced decision – that is crisis as *dispositif*.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels unmasked the *dispositif* of the crisis that operates in the bourgeois-capitalist system:

The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.⁸

Without entering into details, it should be noted that Marx and Engels theorized the cyclical nature of capitalist crises and the vital role they play in the system’s restructuring. However, Marx’s theory of the crisis also includes another aspect, which adopts the same *dispositif* of the crisis already at work in capitalism yet subverting its terms: the health of the capitalist system is already compromised, and disease has become its “rule.” Capitalism is sick, and its course leads inexorably to extinction; recovery from illness, on the contrary, does not follow the healthy course toward recovery and thus a return to balance, but instead it leads to a new order, to a new and different condition of health. The following passage from the *Grundrisse*, for example, almost sounds like a medical prognosis:

The growing incompatibility between the productive development of society and its hitherto existing relations of production expresses itself in bitter contradictions, crises, and spasms. The violent destruction of capital not by relations external to it, but rather as a condition of its self-preservation, is the most striking form in which advice is given it to be gone and to give room to a higher state of social production.⁹

In short, the Marxist conception of crisis and the use of crisis by capitalism share the same *lack of an alternative*: its application is different, but the *dispositif* is the same.

⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin, 2002), 226.

⁹ K. Marx, *Grundrisse* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 749–50.

In the Marxist case, conflict – class struggle – is functional to the gestation of a new life. The capitalist crisis is thus converted into the proletarian revolution.

Antonio Gramsci's interpretation of the *dispositif* of the crisis falls within the Marxist line, only he places more emphasis on the “balancing” role of *krisis*. For Gramsci, the balancing is no longer articulated in the ancient “Greek” sense of a suspension between life and death; rather, he subverts the terms, precisely in the Marxist sense as a *suspension between an impending death and a new life that is not yet*: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”¹⁰ For Gramsci, the *dispositif* of the crisis in capitalism consists precisely in the *government* of this interregnum. To govern the interregnum means to postpone treating the disease, to postpone finding a balance that will restore health and thus to refrain from applying the alleged knowledge found in the recipe of the cure. This postponement is indefinite:

[T]he development of capitalism has been a “continuous crisis,” if I may say so, i.e., a very fast movement of elements that balance and immunize each other. At one point, in this movement, some elements prevailed, others disappeared or became inept in the general framework. Then events occurred which we can call by the specific name of “crisis,” which are more serious or less serious depending on greater or minor elements of balance.¹¹

Crises are not what will ultimately lead to the death of capitalism but what from time to time – in the absence of an alternative, of a new life – enable it to be governed and thus “immunized” from its diseases and imbalances, which the dying condition constantly faces.

4. THE NEOLIBERAL CRISIS

In the relationship between crisis and conflict, the concept of conflict is shaped by its use within the *dispositif* of the crisis, not vice versa. Conflict is indeed *governed* by crisis, since it aims at a “decision” that is always already preordained. The decision is always in *response* to the crisis, that is to say, it cannot be separated from the functioning of the *dispositif* in which it is inscribed: the alternative posed by the crisis is fictitious – the choice is expressed when it is clear that there is no choice. Yet, since the concept of crisis has become part of the economic discourse and its *dispositif* has been absorbed within the capitalist system, a fundamental historical-conceptual shift has occurred: crises as a cyclical opportunity to restructure the system have cancelled even the fictitious alternative calling for a final decision. Every decision, as a matter of fact, leads to a new distinction and alternative, hence to a new crisis – and so on ad infinitum. The solution to the crisis comes from within the order, and it is therefore indistinguishable from the very production of crisis as the art of government. Within the *dispositif* of the crisis, the conflict does not produce radical alternatives as a way out from the order as in the

¹⁰ A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 276.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 428.

revolutionary crises of modern times. Rather, the same dispositif of crisis produces temporary ways out from crisis, which are functional to conserve order. This is the same conclusion reached by Koselleck, although he attributes such evanescence to the concept of crisis rather than to the concept of conflict: “The concept of crisis, which once had the power to pose unavoidable, harsh and non-negotiable alternatives, has been transformed to fit the uncertainties of whatever might be favored at a given moment.”¹² Thus, the modern concept of conflict is fully neutralized.

There is no need to absorb alternatives to justify the fact that there is no alternative. The temporality of the crisis is now completely converted into a cyclical pattern: one lives in the “eternal repetition of the present,” a present now devoid even of the unknown land represented by future, by the possibility of having alternatives. Therefore, the neoliberal revolution announced by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s with the slogan “there is no alternative”¹³ is now complete. This neoliberal revolution recovered and reactivated the premodern and literal meaning of the term “revolution”: natural cycles, repetition, and the stability of the established order regain their temporal primacy over the historicity and linearity of modern temporality. To define this revolution, we could use Gramsci’s category of “passive revolution.”¹⁴ Today the Thatcher slogan characterizes a dispositif of the crisis as a direct, immediate, and affirmative art of government. We now have several exemplary cases where governments from many different countries have employed the dispositif of the crisis in their cunning neoliberal art of governing. Despite being employed in different contexts, each has ultimately used the same formula to seek legitimacy for their unpopular decrees or even for constituting a new government (“technocratic” ones are the most exemplary case): “there is no alternative.” And yet, to arrive at the crisis as the accomplished art of government of today, we must record a further fundamental step that was taken by neoliberal thought.

After the bourgeois Third Estate and the class party – outcomes of the most significant forms of previous crises – the political party became defined in the name of life itself, as the “party of life.” The expression comes from Friedrich A. von Hayek, one of the leading theorists of neoliberalism and Thatcher’s reference.¹⁵ While searching for a name for his new conception of liberalism that distinguishes it from previous ones, Hayek writes, “What I should want is a word which describes the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution.”¹⁶ Here for the first time, life – its preservation and promotion – became the prerogative of a *part*, which by establishing a party turns life into a polemological criterion. The “party of life” considers life as a prerogative of its own part, offering itself – in the name of life – as an alternative and in conflict with other parts of society. However, it is at the same time “impartial”: there can

¹² Koselleck, “Crisis,” 399.

¹³ Such was the success of this slogan that it became known by the acronym TINA.

¹⁴ “The thesis alone in fact develops to the full its potential for struggle, up to the point where it absorbs even the so-called representatives of the antithesis: it is precisely in this that the passive revolution or revolution/restoration consists.” Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 294.

¹⁵ Cf. N. Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics* (New York: Norton, 2012).

¹⁶ F. A. Hayek, “Why I Am Not a Conservative,” in *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge, 2011), 530.

be no alternatives to the party of life. The moment when a politics of life takes the form of a “party,” it produces and implies its opposite: the part or parts, the party or parties that threaten the survival of the political and social body. Once again, the part to be taken does not appear as a choice between alternatives that are really feasible. In the form of the “party of life,” therefore, biopolitics acquires its most authentically neoliberal trait and, at the same time, shows that the essence of neoliberalism is anything but *liberal*. In Hayek’s case, it becomes apparent in his autobiography that his economic doctrine was inspired by biological evolutionism.¹⁷ Moreover, the term “party of life” employed by Hayek – it is worth emphasizing – has an important precursor in Nietzsche,¹⁸ who is certainly not to be inscribed in the liberal area.

Michel Foucault clearly understood the diversity and comprehensiveness of the neoliberal project and that it represents no political or governmental alternative but a real dispositif of “biopolitical governmentality” whose peculiarity is its lack of alternatives:

I think this is why American liberalism currently appears not just, or not so much as a political alternative, but let’s say as a sort of many-sided, ambiguous, global claim with a foothold in both the right and the left. It is also a sort of utopian focus which is always being revived. [...] Some years ago Hayek said: We need a liberalism that is a living thought. Liberalism has always left it to the socialists to produce utopias, and socialism owes much of its vigor and historical dynamism to this utopian or utopia-creating activity. Well, liberalism also needs utopia. It is up to us to create liberal utopias, to think in a liberal mode, rather than presenting liberalism as a technical alternative for government. Liberalism must be a general style of thought, analysis, and imagination.¹⁹

As a matter of fact, in Hayek’s same terms, the neoliberal utopia is not limited, as it is sometimes presented, to minimizing the interference of state and government in free market and economic affairs, but in its desire to replace the state with private enterprise²⁰ – or rather, with the competition between private companies: the so-called *governance* – it

¹⁷ Cf. F. A. Hayek, *Hayek on Hayek: An Autobiographical Dialogue* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁸ Ernst Nolte gives special prominence to the Nietzschean notion of “party of life,” also contrasting it with the Marxist “class party.” Cf. E. Nolte, *Nietzsche und der Nietzscheanismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein-Verlag, 1990).

¹⁹ M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 218–19.

²⁰ The passage by Hayek, which Foucault paraphrases, is even more powerful and radical in the original, with tones typical of a real political manifesto: “What we lack is a liberal Utopia, a programme which seems neither a mere defence of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism, but a truly liberal radicalism [...]. The practical compromises they must leave to the politicians. Free trade and freedom of opportunity are ideals which still may arouse the imaginations of large numbers, but a mere ‘reasonable freedom of trade’ or a mere ‘relaxation of controls’ is neither intellectually respectable nor likely to inspire any enthusiasm.” F. A. Hayek, “Intellectuals and Socialism,” in *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 194.

wants to leave no space for political alternatives. Therefore, in conceiving the state as an enterprise like any other,²¹ neoliberal utopia attaches to the free market the prerogatives of politics, including the autonomy that allows it to govern itself *juxta propria principia*:

The spontaneous order of the market, based on reciprocity or mutual benefits, is commonly described as an economic order [...]. But it is exceedingly misleading, and has become one of the chief sources of confusion and misunderstanding, to call this order an economy as we do when we speak of a national, social, or world economy. [...] I propose that we call this spontaneous order of the market a catallaxy in analogy to the term “catallactics,” which has often been proposed as a substitute for the term “economics.” (Both “catallaxy” and “catallactics” derived from the ancient Greek verb *katallattein* which, significantly, means not only “to barter” and “to exchange,” but also “to admit into the community” and “to turn from enemy into friend.”)²²

On the basis of the ancient Greek etymology, which Hayek himself recalls, to attach a “catallactic” quality to the spontaneous order of the market means to conceive exchange economics as immediately endowed with “governance” that is capable – according to the other meaning of the verb *katallattein* – to “reconcile, to cease hostilities, war, and conflict.” In *catallaxy* it is the exchange itself that produces community and order when the political conflict – the conflict between friend and enemy, according to Carl Schmitt’s classical formulation – within the market is neutralized in the form of competition, which turns out to work as a link in the so-called global Great Society. In short, the neutralization of political conflict – “to cease hostilities and war” – is the condition of competition that governs the catallactic order of the market.

There is no space outside the market for politics to intervene, either in the name of justice or in respect to common ends, to balance or imbalance the given order, and thus to govern conflicts or to promote them:

The belief that there can be no rational policy without a common scale of concrete ends implies, however, an interpretation of the catallaxy as an economy proper and for this reason is misleading. Policy need not be guided by the striving for the achievement of particular results, but may be directed towards securing an abstract overall order of such character that it will secure for the members the best chance of achieving their different and largely unknown particular ends.²³

²¹ “But what is objectionable here is not state enterprise as such but state monopoly.” F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 224.

²² F. A. Hayek, “The Principles of a Liberal Social Order,” in *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 164.

²³ F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 114.

Therefore, in a catallaxy there is no idea of a political government potentially alternative to market self-regulation; on the contrary, state policy must depend on this government.²⁴ This does not mean, however, that the government of the market is not supported by an order, only that this order has no political “ends.” It is not by chance, indeed, that to define the catallactic order of the market Hayek uses the ancient conception of the *cosmos* – a spontaneously harmonious order that, whether natural or divine, is superhuman:

While an economy proper is an organization in the technical sense in which we have defined that term, that is, a deliberate arrangement of the use of the means which are known to some single agency, the cosmos of the market neither is nor could be governed by such a single scale of ends; it serves the multiplicity of separate and incommensurable ends of all its separate members.²⁵

As ancient Greek tragedy shows, to escape or to reject the order of the *cosmos* leaves no alternatives.

The recurring dispositif that revives the neoliberal utopia is the crisis²⁶ – a crisis that acquires its highest effectiveness when the point of convergence of the action of the governors and the consent of the governed is the lack of a choice between life and death. For Foucault, indeed, the peculiarity of liberal governmentality is the “live dangerously” imperative – that is, to live exposed to the constant threat of death:

First, we can say that the motto of liberalism is: “Live dangerously.” “Live dangerously,” that is to say, individuals are constantly exposed to danger, or rather, they are conditioned to experience their situation, their life, their present, and their future as containing danger. I think this kind of stimulus of danger will be one of the major implications of liberalism.²⁷

5. THE FORM OF LIFE OF THE PRECARIAT

If the current crisis is configured at a biopolitical level, then it is at this level that the processes of subjectification and the conflict that they activate in society should be thought: the precariat is the child of *this* crisis, which, in exchange for survival, seems to condemn it to this condition with no alternative – a condition that links survival and the continuous “adaptation” to changing and mutable circumstances, which exposes the precariat’s existence to a sort of “fate” over which it has no control and which configures the time of

²⁴ It is in this function of the state as a private entity among others and yet called upon to impose with its legislative activity the logic of private law at every level that Pierre Laval and Christian Dardot identify as Hayek’s particular contribution to neoliberal rationality, and it represents the most radical break with classical liberalism. Cf. P. Dardot and C. Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* (London: Verso, 2013).

²⁵ Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 108.

²⁶ For a re-reading of Foucault’s interpretation of liberal governmentality and its revision in the light of the current crisis, see M. Lazzarato, *Experimental Politics. Work, Welfare, and Creativity in the Neoliberal Age* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017).

²⁷ M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 66

life in the natural and organic sense as the cyclical repetition of an eternal present. Hayek himself presents the involvement in the order of the catallactic market almost in terms of the acceptance of an unpredictable and inevitable fate, for whose outcomes – the “scale of ends” that Hayek many times maintains do not belong to the spontaneous order of the market – no one is responsible and, therefore, no “enemy” can be identified:

[T]his adaptation to the general circumstances that surround him [the man who acts] is brought about by his observance of rules which he has not designed and often does not even know explicitly, although he is able to honour them in action. Or, to put this differently, our adaptation to our environment does not consist only, and perhaps not even chiefly, in an insight into the relations between cause and effect, but also in our actions being governed by rules adapted to the kind of world in which we live, that is, to circumstances which we are not aware of and which yet determine the pattern of our successful actions.²⁸

To be inscribed in the *cosmos* of the market, to be part of it, entails another consequence that has a strong influence on the processes of subjectification produced by the neoliberal rationality: the subjects involved in the *cosmos* have a “limited” ability to understand and grasp its overall design and, therefore, to master the “fate” of their actions. The neoliberal cosmos thus actualizes an ancient conception of the human condition: “Man is not and never will be the master of his fate: his very reason always progresses by leading him into the unknown and unforeseen where he learns new things.”²⁹

The shaping of the subjects’ own forms of life to adapt to the cosmic order of the market – and therefore not to obey the sovereign order – is an essential aspect of biopolitical governmentality. It is the “life” of precarious workers that “holds together” the broken fragments of their working lives, which often oppose each other and extort them into forced decisions, as if they were straddled between life and death. Yet every decision produces new contrapositions without solutions – this is the life of the precariat caught within the biopolitical dispositif of the crisis.

Is it, instead, possible to envisage a conflict immanent in life, which cannot be activated exclusively by this dispositif of the crisis in the form of competition, that is the way to make conflict functional to the preservation of the order of the market? This would be a conflict that, although not reducible to the neutralization of the modern political or to overcoming a dialectical synthesis, could not be assimilated to the binary formulas that characterized much of twentieth-century philosophy and politics (think, for example, of Carl Schmitt’s friend-enemy criterion). This kind of difficulty concerns, moreover, a politics of resistance in the modern sense, which also presupposes a dichotomic and dualistic logic, like that of the nexus subjection-subjectification.

These binary and dualistic formulas, indeed, risk having a counterproductive outcome in a postsovereign and biopolitical order. They make the life of one part dependent

²⁸ Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 176.

on the death or subjugation of the other – and not only among the precarious workers or between them and other forms of wage labor but also within the same precarious existence of individuals, who must sacrifice parts of their lives to preserve others (work, leisure, affections). As a result, since it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the enemy to oppose as a class, as Paolo Virno *mutatis mutandis* argued with regard to the multitude,³⁰ the conflictuality of precarious work is eventually turned against them as a sense of guilt and indebtedness³¹ and, in the form of competition, against those who share the same condition. But not against the order itself.

The precariat cannot be exhaustively defined as a socioeconomic class;³² precariousness is rather a *form of life*. The art of governing the biopolitical crisis does not offer the alternatives that in the past used to fuel class conflict. Although today the neoliberal art of government has configured this form of life as precariat so as to make it a majority (precariousness is gradually shaping every type of work, even that which is permanent and has guarantees and benefits), this is not the first time that such a form of life has emerged in history. In the past, however, its characteristics were ambiguous, indefinite, and incomprehensible because they escaped the dominant criteria of political subjectification, dictated first by the struggle for citizenship and then by class conflict. But the fact remains that some thinkers have identified and recognized its character, and therefore it is possible to outline its genealogy. A case in point is, for example, Benjamin, who, in the archeology of nineteenth-century Paris, using as a litmus test the life and work of Charles Baudelaire, saw this form of life surface and be overwhelmed by the emergence of a new phase of capitalism, the prehistory of the stage that we are currently experiencing.³³ The form of life of the precariat has, therefore, its ancestors in a series of figures – the *flâneur*, the *bohémien*, the idle, the conspirator by profession, the player, the night owl, the detective, the rag vendor, the sex worker, the poet, the artist – that cannot resist the market because their production escapes exchange value and commodification. A form of life flourished during Napoleon III's Second Empire that did not outlive the defeat of his peculiar political experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 – not a “class” revolutionary experiment, as Marx himself was forced to recognize – if not transfiguring itself, its subjectivation being impossible within both the people and the class. Here is how Benjamin captures a snapshot of it a moment before its extinction starts:

In Baudelaire's Paris things had not come to such a pass. [...] Arcades where the *flâneur* would not be exposed to the sight of carriages that did not recognize pedestrians as rivals were enjoying undiminished popularity. [...] His leisurely appearance as a personality is his protest against the division of labour which makes people into specialists. It is also his protest against

³⁰ Cf. P. Virno, *Multitude. Between Innovation and Negation* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext[e], 2008).

³¹ Cf. M. Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man. An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext[e], 2012); E. Stimilli, *The Debt of the Living. Ascesis and Capitalism* (New York: SUNY Press, 2017).

³² Cf. G. Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

³³ On capitalistic employment of initiative and relative work autonomy, including the so-called “artistic critique,” see L. Boltanski and É. Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2007).

their industriousness. Around 1840 it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for a walk in the arcades. The *flâneurs* liked to have the turtles set the pace for them. If they had their way, progress would have been obliged to accommodate itself to this pace. But this attitude did not prevail; Taylor, who popularized the watchword “Down with dawdling!” carried the day.³⁴

And this is how, for Benjamin, the metamorphosis takes place and this form of life, which is born out of the market, becomes a commodity among others and is put to work:

Now the type of the *flâneur* so to speak shrinks, as if a bad fairy had touched him with a magic wand. At the end of this process of shrinking is the sandwich-man: here the identification with commodity is completed. The *flâneur* is now really in the goods. He now goes for a walk for money, and his inspection of the market has become, almost overnight, a job.³⁵

The forms of life that characterized nineteenth-century Paris only in part and only marginally participated in the large class conflict that spanned across the twentieth century and its crises; it is today, in the biopolitical crisis, that this form of life emerges again with its more specific facade. And yet, if at the time of Baudelaire the market seemed to be for the *flâneur* an alternative to extinction and death, today, instead, the biopolitical crisis does not pose alternatives, and, therefore, it forces the conception of conflict as competition into a function of government. Conflict should not therefore be conceived as a dispositive of *division* and *selective discrimination* – which must *let die* in order to *let live* – within an order based on biological evolutionism. How then could we think a conflict that shapes life without subjecting it and that, instead of juxtaposing one side to the other, reveals and enhances *their being in common*?³⁶ How could we, in short, outline a conception of the conflict in keeping with an affirmative biopolitics?³⁷

It is time to rediscover the relational matrix of the conflict, parallel to the antagonistic one and beyond the classes. Conflict could thus prove itself – if thought of and practiced *in common* – to be not only what divides society but also what makes society. If crisis as the neoliberal art of government requires “adaptability” to the forms of life in order to survive in the cosmos of market, conflict might concern the political practice of *deciding how to live together* – a being in common that is no longer defined by common subjection within the same cosmos and the same fate. The alternative should not be produced in the narrative of a cosmos that makes the forms of life precarious and potentiality into adaptability. Conflict could open up alternatives that crises today foreclose. It could be a kind of conflict equal to an affirmative biopolitics; not a biopolitics of the individualistic

³⁴ W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1973), 53–54.

³⁵ W. Benjamin, “Neue Baudelairiana. Unveröffentlichte Fragmente zu einer Neufassung des Flaneurs,” in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter* 4 (1995): 13–14 (my translation).

³⁶ Cf. R. Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); R. Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

³⁷ Cf. R. Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

forced decision directed toward individualistic survival and preservation but a biopolitics deriving from the very potency of the conflict when making a decision in common.

One could conceive the *con-flict* on the basis of the meaning of the term *fligo*. The Latin verb *fligere* derives from the ancient Greek and means “compress, squeeze, crush, press.” Can such “being squeezed, pressed, crushed, compressed” indicate not only the pressure exerted by the economic system on the life of precarious workers but also the immanent plane of life itself? Can it be that it is on this very plane of conflictual immanence that precarious work enters politics without being subjected to the cosmos of the market? Can a constituent conflict be possible on this plane of immanence, a conflict not *between* the parts anymore but *of* the parts – a conflict not *between* life forms but *of* the forms of life? While crisis as the art of government presupposes a “party of life,” the conflict of deciding in common corresponds to a “politics of life,” to an affirmative biopolitics. At this point, perhaps, it would no longer be precariousness that defines the form of life.

THE LUXURY OF TEARS: DE MARTINO AND WARBURG ON *PIANTO* AND *KLAGE*¹

*Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.*

*So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.*
[Tennyson, *In Memoriam* LIV]

*A slave will always cry whenever
he can do so with impunity.*
[Weil, “*The Iliad, or The Poem of Force*”]

It might be tempting to pair Ernesto de Martino and Aby Warburg and explore under their joint guidance the “mimic of *góos*,” as de Martino titled one of his notebooks for *Death and Ritual Weeping* (*Morte e pianto rituale*),² using the Homeric term for “lament,”³ or what Warburg called the “*pathos formulae*” (*Pathosformeln*) of lament that

¹ I presented a version of this paper at the de Martino conference “Mourning, Magic, Ecstatic Healing: Ernesto de Martino” at the Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung in Berlin on July 10, 2015. I wish to thank Sigrid Weigel and Martin Tremel for their kind invitation. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Center for Humanities and the Arts at the University of Colorado, Boulder, which allowed me to conduct research in the Archive of the Warburg Institute.

² Archivio Ernesto de Martino, notebook 10.4., titled “Grecia Mimica del *góos*.” I thank Dr. Adelina Talamonti and the Associazione Internazionale Ernesto de Martino for having granted me access to this precious resource. There is no available English translation yet of this book. I translate *pianto* as “weeping” rather than “crying” for reasons that my argument, I hope, will make clear.

³ For an exhaustive discussion of *góos* and related terms, cf. Margaret Alexiou’s *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974; 2nd ed., rev. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos [Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University, 2002]), accessed online; and Christos Tsagalis, *Epic Grief: Personal Laments in Homer’s Iliad* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

he saw emerge out of “the pagan figure of the dancing maenad.”⁴ Such a figure was, as Edgar Wind keenly observed, “the central theme” of his studies, whose “most poignant chapter contained the story of how Bertoldo di Giovanni, the early Renaissance sculptor, transformed the maenad into a Mary Magdalene moaning under the Cross.”⁵ It would certainly be a worthwhile and indeed eye-opening endeavor to dwell on such seminal images under their guidance and in the context of the highly seductive visual atlases that they assembled: Warburg’s *Mnemosyne*, and especially its plate 42, which features prominently Bertoldo di Giovanni’s Bargello relief under the general caption “Pathos of suffering in reversed energy charge (Pentheus, maenad at the Cross)” (*Leidenspathos in energetischer Inversion [Pentheus, Mänade am Kreuz]*),⁶ and de Martino’s “Pictorial Atlas of Weeping” (*Atlante figurato del pianto*), the photographic appendix to *Death and Ritual Weeping*, which includes “three fundamental types of documentary material, folkloric, ancient, and Christian,” culminating in a reproduction of Perugino’s *Deposition* at the Pitti Palace in Florence.⁷

I will instead focus on the language of *góos*, and even more so on the way Warburg and de Martino spoke about what the Greeks called *γóος*, and, by extension, on the ways we do so in different modern European languages such as German and Italian, as well as the English I will be translating into and out of. I aim thereby to make explicit an assumption that is implicit in their arguments, if I am not mistaken – namely, that language matters no less than gesture when we express our pain and also, and perhaps more importantly, when we talk about our expressions of pain.⁸ Warburg would have wholeheartedly agreed with

⁴ Edgar Wind, “Comments on an Observation by Reynolds,” *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937): 71.

⁵ Ibid. Warburg discusses the relief in the 1914 lecture “Der Eintritt des antikisierenden Idealstils in die Malerei der Frührenaissance” delivered at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence (first published in its entirety in Aby Warburg, *Werke*, ed. Martin Trembl, Sigrid Weigel, and Perdita Ladwig [Berlin: Suhrkamp 2010], 281–310: 303–4).

⁶ The caption reads further: “Bürgerliche Totenklage, heroisiert. Kirchliche Totenklage. Tod des Erlösers. Grablegung. Todesmeditation” (Bourgeois death lament, heroized. Church death lament. Death of the redeemer. Burial. Death meditation); see Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe* (hereafter cited as GS, followed by the volume number), vol. II.1, *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. Martin Warnke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 76. The representation of Pentheus’s dismemberment by his mother, Agave, and by the maenads is a pathos formula that Warburg associated with that of Orpheus’s *sparagmos* starting with his 1905 lecture “Dürer und die Italienische Antike” (Warburg, *Werke*, 176–83) and experiences a similar inversion in a Christian context (cf. E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 2nd ed. [Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986], 247). See the useful map of the atlas recently drawn by Giulia Bordignon and Maria Bergamo, “Iconographies and Pathosformeln of Pain in Aby Warburg’s *Mnemosyne Atlas*: A Pathway through Plates 5, 6, 41, 41a, 42, 53, 56 and 58,” *IKON* 12 (2019): 217–32.

⁷ Ernesto de Martino, *Morte e pianto rituale: dal lamento funebre antico al pianto di Maria* (hereafter cited as MPR), 2nd ed. (Turin: Paolo Boringhieri, 1975), 373–416; under the title *Morte e pianto rituale nel mondo antico: dal lamento pagano al pianto di Maria* (Turin: Edizioni scientifiche Einaudi, 1958).

⁸ That applies also to Wind’s argument, as he goes on to observe that “even to-day [he is writing in the first issue of the *Journal of the Warburg Institute* after the relocation of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg to London], the formula has not lost its force, as can be seen in a recent book on Grünewald written by that experienced physiognomist, Wilhelm Fraenger. It would be difficult to imagine anything further removed from classical antiquity than the figures painted by Grünewald for the Isenheim altarpiece. Yet when Fraenger tries to find adequate words to describe Mary Magdalene under the Cross, the memory of the old symbol makes itself felt and he calls her *eine Schmerzmänade*” (Wind, “Comments,” 71; Wilhelm Fraenger, *Matthias Grünewald in seinen Werken. Ein physiognomischer Versuch* [Berlin: Rembrandt-Verlag, 1936], 92). The verbal formula has not lost its power, in other words, at least as the figurative one. Warburg’s pathos formula is literally, and not just metaphorically, a verbal formula, as E. R. Curtius saw before anyone else.

de Martino that the greatest existential threat to human agency occurs when individuals are left “without voice and without gesture” as they are paralyzed by “anguish.”⁹ In the process, however, we will also become aware of important differences between the two, beyond their “unintended convergences,”¹⁰ that may matter to our understanding of their respective stances as well as of pain and its articulation.

1. THE LANGUAGE OF ACHIEVEMENT

To start with my title, “the luxury of tears” is neither de Martino’s nor Warburg’s formulation. It is the way Robert Fitzgerald, a recent and justly celebrated translator of *The Iliad* into English,¹¹ chose to translate Homer’s γόοιο τετάρπετο,¹² which may be more literally rendered, “He satiated himself with lament,” as the same verb τέρπεσθαι is also used of food, sight, and sleep in that very episode (Fitzgerald translates consistently only the “luxury of sleep”).¹³ The expression describes Achilles’s response to Priam’s evocation of his far-away father in the extraordinary encounter between the two that brings the poem to a close in book Ω. It is a classic example of the so-called *hiketeia* (ἱκετεία), the supplication scene,¹⁴ which follows a precise ritual sequence: first gestural, when Priam “knelt down, took in his arms Akhilleus’ knees, and kissed the hands of wrath that killed his sons”; then verbal, as he goes on to implore him by evoking the memory of his distant father, Peleus, “Remember your own father, [...] think me more pitiful by far, since I/have brought myself to do what no man else/has done before – to lift to my lips the hand/of one who killed my son.” It is crucial to notice that Priam’s gesture would be ineffective in and by itself¹⁵ without the recollection he provokes in Achilles

⁹ MPR 17. Cf. also MPR 45: “una ebetudine stuporosa senza parola e senza gesto,” in reference to Niobe’s petrification (see note 81 below). De Martino uses the term “anguish” (*ansietà, Angst, angoisse*) both in a strictly psychiatric and in a broadly existentialist sense (cf. MPR 31).

¹⁰ Which Carlo Ginzburg has pointed out repeatedly, most recently in a lecture at the Warburg Institute by that title on December 18, 2018; accessed online.

¹¹ His verse translation of Homer’s *Iliad* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974) received the first Harold Morton Landon Translation Award from the Academy of American Poets in 1976. I use the most current spelling of Greek proper names in my text, whereas Fitzgerald adopts a more faithful transliteration.

¹² *Il.* xxiv, 513; *The Iliad*, 584.

¹³ *Il.* xxiv, 636; *The Iliad*, 588. Cf. R. B. Onians’s perceptive comment that τέρπεσθαι “is used when any inclination, even if it be only an inclination to give bodily expression to grief, is realised” and the more speculative but fundamentally accurate observation that “men then lived more for the moment or at least shaped their language from the standpoint of the moment and its satisfaction. Later ages have not only deprived themselves of the pleasure of unrestrained weeping and the free bodily expression of other feelings, but also, taking a longer view, have restricted such terms virtually to those instincts and satisfactions which, when viewed from the outside or in cold blood, seem desirable” (*The Origins of European Thought: About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951], 20–21).

¹⁴ Cf. John Gould, “HIKETEIA,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973): 74–103.

¹⁵ In her great essay “*The Iliad, or the Poem of Force*” (1940), Simone Weil has a very insightful commentary on the asymmetry of power between Achilles and Priam in spite of their physical proximity at this moment, which is revealed by the Greek hero’s reflex in pushing aside the kneeling king: “It was not insensibility that made Achilles with a single movement of his hand push away the old man who had been clinging to his knees; Priam’s words, recalling his own old father, had moved him to tears. It was merely a question of his being as free in his attitudes and movements as if, clapping his knees, there were not a suppliant but an inert object. Anybody who is in our vicinity exercises a certain power over us by his very presence, and a power that belongs to him alone, that is, the power of halting, repressing, modifying each movement that our body sketches out. If we step aside for a passerby

by recalling Peleus's name: "Now in Akhilleus/the evocation of his father stirred/new longing, and an ache of grief. He lifted/the old man's hand and gently put him by./Then both were overborne as they remembered/ [...] and sobbing/ filled the room." It is then, only after "Akhilleus' heart/ had known the luxury of tears, and pain within his breast and bones had passed away," that they both can stand up in the erect position of equally dignified, though mortal, human beings ("he stood then, raised the old king up, in pity/ for his grey head and greybeard cheek") and can get ready to satiate themselves with food, as they did with tears.¹⁶

De Martino comes close to Fitzgerald's idiosyncratic choice, however, when he speaks of the "sweetness of weeping" (*dolcezza del pianto*) that St. Augustine experiences in the aftermath of his mother Monica's funeral, which he regards as "a moment of dramatic suspension between the two ages of death, the pagan and the Christian."¹⁷ As the *Urszene* of silent, private reading in Western culture for J. L. Borges,¹⁸ St. Augustine's *Confessions* provides the *Urszene* of silent, private weeping for de Martino. In the stark light of this momentous transition, Fitzgerald's choice unquestionably appears to be an anachronism, as no pagan Greek would have thought of tears as being a luxury: on the one hand, a pleasure we can ill afford but also, on the other hand, one we are under normal conditions denied and hence can all the more enjoy when it happens, seldom, to be granted to us, or we grant ourselves the permission to enjoy it;¹⁹ and one may well apply to the late twentieth-century American translator Lessing's ironic self-referential comment in the *Laocoön*: "I know that we more refined Europeans of a wiser, later age know better how to govern our mouths and our eyes. Courtesy and propriety force us to restrain our cries and tears."²⁰ In a similar vein, Elaine Scarry, in *The Body in Pain*, takes to task the anonymous English translator of Sophocles's *Philoctetes*, who came up with no better choice to render the "changing cries and shrieks" of the wounded hero than the monosyllable "Ah" "followed by variations in

on the road, it is not the same thing as stepping aside to avoid a billboard; alone in our rooms, we get up, walk about, sit down again quite differently from the way we do when we have a visitor. But this indefinable influence that the presence of another human being has on us is not exercised by men whom a moment of impatience can deprive of life, who can die before even thought has a chance to pass sentence over them" (trans. Mary McCarthy, *politics 2* [November 1945]: 322–23).

¹⁶ *Il.* xxiv, 477–636; *The Iliad*, 583–88.

¹⁷ "Un momento di drammatica sospensione fra le due età della morte, quella pagana e quella cristiana" (MPR 330). The reference is to *Conf.* IX, 12, 29, and 33. On the next page of the text, on the other hand, de Martino pays tribute to the "violence of tears" (*violenza delle lacrime*) that even the founders of Christian spirituality are unable to resist – the natural overflowing of the eyes as tears well up irrepressibly like water from a spring or break the dam of inhibitions that keep them only provisionally contained (MPR 331).

¹⁸ I am referring to Borges's essay "Del culto de los libros," where he singles out the decisive "moment" (*el instante*) at *Conf.* VI, 3, 3 (J. L. Borges, *Otras inquisiciones* [Madrid: Alianza, 1997], 169); but cf. the sobering remarks by Daniel Donoghue, *How the Anglo-Saxons Read Their Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 18–36.

¹⁹ Fitzgerald's and de Martino's choices may confirm, incidentally, Lambert Wiesing's basic claim that "the experience of luxury depends, no ifs or buts, on the act of possession" (*Luxus* [Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015]; *A Philosophy of Luxury*, trans. Nancy A. Roth [London: Routledge, 2019], 113), at least in post-Christian societies, as tears became literally private property once they started to be shed only *in camera cordis*, the practice St. Augustine inaugurated, and were no longer shared in public.

²⁰ G. E. Lessing, *Laocoön*, trans. E. A. McCormick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 9.

punctuations (Ah! Ah!!!!).²¹ Such cries must necessarily remain unreadable to all those critics who anachronistically apply to the pain of the ancients the meter of a later stoicism, as Lessing suggests. And I want to make clear that neither Warburg nor de Martino belong in this category of critics. There is arguably no more Lessingian critic than Warburg,²² and it may be sufficient here to recall de Martino's very Lessingian criticism apropos of Passow's collection of *Popularia carmina graeciae recentioris* that have been "'cleansed' of all the 'incidents' of the real ritual performance" and thereby falsified.²³

Scarry, on the other hand, falls into that category when she writes that "physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned."²⁴ Yet the paradox is not that pain resists or even destroys language and thus unmakes the world with it, as Scarry denounces, but rather that language cannot but express pain *otherwise*. Even now, Virginia Woolf points out in her essay "On Being Ill," when confronting the failure of language to express what he perceives as a uniquely individual pain, the sufferer may be "forced to coin words himself, and, taking his pain in one hand, and a lump of pure sound in the other (as perhaps the people of Babel did in the beginning), so to crush them together that a brand new word in the end drops out."²⁵ Pain, Woolf reminds us, is a stimulus to verbalization, and especially to naming, rather than to inarticulation. In his treatise *De locis affectis*, Galen narrates how an epileptic he examined at the very beginning of his medical practice would describe his

²¹ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5.

²² In a letter to Warburg on May 29, 1929, Fritz Saxl rightly suggests that "one could present your entire development wonderfully from the vantage point of the *Laocoön*" and that "your primal experience [*Ur-Erlebnis*] is aligned with Lessing's interpretation of the *Laocoön*, namely, the interpretation of an ancient pathos formula" (Dorothea McEwan, "Wanderstrassen der Kultur": *Die Aby Warburg-Fritz Saxl Korrespondenz 1920 bis 1929* [Munich: Dölling und Galitz, 2004], 203). Warburg's contribution to the congress of the German Society for Aesthetics, to be held in Hamburg in 1930 (as announced in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 24 [1930]: 96; Warburg could not attend, as he died on October 26, 1929), was to be devoted to "The Transitory" (Das Transitorische), and one of the possible subtitles of his atlas, formulated in conjunction with the preparation for that congress and meant as "a supplement to Lessing," was "The Transitory under the Influence of Classical Antiquity from the Renaissance Onward" (Das Transitorische unter dem Einfluß der Antike seit der Renaissance) (Warburg, GS, vol. VII: *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg*, ed. Karen Michels and Charlotte Schoell-Glass [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2001], 162). His pathos formulae are usually thought of as expressing emotional upheaval, uncontrolled energy, but Warburg became more and more interested in his later years in "the interval between the impulse and the action." Rembrandt's brooding Medea, depicted in a truly Lessingian vein as she broods in the shadows upon her revenge over Jason and Creusa, replaced hence Ghirlandajo's ecstatic maenad as the epitome of his concerns: Rembrandt's etching, created "for the 1648 edition of the tragedy written by his patron Jan Six" (Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 235), is one of three works around which Warburg centered his 1926 lecture "Italian Antiquity in the Age of Rembrandt" (Italienische Antike im Zeitalter Rembrandts).

²³ "[I] falso presupposto di considerare i lamenti funebri esclusivamente come documenti di letteratura o di poesia popolare ha condotto ad allineare una serie di testi 'depurati' da tutti gli 'incidenti' della reale esecuzione rituale: ora fra questi 'incidenti' vi sono appunto i ritornelli emotivi, le interiezioni e le interrogazioni periodiche, le stereotipie mimiche e foniche del planctus, gli interventi e le partecipazioni corali, e in genere ciò che forma il tendenziale ordine drammatico del lamento come rito" (MPR 128–29). See also MPR 67.

²⁴ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

²⁵ Virginia Woolf, "On Being Ill" (1930), in *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, vol. 4 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), 194.

condition as originating in the lower leg and from there climbing “upwards in a straight line through the thigh and further through the flank and side to the neck and as far as the head; but as soon as it had touched the latter he was no longer able to follow.” As he could not explain what exactly was rising up to his head, a youth standing nearby, who also suffered from the illness, was able to supply him with a fitting description: “it was like a cold breeze” (*oion auran tina psychran*).²⁶ From this moment on, thanks to the linguistic creation of a sufferer, who was “forced to coin” a name for his pain, physicians could identify this prognostic of the coming seizure as an *aura*.²⁷ Woolf also reminds us of the dazzling incipit of Herder’s *Essay on the Origins of Language*, in which Philoctetes again plays a prominent role:

Already as an animal, the human being has language. All violent sensations of his body, and the most violent of the violent, the painful ones, and all strong passions of his soul immediately express themselves in cries, in sounds, in wild, unarticulated noises. A suffering animal, as much as the hero Philoctetes, when overcome with pain, will whine!, will groan!, even if it were abandoned, on a desolate island, without the sight, the trace, or the hope of a helpful fellow creature. It is as though it breathed more freely by giving vent to its burning, frightened breath; it is as though it moaned away a part of its pain, and at least drew into itself from the empty atmosphere new forces for getting over its pain, by filling the deaf winds with groaning.²⁸

If we agree with the premise that these *Urlaute* are already language, then language can only betray pain insofar as it muffles or distorts or otherwise translates it: it is the atrophy of our language, as Woolf suggests (against Scarry’s reading), which has “all grown one way,”²⁹ that inhibits the expression of pain.

There is an important affinity here with de Martino’s criticism of Benedetto Croce’s sweeping universalism, boldly confident that “all men weep in one way” (*tutti gli uomini piangono ad un modo*),³⁰ whereas there is no single way of weeping, according to de Martino, there is rather a “risk of ‘weeping in one way’” (*ad un modo*) that we ought to be aware of and transcend into that “wisdom of weeping” whose different “historical and cultural modes” his book is meant to explore.³¹ Woolf’s argument suggests that the problem is rooted in the way a particular language works, such as her native English, “which can express the thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear, but has no words for the shiver and the headache,”³² and not in the essence of pain; if at all, then

²⁶ Galen, *De locis affectis*, III, ii, Kühn, vol. 8, 194; quoted in Owsei Tomkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginning of Modern Neurology*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 37.

²⁷ Cf. Davide Stimilli, *The Face of Immortality: Physiognomy and Criticism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2005), 96.

²⁸ J. G. Herder, “Treatise on the Origin of Language” (1772), in *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Michael Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 65.

²⁹ Woolf, “On Being III,” 194.

³⁰ Benedetto Croce, *Frammenti di etica* (1922), cited in MPR 4.

³¹ MPR 11; cf. also MPR 5 and 43.

³² Woolf, “On Being III,” 194.

arguably in the essence of language rather than in that of pain. Scarry's view of the relationship of language and pain is a document more symptomatic of our own enduring effort at anesthetizing pain than of an intrinsic opacity of pain. Scarry turns, in other words, a historic event (the Christian silencing of bodily pain and its transfiguration in spiritual suffering) into a natural trait of pain, as if this event would not be in itself symptomatic of what Nietzsche called the "misinterpretation of the body"³³ that has led to the inexpressibility her book otherwise so eloquently tries to bypass. Kierkegaard's poet, "who in his heart harbors a deep anguish, but whose lips are so fashioned that the moans and cries which pass over them are transformed into ravishing music,"³⁴ is no exception: language, Kierkegaard implies, and before him Herder, is the inescapable Phalaris's bull that amplifies our cries and transforms them into beautiful, soothing melodies. But language as such is not just an attempt at sounding *better*: in Philoctetes's second episode, language comes to a halt in the many lines that are outside the meter, *extra metrum*, in a technical but also and more importantly in an emotional sense, as the protagonist is enduring a paroxysm of pain, and it is to those words *extra metrum*, beyond measure, that both de Martino and Warburg turn our attention. It is also important to remember, as one recent editor has insightfully noticed, that "the cries express not only Philoctetes's physical suffering," but signal "his psychological anguish at being unable to conceal the outbreak of his disease, which might lead Neoptolemus to renege on his promise to take him on board his ship."³⁵ Moreover, as Edmund Wilson no less astutely observed in his essay on the Sophoclean drama, Philoctetes had been abandoned in the first place because his groans "made it impossible to perform the sacrifice, which would be spoiled by ill-omened sounds."³⁶ The language of pain, which cannot be repressed or silenced and is even capable of inhibiting the performance of a sacrifice, is language at its most powerful and at its most effective – an ideal instance of what British psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion called "Language of Achievement," "language that is both prelude to action and itself a kind of action."³⁷

2. PLANGTUS AND PIANTO

Returning to Homer, the last book of the *Iliad* is central to de Martino's discussion in *Death and Ritual Weeping*, but his focus is the lament over Hector's corpse once Priam has managed to bring it back to Troy. De Martino surveys the three female performances of mourning – by the Trojan hero's widow Andromache, his mother Hecuba, and his sister-in-law Helen – and uses them as a foil against which to evaluate Achilles's own reaction to Patroclus's death, which is *prima facie* unworthy of such a great hero, "the best of the

³³ "Philosophie bisher überhaupt nur eine Auslegung des Leibes und ein Mißverständnis des Leibes gewesen ist" (Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe," in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* [Chemnitz: Ernst Schmeitzner, 1882], 15).

³⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 9.

³⁵ Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, ed. Seth L. Schein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 237.

³⁶ E. Wilson, "Philoctetes: The Wound and the Bow," in *Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1930s & 40s* (New York: Library of America, 2007), 460.

³⁷ Echoing John Keats's "Man of Achievement": W. R. Bion, *Attention and Interpretation* (1970), in *Seven Servants* (New York: J. Aronson, 1977), 125.

Achaeans”:³⁸ Achilles, no less, “rolls in the dust at the news of Patroclus’s death,”³⁹ acting without any restraint, no differently than a woman would.⁴⁰ De Martino uses Achilles’s reaction to the news of Patroclus’s death as the touchstone of what he calls the “crisis of mourning” (*crisi del cordoglio*) and adds the decisive remark that what we are witnessing “is obviously not the lament, but the *planctus*, which drives to the threshold of madness. The discourse of lamentation will come later, when the same Achilles will rise over the *planctus* of the Achaeans, having turned himself bravely, for himself and for the others, into the leader of lament (ἔξαρχος γόοιο).”⁴¹ One can then easily differentiate “the two moments of crisis” from the “order that is established through ritual lamentation”⁴² since in both cases “the transition from the *planctus* to the discourse of lamentation is underscored by a ritual gesture”: Achilles resting his hand on Patroclus’s chest, and Andromache holding Hector’s head in her hands.⁴³

De Martino introduces here the crucial distinction between Latin *planctus* in its etymological sense and its Italian derivative *pianto*. To return to my original point, language matters, the way we talk about pain, the specific vocabulary of pain and lament⁴⁴ that we turn to when we talk about pain is the crux of the matter, and I would like to suggest that de Martino’s and Warburg’s considerations on the expression of grief through language and gesture, in *Wort und Bild*, to use Warburg’s favorite hendiadys, are shaped by the languages they respectively speak. De Martino’s considerations on lament, to stay with him, are ultimately based on the realization that modern Italian *pianto* has surrendered the mimic element that was expressed by Latin *planctus*, hence the transition from paganism to Christianity is crystallized in the semantic history of the term, which has survived as a loanword in modern Italian but has lost in the process its gestural component: “Christianity inaugurated without question a new era in the practices toward death, which is attested also by the semantic shift that occurred in the word *planctus*, which in Latin refers to the gesture of beating one’s breast (*plangere pectora*), whereas in Italian the word

³⁸ Cf. Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

³⁹ MPR 83.

⁴⁰ Since de Martino does not hesitate to stigmatize “the spectacular character that mourning took in the Homeric world [...] or in ancient Israel” (il carattere spettacolare che il cordoglio assumeva nel mondo omerico [...] o nell’antico Israele) (MPR 83) and uses it to measure our distance from the Homeric epos and the biblical ethos, it may not be unfair to use the same standard to measure our distance from de Martino himself, when he writes with a language that cannot but sound problematic to our contemporary sensibility (even taking into account the inverted commas): “Achilles’s crisis over Patroclus’s death manifests itself in ‘excessive’ ways that we would not be today amenable to allow to a ‘normal’ man, and that we may at most tolerate with a different set of mind in the female peasants of Southern Italy or the Balkan peninsula” (la crisi di Achille per la morte di Patroclo si manifesta in modi ‘eccessivi’ che noi oggi non saremmo disposti a concedere a un uomo ‘normale’, e che possiamo al più tollerare con varia disposizione d’animo nelle contadine dell’Italia meridionale o della penisola balcanica) (MPR 44).

⁴¹ “[Q]uesto evidentemente non è il lamento ma il *planctus*, che trascina sino alle soglie della follia. Il discorso della lamentazione verrà poi, quando sul *planctus* degli Achei si leverà lo stesso Achille, fattosi coraggiosamente, per sé e per gli altri, guida del *pianto* (ἔξαρχος γόοιο)” (MPR 195).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ MPR 196.

⁴⁴ Another entry in the “vocabulary of Indo-European institutions,” even if Benveniste did not include a discussion of this specific institution in his magisterial survey.

pianto has only the meaning of shedding tears, of the simple *flere*.⁴⁵ Modern Italian *pianto* is no longer *planctus*: the Latin term meant a rhythmic gesture, not the shedding of tears, the natural release of excessive humidity by the body. The *planctus*, “which drives to the threshold of madness” and is therefore still close to the Greek style of lamentation, has thus become “a subdued weeping” (*pianto somnesso*).⁴⁶

It is precisely the knowledge of how to weep that, according to de Martino, “reintegrates man in human history.”⁴⁷ But how do we learn to weep? In his *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, a book that made an epochal impression on Warburg when he first read it in Florence in the 1880s,⁴⁸ Darwin had listed weeping (or crying, which for him are “synonymous terms”) as the first among the special human expressions and called it “the primary and natural expression, as we see in children, of suffering of any kind,”⁴⁹ even as he went on to explain it as “an incidental result” of their “prolonged screaming,” which “inevitably leads to the gorging of the blood-vessels of the eye” and a chain of further physiological reactions up to “the secretion of tears” as a reliable “relief of suffering.”⁵⁰ De Martino agrees with the premise that tears are a natural expression, a natural symbol of pain, but one that must be tamed and disciplined, refined into a *saper piangere*. The natural, immediate emotional response at the ontogenetic level is later replaced by what de Martino calls, in language indebted to Marcel Mauss’s definition of the *techniques du corps*, “technique of weeping, namely, a model of behavior that culture founds and tradition safeguards in order to regenerate [*ridischiudere*] the values that the crisis of mourning threatens to compromise.”⁵¹ Or, more emphatically, “in order to grant the deceased a second, cultural death, which avenges the scandal of natural death.”⁵²

De Martino acknowledges the diversity of such techniques against Croce’s universalism, as we have seen, since each culture is ultimately based on its way of weeping,⁵³ and explanation has to stop before the realization that “one weeps in a certain way” (*si piange così*),⁵⁴ but the teleologism of his view is undeniable, whether he happens

⁴⁵ “Senza dubbio il Cristianesimo inaugurò una nuova epoca del costume di fronte alla morte, del che rende tra l’altro testimonianza il mutamento semantico intervenuto nella parola *planctus*, che in latino indica il percuotersi (*plangere pectora*), mentre in italiano la parola *pianto* ha soltanto quello del versare lacrime, del semplice *flere*” (MPR 355).

⁴⁶ MPR 359.

⁴⁷ “[Q]uel *saper piangere* che reintegra l’uomo nella storia umana” (MPR 5).

⁴⁸ Cf. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 72 and 283.

⁴⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 145–75: 155. “Weeping and crying are synonymous terms” (147), Darwin explains, since “crying out or wailing from any distress is so regularly accompanied by the shedding of tears,” and quotes Hensleigh Wedgwood’s *Dictionary of English Etymology*, according to which “the verb to weep comes from Anglo-Saxon *wop*, the primary meaning of which is simply outcry” (164).

⁵⁰ Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions*, 174–75.

⁵¹ “[T]ecnica del piangere, cioè un modello di comportamento che la cultura fonda e la tradizione conserva al fine di ridischiudere i valori che la crisi del cordoglio rischia di compromettere” (MPR 57).

⁵² “[P]rocurare al defunto quella seconda morte culturale che vendica lo scandalo della morte naturale” (MRP 236). Cf. also MPR 213: “quella ‘seconda morte’ culturale che l’uomo procura alla ‘prima morte’ naturale, ridischiudendo il ‘diritto dei vivi.’”

⁵³ Cf. de Martino’s definition of *umana civiltà* as “the formal power to turn into value that which in nature races toward death” (la potenza formale di far passare nel valore ciò che in natura corre verso la morte) (MPR 236).

⁵⁴ MPR 86.

to privilege the Christian way or the integral humanism of realized communism, as long as the development leads to “a society in which man – any man – feels himself so much a citizen *pleno iure* than he can accept the dying that wounds it by merely accompanying it with a subdued weeping,”⁵⁵ or, as he puts it in even more elegiac tones and almost *sottovoce* in the very last sentence of the book, with “a sweet melancholy that does not swell over the ‘subdued weeping,’”⁵⁶ echoing again St. Augustine (while quoting himself). And de Martino has no qualms in stating openly, in terms that are clearly indebted to Croce’s idealism, how “the fundamental task of the historian remains always that of illustrating the dramatic struggle with which the realm of the ends of human civilization is raised over the a-teleological suffering.”⁵⁷

“Subdued weeping,” the restrained expression of pain, is thus the goal that de Martino sets for human civilization in *Death and Ritual Weeping* and one that he sees ideally represented in Ghirlandaio’s fresco of Santa Fina’s funeral service in San Gimignano or, even more so, in Perugino’s *Deposition*, which is the ultimate portrayal of “Christian composure enlightened by piety and hope,”⁵⁸ whereas in the concluding page of the later *Magic: A Theory from the South (Sud e magia)*, it is another episode from *The Iliad*, the delivery of Achilles’s shield, which his mother Thetis brings to the hero while he is still embraced to Patroclus’s corpse, and its detailed description that serve to introduce a more secular but no less eschatological view of the coming redemption of the Southern masses: “Upon seeing these images governed by the measure of human work, the hero opens himself up again to his heroic destiny and rises up trembling: ‘It is time to take up arms!’ For the Southern Italians, too, it is necessary to abandon the sterile embrace of the corpses of their history and open themselves up to a heroic destiny that is higher and more modern than what they had in the past.”⁵⁹

3. *KLAGE* AND CRY

Very stressful months followed Warburg’s return to Hamburg in 1924 after his release from the clinic of Kreuzlingen, where he had been hospitalized since 1921, as plans for the new building of the library were being laid out; the regained proximity to his cherished “*Arbeitswerkzeug*”⁶⁰ afforded him all the ease of research he had so badly missed in Kreuzlingen but also demanded a reorientation in the no longer familiar surroundings;⁶¹

⁵⁵ “[U]na società in cui l’uomo—qualsiasi uomo—si senta a tal punto suo cittadino pleno iure da poter accettare il morire che la vulnera accompagnandolo soltanto con un sommesso pianto” (MPR 359).

⁵⁶ “[U]na dolce melanconia che non va oltre il ‘sommesso pianto’” (MPR 381).

⁵⁷ “[I]l compito fondamentale dello storico resta sempre quello di illustrare la lotta drammatica con la quale sull’ateologico patire si innalza il regno dei fini della umana civiltà” (MPR 231).

⁵⁸ “[L]a compostezza cristiana illuminata di pietà e di speranza” (MPR 381).

⁵⁹ “[O]nde alla vista di queste immagini governate dalla misura dell’opera umana, l’eroe si ridischiede al suo destino eroico, e si leva fremente: ‘è giunta l’ora di armarmi!’ Anche per le genti meridionali si tratta di abbandonare lo sterile abbraccio con i cadaveri della loro storia, e di dischiudersi a un destino eroico più alto e moderno di quello che pur fu loro nel passato” (*Sud e Magia* [Milan: Feltrinelli, 1959], 184; trans. Dorothy L. Zinn, *Magic: A Theory from the South* [Chicago, IL: HAU Books, 2015], 188, slightly modified).

⁶⁰ The expression is Fritz Saxl’s: Warburg Institute Archive (hereafter cited as WIA), General Correspondence (hereafter cited as GC), Saxl to Warburg, June 1, 1922.

⁶¹ In spite of Saxl’s best efforts “to arrange everything in the library in such a way that the difficulties of orientation [*die Schwierigkeiten der Orientierung*] may be as minimal as possible” (WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, July 9, 1924).

the complex negotiations for the purchase of his late friend Franz Boll's library took much more time and energy than expected, and the sudden eruption of "a second Kreuzlingen"⁶² was therefore still a feared and impending possibility. A telling document of Warburg's state of mind during this trying time is a letter to Gustav Herbig, linguist in Munich and Boll's father-in-law. Herbig was originally supposed to participate in the celebration that Warburg planned in memory of the great historian of astrology, who had recently deceased, and lecture on Etruscan hepatoscopy, a topic of great interest to Warburg, as his own lecture on that occasion may prove.⁶³ Herbig ended up, however, declining the invitation, also because of a lingering animosity, which clearly transpires from the tone of this letter, due to the ambivalent role he played in the negotiation over his son-in-law's library. Warburg, however, managed to restrain his obvious resentment while expressing it in by now familiar terms, as he presented himself in the pose of an Achilles ready to revenge Patroclus's death:

Do not forget that I am a revenant from the sanatorium who knows that "hosanna" and "crucifige" live side by side, who does not want to be praised to the skies, but only wishes respect for his *daimonion*. My comrade in arms has fallen, and, in his manly manner, he would not wish and expect anything else from me than I take up his arms. I would like to be no longer disturbed, as I fulfil my duty, by the question, how much his swords are worth to me as scrap metal.⁶⁴

Another, and even more immediate echo is Hamlet's most celebrated monologue, which Warburg had copied on a *Zettel*, probably in the spring of 1924, up to the words "and by opposing end them."⁶⁵ Having faced for so long "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," he had no doubt resolved in his mind "to take arms."

The letter is a telling example of Warburg's *terribilità*, which many who knew him intimately have remarked upon,⁶⁶ and it gives already a hint that a "subdued weeping" was not the attitude Warburg was naturally inclined to, even, or especially, after the tremendous trial he had undergone. *Klage* was part and parcel of Warburg's intellectual vocabulary

⁶² WIA, GC, Saxl to Max Adolph Warburg, Aby's son, September 9, 1924.

⁶³ Cf. Aby Warburg, "Die Einwirkungen der Sphaera barbarica auf die kosmischen Orientierungsversuche des Abendlandes" (April 25, 1925), in "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram": *Sternglaube und Bilddeutung. Vortrag in Gedenken an Franz Boll und andere Schriften 1923 bis 1925*, ed. Davide Stimilli with Claudia Wedepohl (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008), 73ff.

⁶⁴ WIA, GC, Warburg to Herbig, November 15, 1924.

⁶⁵ *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 1, lines 56–60; WIA, Zettelkasten 045/023953.

⁶⁶ Gertrud Bing observed, and Max Adolph Warburg confirmed her remark in a lecture he wrote on the occasion of his father's centennial anniversary, "that his person had something of the Old Testament prophet. All those who have experienced on themselves the full measure and eloquence of his wrath must have felt that way" (Gertrud Bing, "Aby M. Warburg" [1958], in Aby M. Warburg, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*, ed. Dieter Wuttke, 3rd ed. [Baden-Baden: Koerner, 1992], 456). To describe this side of Aby's personality, Max Adolph uses *terribilità* in explicit reference to Bing's remark and recommends understanding the term in its whole semantic range, from *enfant terrible* to Michelangelo's *terribilità*. (I published an Italian translation of Max Adolph Warburg's lecture, which was never delivered [WIA III.134.4.1.1.]: "Per il centenario della nascita di Aby Warburg" [1966], in the monographic issue of the journal *aut aut* I edited: *Aby Warburg. La dialettica dell'immagine, aut aut*, 321–322 [2004]: 173–83, 179).

at least since his 1905 study of Dürer's engraving of the *Death of Orpheus* but was also one of the *Leitmotiv* of his writing during and after his ordeal, as he found himself cast in the role of antagonist and engaged with all his manic energy⁶⁷ in a radical protest against the modern society that had descended into the abyss of a world conflagration, while banishing him in the process. Another letter from this crucial period provides one of the most revealing and ambitious statements to this effect: writing to his wife, Mary Warburg, on April 7, 1924, Warburg expresses the high hopes he had for the collegial work that the "'higher unity' Boll-Cassirer-Warburg" was capable of producing.⁶⁸ This is the way he formulates their program, as he envisioned it: "The origin of man's way of expression, as he is spiritually orienting himself, from the experience of his cosmic totality, which becomes an inhuman burden through the consciousness of his absolutely ill-fated descent to the underworld. The Orphic lament against the Platonic vision as incomprehensible polarity."⁶⁹ In spite of the hermetic laconicism of his statement, it is clear that Warburg is both interested in the question of the origin of expression as a form of orientation, which had been central to his early engagement with Darwin and his various texts on the theory of expression from the 1890s,⁷⁰ and in the form of lament he qualifies as Orphic as an irreducible alternative to philosophic contemplation.

Warburg included an excerpt from this letter among the disparate materials that he gathered under the title *Powers of Destiny as Reflected in the Mirror of all'antica Symbolism (Schicksalsmächte im Spiegel antikisierender Symbolik)*, a project that is the germ, I have argued, of the atlas *Mnemosyne*.⁷¹ Another page from that same set of texts provides an exegesis of Warburg's programmatic statement, as he now makes reference to *der Orphische Urlaub*, and it is clearly Orpheus the creator of language, the anonymous onomaturgist of the *Cratylus*, that he has in mind:⁷²

⁶⁷ Cf. Davide Stimilli, "L'énigme de Warburg," *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* 79 (2015): 1100–1114, and my introduction "Tinctura Warburgii," in Ludwig Binswanger and Aby Warburg, *Die unendliche Heilung. Aby Warburgs Krankengeschichte*, ed. Chantal Marazia and Davide Stimilli (Berlin: diaphanes, 2007), 7–25.

⁶⁸ Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram," 42. The third component is, of course, the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who played no less important a role than Boll in securing Warburg's recovery (cf. my "Einleitung" to Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram,") 24–25.

⁶⁹ "Die Entstehung der Ausdrucksweise des geistig sich orientierenden Menschen aus der Erfahrung seiner kosmischen Totalität, die zur unmenschlichen Last wird durch das Bewusstsein seiner absolut verhängten Unterwelts-Todesfahrt. Die orphische Klage gegen platonische Schau als unbegreifliche Polarität" (Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram," 42).

⁷⁰ Now available in Warburg, GS IV: *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer and Hans Christian Hönes (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

⁷¹ Cf. my "Einleitung" to Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram," 19–20.

⁷² Orpheus returned to his attention in those years probably because of the external stimuli provided by Fritz Saxl's research in the continuity of pagan and Christian religious symbolism ("Frühes Christentum und spätes Heidentum in ihren künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen," *Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 16 (1923): 63–121), Robert Eisler's lecture "Orphisch-dionysische Mysteriengedanken in der Christlichen Antike" (published separately under that title in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1922-1923/II. Teil*), and his intensive reading of Jane Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (cf. Ludwig Binswanger and Aby Warburg, *Die unendliche Heilung*, 121), but also, and most immediately, because of his identification with the fate of the mythical singer, dismembered by the maenads, as demonstrated by a letter to his wife, Mary (WIA, Family Correspondence, January 15, 1921), from the Jena clinic of Dr. Hans Berger, where he was briefly hospitalized before his internment in Kreuzlingen (cf. Stimilli, "Tinctura Warburgii," 13–15).

On the one side the legislating, immanent cosmic necessity, man a particle within it. On the other side, the absolutely annihilating power of fate hostile to man, the envy of the ancient gods, the whole tragic circle of the annihilated. To them belongs *Orpheus* and the lament against fate, against death. And it is lament over the dead and hope to meet again, the Orphic primal sound, that belongs there. The fable of Orpheus encompasses the whole circle of human feelings of impotence vis-à-vis fate in their hopes and in their annihilation.⁷³

Warburg continues with an aside on the transformation that the Orpheus mythical complex experiences as it is appropriated by the Romans: “The whole Orpheus-circle appears in the case of the Romans in its crude sedimentation on the world. Whatever the singing and fighting primal hero of the Greek saga does, is flatly re-embodied ‘*in grisaille*’ in the Roman *virtus*.”⁷⁴ Latin *virtus* is thus only a pale translation of the Greek lament that Orpheus created and personified, or, rather, of its German reembodiment *Klage*.⁷⁵ It is highly likely that Warburg exploited with full cognizance the ambiguity of the German term, which may mean “complaint” and “accusation” besides “lament”: the patients’ “*plaints (Klagen)* are really *complaints (Anklagen)*, according to the old sense of the word,” as Freud observes in *Mourning and Melancholy*.⁷⁶ Originally, however, the verb *klagen*, from which the substantive *Klage* is derived, meant nothing else but “crying” in the sense of “screaming”⁷⁷ but then experienced a semantic transformation similar to that of Latin *clamare*, which means both “to cry out” and “to accuse in court,” and of English “crying” itself,⁷⁸ whose range of meaning is even broader, however, as it encompasses also the very shedding of tears, as we have seen. When Warburg talks

⁷³ “Auf der einen Seite die gesetzgebende, immanente kosmische Notwendigkeit, der Mensch eine Partikel davon. Auf der andern Seite die absolut vernichtende Gewalt des menschenfeindlichen Schicksals, Neid der antiken Götter, der ganze tragische Kreis der Vernichteten. In den gehört Orpheus und die Klage wider das Schicksal, wider den Tod. Und dazu gehört der orphische Urlaut, ist Klage um den Toten und Hoffnung auf Wiedersehen. Die Fabel des Orfeo beschliesst den ganzen Kreislauf menschlicher Ohnmachts-Empfindungen dem Schicksal gegenüber in seinen Hoffnungen und in seiner Vernichtung” (Warburg, “*Per Monstra ad Sphaeram*,” 44).

⁷⁴ “Bei den Römern erscheint der ganze Orpheus-Kreis in seinem derben Niederschlag auf der Welt. Was der singende und kämpfende Urheros in der griechischen Sage tut, das bekommt seine platte Wiederverkörperung ‘in Grisaille’ in der römischen *Virtus*” (ibid.). On *grisaille*, cf. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 247, 264, and 296.

⁷⁵ These are, of course, the years in which Rilke wrote the *Sonette an Orpheus* and the last *Duineser Elegien*.

⁷⁶ Freud, “Trauer und Melancholie” (1917), *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 10 (London: Imago, 1947), 434. I borrow the pun from Strachey’s translation in the *Standard Edition* (vol. 14, 248) but reverse the two terms, as warranted by the context and their respective meaning. Cf. also English *plaintiff*, which meant both “a complainer” and a person who “complains” of sickness according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *ad vocem*, before becoming the technical term for a “complainant” in a court of law. I thank Charles Stewart for bringing my attention to this link. Interestingly, de Martino has a similar pun on the Italian terms *cosa* and *causa*, both derived by Latin *causa*: in the world of the mentally ill, the world that de Martino calls “the sick presence” (*presenza malata*) (MPR 24), “things (*le cose*) become causes (*cause*), not in the physical sense of the term, but rather in the legal one of causes brought against the sick person” (MPR 29).

⁷⁷ Cf. Leo Spitzer, “Altfranzösisch *clamer*; altprovenzalisch *clamar* ‘anklagen’ und einiges Prinzipielles aus diesem Anlaß,” *Wörter und Sachen* 9 (1919): 69–81, for a still masterful discussion of the linguistic evidence.

⁷⁸ If we are willing to accept the etymology of “cry” that derives it from Latin *quiritare* through French *cri*: any cry would thus be a cry for help, a summoning of fellow human beings, useless when stranded on a deserted island, like Philoctetes.

about *Klage*, he is then not evoking the ritual production of tears but rather invoking the power of “the eternally new, the unappeased lament” (*die ewig neue, die unausgesetzte Klage*) that Walter Benjamin heard resound in Karl Kraus’s voice,⁷⁹ decrying a world that is perceived as unjust and inhuman, or “the bad past, the past that was not chosen.”⁸⁰ We may be confident that Warburg, too, overheard in *Klage* the complaint, which has to be loud but clearly articulated in order to be heard and be effective, rather than the unrestrained outburst of pathos in need of being disciplined and subdued, which is the justification of de Martino’s “discipline of weeping” (*disciplina del pianto*).⁸¹

In Warburg’s case, faithful to the Orphic teaching, the accused is death itself, and *Klage* is the charge brought against the injustice of nature and of any supposedly natural death by the “annihilated.” De Martino rightly denounced “the scandal of natural death” only to sublimate it, however, in the Hegelian sense of *aufheben*, in a second, cultural death. It is important to appreciate Warburg’s unwavering stance on this crucial point: the “*a teleologico patire*” that, according to de Martino, has to be overcome and sublated in the realm of ends, cannot be redeemed or transfigured, according to Warburg, but only repressed and distorted, be it the pain of Niobe⁸² or of Medea,⁸³ or even the pain of Mary at the feet of the cross: a mother’s pain is not justifiable or redeemable in the name of any *telos*. Warburg is not interested in reconciliation, equipoise, in the neoclassical *edle Einfalt und stille Grösse* that Winckelmann had somehow seen in Laocoön’s distorted features and heard in Philoctetes’s fitful cries⁸⁴ and that de Martino admires in the transfigured beauty of Ghirlandaio’s burial and Perugino’s deposition. It was rather another work by Ghirlandaio, the *Massacre of the Innocents* in the Cappella Tornabuoni in Florence, that helped Warburg realize, along with reliefs such as Baccio di Bartolo’s, that the Renaissance had been primarily interested in rediscovering the classical *Unruhe*⁸⁵ rather than its opposite.

Klage was one of the *Urworte* making up Warburg’s intellectual vocabulary but also the *Urworte* of pathetic gestural language that he was trying to isolate and identify as the basis of any pathos formula.⁸⁶ The Boll lecture ends with the evocation of one of the most enigmatic texts of Goethe’s old age, the five stanzas gathered under the title

⁷⁹ Walter Benjamin, “Karl Kraus” (1931), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (Frankfurt am Main.: Suhrkamp, 1977), 345; trans. Edmund Jephcott, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 440, slightly modified.

⁸⁰ The “return of the bad past, the past that was not chosen” (*ritorno del cattivo passato, del passato che non fu scelto*) is de Martino’s definition of *rimorso* in *La terra del rimorso* (Milan: Saggiatore, 1961), perhaps his most Warburgian work.

⁸¹ MPR IX.

⁸² Niobe is for de Martino no more than the extreme example of “the self-destructive furor” (MPR 46) that results in “an inauthentic, ominous and threatening calm” (MPR 45).

⁸³ See note 22 above.

⁸⁴ Winckelmann famously compared Laocoön’s suffering to Philoctetes in his *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (1755) and concluded that Laocoön suffered his pain with the calm and composure, “the noble simplicity and sedate grandeur [*edle Einfalt und stille Grösse*] in gesture and expression” (trans. David Irwin, *Writings on Art* [London: Phaidon, 1972], 72), that characterized Greek art and literature at its peak.

⁸⁵ Warburg, “Eintritt des antikisierenden Idealstils in die Malerei der Frührenaissance,” 307.

⁸⁶ Warburg was attempting, concurrently with the *Mnemosyne* project, to create a table of categories, the *Urworte* of pathetic gestural language, and *Klage* figures consistently therein, leading up to the Ovid exhibition, *Urworte leidenschaftlicher Gebärdensprache* (January 29–February 12, 1927), in the KBW (see the *Bilderreihe* including

Urworte. Orphisch, the “primal words” that Goethe retrieved out of the vocabulary of ancient Orphism and in particular of the fourth line of the first stanza, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ.⁸⁷

When he invokes his *daimonion* in the letter to Herbig, Warburg is thus knowingly following the example of Goethe, who tried to rescue the name from its Christianized spelling by restoring its original Greek in the *Urworte* and, even more so, by employing the German loanword *dämonisch* as a key term in his autobiography. The uncanny effect the return of a repressed name produces is here emphasized by Goethe’s choice of the word in order to name something that he vouches to be unnamable:

He thought he could detect in nature – both animate and inanimate, with soul or without soul – something which manifests itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under any idea, still less under one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed unreasonable; not human, for it had no understanding; nor devilish, for it was beneficent; nor angelic, for it often betrayed a malicious pleasure. [...] To this principle, which seemed to come in between all other principles to separate them, and yet to link them together, I gave the name of Demonic [*Dieses Wesen (...) nannte ich dämonisch*], after the example of the ancients.⁸⁸

Goethe introduces the term as he describes the process that lead to the composition of *Egmont*: at a particularly critical time in his life, he “tried to screen himself from this fearful principle, by taking refuge, according to his usual habits, in an imaginary creation.” In creating *Egmont*’s character, however, Goethe’s customary mechanism of defense was taking on nothing less than “the most fearful manifestation of the demonic” itself, its embodiment in an “individual character.”⁸⁹

We may see a similar mechanism at work when Warburg chose to hold one of his first seminars after his return from Kreuzlingen on the two individual characters who had had the most powerful impact on him, Burckhardt and Nietzsche: their polarity clearly

Verfolgung, Verwandlung, Raub, Opfertod, Menschenopfer, Opfertanz, Klage, and Sieg reproduced in GS II.2: *Bilderreihen und Ausstellungen*, ed. Uwe Fleckner and Isabella Woldt [Berlin: Akademie, 2012], 72–97).

⁸⁷ “According to the law presiding at your birth” (*Nach dem Gesetz, wonach du angetreten*). Warburg may have found the stanza quoted in Boll’s *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, cf. WIA, III.12.3, fol. 15: “Goethe *Urworte* Orphisch Boll S. 100” (probably July 1924) (Warburg quotes from the second edition: Franz Boll and Carl Bezold, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung. Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1919]). In 1817, Goethe read the essay “Tyche and Nemesis” by the Danish philologist and antiquarian Georg Zoega, who quoted a passage from Macrobius that ostensibly inspired Goethe’s composition of the *Urworte*: “According to the Egyptians, the gods who attend a man’s birth are four: Δαίμων, Τύχη, Ἐρως, Ἀνάγκη.” Goethe’s series of poems is meant as a meditation on this anecdote, and his own later prose commentary (1820) further elaborates the programmatic meaning of the cycle. To the four sacred words (Macrobius calls them *ieroi logoi*), *Daimon*, *Tyche*, *Eros*, *Ananke*, Goethe adds a fifth one, *Elpis*. Zoega was first identified as a source by Karl Borinski, “Goethes *Urworte*. Orphisch,” *Philologus* 69 (1910): 1–9, an essay with which Warburg was familiar; cf. Stimilli, *The Face of Immortality*, 105–6. The ring-book WIA III.12.21 contains notes from 1927/1929, devoted, among other themes, to Goethe’s quadriga (fols. [92–96]), on which cf. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 267.

⁸⁸ Goethe, *The Autobiography of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, trans. John Oxenford, vol. 2 (Chicago: IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 423, slightly modified.

⁸⁹ Goethe, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 423, slightly modified.

corresponds to that of *Schau* and *Klage*, or of *sophrosyne* and *mania*.⁹⁰ (Warburg himself, it may have become clear by now, plays the Nietzsche to de Martino's Burckhardt in my reading.) The conclusion of the Boll lecture had already warned of the dangers involved in trusting "monsters," even when they appear to be tamed, like the "*Fünfgespann*," the five-horse chariot of Goethe's *Urworte*, the *ieroi logoi*, the primal or sacred words that he had found mentioned in Macrobios: "Who will trust themselves in their ascent to the aether to master the five-horse chariot Daimon, Eros, Tyche, Ananke and Elpis? Let's already be thankful, if in the contemplation of the eternal enigma [*bei der Contemplation der ewigen Rätselhaftigkeit*] we can fulfil our duty as scrupulously as Franz Boll."⁹¹ Goethe writes to Herder that "to grasp, to grab is the essence of every mastery" (*drein greifen, packen ist das Wesen jeder Meisterschaft*) in the July 1772 letter, in which he reports to his friend on his reading of Pindar and his newly acquired admiration for the "mastery, epicratean, virtuosity" (*Meisterschaft, epikratein, Virtuosität*) that is needed to steer a quadriga, standing in a chariot and having to dominate four unruly horses "till all their sixteen feet move in unison and carry you to the goal."⁹² Hermann Usener, Warburg's teacher in Bonn and another crucial influence in his formative years, had asked of the philologists a similar command of their craft, and almost in the same words: "The decisive mark of the philological interpretation is grammatical tact or, if one prefers, mastery, virtuosity" (*Meisterschaft, Virtuosität*).⁹³ And even if Warburg emphasizes at the end of the Boll lecture that he had no claim to such a mastery, this was hardly his last word. In the library journal we find an entry on August 9, 1929, just two months before his death, that tries a daring synthesis between the alternative poles of *vita activa* (here Italianized in *vita fattiva*) and *vita contemplativa*:

From handling *Von der Hantierung*
 (*Vita fattiva*) (*Vita fattiva*)
 over the em-bracing *über die um-fassende*
 formation to the awakening *Gestaltung zur erwachenden*
 vision of the future *Zukunftsschau*
 (*Vita contemplativa prophetica*) (*Vita contemplativa prophetica*)⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Warburg identifies Burckhardt with Goethe's Lynkeus, "a necromancer with his eyes open, [...] who conjured up specters which quite seriously threatened him, but evaded them by erecting his observation tower" (*seinen Seherturm*), and with the Batavian "seeress" Veleda, who also took refuge on a tower: Warburg opposes her to "the mother who tears her son (Pentheus) limb from limb," namely, Agave, hence to Nietzsche, "the type of a Nabi, the ancient prophet who runs out into the street, tears his clothes, cries woe" (*Wehe schreit*) (Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 255–56); but cf. the enlightening remarks by the editors of Warburg's *Werke* on Veleda's role in the rebellion of the Batavians against the Romans and her meaning in the context of Warburg's late interest in Rembrandt's *Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*, which they see correctly (and consistently with Warburg's reading) as a monument "to the necessity of the struggle for rights and freedom" (Warburg, *Werke*, 669); cf. also Stimilli, "L'énigme de Warburg," 1100–1111.

⁹¹ Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram," 127. The lecture closes with the line from the *Urworte* I quoted in note 86 above.

⁹² *Sophien-Ausgabe*, vol. 4.2 (Weimar 1887), 17. Warburg makes reference to the letter on WIA, III.12.21, fol. [93].

⁹³ Hermann Usener, "Philologie und Geschichtswissenschaft," *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914), 20.

⁹⁴ Warburg, GS VII: *Tagebuch der KBW*, 492 (August 9, 1929).

One may well sum up Warburg's life-project, but especially the "illustrated psychological history of the interval between impulse and action" (*illustrierte psychologische Geschichte des Zwischenraums zwischen Antrieb und Handlung*)⁹⁵ that he intended to provide with his atlas, as an attempt to bypass (or, better, again in Hegelian terms, to sublimate, *aufheben*) the old *Contrasto-Spiel*, in his words, between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* and thereby to attain the higher synthesis of such a *vita contemplativa prophetica*.⁹⁶ We can unmistakably hear, however, as a fundamental chord underlying all Warburg's writing, the lament of *vita activa* against *vita contemplativa*, of Leah against Rachel,⁹⁷ and the praise of the impulse to act against the pure theoretical attitude.⁹⁸ The language of *Klage* can only truly resonate in a social context, as opposed to the privatization and domestication of *planctus* in *pianto*. Varro's intriguing, if unscientific, etymology of *quiritare*, from which English "crying" likely derives, claims that it meant to implore the aid of the *Quirites*, or Roman citizens, by crying out loudly ("*Quiritare dicitur is qui Quiritum fidem clamans inplorat*," *De Lingua Latina*, bk. 6, 68). We may have "no language but a cry," and yet we will not fail to reach an audience and create an enduring social bond if it is a veritable *cri du cœur*.⁹⁹

4. CODA: A DESCENT INTO THE MITHRAEUM¹⁰⁰

Warburg's sensibility is closer to ours than de Martino's, who sought refuge in a neoclassicism Warburg, always a loyal Nietzschean, instinctively rejected. It is the Baroque *Massacre of the Innocents* that Warburg, as we have seen, was fascinated by, rather than the equiposed Ghirlandaio of the San Gimignano fresco. Another wonderfully evocative text by Edmund Wilson recounts his only conversation with the late journalist and Christian apologist Paul Elmer More, whom he visited at Princeton along with the literary scholar Christian Gauss in December 1929, just a couple of months after Warburg's death. The pretext for the visit was Gauss's desire to brush up his knowledge of Mithraism with an expert, until a *deus ex machina* entered the scene in the shape of a collector, who encouraged the visitors to see for themselves the fine specimen of a Mithraic bull he had just brought back from Europe and donated to the university museum. On their way there, Gauss spoke "of his affection for More" and told Wilson "a curious story":

⁹⁵ Warburg, GS II.1: *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, 3.

⁹⁶ Warburg, GS VII: *Tagebuch der KBW*, 429. Cf. other late formulations of the alternative between *vita contemplativa* and *activa*: "*Vita activa – vita contemplativa*/von der Ergreifung – zur Ergriffenheit" (WIA, III.102.2.2., fol. [28], May 8, 1928); "*Vita activa – leidenschaftliche Ekstase/Vita contemplativa – leidenschaftliches Ergriffensein*" (WIA, III.102.3.1., *Mnemosyne Grundbegriffe*, fol. [80], June 3, 1929).

⁹⁷ Their respective personifications in Dante's dream just before entering earthly Paradise (*Purg.* 27).

⁹⁸ His son Max Adolph rightly claimed that *Zivildourage* was his father's defining virtue, and if only more Germans had possessed it to his degree, "we might have been spared the horrors of Nazism and our second war" (M. A. Warburg, "Per il centenario della nascita di Aby Warburg," 182).

⁹⁹ Cf. Rudolf Bilz's compelling theories in his *Studien über Angst und Schmerz* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971) on the call (*Ruf*) as a substitute for lost eye contact (31) and the origin of society from the need to keep in touch at a distance, while gathering food or hunting, through the emission of sounds similar to the cuckoo cry ("Die Kuckucksterz: eine paläoanthropologische Studie," 29–57). Bilz sums up his insights based on the Herderian premise that "*es gibt Urlaute der Kreatur*" (55) in the formula *timor est clamor*, coined on the mold of St. Augustine's *timor est fuga* (11).

¹⁰⁰ One of the highlights of Warburg's last trip to Italy was his descent into the Mithraeum in Santa Maria Capua Vetere on May 17, 1929 (*Tagebuch der KBW*, 456–57).

When More had come back recently from Italy, he had announced with gratification and assurance that he had discovered the finest picture in Florence. Gauss had said to him: “I’ll bet I can guess what it is! Don’t tell me – I’ll bet I can guess what you think is the finest picture in Florence!” – and he guessed Perugino’s *Crucifixion*.¹⁰¹ He was right; More had been quite taken aback. “But how did you know?” I asked. “Why should he have liked that picture particularly?” “Why, you see Christ way up there – so far above the world.”

They were disappointed, however, as they found upon their arrival the museum dark and locked: “We squinted at the Mithraic bull through the glass, but it was scarcely visible now: we could make out only a whitish blur at the bottom of the cavernous entrance hall.”¹⁰²

De Martino’s taste is no less predictable than More’s, even if the moment he favors is the deposition rather than the elevation of the body of Christ, and we cannot but keep “peering at Mithra through the glass”¹⁰³ with Wilson and Warburg, no longer able as we are to descend to the underworld and reopen (*ridischiudere*)¹⁰⁴ its gates, as Orpheus could, just by the power of his song. We can, however, weep without a pretext, as opposed to the slaves in the *Iliad*, who always need one, Simone Weil poignantly observed, if they wish to shed their tears “with impunity.”¹⁰⁵ Even in “our wiser, later age,” we may still believe that we need pretexts to enjoy such an impunity: once we realize none is needed, we may be free at last. Only then, tears will be a luxury.

¹⁰¹ The so-called *Pazzi Crucifixion* (c. 1495) in the monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, Florence.

¹⁰² E. Wilson, “Mr. More and the Mithraic Bull” (1937), in *Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1930s & 40s*, 17.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ A key term in de Martino’s vocabulary, as even a quick recognition of the quotes included in this paper will confirm.

¹⁰⁵ Weil, “*The Iliad*, or the Poem of Force,” 323.

UNINTENDED CONVERGENCES: ERNESTO DE MARTINO AND ABY WARBURG

The history of reception, or *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, is a vast and still largely unexplored continent. We all agree that the ways in which a poem, a painting, or an event are reworked and reinterpreted raise fundamental historical questions. But there has been a tendency to look at *Rezeptionsgeschichte* in a more or less explicit relativistic perspective, opposing the unpredictable richness and mobility of the reception to the fixity of the text (taking text in a broad sense) assumed by naïve positivists. The implications of this simplistic opposition are self-evident. If there are only interpretations, *anything goes*: we are entitled to conclude that there are innumerable interpretations but no text (or no event).¹

My approach to the history of reception is completely different. I am obviously interested in the history of reception per se, but I am even more interested in the possibility of using the reception of a text as an instrument of textual philology (once again, taking text in a broad sense). A close analysis of Ernesto de Martino's early development and some of his writings would hopefully cast an oblique, conjectural, but potentially fruitful light on Aby Warburg's work and personality – although, as we will see, de Martino never dealt directly with Aby Warburg's work.

1

Ernesto de Martino is considered the most original Italian anthropologist of the twentieth century. There is a growing international interest around his work: a conference in Berlin a few years ago, new translations of his works in France – to mention only the latest events. Let us start with some biographical data.²

Ernesto de Martino was born in Naples in 1908 and died in Rome in 1965. His father was an engineer. Ernesto studied philosophy at the University of Naples, became interested in

¹ Different versions of this paper were delivered at Hamburg University in October 2017 to honor Martin Warnke and at the Warburg Institute in December 2018. Many thanks to Giordana Charuty, Filippo De Vivo, and Claudia Wedepohl for their invaluable help and to Henry Monaco for his linguistic revision. C. Ginzburg, "Just One Witness," in *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the "Final Solution,"* ed. by S. Friedlander (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 82–96, 350–55.

² G. Charuty, *Ernesto De Martino. Les vie antérieures d'un anthropologue* (Marseille: Editions Parenthèses, 2009).

the history of religions, and wrote, under the guidance of Adolfo Omodeo, a dissertation on a ritual related to ancient Greek mysteries. Still in his twenties, de Martino began to work on a book, which was never written, on secular religion (“*religione civile*”): first identified with Fascism, then moving toward Croce’s “*religione della libertà*,” the religion of freedom – that is, liberalism. In the meantime, de Martino had joined a liberal, anti-Fascist group inspired by Benedetto Croce. De Martino later said that the only university he had attended was the one located at “palazzo Filomarino” – Benedetto Croce’s residence in Naples (the same palace where Giambattista Vico had lived and taught). Undoubtedly, Croce – who never was an academic – played a crucial, albeit occasionally ambivalent role in de Martino’s intellectual life. But in his maturity, de Martino refrained from mentioning another, very different influence – a scholar who had become his father-in-law: Vittorio Macchioro.³

2

A Sephardic Jew born in Trieste in 1880, Macchioro was a controversial, for some time internationally known archaeologist and historian of religions; he converted to Catholicism, then to Protestantism, then back to Catholicism before being ejected as a Jew from his academic position according to the racist laws passed in 1938 by the Fascist regime. A stormy life, and a stormy personality.

In May 1929, during his last Italian journey, Aby Warburg met Macchioro in Naples. Both in his private journal and in the journal written along with Gertrud Bing for the Kulturbibliothek, Aby Warburg recorded in a few vivid sentences the impressions Macchioro had left on his two interlocutors. In his book *I greci selvaggi*, Riccardo Di Donato commented on this encounter, as well as on the exchange of letters between Macchioro and Bing in 1932, after Warburg’s death, preserved in the Warburg Institute archives in London.⁴ I will rely on Di Donato’s account but will develop it in a different direction.

“The most interesting visit we had [in Naples],” Aby Warburg wrote in his private journal under the date May 23, 1929, before adding a comment about the visitor, Vittorio Macchioro: “Confused and consumed by his own ideas up to fixation.”⁵ In the journal addressed to the Kulturbibliothek, one reads that, as soon as he received from Warburg an offprint of his essay on the death of Orpheus, Macchioro erupted in an endless flow of words, “his own mysticisms.” A further, laconic remark by Warburg follows in the journal: “an obsessed man. But Bacchus” (*Ein Besessener. Aber Βάκχος*).⁶

³ See R. Di Donato, “Preistoria di Ernesto de Martino,” in *La contraddizione felice?*, ed. by R. Di Donato (Pisa: Edizione Ets, 1990), 43–67. The importance of Di Donato’s discovery was emphasized by Cesare Cases in a postscriptum (1997) to his introduction to E. de Martino, *Il mondo magico* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1997), xlix–lii; see *Le intrecciate vie. Carteggio di Ernesto de Martino con Vittorio Macchioro e Raffaele Pettazzoni*, ed. by R. Di Donato and M. Gandini (Pisa: Edizioni Ets, 2015), with an essay by E. Andri, “Ernesto de Martino e Vittorio Macchioro: la riscoperta del discepolato dimenticato,” 29–34. De Martino’s obituary of Vittorio Macchioro (1959) has been republished in a new edition of *La contraddizione felice? Ernesto de Martino e gli altri*, ed. by R. Di Donato (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2006), 201–4.

⁴ R. Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi. Antropologia storica di Ernesto de Martino* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 1999), 41–44; Charuty, *Ernesto De Martino*, 126–27.

⁵ “Unklar und ideen-verzehrt bis su Manie” (Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 41).

⁶ A. Warburg, *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg mit Eintragen von Gertrud Bing und Fritz Saxl*, ed. by K. Michels and C. Schoell-Glass (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 460.

Those dense, cryptic words need some clarification. At that very moment, Macchioro was completing the second, much enlarged edition of his major work, *Zagreus. Studi intorno all'orfismo* (the short introduction is dated “Naples, May 1929). On page 221, one reads, “Quest’identificazione dell’uomo col dio è espressa nell’orfismo usando per l’iniziato il termine Bakchos” (In Orphism, this identification of the man with the god [achieved through the ritual] is expressed by naming the initiate “Bakchos”).⁷

The convergence between texts and dates leaves no doubt. During their meeting, Macchioro must have informed Warburg and Bing about his forthcoming book (in 1932, Macchioro sent a copy of the second edition to Fritz Saxl).⁸ Warburg’s comment echoed Macchioro’s words, pointing to the identification between the scholar and his topic: “Confused and consumed by his own ideas up to fixation.” But, there is a “but,” *aber*: “an obsessed man. But Bacchus.”

A plain, flat paraphrase of this line would be: through his research the scholar becomes a kind of god. This sounds like a sympathetic remark, in a literal sense. In a recently published letter, dated September 29, 1929 – one month before his sudden death – Warburg invited Macchioro to deliver a lecture at the Kulturbibliothek about his interpretation of the Villa dei Misteri frescoes in Pompei, concluding, “We found in you a colleague who shares our own problems, both on the human and on the scientific level.”⁹

This was not a formal greeting, as the convergence between two more texts shows. On the one hand, a passage from a letter sent to Bing in 1932, in which Macchioro recalled, in quotation marks, a sentence uttered by Warburg four years before, during their meeting in Naples: “Uebrigens ich bin ein Jude und die Juden sind immer prophetisch begabt” (After all, I am Jewish, and Jews always have a gift for prophecy).¹⁰ On the other hand, Aby Warburg’s entry in the journal addressed to the Kulturbibliothek dated May 23, 1929, pointed to Macchioro’s “Juden-Prophetentum” and added, “(he was reluctant to recognize it as valuable).”¹¹

The juxtaposition between the two texts makes clear that, although the tone of the conversation may have been half-joking, its content was deeply serious. Apparently, Warburg saw something familiar in Macchioro’s obsessions – and the other way around. As we learn from a letter commented upon by Di Donato, in 1932 Macchioro wrote to Bing asking insistently what “his own schizophrenia really meant to Warburg.”¹² Bing did not reply; this was, understandably, the end of their exchange.

3

“A very intelligent and learned man [...]. A very difficult character”: this is how Benedetto Croce described Vittorio Macchioro in a letter addressed to Karl Vossler in November

⁷ Florence, 1930. The first edition, with a slightly different subtitle (*Studi sull'orfismo*) was published in Bari in 1920. See also *From Orpheus to Paul. A History of Orphism* (London: Constable, 1930).

⁸ Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 44.

⁹ V. Macchioro, *Zagreus. Studi intorno all'Orfismo*, ed. C. Pugliese (Milan: Mimesis, 2014), 663. On this edition, see Di Donato, introduction to *Le intrecciate vie*, 19–20.

¹⁰ Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 43.

¹¹ “[U]nd gestützt au sein eigenes (ungern als wertvoll nicht anerkanntes) Juden-Prophetentum” (Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 42).

¹² “[W]as eigentlich für ihn [sc. Warburg] seine Schizophrenie war” (Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 43).

1928.¹³ We can perceive a deep anxiety behind Macchioro's inappropriate questions to Bing – as if Macchioro would have seen in Aby Warburg's destiny, as in a magnifying mirror, his own destiny.

One might object that I am overinterpreting a few fragments, trying to detect a series of mutual psychological reactions in them. In fact, my remarks on Macchioro's obsessions aim to introduce a necessarily compressed reading of *Zagreus*, starting from its first edition, published in 1920. In his book, Macchioro provided a close analysis of the Villa dei Misteri frescoes discovered in Pompei in 1909, which he interpreted as a narrative sequence depicting an Orphic initiation ritual. The identification between the initiated and the god, which was at the core of the Orphic ritual, was, Macchioro argued, a “hallucination.” The initiated called themselves *Bacchoi* because they felt like gods: “likewise, the primitive man calls himself bear or wolf because he feels to be a wolf or a bear.”¹⁴

The Orphic palingenesis was “a disintegration of the individual personality, a well-known psychic or psychopathological phenomenon.”¹⁵ This argument, put forward in the central chapter of *Zagreus*, was supported by references to (mostly French) works that Macchioro had found in the library of the Mental Asylum of Aversa, dealing with hypnotism, hallucination, prelogical primitive mentality: from Janet to Lévy-Bruhl, from Maury to Hubert and Mauss. Macchioro repeatedly evoked “subconscious”; he never mentioned Freud's *Totem und Tabu* – not even in the second, much enlarged edition of *Zagreus*, which included a new section on the alleged trajectory leading from orphism to Paul.¹⁶

4

The first edition of *Zagreus* was reviewed in 1920 by Giovanni Gentile in *La Critica*, the journal he had founded with his close friend and associate Benedetto Croce (a few years later, their different attitudes toward Fascism put an end to their friendship). Gentile warmly praised Macchioro's book (“*bellissimo studio*”) but at the same time sharply criticized it for having relied upon such a natural science as psychology in order to analyze such a spiritual phenomenon as religion. Gentile objected not to Macchioro's comparison between “religious and psychopathological phenomena” but to its conclusions: instead of turning religion into psychopathology, one should try to take religious experience as a criterion of normality in order to identify “a rudimentary spiritual value within psychopathological phenomena.”¹⁷

¹³ *Carteggio Croce-Vossler, 1899–1949* (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza, 1951), 313: “E' uomo di molto ingegno e dottrina [...]. Carattere alquanto difficile; sicché io ora non lo vedo da anni.”

¹⁴ V. Macchioro, *Zagreus. Studi sull'Orfismo* (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza, 1929), 168: “E non ha una parola vana il termine *bakchos* che gli iniziati davano a se stessi: essi si denominavano col nome del dio perché si sentivano *Bacchi*, così come l'uomo primitivo chiama se stesso orso o lupo perché sente di essere un lupo o un orso.”

¹⁵ Macchioro, *Zagreus*, 160.

¹⁶ More surprising is the absence of any reference, in the second edition of *Zagreus*, to A. Boulanger (*Orphée. Rapports de l'Orphisme et du Christianisme* [Paris: F. Rieder et Cie, 1925]), who rejected any connection between Orphism and Paul. On Boulanger's book, see W. Deonna, *Revue des études anciennes* 28 (1926): 87–88; and L. Robin, *Revue des études grecques* 40 (1927): 463–66.

¹⁷ G. Gentile, review of V. Macchioro, *Zagreus*, in *La Critica* 18 (1920): 371–75, especially 373: “quando si fanno questi raccostamenti si può guardare avanti o indietro: si può cioè paragonare l'esperienza psicologica al fenomeno psicopatico; ma si può anche paragonare questo a quella, e fare l'esperienza religiosa che è, o si deve considerare come normale, misura e criterio d'intelligibilità del fenomeno psicopatico, di cui si potrà in tal modo scoprire il rudimentale valore spirituale.”

5

In his intellectual life, de Martino mixed up different seemingly incompatible sources of inspiration – Macchioro and Croce, Janet and Gentile, Heidegger and Gramsci, and so forth – reworking them from a highly original perspective. But the personal overtones of de Martino’s intricate relationship with Macchioro were undoubtedly unique. As soon as Macchioro received the news of the imminent wedding between Anna, his daughter, and de Martino, he declared to his son-in-law that he considered him like a son.¹⁸ This metaphorical father/son relationship – intimate, affectionate, conflictual – went on for a decade, between 1930 and 1940. In those years, de Martino began to work on a project he labeled “*storia del magismo*,” history of Magism, which ultimately led to *Il mondo magico* (1948), the book in which, as it has been noted, Vittorio Macchioro is present – invisibly.¹⁹

6

Two letters, both written in 1941, give some idea of the breadth and ambitions of de Martino’s project. The first is addressed to Raffaele Pettazzoni, whose work on the history of religions was internationally known. De Martino wrote,

A history of magism as it seems to me it should be understood – that is, as a contribution to the history of culture – is an immense task [...]. Only the guidance and the counsel of other scholars can, at least in part, smooth the way for me [...]. For the part that is most closely connected to our civilization, I have turned to Omodeo and to Croce, and I have had from the two masters noteworthy leads and suggestions. I am also in correspondence with Cassirer, and I hope at the end of the war to be able to use the impressive materials collected in the Warburg Library. For knowledge of modern German thought I am availing myself of the aid and counsel of Banfi and the group of scholars gathered around the review *Studi filosofici*.²⁰

And so on. But de Martino’s letter to Antonio Banfi struck a different tone: “I am much interested in psychopathology and parapsychology. I have become convinced that some psychopathic phenomena can be considered as relics, within Western civilization, of magical civilization. My work on the magical takes inspiration from this idea (among others), which I consider particularly fruitful.”²¹

7

From Cassirer and the Warburg Library to parapsychology and psychopathology: this unpredictable mixture may introduce a compressed presentation of *Il mondo magico*,

¹⁸ *Le intrecciate vie*, 53 (from Calcutta, August 30, 1935).

¹⁹ See Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 161: “Anna [Macchioro] che ha salvato il manoscritto de *Il mondo magico*, il libro in cui, più di chiunque, si può riconoscere l’influenza del padre Vittorio.”

²⁰ Other letters between de Martino and Pettazzoni are now published in *Le intrecciate vie*.

²¹ C. Ginzburg, “Momigliano and De Martino,” *History and Theory* 30, no. 4 (1991): 37–48, especially 40–42. The reference to the Warburg Library may have been inspired by Macchioro.

de Martino's most original and most disturbing book.²² Many years ago, developing a suggestion put forward by Renato Solmi, I pointed out some analogies between de Martino's *Il mondo magico* and Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, inscribing both of them within a larger category that I labeled, echoing Roberto Rossellini's film *Germania anno zero* (1948), "libri dell'anno zero," "books of the year zero." This category, I suggested, could also include texts as heterogeneous as Marc Bloch's *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien*, Walter Benjamin's *Theses on History*, Carlo Levi's *Pauro della libertà*, Raymond Queneau's *Une histoire modèle* – all of them written in the 1940s. The threat of a possible victory of Nazism had led to rethinking history from its roots and to reflecting on the aims and limits of historical knowledge.²³

In *Il mondo magico*, de Martino argued, on the grounds of several eye-witness testimonies by missionaries and ethnographers, that (a) in many cultures, the presence of the individual within the world is fragile and insecure; (b) in the same cultures magical powers are real – they work. Magic overcomes – as it did in a faraway past – the risk of "perdita della presenza," loss of presence, as de Martino labeled it. By guaranteeing the presence of the individual within the world and the world as an objective reality, magic made history possible.

8

I have never believed in the reality of magical powers, and I have never been interested in parapsychology. But I was (and still am) deeply interested in the bold theoretical argument advanced in *Il mondo magico* – that is, that reality and our presence in it are the outcome of a long historical process in which magic played a crucial role. Over the years, I have tried to disentangle the multiple threads, sometimes barely visible, sometimes utterly concealed, detectable in the heterogeneous textual fabric of *Il mondo magico*.²⁴ (I once compared Ernesto de Martino to the lion of the fable, who erases his footsteps with his tail.)²⁵

Let me give you one example. At the very start of *Il mondo magico*, the reader is confronted with a two-page quotation from a book that has remained a classic reference on shamanism up to the present time: Sergei Shirokogoroff's *The Psycho-mental Complex of the Tungus*, published in London in 1935.²⁶ De Martino published a review of it in 1942; however, he was already extensively quoting it in 1940.²⁷ What brought Shirokogoroff's

²² E. de Martino, *Il mondo magico. Prolegomeni a una storia del magismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1948). The manuscript was sent to the publisher, Giulio Einaudi, on August 8, 1946; see P. Angelini, introduction to E. de Martino, *Dal laboratorio del 'Mondo magico'. Carteggi 1940–1943*, ed. by P. Angelini (Lecce: Argo, 2007), 9.

²³ C. Ginzburg, "La fine del mondo" di Ernesto de Martino," *Quaderni storici* 40 (1979): 238–42. This suggestion has been followed by P. Cherchi, "Ernesto De Martino: un pensatore dell'anno zero," in *Il signore del limite. Tre variazioni critiche su Ernesto De Martino* (Naples: Liguori, 1994), 9–62, particularly 42–43.

²⁴ See "Genèse de *La fin du monde* de De Martino," in *Gradhiva. Revue d'anthropologie et d'histoire des arts* 23 (2016): 194–213; C. Ginzburg, "Travelling in Spirit: From Friuli to Siberia," in M. M. Balzer, J. Bremmer, and C. Ginzburg, *Horizons of Shamanism: A Triangular Approach to the History and Anthropology of Ecstatic Techniques*, ed. P. Jackson (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2016), 35–51.

²⁵ This is echoed by S. De Matteis, *Il leone che cancella con la coda le tracce. L'itinerario intellettuale di Ernesto de Martino* (Naples: D'If, 2016).

²⁶ S. M. Shirokogoroff, *The Psycho-mental Complex of the Tungus* (London: Kegan Paul, 1935).

²⁷ Archivio De Martino, 3.8.26; de Martino, review, in *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 18 (1942): 108–11. See also E. de Martino, "Percezione extrasensoriale e magismo etnologico," in *Studi e materiali di storia delle*

book to de Martino's attention was, I would argue, another book mentioned in *Il mondo magico*: Wilhelm Mühlmann's *Methodik der Völkerkunde* (1938).²⁸ In his first book, *Naturalismo e storicismo nell'etnologia*, de Martino had already mentioned an essay by Mühlmann, emphatically praising it as "one of the highest theoretical contributions I had ever come across."²⁹

A footnote is needed here. Mühlmann (1904–1988), the author of a well-known history of anthropology, went through a long and successful academic career in anthropology and folklore; two bibliographies dedicated to him in 1968 and 1984 duly included his essays and books on *Rassenkunde* published in the 1930s and 1940s. Mühlmann, a Nazi through and through, has been labeled by a German sociologist a most blatant example of academic "amnesia and amnesty."³⁰ In his *Methodik* – in many ways a remarkable book – Mühlmann repeatedly mentioned, and warmly praised, Shirokogoroff's *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* as an example of accomplished functionalist anthropology, based on a historical and psychological approach.³¹ What triggered de Martino's interest in Shirokogoroff's book was its rejection of the customary skepticism, shared by almost all ethnologists, concerning the reality of magical powers among "primitive" populations. This scandalous issue, de Martino argued, should be seriously addressed on the basis of parapsychology and related phenomena, which he had been deeply interested in since his youth.³² In this perspective, de Martino quoted long passages from *The Psychomental Complex* as evidence for the reality of magical powers among the Tungus.

Since his first book, *Naturalismo e storicismo nell'etnologia*, de Martino had identified himself with Benedetto Croce's "storicismo," which he regarded as a perspective capable of conquering new intellectual territories – first of all, ethnology. But Shirokogoroff was indeed far away from Croce.³³ The same can be said about Heidegger's philosophy, commented on in a rather ambivalent footnote of *Il mondo magico*. De Martino's first encounter with Heidegger may have been mediated, once again, by Mühlmann. In his

religioni 18 (1942): 1–19; *ibid.*, 19–20 (1943–1946): 31–84. In 1942, when he received the suggestion from Father M. Schulien to read Shirokogoroff's book, de Martino was already familiar with it, a point missed by P. Angelini in *Ernesto de Martino* (Rome: Carocci, 2008), 33–38. Angelini emphasizes the impact of Shirokogoroff's book on de Martino, relying upon the latter's remarks.

²⁸ W. Mühlmann, *Rassen- und Völkerkunde. Lebensprobleme der Rassen, Gesellschaften und Völker* (Braunschweig: Fried. Vieweg & Sohn, 1936). See de Martino, *Il mondo magico*, 93–94, 159.

²⁹ E. de Martino, *Naturalismo e storicismo nell'etnologia* (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1941), 197–98.

³⁰ See W. E. Mühlmann, *Geschichte der Anthropologie*, 2nd rev. and enlarged ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1968); H. Reimann, *Bibliographie 1965–1984. Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann zum 80. Geburtstag* (Augsburg: University, Lehrstuhl für Soziologie u. Kommunikationswiss, 1984). See U. Michel, "Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann (1904–1988) – ein deutscher Professor. Amnesie und Amnestie: Zum Verhältnis von Ethnologie und Politik im Nationalsozialismus," *Jahrbuch für Soziologiegeschichte* (1991): 69–119; C. Klingemann, *Soziologie und Politik. Sozialwissenschaftliches Expertenwissen im Dritten Reich und in der frühen Westdeutschen Nachkriegszeit* (Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 363–73.

³¹ W. E. Mühlmann, *Methodik der Völkerkunde* (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1938), 158, 162–63 *passim*. The preface is dated "Hamburg, 13. März 1938. Am Tage der Rückkehr Oesterreichs ins Reich." Mühlmann's early reaction to *Naven* had been more critical; see his review in *Archiv für Anthropologie und Völkerforschung*, N.F. Bd. 24 (1938): 164–65.

³² See G. Satta, "Le fonti etnografiche de 'Il mondo magico,'" in *Ernesto de Martino e la formazione del suo pensiero. Note di metodo*, ed. by C. Gallini (Naples: Liguori, 2005), 57–77, *Archivio Ernesto de Martino*, Rome, 3.8.

³³ I am relying in the following paragraphs upon my essay "De Martino, Gentile, Croce. Su una pagina de *Il mondo magico*," *La ricerca folklorica* 67–68 (April–October 2013): 13–20.

Methodik der Völkerkunde, Mühlmann pointed out that the relationship between the individual and its “world,” as an existential problem, is at the very center of Martin Heidegger’s philosophy.³⁴ Mühlmann referred, and partially quoted, a passage from *Sein und Zeit* that in the English translation reads as follows:

Believing in the reality of the “external world,” whether justified or not, *proving* this reality, whether sufficiently or insufficiently, *presupposing* it, whether explicitly or not, such attempts, that have not mastered their own ground with complete transparency, presuppose a subject which is initially *worldless*, or not certain of its world, and which basically must first make certain of a world.³⁵

De Martino may have regarded those last words – “a subject which is initially *worldless*, or not certain of its world, and which basically must first make certain of a world” – as a description, in a nutshell, of his ongoing research project. A few years later, in the already mentioned footnote of *Il mondo magico*, de Martino declared his intellectual debt toward Heidegger but at the same time emphasized his distance from him. “Existentialism,” he wrote, “has identified [...] an unsolved problem in modern rationalism” (that is, in Croce’s philosophy): “the individual as a given,” as a taken-for-granted entity. But, de Martino went on, Heidegger unduly extended his criticism (which, we understand by implication, was well taken) to the point of rejecting all forms of rationalism. Instead of addressing the theoretical problem involved in taking “the individual as a given,” Heidegger raised “to the dignity of thought the experience of crisis, although passionately lived.” Through the history of magic, de Martino objected, “historical reason takes back its own rights.”³⁶

The word “crisis,” so widespread in the philosophical language of those years, had for de Martino a deep personal resonance. A note published by Giordana Charuty in her

³⁴ Mühlmann, *Methodik der Völkerkunde*, 99: “Wie sehr der Gedanke an das Verhältnis des Menschen zu seiner ‘Welt’ als existentielles Problem heute die Geister beschäftigt, zeigt der Streit um die Existentialphilosophie M. Heideggers. Diese Philosoph macht die unrettbare Verhaftung des Menschen mit seiner Welt nicht nur, wie wir, zur Grundkategorie des geschichtlichen Lebens, sondern sogar zu der des Seins, d. h. er erweitert sie von den Erkenntnistheorie auf die Ontologie. Er lehnt daher auch jeden Versuch eines Beweises der Realität der Außenwelt rundweg ab, weil solche Versuche ‘ein zunächst weltloses bzw. seiner Welt nicht sicheres Subject voraussetzen, das sich im Grunde erst seiner Welt versichern muß’. Demgemäß faßt Heidegger das In-der-Welt-sein als Struktur Ganzheit auf (*Sein und Zeit*, 203–208; vgl. 57 f.)”

³⁵ M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), 206 (par. 43a): “*Glauben* an die Realität der »Außenwelt«, ob mit Recht oder Unrecht, *beweisen* dieser Realität, ob genügend oder ungenügend, sie *voraussetzen*, ob ausdrücklich oder nicht, dergleichen Versuche setzen, ihres eigenen Bodens nicht in voller Durchsichtigkeit mächtig, ein zunächst *weltloses* bzw. seiner Welt nicht sicheres Subjekt voraus, das sich im Grunde erst einer Welt versichern muß.”; *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 191, par. 47a; translation slightly modified.

³⁶ *Il mondo magico*, 190, 191n1: “In realtà le cose stanno diversamente: l’esistenzialismo ha posto in risalto un punto oscuro, un problema irrisolto, del razionalismo moderno: l’individuo come dato. Ma in luogo di allargare la coscienza storicistica di tale razionalismo sino a sciogliere la concrezione di questo dato nel dramma storico del farsi magico della presenza, ha spinto la sua polemica tant’oltre da mandare in pezzi ogni forma di razionalismo, e da promuovere a dignità di pensiero non la soluzione del problema, ma la esperienza della crisi, sia pure appassionatamente vissuta. Ora attraverso la storia della magia la ragione storica riprende i suoi diritti, e di nuovo torna a giudicare al suo tribunale le pretese di coloro che vorrebbero detronizzarla.”

fundamental biography, *Les vies antérieures d'un anthropologue* (The former lives of an anthropologist), shows that de Martino was deeply aware of the intimate, emotional roots of the argument he had put forward in *Il mondo magico*. As a young man, he had suffered from epileptic fits. He retrospectively reinterpreted them within the framework of his own concept of "loss of presence": "The [epileptic] 'aura' begins like this: the world is becoming sordidly foreign, diabolically tedious, devoid of passionate feelings. This is the sign that presence is going to weaken [...]. Then, after a few seconds, presence reemerges from the shipwreck, along with a world that has retrieved its forms, its feelings. It was like sliding down from history, slowly."³⁷

Let me point out straight away that I am not interpreting de Martino's work as the result of his illnesses: this would be a naive biographical fallacy. But history and anthropology are located forms of knowledge; through his personal intellectual and emotional experience (which included his illnesses), de Martino worked out arguments that aimed at a general relevance and that must be evaluated on their own grounds.

9

After *Il mondo magico*, de Martino entered a new stage of his life, on a personal, political, and scientific level. His marriage broke down; he started a lasting relationship with a new partner. He had been involved in the anti-Fascist resistance; after the war, he became an active member first of the Socialist Party, then of the Communist Party. In his book *La terra del rimorso* (1961), he carefully distinguished, as it has been noted, the mythological and religious features of "tarantismo," a dancing obsession recorded in Puglia for centuries, from its psychopathological dimension, duly analyzed in a specific chapter by Giovanni Jervis, at that time a young psychiatrist.

Then something in de Martino's life changed again. His private reflections on the shipwreck of the world, experienced in his epileptic crises, paved the way to a reflection on the end of the world as a threat for the human species. In his last, unfinished project, *La fine del mondo*, de Martino went back to his earlier work, developing some of its implications in a completely different perspective. Once again, de Martino focused on pathological phenomena as a key to broader, nonpathological configurations.

La fine del mondo. Contributo all'analisi delle apocalissi culturali (The end of the world. Contribution to the analysis of cultural apocalypses) was published, posthumously, in 1977. Clara Gallini, who edited the huge amount of notes assembled by de Martino,

³⁷ The Italian text, which Giordana Charuty kindly conveyed to me, reads: "Analizzando l'esperienza della mia « aura » mi sembra di ravvisarvi anzitutto una profonda distimia. L'aura comincia così: il mondo va diventando sordidamente estraneo, diabolicamente tedioso, si spoglia di affetti. È il segno che la presenza comincia ad attenuarsi. Quindi si produce l'assenza, improvvisa, momentanea, completa, e coloro che hanno assistito al prodursi di questa mia avventura psichica affermano che contraggo il volto in una smorfia e che rantolo un poco, come se si trattasse di un colpo di sonno maligno dal quale l'energia psichica che non è già più « spirito », cercasse di sottrarsi. Poi, dopo pochi istanti, la presenza riemerge dal naufragio, e con essa il mondo, restaurato nelle forme e negli affetti. (È come se scivolassi lentamente fuori della storia). La crisi interviene talora nel sonno o quando mi sveglio dal sonno ed allora somiglia assai a una bolla di sonno da scontare mio malgrado." For a French translation of this text, see G. Charuty, *Ernesto De Martino. Les vies antérieures d'un anthropologue* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 2009), 57–59. An allusion to this text has been made by Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 135 (and see, more elliptically, Di Donato, "Preistoria di Ernesto de Martino," in *La contraddizione felice?*, 65).

wrote a long introduction that was fiercely criticized by some scholars (including myself).³⁸ The same, vast dossier was republished in 2002, with a new introduction written by Clara Gallini and Marcello Massenzio.³⁹ But the French translation, edited by Giordana Charuty and Marcello Massenzio, was based on a different dossier, arranged in a different way, which included detailed introductions to each chapter.⁴⁰ Among the additions was a new chapter, titled by the editors “Les apocalypses psychopathologiques” (The psychopathological apocalypses).⁴¹ In fact, de Martino’s original project focused on cultural and religious apocalypses on the one hand and psychopathological apocalypses on the other: two parts that should have been dealt with, respectively, by de Martino and a psychiatrist, Bruno Callieri.⁴² Then, for unclear reasons, Callieri disappeared from the project. The intricate relationship between the two kinds of apocalypses, cultural and psychopathological, came to the forefront. De Martino decided to deal with both of them by himself.

Callieri’s help must have been crucial in the early stages of the project. Besides being a practicing psychiatrist, Callieri was deeply interested in Ludwig Binswanger’s anthropoanalysis as well as in the anthropological psychology of Alfred Storch, whose works he commented upon and criticized.⁴³ De Martino followed in Callieri’s footsteps, and in the early 1960s took extensive notes from those authors. But he had come across their works twenty years before, in the early 1940s. Although the role played by Alfred Storch in *Il mondo magico* has been identified, some further remarks are needed.⁴⁴

10

Alfred Storch, born in Hamburg in 1888 from Jewish parents, worked as a psychiatrist in Tübingen and Gießen. Ejected from his academic positions in 1933, he emigrated to Switzerland, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in 1962. His most ambitious work, *Das archaisch-primitive Erleben und Denken der Schizophrenen*, published in 1922 and translated into English two years later, compared the experiences of schizophrenic patients with a large amount of anthropological data. De Martino referred to Storch’s book

³⁸ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo. Contributo all’analisi delle apocalissi culturali*, ed. C. Gallini (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1977); see Ginzburg, “*La fine del mondo*” di Ernesto de Martino.

³⁹ E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo. Contributo all’analisi delle apocalissi culturali*, ed. C. Gallini, intro. C. Gallini and M. Massenzio (Turin: Einaudi, 2002).

⁴⁰ E. de Martino, *La fin du monde. Essai sur les apocalypses culturelles*, ed. G. Charuty, D. Fabre, and M. Massenzio (Paris: Éditions de l’EHESS, 2016); a new edition is forthcoming.

⁴¹ De Martino, *La fin du monde*, 130–92.

⁴² The French translation does not mention the project identified and analyzed by R. Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi. Antropologia storica di Ernesto de Martino* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 1999), 125–35, esp. 128–29 (dated 1960, with a manuscript note by de Martino, 1962). According to Di Donato, this would be the most ancient project of *La fine del mondo*. See also Progetto per una “*Collana di scienze religiose*,” in C. Pavese and E. de Martino, *La collana viola. Lettere 1945–1950*, ed. P. Angelini (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991), 187, 201–3; Di Donato, *I greci selvaggi*, 131.

⁴³ B. Callieri, *Quando viene l’ombra. Problemi di psicopatologia clinica* (Rome: Edizioni Universitarie Romane, 1982), 22: “gli studi che tendevano ad omologare o, comunque, a dedurre il delirio da un pensiero arcaico, primitivo, paralogico, o da un’attività magica, superstiziosa, fideistica, si dimostrano molto criticabili, sia perché soffrivano di una estrapolazione eccessiva, sia perché si fondavano su basi etnologiche non troppo solid.”

⁴⁴ S. Barbera, “‘Presenza’ e ‘Mondo’. Modelli filosofici nell’opera di Ernesto de Martino,” in *La contraddizione felice? Ernesto de Martino e gli altri*, ed. R. Di Donato (Pisa: ETS, 1990), 103–28, esp. 106; Cherchi, *Il signore del limite*, 84–87, is superficial.

in a crucial passage of *Il mondo magico*, in a chapter titled “The Historical Drama of the Magic World”: “Storch’s works on the relationship between schizophrenia and the mythico-magical (or archaic) mentality confirm the relationship between the magical drama of the danger of ‘not being here’ and the redemption of this danger, at a historical level.”

Here I would like to point out a mistake in the only available (but utterly unreliable) English translation, which is not based on the Italian original but on the French translation. In his peculiar, admittedly idiosyncratic style, de Martino emphasized that Storch’s works “*confermano largamente la individuazione storiografica del dramma magico*” (confirm to a large extent the historian’s interpretation [that is, de Martino’s] of the magic drama).

In other words, in this passage de Martino was not dealing with *res gestae* but with *historia rerum gestarum* – his own approach as a historian. This personal note becomes more and more intimate in the following lines, which tacitly shift from a description of schizophrenia to an account of de Martino’s experience during his epileptic fits:

In schizophrenia, there is the manifestation of a more or less profound dissociation within the personality, a suppression of the distinction between subject and object, between the me and you, between the self and the world. The crisis suffered by the presence is sensed as a kind of occult power, an evil influence. The objectivity of the world turns into something almost wax-like, as if objects lose their resistance and contours and outlines are erased, or else run together. The world gives way, crumbles, loses its beauty and value and turns into something sordid.⁴⁵

“*Il mondo va diventando sordidamente estraneo*” (the world is becoming sordidly foreign), de Martino wrote in his already mentioned private note – a text I am unable to date. “Sordidly,” “sordid”: the convergence is striking. *Il Mondo magico* is also (not only, but also) a concealed autobiography.⁴⁶

It should be noted, however, that a few pages later de Martino emphasized:

[Storch’s] comparison between the magic world and the schizophrenic mentality is of purely heuristic value: the shared traits should cause one to forget or ignore the basic differences. In the magic world, we are concerned with an historic epoch in which the being-within-the-world is not yet fixed and guaranteed [...]. Considered as an historical epoch, magic belongs to the physiology of spiritual life and, in the variety of its forms

⁴⁵ *The World of Magic* (New York: Pyramid Communications, 1972), 158. The antifrонтispiece reads, “Translated by Paul Saye White, docteur (lettres) université de Paris. Published in French under the title *Le monde magique*.” The latter was translated by Marc Baudoux, 1971, and republished, with a postface by Silvia Mancini (Paris: Institut d’édition Sanofi-Synthelabo, 1999).

⁴⁶ A retrospective, not so veiled allusion to this trajectory can be found in de Martino’s following remark: “The primitive, the barbaric, the savage were not only around me, because at times, in anguish, I would hear archaic voices echoing within me, insinuating gratuitous, irrational, disconcerting behaviors: something chaotic and murky inside me that demanded order and light. In this way, a course of thoughts and research developed that led me to the fundamental thesis of *The World of Magic*, etc.,” in “Etnologia e cultura nazionale,” *Società* 9 (1953): 314–15 (my translation).

and developments, it has had one result that is most precious to the history of human civilization: a presence that is guaranteed in its relationship to a balanced, ordered world.⁴⁷

11

So far, if I am not mistaken, I have moved on rather solid ground. Now my trajectory will become more conjectural. The name of Ludwig Binswanger (one of the authors Ernesto de Martino repeatedly read and commented upon) brings us close to the last stage of Aby Warburg's life. Aby Warburg spent three years as a patient at Bellevue, the Kreuzlingen clinic founded by Ludwig's grandfather (also named Ludwig Binswanger). The initial diagnosis, "schizophrenia," was contradicted by Emil Kraepelin, the famous psychiatrist, who regarded Warburg as a case of manic depression. Binswanger privately disagreed.⁴⁸

In September 1922, Fritz Saxl, who had visited Warburg at Bellevue, wrote, "[Warburg] dictated thirty pages to me – still shapeless. Psychology of the primitive man, very generic – not yet based on an illustration of the evidence."⁴⁹

On March 15, 1923, Binswanger recorded Warburg's intention to give to his fellow patients a lecture dealing with his journey among the Sioux (in fact, Hopi). On April 21, Warburg delivered his lecture on "The Logic of Magic in Primitive Man" – later known as "The Serpent Ritual."⁵⁰ A copy of Alfred Storch's book *Das archaisch-primitive Erleben und Denken der Schizophrenen*, published in October 1922, was certainly available at Bellevue. Binswanger must have received a copy of it from his colleague Alfred Storch, with whom he later engaged in a lively intellectual dialogue that became friendship.⁵¹ Did Warburg consult Storch's book on the relationship between schizophrenia and the primitive man, either before or after delivering his lecture on serpent ritual? This question may sound far-fetched. But a copy of Storch's book does indeed exist in the Warburg Library.⁵² The book entered the library on December 5, 1924. No price was recorded; it might have been a present from Ludwig Binswanger (an offprint of his, with a handwritten dedication to Aby Warburg, entered the library on the same day).⁵³

The published versions of the lecture on serpent ritual do not bear any trace of a reading of Storch's book. But the tragic dimension of that text (rightly emphasized by

⁴⁷ *The World of Magic*, 159–60. Here de Martino is developing A. Storch, "Die Welt der beginnenden Schizophrenie und die archaische Welt," in *Zeitschrift für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 27 (1930): 799–810.

⁴⁸ L. Binswanger and A. Warburg, *La guarigione infinita. Storia clinica di Aby Warburg*, ed. by D. Stimilli (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 2005), 14–18.

⁴⁹ Binswanger and Warburg, *La guarigione infinita*, 178.

⁵⁰ Binswanger and Warburg, *La guarigione infinita*, 124–25; see also D. McEwan, "Zur Entstehung des Vortrages über das Schlangenritual: Motiv und Motivation /Heilung durch Erinnerung," in *Schlangenritual. Der Transfer der Wissensformen vom Tsu'ti'kive der Hopi bis zu Aby Warburg's Kreuzlibger (!) Vortrag*, ed. C. Bender, T. Hensel, and E. Schüttpelz (Berlin: De Gruyter Akademie Forschung, 2007), 267–82, esp. 268.

⁵¹ M. Grimm, *Alfred Storch (1888–1962). Daseinanalyse und anthropologische Psychiatrie* (Giessen: Schmitz, 2004), 62ff., 121ff.

⁵² Warburg Institute Library, DAC 475. The volume shows some pencil marks, as well as a word ("nein!") on p. 52, written in pen by a hand which (as Claudia Wedepohl confirmed) is not Aby Warburg's.

⁵³ L. Binswanger, "Welche Aufgaben ergeben für die Psychiatrie aus den Fortschritten der neueren Psychologie?," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, XCI, Heft 3/5, 1924. I am indebted to Claudia Wedepohl for this information.

Ulrich Raulff) becomes visible as soon as we compare it with the notes left by Warburg. Let me quote a few passages from them, as translated by Ernst Gombrich:

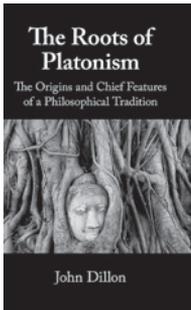
All mankind is eternally and at all times schizophrenic. [...] These notes should not be taken as the pretended results of superior insights, let alone of science, but as the desperate confessions of a seeker after salvation which tell of the inexorable link by which the upward striving of the mind remains tied to the compulsion of projecting bodily causes. [...] The images and words are intended as a help for those who come after me in their attempt to achieve clarity and thus to overcome the tragic tension between instinctive magic and discursive logic. They are the confessions of an (incurable) schizoid, deposited in the archives of mental healers.⁵⁴

12

As I had anticipated, the connection between Ernesto de Martino and Aby Warburg was indirect and tenuous. But de Martino's personal investment in the topics of his research casts an oblique light on the relationship between Warburg's personality and his own work. In an outstanding essay published in 1930, one year after Warburg's death, Giorgio Pasquali, the great Italian philologist, wrote, "his [Warburg's] illness was, in a sense, a prosecution of his scientific research [...]. But he was able to resist his illness, defeating it through scientific thought and scientific activity; in a strange split, Warburg never ceased to observe himself, discovering in himself the primitive man who has in magic a logic of his own."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. An Intellectual Biography* (London: Warburg Institute, 1970), 223, 226–27. The last passage (from "The images and words") is quoted by U. Raulff, postface to A. Warburg, *Il rituale del serpente. Una relazione di viaggio* (Milan: Adelphi, 1998), 99–100; see *Photographs at the Frontier: Aby Warburg in America 1895–1896*, ed. B. Cestelli Guidi and N. Mann (London: Merrell Holberton in assoc. with the Warburg Institute, 1998); H. Bredekamp, *Aby Warburg, der Indianer: Berliner Erkundungen einer liberalen Ethnologie* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2019).

⁵⁵ G. Pasquali, "Aby Warburg" (April 1930), *Pagine stravaganti vecchie e nuove*, repub. in *Pagine stravaganti 1*, intro. G. Pugliese Carratelli (Florence: Le Lettere, 1968), 40–54, esp. 54.



Damian Mrugalski

THE FORMS AS GOD'S THOUGHTS IN THE PLATONIST TRADITION: A POLEMIC WITH JOHN DILLON'S THESIS

[John Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism: The Origins and Chief Features of a Philosophical Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.]

1. INTRODUCTION

More than forty years have passed since the first edition of John Dillon's monograph *The Middle Platonists* was published.¹ This book was essential at that time because, besides there not being many studies on Middle Platonic philosophy in the 1970s, even the term "Middle Platonism" itself was not yet commonly used in the academic community. In fact, the doctrines of philosophers, which are discussed in this book in chronological order, were previously defined by rather pejorative terms such as "eclecticism" or "syncretism."²

¹ John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977). Below I will quote the new, revised edition of the book of the same title (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

² It should be noted, however, that the term "Middle Platonism" had already appeared in the German handbook of the history of philosophy edited by Karl Praechter. See *Friedrich Ueberwegs Grundriß der Geschichte der*

After many years of research and numerous publications on Platonism,³ John Dillon has published another book, *The Roots of Platonism*,⁴ in which he discusses the most important issues related to the development of Platonism in the period preceding the emergence of the Plotinus system. This time the author used not a chronological but a thematic approach.

The book consists of six chapters (lectures), each of which touches upon an important issue that was characteristic of Platonism as it developed after the death of the founder of the Academy or that was the topic of consideration by representatives of this movement. In this paper, I would like to focus on a single topic that occupies a central place, not only in Dillon's book, but also in the philosophy of Middle Platonism itself. It is the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts. Although many historians of philosophy have already tried to identify the possible sources of this concept, it is only in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (first century CE) that we find an explicit identification of Platonic Forms with the thoughts of the Divine Intellect. Yet the author of *The Roots of Platonism* argues that this conception was present in Platonism continuously since the time of the Old Academy and thus denies the originality of the Jewish thinker's doctrine. While arguing with John Dillon's thesis, I will try to point out that Philo of Alexandria was an original thinker on this issue. And although he was undoubtedly familiar with the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, the Pythagoreans, and the Stoics, he developed his doctrine of the transcendent Logos, which is the place of God's ideas, based on a philosophical interpretation of the concepts contained in the Bible. This latter thesis is often overlooked by many researchers dealing with the thought of Philo of Alexandria. In fact, they usually indicate the philosophical background of the Jewish thinker's doctrine,⁵ omitting biblical premises that are essential for a correct understanding of Hellenistic Judaism.

2. JOHN DILLON'S THESIS

Some historians of philosophy suggest that the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts emerged in Platonism as a kind of reception of Aristotle's concept of the Prime Unmoved Mover. It was also an attempt to reconcile the Platonic doctrine of transcendent and self-existent Forms with Aristotle's concept of immanent forms.⁶ The God of Aristotle, since he is an intellect (νοῦς), certainly contains forms within himself or thinks ideas, although the philosopher does not say it explicitly.⁷ Nevertheless, God's intellectual activity does not concern the material world. After all, the Prime Unmoved Mover is not the creator of

Philosophie des Altertums, ed. Karl Praechter (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1920), 536–68. Nevertheless, the much more extensive monograph by John Dillon, published in English, has led the academic community not only to speak about but also to explore more extensively issues related to the philosophy of Middle Platonism.

³ From among John Dillon's many other works, it is worth mentioning here a monograph in which the author analyzes the doctrines of the great scholarchs of the Old Academy. See John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴ John Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism: The Origins and Chief Features of a Philosophical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

⁵ Cf. David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Roberto Radice, *Platonismo e creazionismo in Filone di Alessandria* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1989).

⁶ Cf. Roger M. Jones, "The Ideas and the Thoughts of God," *Classical Philology* 21 (1926): 317–26; Audrey Rich, "The Platonic Ideas as the Thoughts of God," *Mnemosyne* IV, no. 7 (1954): 123–33. The latter article is quoted and commented on by John Dillon. See Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism*, 35.

⁷ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1074b.

the universe. The Demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*, on the other hand, creates the physical world while looking at Forms, but it is not certain whether Forms exist in his intellect or above it.⁸ Although in the *Philebus* Plato himself seems to identify the Demiurge with the intellect (νοῦς) of the universe,⁹ he never states that Forms are his thoughts. All the Platonic and Aristotelian theses became the inspiration for the later Middle Platonists to create a concept of the hierarchy of the Divinity and to identify Platonic Forms with God's thoughts. John Dillon does not entirely agree with this thesis. According to the researcher, it was not the Middle Platonic reflection on the theses by Plato and Aristotle that led to the emergence of the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts, but it was already present in the Old Academy – namely, in the teachings of Speusippus and Xenocrates. For these scholars talked about the supreme or the first God, whom they identified with Nous and Monad. Moreover, they read the *Timaeus* in an allegorical way and probably identified the Demiurge with Nous-Monad.¹⁰

The author of *The Roots of Platonism* also makes reference to Antiochus of Ascalon, a philosopher of the Platonic Academy from the turn of the second and first centuries BCE, who probably could have combined the Stoic doctrine of λόγοι σπερματικοί with the Platonic doctrine of the Demiurge and the World Soul. In this way, the Stoic λόγοι would be equivalent to the Forms that contain the Divine Logos identified with the Demiurge.¹¹ Since none of Antiochus's books have survived and information about him, like that about the Old Academy scholars, is preserved only in fragments, Dillon's thesis is only an attempt to reconstruct ancient doctrines based in large part on fantasy and imagination. The author of *The Roots of Platonism* himself is quite aware of it, and so he states, "If one is not prepared to make (judicious) use of fantasy and imagination, not only in respect of Antiochus, but also in respect of the Old Academy and of Middle Platonism in general, one had better steer clear of the area altogether."¹² Thus, through imagination and critical reflection on the very scarce testimonies, Dillon comes to the conclusion that the doctrine of the Forms as God's thoughts was not created by Philo of Alexandria – as many researchers have thought so far – but that it emerged in the Old Academy and then evolved over the centuries in the doctrines of successive philosophers associated with the Platonic Academy. Philo's only merit would therefore be to renew the concept of God's transcendence – although Dillon does not quite believe that either – and to point out that Forms are the thoughts of an absolutely incorporeal Intellect.¹³ Thus, on the one hand, Philo was inspired by the doctrine of Antiochus, and, on the other, he modified it a little, since he abandoned Stoic materialism and immanentism whereby Antiochus identified the Demiurge of Plato with the Logos present within the world. Dillon's analyses are very erudite, engaging, and sometimes very convincing. However, a certain problem arises, for the author of *The Roots of Platonism* does not analyze Philo's writings in depth and does not consider what impact the ideas contained in the biblical texts that he commented on might have had on his doctrine. Dillon

⁸ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 28a–29a.

⁹ Cf. Plato, *Philebus*, 30c–31a.

¹⁰ Cf. Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism*, 35–38.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 39–41.

¹² *Ibid.*, 41.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 44–45.

assumes in advance that the Jewish thinker of Alexandria may have been familiar with the doctrines of the scholars of the Platonic Academy.

Yet we cannot be sure whether Philo knew the doctrines of Speusippus, Xenocrates, and Antiochus, or whether these thinkers even spoke of Forms as God's thoughts, as we are not in possession of their writings. Instead, we are in possession of numerous allegorical commentaries on the Pentateuch by the Jew of Alexandria. In addition, we also have a list of biblical passages that Philo quoted or alluded to.¹⁴ On this basis, we can trace his argumentation and indicate which of the ideas contained in the biblical texts could have influenced his doctrine. Therefore, in polemic with John Dillon's thesis, I, too, will take the liberty of using a bit of fantasy and imagination to prove that not only the concept of Forms as God's thoughts but also the notion of the hierarchy of the Divinity may have developed in Hellenistic Judaism, independently of the doctrines taught by the scholars of Plato's Academy. Obviously, this does not exclude the fact that Philo, one of the most eminent representatives of Hellenic Judaism, may have been inspired by various doctrines of ancient philosophers. One thing, however, is the philosophical exegesis of biblical texts whereby he developed new concepts, and another is to copy those already existing.

3. THE HYPOSTATIZATION OF THE WORD AND WISDOM IN JUDAISM

As Giovanni Reale rightly pointed out, the texts that are the starting point of Philo's doctrine and, at the same time, the aim of his reflections are not those of philosophers but those of Scripture.¹⁵ It is reductionism to analyze the works of the Jewish thinker only from the point of view of philology or to look only for references to Greek philosophy. For it is impossible to understand Jewish thought without constant reference to the Bible. After all, Philo was a Jew and a commentator on the Bible. It is undisputed that the Alexandrite knew the Stoic doctrine of the Logos present in the world.¹⁶ However, when the Jewish thinker talked about the Logos as a transcendent being generated by a radically transcendent God, he was certainly referring to his familiar theology of Hellenistic Judaism, which often hypostatized Divine attributes and powers and, in a way, made them intermediaries between God and the world. Examples of such hypostatization can be found in many places of the Book of Wisdom. Here is one of these texts in which the author gives a certain reinterpretation of the events that took place during the first night of Passover, the night when the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt:

When peaceful silence lay over all, and night had run the half of her swift course, down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word [ὁ παντοδύναμος σου λόγος] like a pitiless warrior into

¹⁴ Cf. *Biblia patristica. Supplément, Philon d'Alexandrie*, ed. Centre d'Analyse et de Documentation Patristiques (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1982).

¹⁵ Cf. Giovanni Reale, *Storia della filosofia greca e romana*, ed. Vincenzo Cicero (Milan: Bompiani, 2018), 1752. See also David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 13–14.

¹⁶ Furthermore, his writings are a source of our information on the Stoics, which is why the collection of preserved fragments of the Stoics (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. Hans F. A. von Arnim, vols. 1–4 [Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24]) contains many quotations derived precisely from the works of Philo. See for instance SVF 2, 39; 2, 57; 2, 95; 2, 99; 2, 182; 2, 302; 2, 358; 2, 458; 2, 472; 3, 7; 3, 33; 3, 116; 3, 209, and many others.

the heart of a land doomed to destruction. Carrying your unambiguous command like a sharp sword, it stood, and filled the universe with death; though standing on the earth, it touched the sky.¹⁷

According to the author of the Book of Wisdom, it was not God who at midnight struck down all the first-born in Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the prisoner in the dungeon, as stated in the Book of Exodus,¹⁸ but his all-powerful Logos. This Logos is presented here as a self-existent being, a hypostasis, originating from God and operating in the world. In a similar way, another attribute of God – namely, Wisdom (ἡ σοφία) – is hypostatized. The author of the Book of Wisdom depicts it as a female allegory. In this way, Divine Wisdom receives a voice and describes her intimate relationship with God:

She enhances her noble birth by sharing God's life, for the Master of All has always loved her. Indeed, she shares the secrets of God's knowledge, and she chooses what he will do. If in this life wealth is a desirable possession, what is more wealthy than Wisdom whose work is everywhere? Or if it be the intellect that is at work, who, more than she, designs whatever exists?¹⁹

Divine Wisdom, like the Logos, sent by God from above, also dwells among the inhabitants of the earth, guides them to the right paths, and sometimes saves them from their oppression.²⁰ The Book of Wisdom, however, was composed relatively late – that is, between the first century BCE and the first century CE. That is why some researchers also find influences of Middle Platonic philosophy in this text.²¹ But the process of hypostatization of divine attributes began in Judaism much earlier and was not necessarily influenced by the philosophy of the Hellenistic era.²² Indeed, the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms already mention the Word that, as God's messenger, descends on earth and successfully accomplishes what God commanded.²³ In the Book of Proverbs and in the Book of Sirach, however, the personified Wisdom of God declares that she came to birth before the foundation of the world, that she created the world together with God, and that she covered the earth like mist.²⁴ These statements highlight both the dimension of

¹⁷ Wis. 18:14–16.

¹⁸ Cf. Exod. 12:29.

¹⁹ Wis. 8:3–6.

²⁰ Cf. Wis. 9:10–11; 9:17–18.

²¹ Cf. David Winston, *Introduction*, in *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David Winston (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 38–40.

²² For more on the subject, see Helmer Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: Ohlssons, 1947); Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974), 153–56; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 347–60.

²³ Cf. Isa. 55:10–11; Ps. 147:15–20 [LXX: Ps. 147:4–9]; Ps. 107:19–20 [LXX: Ps. 106:19–20].

²⁴ Cf. Prov. 8:22–25; Sir. 24:1–3. As regards the passage of Prov. 8:22–25, the LXX version is much more relevant. For in verse 22 it states, not so much that Wisdom was created, but that “she was made the beginning of the ways of God” (ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ). Whereas in verse 25, personified Wisdom declares, “Before the mountains were settled,

transcendence and the immanence of Divine Wisdom. The authors of the biblical books also hypostatize and personify other attributes of God, such as majesty, beauty, power, law, justice, kindness, faithfulness,²⁵ and even the Torah, which has been identified with Wisdom coming forth from the mouth of the Most High.²⁶ All these hypostatizations and personifications were known to the Jewish thinker from Alexandria because, although his works are mainly a commentary on the Pentateuch, he often referred to texts from prophetic books and psalms but also to biblical wisdom literature.

It is true that Philo, when describing the Logos at the transcendental level, often used Platonic language, whereas when talking about the immanent Logos, he used Stoic language. It should be noted, however, that at the same time he referred to biblical ideas and sometimes explicitly used biblical categories when talking about the Logos as a messenger of God, an archangel, or a mediator. He also juxtaposed the Logos with other hypostatized attributes of God. For example, in one of his writings the Jewish thinker states that God is the father of the Logos, while Wisdom by which the world came into being is the Logos's mother.²⁷ In another place he states the opposite, that the Logos is the source of Wisdom,²⁸ and elsewhere he identifies the Logos and Wisdom.²⁹ This inconsistency is probably due to the fact that the Logos and the Wisdom of God, although they have similar functions, are presented in the various books of the Bible sometimes as existing forever with God and other times as working in the created world. Thus, the hypostatized attributes of God, because of the various activities that the Bible attributes to them, assume many different names in Philo's works.³⁰

Apart from Logos and Wisdom, it is worth noting yet another hypostatized quality of God – namely, the powers whose functions have been widely discussed by the thinker of Alexandria. Their various names are also of biblical origin. One of these powers, or even the highest of them, is also the Logos:

These are the powers of Him who utters the word, the chief of which is his creative power, according to which the Creator made the world with a word; the second is his kingly power, according to which he who has created rules over what is created; the third is his merciful power, in respect of which the Creator pities and shows mercy towards his own work; the fourth is his legislative power, by which he forbids what may not be done.³¹

and before all hills, he begets me [γεννᾷ με].” The phrase γεννᾷ με, which occurs here in the present time, may suggest the eternal generation of Wisdom by God.

²⁵ Cf. 1 Chr. 16:27; Ps. 96:6 [LXX: Ps. 95:6]; Ps. 89:15 [LXX: Ps. 88:6].

²⁶ Cf. Sir. 24:23; Bar. 4:1.

²⁷ Cf. Philo, *De fuga et inventione*, 109; *De somniis*, 2:242.

²⁸ Cf. Philo, *De fuga et inventione*, 97.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 137–38; *Legum allegoriae*, 1:65.

³⁰ Cf. Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 15–16. According to Philo, it is the Bible itself that assigns many names to Wisdom and Logos. Cf. Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, 1:43; *De confusione linguarum*, 146.

³¹ Philo, *De fuga et inventione*, 95.

The names of the hypostatized powers that Philo enumerates are related to the various activities of God that the Bible describes.³² Although this is not the place to discuss each of these powers, there is at least one of them worthy of attention. Thus, in the biblical texts I quoted above, both the Logos and the Wisdom of God were sent from the royal throne (ἐκ θρόνων βασιλείων)³³ to carry out on earth the orders of God the King. The echo of these poetic personifications of the Logos and the Wisdom of God can be found precisely in the concept of royal (βασιλική) power, or power of authority (ἐξουσία).³⁴ The main task of this power is to govern creatures according to God's plan and intention. This world governance, however, is not limited to maintaining the ontological order, that is to say, maintaining the material world in existence or giving it the laws of nature. According to Philo, through his powers, God also guides the history of mankind and even intervenes in the lives of individual people, punishing them or showing mercy. This last point is also of biblical, not philosophical, origin.³⁵

It follows from what has been said so far that the doctrine of a hierarchy of divine principles with stress on the transcendence of the supreme principle, that is, God, could have emerged in Hellenistic Judaism independently of the teachings preached in the Old Academy. In fact, Philo, although he knew and quoted many of the works of ancient philosophers, was primarily focused on commenting on Scripture, where he found the already hypostatized Divine attributes. One of them was the Logos, generated by God for the purpose of creating the world, but also of working in the created world. Platonic or Stoic terminology has only helped the Jewish thinker to articulate in philosophical language ideas that were already present in Scripture itself. But could the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts have developed in the same way?

4. THE CONCEPT *KOSMOS NOËTOS* AND THE BIBLE

The term κόσμος νοητός (intelligible world), by which Philo defines the world of God's thoughts, does not appear in the Bible nor in any of the philosophical texts written before the first century CE.³⁶ Many researchers, including John Dillon himself, suggest that this expression may be some kind of evolution or demythologization of the Platonic term νοητὸν ζῶον, which appears several times in the *Timaeus*.³⁷ This is a highly probable thesis.

³² Philo, adopting a biblical vision of God working in the world, also explicitly criticized those philosophers who attributed inactivity to God and rejected God's providence. See Philo, *De officio mundi*, 9–11.

³³ Cf. Wis. 18:15. See also Wis. 9:10.

³⁴ Cf. Philo, *De cherubim*, 27–29; *De Abrahamo*, 120–24.

³⁵ It should be pointed out that John Dillon is familiar with the above quoted texts on royal power since he mentions them in his previous monograph. Cf. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 161–63. However, he suggests that the source of this doctrine of Philo's is the treatise of Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the World*, in which the philosopher compares God to the great king of Persia and mentions his power encompassing the world. Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo*, 398a. However, the powers of Philo, as I have already explained, have functions that characterize the actions of God in the Bible. Besides governing the world, they are also the punishment or the display of mercy to persons. Such characteristics of the powers of God are not mentioned in the treatise of Pseudo-Aristotle. In another place, Philo states that one of the greatest powers of God is the legislative power because "God himself is the legislator and source of all laws." Cf. Philo, *De sacrificiis*, 131.

³⁶ Cf. David T. Runia, "A Brief History of the Term *Kosmos Noëtos* from Plato to Plotinus," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. John J. Cleary (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 154.

³⁷ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 30c–31b; 39e; Dillon, *The Roots of Platonism*, 45; Runia, "A Brief History of the Term *Kosmos Noëtos*," 152–53.

However, it is not only the term κόσμος νοητός itself that is new but also the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts that this term describes. Philo, as a representative of Judaism, could not place the Forms in any other place than in the Divine Mind. For Judaism, unlike the religion of the Greeks,³⁸ did not allow any beings or laws to exist above a radically transcendent God. God alone is the creator of visible and invisible beings, and he alone is the supreme legislator. In his creative activity, he does not follow any preexisting law or project. He creates what he himself has thought and designed. That is why the biblical texts speak of God's wisdom, knowledge, and thoughts, which are inexhaustible and impenetrable.³⁹ They precede what is to be created and permeate what already exists.⁴⁰ God's thoughts and knowledge in biblical theology also have creative power and govern nature and time.⁴¹ And while many anthropomorphic descriptions of God may suggest that God is changeable in his decisions,⁴² many biblical texts also state that God's word, wisdom, thoughts, and plans endure forever.⁴³ That is why Philo, inspired by these or similar ideas contained in the Scriptures, states that Moses "has attributed eternity [αἰδιότης] to that which is invisible and discerned only by our intellect [τῷ ἀοράτῳ καὶ νοητῷ] as a kinsman and a brother, while of that which is the object of our external senses [τῷ δ' αἰσθητῷ] he had predicated generation [γένεσις] as an appropriate description."⁴⁴

The distinction between an intelligible being (νοητός) and a sense-perceptible being (αἰσθητός) that is in a continuous process of becoming (γένεσις) is, of course, a distinction made by Plato in the metaphysical prelude to the famous Demiurge myth.⁴⁵ However, the biblical account of creation itself could be a pretext for such a Platonic interpretation by Philo. Indeed, in the first description of the creation of the world, in the Septuagint version, the following statement appeared: "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was invisible" (ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος).⁴⁶ For the Alexandrian thinker, the invisible heaven and earth are ideas that, although generated, endure forever in the Divine Logos. Furthermore, the first biblical account of the creation of the world (and according to Philo, it is an intelligible world) concludes with the following statement: "This is the book of the generation [αὐτῆς ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως] of heaven and earth, when they were created."⁴⁷ The Jewish thinker comments on these words as follows:

³⁸ Cf. Giovanni Reale, *Storia della filosofia greca e romana*, ed. Vincenzo Cicero (Milan: Bompiani, 2018), 585.

³⁹ Cf. Ps. 33:11 [LXX: Ps. 32:11]; Ps. 147:5 [LXX: Ps. 146:5]; Ps. 92:6–7 [LXX: Ps. 91:6–7]; Ps. 139:6–15 [LXX: Ps. 138:6–15]; Isa. 40:28; Isa. 55:8–9; Bar. 3:37; Job 12:16; Prov. 8:12. In the passages listed here, in the LXX version, the following Greek terms are used to describe God's thoughts and knowledge: ἐννοια, διάνοια, λογισμός, ἐπιστήμη, σύνεσις, διαλογισμός, γνώσις, φρόνησις.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ps. 139:1–5 [LXX: Ps. 138:1–5]; Job 28:23–27; Jer. 1:5; Sir. 42:18–21; Wis. 9:8–9.

⁴¹ Cf. Job 26:12; Prov. 3:9–20; 8:27–30; Sir. 1:19; 33:8; 43:23; Wis. 8:3–6; 9:1–2; 9:9.

⁴² On Philo's critique of biblical anthropomorphisms, see Damian Mrugalski, "Bóg niezdolny do gniewu: Obrona apatheī Boga w teologii aleksandryjskiej: Filon, Klemens i Orygenes," *Verbum Vitae* 33 (2018): 282–90.

⁴³ Cf. Ps. 33:11 [LXX: Ps. 32:11]; Ps. 119:89–160 [LXX: Ps. 118:89–160]; Isa. 40:8; Bar. 4:1; Sir. 1:1. In the passages listed here, biblical terms such as εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα or εἰς γενεάν καὶ γενεάν are used to describe eternity.

⁴⁴ Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 12.

⁴⁵ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 27d–28a.

⁴⁶ Gen. 1:1–2. See also Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 29: "First, then, the Maker made an incorporeal heaven, and an invisible earth" (πρῶτον οὖν ὁ ποιῶν ἐποίησεν οὐρανὸν ἀσώματον καὶ γῆν ἀόρατον).

⁴⁷ Gen. 2:4.

And Moses calls the word of God [τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον] a book [βιβλίον], in which it is come to pass that the formations of other things are written down and engraved. But, lest you should imagine that the Deity does anything according to definite periods of time, while you should rather think that everything done by him is inscrutable in its nature, uncertain, unknown to, and incomprehensible by the race of mortal men. Moses adds the words, “when they were created,” not defining the time when by any exact limitation, for what has been made by the Author of all things has no limitation. And in this way the idea is excluded, that the universe was created in six days.⁴⁸

The fact that the book (βιβλίον) was identified by Philo with the Logos of God is not surprising if one considers the theological tradition of Judaism, according to which the Torah, as an expression of God's eternal law, existed before the creation of the world.⁴⁹ The authors of the biblical books, as I have mentioned above, identified this eternal law with the Wisdom of God, which also existed with God forever.⁵⁰ What may surprise us in the above quoted text is Philo's thesis, which states that the creation of the world did not take place in definite periods of time but beyond time. The six days of creation, which are described in the Book of Genesis, are therefore interpreted by the Alexandrian thinker in an allegorical way. It is worth mentioning on this occasion that in Philo's time and later there was a debate in Middle Platonic circles on whether the world was created in time or whether it existed eternally.⁵¹ According to the Jewish thinker, the world is created, which does not exclude the possibility that it could exist as created or be created by God eternally. However, the text under consideration refers not to the visible but to the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός), which exists in the Logos of God. Although the biblical text at a literal level talks about the stages, that is, the days of the creation of this intelligible world, there is a basis in the same text to consider it as already existing. We find it in the paradox that appears in the Greek version of the passage of Genesis 2:4: ἡ βιβλος γενέσεως – ὅτε ἐγένετο (the book of the generation – when it came into being). This expression suggests that the whole narrative about the process of generation (γένεσις) is about something that has already taken place (ἐγένετο – Greek aorist). Hence Philo concludes that what the first biblical account of creation depicts in chronological

⁴⁸ Philo, *Legum allegoriae*, 1:19–20. See also Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 129.

⁴⁹ It is worth noting that, at the very beginning of the commentary on Genesis, Philo states that the account of the creation of the world implies that “the world is in harmony with the Law, and the Law with the world.” Cf. Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 3. Of course, the Torah is that Law. The world was therefore created in the image of the Torah, and that is why there are laws in the world that are compatible with the laws written in the Torah. Cf. Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 49. See also Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 354–60.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bar. 4:1; Sir. 24:23. See also Céline Mangan, *Wisdom, Torah and Creation in Targumic Literature*, in *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honour of Kevin J. Cathcart*, ed. Carmel McCarthy and John F. Healey (London – New York: T&T International, 2004), 143–53.

⁵¹ I have written about the various positions of this dispute elsewhere. Cf. Damian Mrugalski, “Plato Read Moses and (Mis-)Understood: The Middle Platonic Context in Which the *Creatio Ex Nihilo* Doctrine Was Devised,” *Studia z Historii Filozofii* 10, no. 4 (2019): 7–30; Damian Mrugalski, “Stwarzanie wieczne i poza czasem: Filozoficzne źródła koncepcji *generatio aeterna* Orygenesa,” *Verbum Vitae* 35 (2019): 373–418.

order exists in God always. One might say, however, that the Alexandrian thinker would not have noticed this paradox of Genesis 2:4 or would not have interpreted it in such a philosophical way if he did not share the Platonic thesis about the eternal existence of intelligible beings. But let us repeat this once again: in many biblical texts, the Word of God, his Wisdom, thoughts, and designs, and even the Torah, or Divine law, endure with God forever (εις τὸν αἰῶνα). After all, the biblical word αἰών, as Philo himself explains, points to eternity because it “signifies the life of the world of thought, as time is the life of the perceptible.”⁵² Elsewhere, our author states that eternity (αἰών) means the life of God, “and in eternity [ἐν αἰῶνι] there is no past nor future, but only present existence.”⁵³ Therefore, the Logos in which God’s ideas exist, though generated, “is the eternal Logos of eternal God” (λόγος ὁ ἀίδιος θεοῦ τοῦ αἰωνίου).⁵⁴

There is another statement in the above quoted text that is also anchored in biblical theology – namely, that “the Deity does anything according to definite periods of time.” In another place, Philo develops this idea in the following words:

But the divine Teacher is swifter even than time, for not even when He created the Universe did time co-operate with Him, since time itself only came into being with the world. God spoke and it was done – no interval between the two – or it might suggest a truer view to say that His word was deed [ὁ λόγος ἔργον ἦν αὐτοῦ].⁵⁵

The Hebrew term *dabar*, translated into Greek as λόγος, carries a dynamic connotation in the Bible. That is clearly evident in the repeated statement of Genesis 1: “And God said ... and it was so” (καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός ... καὶ ἐγένετο),⁵⁶ but also in other statements of the Scriptures, such as “For he spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created”⁵⁷ or “He sends his oracle to the earth: his word will run swiftly.”⁵⁸ Biblical texts, which reveal the swift, even immediate way of acting of the Divine Word, led Philo to state that there is no time interval between the word spoken by God and the action it performs and even that the Divine Word itself is actually God’s action (ὁ λόγος ἔργον αὐτοῦ).

The concept of a dynamic Logos, that is to say, one that has power (δύναμις), is also linked to the doctrine of Forms as God’s thoughts. For Philo states that the incorporeal powers (δυνάμεις) whereby God creates the world have also another name: Ideas (ιδέαι).⁵⁹ This thesis also appears in *De opificio mundi*, when the Alexandrian thinker refers for the first time to the Divine design of creation, which is the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός).

⁵² Philo, *De mutatione nominorum*, 267.

⁵³ Philo, *Quod sit Deus immutabilis*, 32.

⁵⁴ Philo, *De plantatione*, 8–9.

⁵⁵ Philo, *De sacrificiis*, 65.

⁵⁶ Cf. David T. Runia, “Commentary,” in Philo of Alexandria, *On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, ed. David T. Runia (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 143.

⁵⁷ Ps. 33:9 [LXX: Ps. 32:9].

⁵⁸ Ps. 147:15 [LXX: Ps. 147:4].

⁵⁹ Cf. Philo, *De specialis legibus*, 1:329; *De confusione linguarum*, 171–72.

At the very beginning of the treatise, this world of incorporeal Ideas is identified with the world of God's power:

As, then, the city which was fashioned beforehand within the mind of the architect held no place in the outer world, but had been engraved in the soul of the artificer as by a seal; even so the universe that consisted of ideas [ὁ ἐκ τῶν ιδεῶν κόσμος] would have no other location than the Divine Reason [τὸν θεῖον λόγον], which was the Author of this ordered frame. For what other place could there be for His powers [δυνάμεις] sufficient to receive and contain, I say not all but, any one of them whatever uncompounded and untempered?⁶⁰

Besides the texts mentioned above, which point to the dynamic nature of the Divine Word, the Greek Bible used by Philo contains many other statements in which the term δύναμις appears. For instance, the Hebrew phrase “Lord of hosts” was translated in the Septuagint as κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων (Lord of power),⁶¹ while the anthropomorphic phrase “The hand of God” was given as δύναμις τοῦ κυρίου (the power of the Lord).⁶² This type of statement could also have inspired the Alexandrian thinker to put forward the thesis that the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός) that exists in the Divine Logos consists of Divine powers (δυνάμεις), in other words, ideas. It hardly seems that the belief in the existence of God's powers was more fundamental and essential for the Alexandrian Jew than the identification of those powers with the Platonic Forms. For in his writings, Philo refers to Divine powers much more often than to Forms. Furthermore, besides the powers created, operating in the world, he also talks about uncreated powers, which are the Divine property.⁶³ As far as the term “form” (ιδέα) is concerned, the thinker of Alexandria uses it exclusively as a description of the patterns created by God when he decided to create our world.⁶⁴ Some researchers, including Dillon, saw in Philo's “powers” the dynamic character that Plato's Forms might also have had.⁶⁵ But even if this is true, it is precisely this dynamic nature of the Platonic ideas that has become the reason why Philo decided to name the powers of God that the Bible talks about the ideas rather than the opposite.⁶⁶

5. CONCLUSIONS

The above analyses obviously do not exhaust the topic of the relationship between the Philo doctrine and Judaic theology or Platonic tradition. However, they are an alternative

⁶⁰ Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 20.

⁶¹ Cf. 2 Sam. 6:2; Ps. 24:10 [LXX: Ps. 23:10]; Zech. 7:4.

⁶² Cf. Josh. 4:24.

⁶³ Cf. Philo, *Quod sit Deus immutabilis*, 77–78.

⁶⁴ Cf. Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, vol. 1, 4th rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 226.

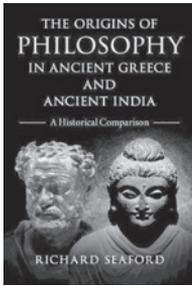
⁶⁵ Cf. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 161–64; Wolfson, *Philo*, 217–26.

⁶⁶ The doctrine of the powers of God may be much older than the theology of Hellenistic Judaism. Some researchers noticed its origins even in Eastern, Iranian, or Egyptian religions. For more on the origins of the biblical and Philonic concept of the power of God, see Cristina Termini, *Le potenze di Dio. Studio su δύναμις in Filone di Alessandria* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2000), 10–27.

proposal depicting the roots of the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts to that provided by John Dillon. In this paper, it was not my intention to demonstrate in an apologetic way that Philo was an original thinker. I would not even claim that he developed his doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts based only on the biblical texts. It is even very likely that this doctrine could not have come into being if the Alexandrian thinker had not been familiar with Platonic, Aristotelian, Pythagorean, and Stoic philosophy. Nevertheless, the Bible itself has provided sufficient grounds for Philo to speak of the eternal Logos, the wisdom and knowledge of God, as well as of the eternal and unchanging thoughts, judgments, and designs that they contain. Similarly, the Bible also gave the Jewish thinker the basis to claim that what is thought by God has creative power and that God did not need time to create what he thought. For his Logos immediately performs whatever God thinks and wants.

Alongside the religious and theological background of Philo's doctrine, it is also worth noting the efforts of the Jewish thinker to explain and translate biblical ideas into philosophical language. For these efforts reveal the intentions that accompanied Philo in commenting on the Pentateuch. Thus our author explains to his readers that the biblical term αἰών (age, era) in certain contexts means ἀδιότῃς (eternity), or that the biblical adjective ἀόρατος (invisible) can be identified with the Platonic νοητός (intelligible), whereas terms such as ἔννοια, διάνοια, or λογισμός, by which the Bible defines God's thoughts, are understood by philosophers as ἰδέαι (Forms, Ideas), since they are nothing else than archetypes of the beings to be created. The Jewish thinker also notes that the term ἰδέαι can also be used to describe the Divine δυνάμεις (powers). Indeed, in biblical theology, that which is thought and desired by God has an immediate effect. Thus Ideas or Forms thought by God have a dynamic and therefore also a creative aspect.

In my view, therefore, Philo makes use of philosophy in an instrumental way, not to implement by force the philosophical theses into biblical theology, but to explain the religious theses that he shared in philosophical language. Within this procedure, the doctrine of Forms as the thoughts of a transcendent God develops. It could perhaps, as Dillon suggests, have developed in parallel among philosophers associated with the Platonic Academy. However, we are not entirely sure about that because the testimonies that the Irish researcher brings out are only circumstantial in nature. We are also not sure whether the Jewish thinker had access to this kind of doctrine at all. After all, John Dillon himself refers to testimonies that appear in the writings of Augustine (fifth century CE) written in Latin, which did not necessarily accurately reflect the views of philosophers related to the Platonic Academy. However, we are sure of the sources that Philo certainly used, and we are in possession of whole works of the Jewish thinker in which the doctrine of Forms as God's thoughts is explained in a clear and explicit way.



PHILOSOPHY AND MONETIZATION AS COMMON EXPERIENCES OF THE EAST AND THE WEST

[Richard Seaford, *The Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India: A Historical Comparison*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.]

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this review is to show the main threads in Richard Seaford's book and to discuss its essential assertions. I will start with an overview of the structure, then I will expand on the main definitions proposed by the author. In the next part of this review, I will outline some chosen elements of his work, such as monism, inner self, and monetization. Finally, in the penultimate section, I will analyze the main argument, which will be followed by the conclusion.

OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE

The book consists of five parts, but two of them are crucial. Part C is named *Unified Self, Monism and Cosmic Cycle in India*, and the title of Part D is *Unified Self, Monism and Cosmic Cycle in Greece*. These chapters contain the core of Seaford's work, as well as the major part of his comparative research. The subject matter of this research is related to such concepts as a vision of the inner self, the idea of monism, and cosmological beliefs. The relevant idea that is present in all these threads is reincarnation, which appeared in both cultural circles but in different, peculiar forms. The scope of the philosophical sources being examined is extremely broad. Seaford draws mainly from the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Samaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda* (and also the early Buddhist texts the *Dharmasutras* and the *Arthaśāstra*) in the context of Indian thought and from the rich tradition of ancient Greece, especially Homer, Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Plato. Juxtaposing these monumental parts of the heritage of humankind and searching for some kind of relations among them would be enough to constitute very interesting work, but the author digs deeper and proposes an original analysis of the phenomena of philosophical thinking. The results of this analysis are to be found in the conclusion (Part E). We should

note that some examples of useful clarification are presented in Part A, where we can find explanations of the main concepts.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTS

The author proposes a clarification of the main concepts that will recur in the entire work. Three of them are key. First, he defines *philosophy* as “the attempt to explain systematically, and without relying on superhuman agency, the fundamental features of the universe and the place of human beings in it.”¹ This kind of comprehension of philosophy is useful especially in the initial stage of philosophical development. Another important distinction is the definition of the *self*. Seaford places his statement against the background established by contemporary debates about personality. He ascertained that his idea of person was far from the philosophical theories represented by Derek Parfit² and Richard Sorabji.³ According to Seaford’s view, they failed to take into account the perspective of the anthropology of the self. Hence in his work he would use the concept of the person in the following meaning: “I will be referring to the *self* (as opposed to *others*), the *individual* (as opposed to *society*), the *subject* (as opposed to *object*) and the *soul* (as opposed to *body*). *Person* is close to self and to individual, and *mind* is close to soul.”⁴ This assumption will be relevant especially in analyzing the structure of the inner self and possible modes of interiorization. Third, the central concept for Seaford’s main argument is monetization. Although it is a frequently recurring concept and can be approached from different perspectives, its basic definition is “development towards a single entity (money) whose only or main function is to be a general means of payment and exchange and a general measure and store of value.”⁵ For the sake of simplicity, we can say that the relation among these three concepts is the core of Seaford’s argument, which we will analyze shortly. But first we should take a look at the comparative research between Greece and India, its similarities and peculiarities.

GREECE AND INDIA: PHILOSOPHY, INNER SELF, MONETIZATION

Although many similarities and parallels can be seen in the cultural and intellectual circles of Greece and India, Seaford rejects at the beginning of his analysis the possibility of ideas passing directly between them.⁶ There is a lack of evidence for any relations before 326 BCE, so the fact is that philosophy and its accompanying elements appeared independently in these two areas. Nonetheless, socioeconomic changes emerge in similar form in both societies. The most relevant example of this parallel is the phenomenon of monetization, which appeared at the same time in Greece, India, and China.⁷ As Seaford claims:

¹ R. Seaford, *The Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India: A Historical Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1.

² D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

³ R. Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁴ Seaford, 53; emphasis in original.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

A society will receive *fundamental* ideas from another society only if it *has a need and a place* for them, whether because it has become dominated by that other society or because in its basic form it sufficiently resembles the society in which the ideas were produced. Between Greece and India in our period there was no relation of domination (or even of contact), but there was a similarity in basic societal form at least as great as that between Greece and any other society.⁸

What is important at this point is that Seaford is aware of economic factors that can be used as tools of explanation, but his approach cannot be described as economical determinism. On the basis of this approach, it is possible to conduct fruitful research on the connections between a social base and metaphysical beliefs without the burden of economical determinism. Writing about monetization, he claims that “part of this historical development is the development of individual property,”⁹ and in another fragment, “the power of the self and the order of the universe are characterised by individual property.”¹⁰ It is hard to prove causality between these issues, but the connections between them are a fact. Another factor present in this analytical perspective is the process of urbanization: “The movement of population into towns and cities was in all likelihood accompanied by a tendency towards the dissolution of kinship groups and of traditional culture, and by an increase in impersonal institutions, commerce, specialisation and individual property.”¹¹ All these factors affect the sphere of thinking that belongs to philosophy because “such radical transformation could not be unaccompanied by radical metaphysical and spiritual change.”¹²

The significant idea of Seaford’s analysis is the assumption that it is possible to find relevant historical data in philosophical texts.¹³ It is probably the right source for searching for metaphysical reflections on economics because, according to his methodology, metaphysics cannot be independent of the context in which it occurs. Let us look at the most interesting points of comparative analysis. We will choose a few from among the wide range of examples that can be found in the book:

1. Three common grounds of Indian and Greek are (a) the imagining of universe and society in terms of each other; (b) the relationship of the personal power of Indra and Zeus to the universal order; and (c) the failure of reciprocity.¹⁴

2. The relation between sovereignty and moral order was perceived as compatible in the Indian worldview, while in Greece (especial in Homer’s writings) there was a strict opposition between these two categories.¹⁵

⁸ Ibid., 13; emphasis in original.

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 21.

¹² Ibid., 15.

¹³ Ibid., 34.

¹⁴ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵ Ibid., 47.

3. There were two different visions of the autonomous inner self: “Whereas in India the idea of the autonomous inner self may be influenced by a positive image of the universal individual power of the king, in Greece it is influenced by the abstract unifying power of the money by which its owner is constituted as an individual.”¹⁶

4. The relation between the unitary-comprehensive and the abstract can be grasped in the case of monetization and by analogy in philosophical figures: “The development of such an idea is a historical process, in which some part was played by monetisation.”¹⁷

5. The same metaphor of the soul as a chariot (Plato’s *Phaedrus*, *Katha Upanisad*) is present in both.

6. A very interesting part of this comparative analysis consists in exposing similarities between karma and money. There are exactly sixteen similarities, among which are impersonality, relation to action, acquisition or accumulation by an individual, the cycle of exchange, and so forth.

These are just some samples of Seaford’s valuable and comprehensive research. By using this material, the author tries to provide a backing for his main thesis about monetization as a relevant factor in the development of philosophical thought and metaphysical thinking.

Another important element of this operation is the divergence in the understanding of monism. This idea is present in both cultures, but there are some nuances in comprehension, hence clarification is needed. The general definition is as follows: “the belief that all things are a single entity (so that diversity is mere appearance, or no more than diversity of aspect or of mode).”¹⁸ On the ground of this concept, one can distinguish between (a) material monism; (b) personal monism; (c) mental monism; and (d) abstract monism.¹⁹ This is exactly what we can call the common perspective of cognition in Greece and India. Monism constitutes the prism of thinking about reality and metaphysics, and it was common in both cultural spheres. In light of the distinctions and concepts mentioned above, we should look at the structure of the main line of reasoning.

MAIN ARGUMENT

We encounter Seaford’s argument in advanced form in this book. He provides six clarifications, initially established in discussions in his previous book:²⁰

- (1) My emphasis on the factor of monetisation implies not that it was the *only* factor, rather that monetisation has been *ignored*. [...]
- (2) There is no sense in which ideas can be *reduced* to money. Rather, ideas are the product of complex processes in which money may be a factor, as may other ideas.
- (3) To identify socio-economic processes as a factor in the creation of metaphysical ideas is not to deny that metaphysical ideas may influence socio-economic processes.
- (4) To identify the preconditions (economic or

¹⁶ Ibid., 140.

¹⁷ Ibid., 161.

¹⁸ Ibid., 62.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ R. Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

otherwise) for an intellectual development is not in itself to cast doubt on its content. [...] (5) It has become obvious from our argument that there is not a single mode of projecting (cosmising) or introjecting money. [...] (6) Cosmisation and introjection are complex processes.²¹

Seaford takes this assumption about the centrality of monetization and looks for its consequences in Greek and Indian culture. What is crucial for this idea is the observation of interconnected elements. When he is describing social changes and phenomena of social institutions and practices, he emphasizes that “such radical transformation could not be unaccompanied by radical metaphysical and spiritual change.”²² It looks obvious that there are some relations between these facts, but it is hard to find a clear causal relation. One can say that his view aspires to display a holistic picture of the physical and the metaphysical world and to point out its unity. The nexus between these dimensions is to be found in parallels of thinking and practice:

Monetisation represents the gradual transfer of power from interpersonal relations to objective embodiment of a universal. [...] This may also tend to produce the idea of *abstract value* (embodied in the substance). This process is monetisation, which does not require there to be coinage, true though it is that monetisation may be facilitated and promoted by coinage, and that coinage is – especially as its conventional value is generally greater than its metallic value – likely to advance further the idea of abstract value (or abstract Being).²³

Hence our reality is perceived as a mechanism with interconnected elements, and when an idea appears in one dimension, it can affect other elements. The idea of abstract value is present in the economic sphere as well as in the mental or spiritual sphere. The interconnection is a matter of fact. But the question about its causality is similar to the chicken-or-the-egg dilemma. Although it is hard to give a definitive answer, Seaford is willing to recognize the proper meaning of social practice:

It is the gradual diffusion of such practical skills, rather than any diffusion of metaphysics, that may help to explain indirectly the simultaneity of similar metaphysical developments in Greece and India (and China). The indirectly transmitted practical skills may even have included the use of a general means of exchange along trade routes, or even the idea of producing coins.²⁴

Moreover, he looks further. An important part of his argument consists in the thesis on interiorization. As he says, “This historical process – the spread of individual property along with the interiorisation of ownership – resembles what we will argue is crucial for

²¹ Seaford, *The Origins of Philosophy*, 317–19; emphasis in original.

²² *Ibid.*, 32.

²³ *Ibid.*, 31; emphasis in original.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

the development of the Greek inner self.”²⁵ The reality affected by the presence of abstract value that manifests itself in monetization can determine the shape of an individual’s imagination about the inner self. The economic dimension is strictly related to the spiritual dimension. It can be said that this view is based only on economic determinism, but it sheds new light on the relation between these two spheres. As Seaford maintains, “Metaphysical autonomy is economic autonomy, in the sense of fulfilling desire independently of others. The marginalisation of deity by the impersonal omnipotence of money was in both India and Greece more likely to occur among intellectuals whom money had made independent of others, namely an economic elite.”²⁶

The concept of interiorization is a very interesting part of Seaford’s approach. It is in accordance with our intuition that values from the external world can be interiorized by the self. But what is actually interiorized and why – this is a hard question. To show the problems that can arise around this issue, let us look at the case of Plato’s philosophy. Seaford claims:

The inner self may be a unity while consisting of parts. The Platonic *psuchē* is imagined sometimes (notably in *Republic*) as the abstract entity together with physical sensations and attachments, but sometimes (notably in *Phaedo*) purely as the abstract entity itself, imprisoned in the body. What is interiorised is a *relation*, between the abstract power of money and the concrete variety of what it may command, with the variety either within the *psuchē* or relegated to the body.²⁷

This hypothesis is very attractive, especially if we would agree that in Plato’s idea of inner self we are dealing with the interiorization of the master-slave relationship.²⁸ But one can set this issue in a different way. One can assume that the core of Plato’s philosophy consists in establishing a universal and impersonal view of reality. The role of philosophy is then acquiring objective knowledge about external reality or providing a solution for issues from the perspective of impartiality. In this case the impersonal character of money is interiorized in the form of the idea of impartiality as philosophical or ethical value.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that in general Seaford has pointed out an interesting way of analyzing the relation between philosophical issues and those related to the sphere of practice. If the value of science consists in provoking new questions, then Seaford’s work deserves much attention. What could be explained in more comprehensive form is the relation between the phenomenon of monetization and thinking in terms of abstract values. Searching for consequences of anthropological assumption in the economy or analyzing the possible modes of interiorization could be valuable scientific work. Another interesting direction of analysis is formed by the question about the role of symbolical order in philosophical

²⁵ Ibid., 53.

²⁶ Ibid., 88.

²⁷ Ibid., 309.

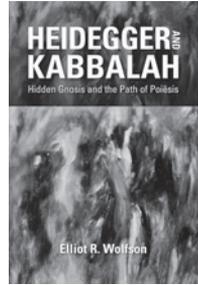
²⁸ Ibid., 317.

thinking. When Seaford talks about interiorization, one can associate this claim with Eric Voegelin's approach toward the analysis of order. His famous assertion about the existential dimension of the *macro-anthropos* and *micro-cosmos*²⁹ evokes the same question that is present in Seaford's research. This is exactly the problem of interiorization. Of course, the economy matters in our metaphysical thinking, but the pattern of this kind of thinking can be settled deeper in the preconditions of the self. We can call this method of analysis a philosophy of consciousness, and Seaford's research could develop in this interesting way. It can actualize the potential of thinking beyond such labels as spiritual determinism, economic determinism, idealism, materialism, and so forth.

The author of *The Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India* tends to be precise about issues that are blurred and abstract in philosophical disciplines. The purpose of this research is hard to achieve, and, as we presume, the form of his main arguments is not a final one and will probably be expanded in future studies.

²⁹ E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. 1, *Israel and Revelation* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 39–54.

HEIDEGGER, BALAAM, AND JOB



[Michael Chighel, *Kabale: Hebräischer Humanismus im Lichte von Heideggers Denken*. Translated by Peter Trawny. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2020; Elliot Wolfson, *The Duplicity of Philosophy's Shadow: Heidegger, Nazism, and the Jewish Other*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018; Elliot Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiesis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019.]¹

The publication of the first three *Black Notebooks* in 2014 added a new dimension to the seemingly interminable debates about Heidegger's relation to Nazism, especially in terms of the comments on the Jews they contain. The distribution of these comments in advance of publication managed to produce yet another scandal in France, home of the notorious Heidegger affair of 1987. Once again, French intellectuals took a stand on Heidegger's legacy, some condemning Heidegger outright as a vicious antisemite whose thought should be unworthy of attention, others trying to understand the comments precisely within the broader contexts of his thought. In the years since the publication of the *Black Notebooks*, a modest industry of commentary regarding his alleged antisemitism has arisen, including a number of monographs, edited volumes, and even a book produced by Heidegger's publisher, Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, providing an advance report about other potentially offensive texts in Heidegger's *Nachlass*.² While no simple account of this

¹ I would like to thank my colleague Michael Meng for his insightful comments on this essay.

² See Klaus Held, ed., *Marbach-Bericht über eine neue Sichtung des Heidegger-Nachlasses* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2019). This edition sidesteps the broader problem of access to Heidegger's *Nachlass* and the editorial quality of the *Gesamtausgabe* as a whole. Lack of access and editorial transparency has led to significant scholarly suspicion regarding this edition. See Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*: An International Scandal of Scholarship," *Philosophy Today* 39, issue 1 (Spring 1995): 3–15; Thomas Sheehan and Martin Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth*, ed. and trans. Thomas Sheehan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), ix–xi; *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks*, ed. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016), 89–94; Adam Soboczynski, "Was heißt 'N.so?'?" *Die Zeit*, March 26, 2015; "Heidegger hielt 'Endlösung' für notwendig," *Hohe Luft*, March 27, 2015; Julia A. Ireland, "Naming Φύσις and the 'Inner Truth of National Socialism': A New Archival Discovery," *Research in Phenomenology* 44 (2014): 315–46. As to more general discussions, noteworthy are Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); *Heidegger, die Juden, noch einmal*, ed. Peter Trawny and Andrew J. Mitchell (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015); Peter E. Gordon, "Heidegger in Black," *The New York Review of Books*, October 9, 2014, and Peter E. Gordon, "Heidegger & The Gas Chambers,"

burgeoning commentarial tradition can do justice to its richness, I think it is fair to identify three very basic orientations without regard to the evaluations of Heidegger's person and thought they express: (1) those who treat Heidegger's comments as evidence of a superficial provincial or quondam antisemitism; (2) those who consider the comments significant instances of a more profound, coherent, and pervasive philosophical antisemitism; and (3) those who rest somewhere in the middle, neither passing off the comments as superficial expressions of antisemitism nor seeing in them an expression of a coherent, if somewhat esoteric, antisemitic philosophical position.

The books I shall discuss in this essay take Heidegger's comments seriously. They are distinctive because they seek to offer a specifically Jewish response to Heidegger's thought. As such, they are also polemical works that seek in rather interesting ways to put Heidegger's thought as a whole in question, not by condemning it, but by revealing alternatives to Heidegger's thought, potentially unsettling its principal assumptions and narratives. I shall proceed in what follows by discussing first Michael Chighel's book and then two books by the distinguished scholar of Kabbalah, Elliot Wolfson. I discuss Wolfson's books together because they form a pair, the first dealing explicitly with Heidegger's Nazism and comments on the Jews, the second showing to what extent Heidegger's thought has affinities with Jewish mysticism, and indeed, what Heidegger could have learned from the latter had he shown the same interest in Jewish mysticism as he did in the great German mystics of the medieval period.

I.

Michael Chighel's book is a polemic in the best sense of the word. Chighel begins his argument on a surprising note with the claim that Heidegger is not an antisemite, at least not in any conventional sense. To the contrary, he argues that Heidegger is more clearly a successor to Balaam, whom Chighel believes to be the first genuine antisemite and antipode to Moses. As such, Heidegger represents not a figure to be dismissed or excluded but rather one who raises a challenge to Judaism. Chighel proceeds to set out Heidegger's challenge and then to meet it. The book articulates this challenge and response in three main sections, the first describing salient elements of the "Heidegger question," the second Heidegger's specific understanding of Judaism, while the third – and longest – section engages in a dispute against Heidegger/Balaam centered on grounding concepts of Heidegger's thought, such as "world," "earth," and "poiesis."

Chighel's primary claim is that Heidegger's antisemitism amounts to what Chighel refers to as "anti-Adamism." Before delving into what Chighel specifically means by Adamism, I want to make a few comments about how he introduces the Heidegger question. As noted, Chighel's approach is polemical. His polemic is not directed against Heidegger only but also against the pathos of what he calls the "apocalypse of otherness" (*die Apokalypse der Andersheit*) that he attributes to treatments of Heidegger's Nazism

The New York Review of Books, December 4, 2014; Martin Heideggers "Schwarze Hefte:" *Eine philosophisch-politische Debatte*, ed. Marion Heinz and Sidonie Kellerer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016); Donatella di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli ebrei* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2014); and *Heidegger and Jewish Thought: Difficult Others*, ed. Misha Brumik and Elad Lapidot with Elan Reisner (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018). As to an extensive bibliography, Wolfson's *Duplicity* is an excellent source. See Wolfson, *Duplicity*, 267–99.

and attitude to the Jews. Chighel points to the role the Jews have played as a victim in an apocalyptic drama whereby European culture has brought itself to its fulfillment with their destruction. For Chighel this drama and the accusation of Heidegger's thought that goes along with it do nothing to confront the challenge that the Jews represent for European culture. To the contrary, insofar as they remain ineluctably "other," the Jews do not present a challenge from within or without but remain the simple other of everyday antisemitism, either as a suspicious foreign element or, after Auschwitz, as the unassailable victim of European brutality. This suppression of Judaism's power and significance is belied by Heidegger himself, however: his accusations against the Jews show precisely how much a part of European and world culture they are, how much their otherness is ours, and how much that otherness puts European thought in question. In this respect, Chighel labors to show that Heidegger's accusations against the Jews are of a piece with the greater Nazi narratives whereby European culture can only truly realize and express itself when liberated from the sabotaging inner influence of the Jewish element that is in essence antithetic to it. Heidegger's thinking is at war with Judaism not so much as the "other" to be looked upon as if from "outside" but as a dangerous excrescence at the very roots of European civilization. I am reminded of the well-known comment Heidegger makes in his course from 1933–34 on the essence of truth:

The enemy can have attached itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a people and can set itself against this people's own essence and act against it. The struggle is all the fiercer and harder and tougher, for the least of it consists in coming to blows with one another; it is often far more difficult and wearisome to catch sight of the enemy as such, to bring the enemy into the open, to harbor no illusions about the enemy, to keep oneself ready for attack, to cultivate and intensify a constant readiness and to prepare the attack looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation.³

Heidegger's appreciation of the general significance of the Jews is matched by his ignorance about their particularity. As other commentators such as Peter Gordon have observed, Heidegger's intense engagement with significant philosophical questions is counterbalanced or undermined by the striking crudity of some of his narratives, a point that is nowhere more fitting than in regard to his views about the Jews. In the next section of Chighel's book, he reveals the scantiness of Heidegger's knowledge of the Jews through brief readings of three passages culled from the *Black Notebooks*: two from the *Ponderings* from 1939/1941 collected in volume 96, and one from the *Ponderings* from 1938/1939 collected in volume 95 of the *Gesamtausgabe*. Chighel's interpretations of these passages are one of the highlights of the book, for they take Heidegger to task with concision and judicious irony. To give an example, Chighel notes that Heidegger's connection of Judaism with "empty rationality and counting ability" may apply in some degree to Husserl's phenomenology but has little or no application to the broadest aspects of the Jewish

³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 73.

religious and theological tradition (the latter of which challenges Christian theology as Chighel notes). The sheer ridiculousness of the charge, based on stereotypes of the Jewish intellectual, especially of the Bolshevik Jewish intellectual, is patent, so much so that Chighel is careful not to belabor his criticism.

Throughout the interpretations comprising this section, Chighel is concerned to reinforce a basic thesis: that Heidegger's antisemitism is more properly an anti-Adamism. Chighel defines the latter term simply by noting that Heidegger's anti-Adamism is "an antipathy" to the kind of human being that prefers beings to Being.⁴ Chighel views this antipathy as fundamental to Heidegger's negative attitude toward the Jews and Judaism through his interpretations of the second part of his book. He thereby reveals what he considers the primary and important role the Jews play in Heidegger's narrative of the destitution of Being by the primacy of beings as expressed in calculative rationality, worldlessness, and rootlessness, to cite only a few of Heidegger's leading accusations against the Jews and the "Judaization of the German spirit."

In the final section of his book, Chighel engages in a detailed articulation of the challenge that "Adamism" so understood presents to Heidegger's thought by taking five keywords from Heidegger's vocabulary and setting them off against their Hebrew equivalents: he sets *od* (עוד) against *Welt*, *erets* (אֶרֶץ) against *Boden*, *adamah* (אֲדָמָה) against *Erde*, *tselem* (צֶלֶם) against *Ethos*, and *avodah* (עֲבֹדָה) against *Poiesis*. He thus presents some of the extraordinary richness of Jewish thought against Heidegger's own. This section is the highpoint of the polemic because it not only presents basic Hebrew terms in contrast to Heidegger's German, but in doing so it offers those terms as the outline of a Jewish "humanism" that offers an alternative to Heidegger's anti-Adamism as a form of anti-humanism. He takes inspiration from Heidegger's celebrated response to Sartre, the *Letter on Humanism*, as bringing out what is unacceptable in Heidegger's thought within the confines of the humanism Chighel associates with the Jewish tradition.

The discussion of these keywords is enriched by the inclusion of modern Jewish speculative thought and philosophy, from Martin Buber to the seventh master of the Hasidic Habad-Lubavitch dynasty, Menahem Mendel Schneerson.⁵ In the first pairing of *od* and *Welt*, Chighel brings in Buber extensively, contrasting what Chighel considers the distinctively dialogic character of the Jewish tradition with Heidegger's inveterate monologism. Chighel hits on what I consider a powerful current in Heidegger's thought: the conviction that we are profoundly alone, especially given that what is our "ownmost" is death, a death that cannot be shared or lived by any other being – the nonfungibility of death is central to the pathos of Heidegger's thought as well as to its destructive impact on the pieties of community. Indeed, Heidegger indicates that community is only possible based on recognition of our essential aloneness. Chighel counters this ostensibly corrosive

⁴ Chighel, 55: "In der kommenden Analyse wird Heideggers Anti-Adamismus als eine Antipathie gegen die Art des Menschen erörtert, die das Seiende dem Sein vorzieht."

⁵ It should be noted that Wolfson, too, shows exceptional interest in the Rebbe as witnessed by his book on the Rebbe, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). In *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, Wolfson not infrequently cites the founder of the Habad-Lubavitch dynasty, Shneur Zalman of Liadi, noting that this dynasty is one of the most philosophical and speculative of the Hasidic "factions." See Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, 64.

aspect of Heidegger's thinking with the immediacy of dialogic contact that makes the other constitutive of my own identity, of my own being. For Chighel, I am never alone since the "you" or the other is always part of who I am: language does not presuppose silence but first allows one to recognize it as such. The preference for beings that Chighel associates with Adamism comes clear in this dialogic affirmation of language and community as having an immediate impact on us, not as beings encountered mediately in a world but as worldless precisely in their pure immediacy and constitutive force.⁶ Chighel permits himself to claim on this account that the worldlessness of the Jews, though demeaning from Heidegger's point of view, is not intrinsically so.⁷

Buber returns again at several spots, but I think this example gives useful insight into the basic thrust of Chighel's opposition to Heidegger insofar as the constitutive significance of community as immediate and pressing on all of us, not as rooted in one parochial tradition, is presented as an essential aspect of a Jewish response that transcends Judaism to the extent it is itself understood parochially. And this is perhaps the most limiting aspect of Chighel's study because it is simply not clear how Judaism can transcend itself to become "universal" in the sense of binding on all. Indeed, it is not even clear in Chighel's study which Judaism is the Judaism that stands in for all, though the clear preference for Hasidic sources, and Hasidic sources traceable to a specific Hasidic dynasty, one among a number of others, also mitigates against the universalism or the identification of one Judaism, undoubtedly simplified, for all of Judaism or a general "Hebrew humanism."

II.

Having written two large and detailed books, Elliot Wolfson's engagement with Heidegger's Nazism and his denigration of Jewish thought has to be, if not the most extensive, at least one of the most extensive treatments of these issues we have. But Wolfson's contribution is in fact far more than even this suggests: his comprehensive questioning of Heidegger's thought in the context of the kabbalistic tradition may be considered another attempt to counter Heidegger that reveals, in a way quite different than Chighel, to what extent a specific and significant aspect of Jewish thought anticipates Heidegger and, indeed, may surpass the most parochial aspects of his thought. For in both of these books Wolfson develops nothing less than a radical view of the divine as being not merely transcendent in a traditional sense but literally beyond any notion of being, even the apophatic bare "is" shorn of all other predicates. That the divine is not in some sense nothingness or the absolutely other but so recondite as to defeat any ascription of being (since these are necessarily limited or dialectical) is the link with Heidegger that drives home the more probing point: that the divine is beyond good and evil and, unlike the God of Christian

⁶ I might add that Chighel's discussion of *Being and Time* as innovative in terms of its use of such prepositions as "in" and "to" is very interesting. Chighel even refers to Heidegger's thought as "prepositional thought." See Chighel, 120.

⁷ Chighel refers often to "acosmism," literally worldlessness, but not in the sense of the denigration of the human being to a mere epiphenomenon of the whole, a charge made against Spinoza, but rather to refer to the immediacy of our relation to other human beings and to God as well. Whether this interpretation of "acosmism" truly accords with Habad-Lubavitch Hasidism is an open question.

theology, not limited by benevolence and therefore not susceptible to the distinctive form of Christian apologetics that G. W. Leibniz called theodicy.

In the interests of clarity and concision, I should like to deal with Wolfson's books separately, devoting more attention to his more recent book while introducing that book by a brief account of its predecessor.

In *The Duplicity of Heidegger's Shadow*, Wolfson sets out to give a comprehensive account of Heidegger's Nazism. He is clear that this task, though scholarly, is also a profoundly personal one. And anyone passingly familiar with Wolfson's broad body of work cannot fail to note the readily avowed influence of Heidegger. Thus, in a way that recalls, if distantly, Jacques Derrida's own attempt to grasp Heidegger's Nazism, Wolfson proceeds to evaluate the case against Heidegger and the impact of Heidegger's thought on his own work as well.

He begins with a wide-ranging examination of the various attitudes to Heidegger's Nazism that extends to two chapters. He proceeds in the third and fourth chapters to a direct engagement with Heidegger's denigration of Jewish thought before trying to make sense of Heidegger's silence about the Holocaust in the fifth chapter. The sixth and final chapter of the book is absorbing: once again we meet Balaam as "the prototype of the non-Israelite sooth-sayer,"⁸ and, like Chighel, Wolfson identifies Heidegger with Balaam, though in doing so he comes to what in my view is a much more explicitly challenging view of the divine (a view likely also present in Chighel's book but not expressed with the same clarity), as I have already mentioned above.

Wolfson's evaluation of the case against Heidegger is very nuanced. Indeed, I think that it is one of the most balanced and meticulous treatments of Heidegger's Nazism that I have read. He avoids both quick dismissal and hyperbolic accusation, the twin blunders attending so many discussions of the Heidegger affair. Most striking perhaps is that Wolfson, as one so influenced by Heidegger, refuses the temptation to join the apologetic literature on Heidegger's Nazism. Instead, Wolfson assesses the evidence exhaustively and comes to a determination that is eminently sensible and far fairer to Heidegger than the latter ever was to his opponents, real or imagined. Wolfson maintains that it would be a mistake to pass off Heidegger's Nazism as the brief flirtation of a naïve philosopher. He thus dismisses elements of Heidegger's own attempt to provide an exculpatory history of his involvement with Nazism. At the same time, he takes advantage of the ever-increasing wealth of evidence to suggest that Heidegger's involvement with Nazism displays a broader arc of enthusiasm and disillusionment, which, put most simply, reveals Heidegger's philosophical investment in Nazism as far greater than his defenders typically choose to admit but not so great as to support Emanuel Faye's by now well-known claim that Heidegger's thought is itself Nazism meriting banishment from the philosophical canon.

As I noted, it is the final chapter of Wolfson's study that grapples with this issue most directly. A much more imposing foe than Faye is Leo Strauss, who in some rather famous remarks made on the occasion of his friend Jacob Klein's eightieth birthday openly compares Heidegger to Hitler: "Only this much must be said: Heidegger who surpasses in speculative intelligence all his contemporaries and is at the same time intellectually

⁸ Wolfson, *Duplicity*, 154.

the counterpart to what Hitler was politically, attempts to go a way not yet trodden by anyone or rather to think in a way which philosophers at any rate have never thought before.”⁹ Although Wolfson does not cite this particular Straussian text, the task he takes on at the end of *The Duplicity of Philosophy’s Shadow* and that preoccupies *Heidegger and Kabbalah* is informed by the kind of challenge Strauss lays down to anyone seeking to wrest Heidegger’s importance from Nazism or the stronger claim (made by Derrida) that Heidegger’s thought is more radical than Nazism.

So enters Balaam and the speculative thought of Kabbalah. Wolfson establishes the comparison of Moses with Balaam in kabbalistic literature:

The homology between Moses and Balaam assumes an interesting twist here. It is not only that Moses’s knowledge and theurgic use of the godly emanations corresponds to Balaam’s knowledge of and magical use of the ungodly gradations, but rather that, like Balaam, Moses himself had knowledge of the demonic. The underlying assumption is that since the demonic derives from the divine, the perfection of Moses’s wisdom necessitated that he had knowledge of the unholy forces to complement his knowledge of the holy forces. Moreover, in the case of both Moses and Balaam, the vision is indirect – a seeing from behind the wall – and temporary. The symmetry is tempered, however, by the fact that the gaze of Balaam was fixed on the faint glow of holiness from the Other Side, whereas Moses contemplated the faint darkness of the Other Side from within the superfluity of the supernal light of holiness. In spite of this critical difference of vantage point, the main thrust of the passage is to narrow the chasm separating the two realms by underscoring the intertwining of light and dark. This gnosis is educed as well from Moses’s inaugural theophany, “An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush” (Exodus 3:2). The bush of thorns symbolizes the force of unholiness and the flame of fire, in which the angel appears, the force of holiness. The image of the fire burning from within the bush thus intimates the dialectical integration of the demonic and the divine.¹⁰

The implication that Wolfson elaborates in this final chapter is that good and evil are intertwined aspects of the divine. He explicates this claim in *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, returning us to his own earlier discussion of the relation of truth to untruth or to error that is such an important facet of Heidegger’s thought. Error is inevitable: it is characteristic of our comportment in the world.

Some may find in this admission of the ineluctable presence of the demonic, of error and evil, a perverse justification of Heidegger or, even worse, of the Holocaust itself. Far from being the apocalyptic termination of Western humanism, Auschwitz turns out to be another struggle in the endless conflict between the divine and the demonic. The German

⁹ Leo Strauss, “An Unspoken Prologue to a Public Lecture at St. John’s,” in *Interpretation* 7, no. 3 (September 1978): 2.

¹⁰ Wolfson, *Duplicity*, 156.

historians of the *Historikerstreit*, also a child of 1986–87, would be aghast since this view robs the Holocaust of its unique status, suggesting it is not an endpoint or a terminal event without precedent but another turn in an interminable history.

Wolfson does not take up these questions and assures us, I think fairly, that he is not attempting to justify or exculpate Heidegger.¹¹ Rather, in the guise of a penetrating analysis of Heidegger's Nazism and relation to Judaism, he provides the kernel of an exceedingly radical concept of divinity, which he locates in the Kabbalah.

In *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, Wolfson provides a continuation of this thinking that seems at one level a conventional academic account of the similarities between Heidegger's thought and Kabbalah. On another level, as befits a text on secretive texts, Wolfson shows to what extent Heidegger is perhaps less radical than the Jewish thought he condemns while extending his radical concept of the divine, a concept so radical that it both reflects Heidegger's thought and says what Heidegger is far more reticent to say. At the end of the book, Wolfson provides an intriguing orienting comment:

For both Heidegger and the kabbalists, the nameless is not the transcendent God worshipped and adulated monotheistically, the being that is beyond being; it is rather the being that cannot be reduced to or identified with any being, even the otherwise than being, the godhead or the divinity that can be approached only atheologically, as it exceeds all theological kataphasis, the one constellated not by the one of singular identity but by the illimitable multiples of the one that is never one, the being that is neither being nor nonbeing but the negation of the negation of negation.¹²

Here is the paradoxical being beyond being and nonbeing, a being that, as such, is beyond good and evil as well, encompassing them both while belonging to neither. The language we are compelled to use here is convoluted, thus the accusations that may be leveled against Wolfson for his apparent obscurity. Yet how does one address the “negation of the negation of negation”? Even to use this phrase is problematic because it identifies this being with negation, thus remaining within the horizon of being and nonbeing and not wholly outside of that horizon.

Wolfson deals with this problem expansively throughout the book, which is divided into eight chapters, each of which deals with an important Heideggerian concept and its kabbalistic counterpart. The surface similarity to Chighel's approach is again remarkable, though there is in Chighel nothing of the prodigious detail and careful delineation of sources, schools, and trends as there is in Wolfson. For informational purposes, I provide this brief summary: chapter 1 deals with hermeneutic circularity, chapter 2 with inceptual thinking, chapter 3 with *Seyn/Nichts* and the *Ein Sof* (אין סוף), chapter 4 with *tsimsum* (צמצום or the divine contraction) and the *Lichtung*, chapter 5 with the “Nihilating Leap,” chapter 6 with temporalizing, chapter 7 with disclosive knowledge, and chapter 8 with “Ethnolinguistic Enrootedness” and historical destiny.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹² Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, 336.

As one can see, there is no way a brief or even longer review can deal with the wealth of material that Wolfson presents. Moreover, Wolfson's approach is not to put forth a linear argument, though his discussions are all anchored in a structure of comparing and contrasting Heidegger and kabbalistic thought. In the process of executing this task, however, Wolfson gathers apparently disparate strands of thought from Alain Badiou to Nishida Kitarō's philosophy of bashō (場所) to Nāgārjuna's tetralemmatic logic. Wolfson could be accused of a certain eclecticism or simply a reductive penchant for comparison running across widely disparate cultures and kinds of thinking. In my view, this criticism is unjustified simply because Wolfson tends not to be reductive in his accounts but applies elements of his central comparison to other kinds of thought as a way of creating interesting networks of interaction. He consistently resists restricting or reducing this variety to a "proper" line of thought, this resistance itself reflecting a rather Heideggerian respect for the unresolved and questionable.

In this sense, one may argue that Wolfson's text replicates what I may characterize as the "interruptive" attitude of much of Heidegger's thought and certainly of his attempts to complicate what we take to be simple and obvious. This aspect of Heidegger's thinking is in marked contrast to the reductive narratives he produces, a point of which Wolfson is well aware as he balances his text between expansive interpretation and restrictive comparison. This expansion and restriction in turn reflects the basic pattern of disclosure and concealment that Wolfson attributes both to Heidegger and to Kabbalah, a pattern where being and nonbeing are interrelated and cannot be understood outside of that interrelation, an obvious point obscured by the many attempts to insulate the divine from responsibility for evil.

Wolfson does not continue this tradition, and his claims about divinity when applied to Heidegger's being-historical thinking bring us to the same spot beyond good and evil, mere morality. And, once again, this spot brings us to the central question: Is Heidegger, as a thinker beyond good and evil, not the expression of the most radical Nazism, the complete freedom from all morality and thus the freedom to consider morality mere convention? I think Wolfson does not go quite so far; indeed, I think Wolfson's location of the divine as beyond good and evil does not absolve human beings from responsibility – to the contrary, the enigmatic character of the divine imposes greater responsibility for good and evil squarely on the human being and its relation to the divine. An example of this thinking is in fact Spinoza, who attributes good and evil to human beings alone and not to God, who lies beyond all anthropomorphism: in his essence, God is beyond being and beings as we understand them.

III.

More than their apparent convergence, what is striking about Chighel's and Wolfson's books is the extent of their basic divergence. This basic divergence is revealed clearly in another publication by Chighel that deals with a meeting between Elie Wiesel and Rebbe Schneerson that seems to have made an immense impact on the former. Wiesel describes the encounter in his memoirs. He asks Schneerson, "'Rebbe,'... 'how can you believe in G-d after Auschwitz?'" He looked at me in silence for a long moment, his hands resting on the table. Then he replied, in a soft, barely audible voice, 'How can you not believe in

G-d after Auschwitz?”¹³ Chighel goes on to discuss the Rebbe’s point that for him seems radical. Why? Chighel clarifies:

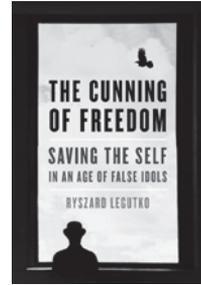
Whereas various writers on Holocaust theology have suggested in various ways that a Jew must continue to believe in G-d despite Auschwitz, not a single voice has had the temerity, or the radical logic, to suggest that a Jew must continue to believe in G-d *because* of Auschwitz. For the Rebbe, Auschwitz is not something that should weaken one’s belief and trust in G-d. “On the contrary,” says the Rebbe, Auschwitz should bring one to place one’s faith in G-d “*even more strongly!*”

The radical logic, the logic of holy *chutzpah*, seems to run as follows. Yes, we must prosecute G-d for Auschwitz. Yes, we must demand from G-d that He give us an explanation. (After all, we cannot explain it with our human intellect.) But in order to prosecute G-d, we must *believe* that G-d is there, and that G-d is inherently benevolent. Without those two fundamental assumptions, the question cannot be asked at all. In the very demand for an explanation, we affirm our trust in G-d and in His goodness. What the Rebbe wished to impress upon Wiesel was the already operative reality of the *emunah*, the faith and trust, upon which Wiesel’s own fury was premised in all his arguments against G-d.

This “Hebrew humanism” affirms the distance of God – and his goodness. While Wolfson conceptualizes the distance of God or the divine that is both utterly beyond and in being and nonbeing as the completely other or nonreducible in superlative detail, he does imply a rather different conclusion: that there is no necessary imputation of benevolence to God. Wolfson’s “God beyond God” is a far more probing and disturbing conception of the divine that must also act as a fundamental challenge to what may seem to some the profound and to others the facile attribution of goodness to God. Wolfson might even go so far as to say that the genuine source of evil is the usurpation of prophetic truth, as in Balaam, as in Heidegger, the assumption of the mantle of the prophet accompanied by an almost cynical disbelief in that prophecy. While the genuine believer has nothing of this cynicism, the question remains whether it is possible to maintain belief in a divinity so distant from us, a divinity whose distance and power are more terrible than benevolent, the kind of divinity that in Hans Blumenberg’s account of nominalism gave rise to modernity in Europe as an active rebellion against the passive acceptance of ignorance that must attend the divine if the divine is beyond understanding. After all, even more than the question of Heidegger, the question of Auschwitz lingers here: Should we accept Auschwitz as “destinal” or reject it as a scourge to be overcome? Is Judaism the belief in Job, or should we reject Job: for why indeed are there beings rather than nothing?

¹³ Michael Chighel, “‘I Shall Teach You to Sing’: The night Elie Wiesel met the Rebbe,” Chabad.org, accessed online December 18, 2020. I note that Chighel modifies Wiesel’s original text by using “G-d” instead of “God.”

WHY WE NEED THE FREEDOM OF ARISTOCRATS



[Ryszard Legutko, *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols*. New York: Encounter Books, 2021.]

Polish statesman and political philosopher Ryszard Legutko has written an essential guide to understanding the ongoing debasement of freedom. In *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols*, Legutko analyzes the main contours of modern freedom: negative freedom, the pyramid scheme of rights, inner freedom, the non-existent self, and the minimal self. He finds them hopelessly deficient and, when understood correctly, he argues, these concepts of freedom are playing a shell game. They traffic in soft concepts of toleration, compromise, authenticity, openness; but, Legutko rejoins, modern understandings of freedom are hardened ideologies that evict classical and religious notions of freedom from respectability and the public square. Modern freedom is anything but neutral regarding how people should live.

The classical and biblical understanding of freedom is built on the soul, conscience, and virtue and the view that our freedom is a prudential opportunity to make ourselves worthy in the pursuits of human life with others in family, civil society, political community, education, and religion. To such vertical articulations of freedom, the modern turn asserts that real freedom is the assertion of the self, stripped of any encumbrances that it judges to stand between it and the object of human desires. Here is the source of its rigid exclusiveness, the intolerance of tolerance that we have come to understand so very well.

Legutko's incisive short chapters on the problem of freedom aim to recover its hierarchical nature; that those who exercise it well by their virtue are estimable persons who know how to bring excellence and order to themselves and to any enterprise or association they lead. It is this radical – from our perspective – unequal quality of liberty that he wants us to see. This is, of course, a notion that our liberty and our choices participate in something higher and more exalted than our frail human condition. Our freedom isn't good because we have nothing left to lose, or because it enables us to live deconstructed autonomous lives bereft of authority, but is precious because it is how we show our devotion to and reflect in our actions the eternal laws that govern us.

Modernity's lowering of freedom began with the state of nature hypothesized by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Legutko judges. This rational construct removed human beings from Prince and Pope, tradition and law, and threw them back on their own devices, in order to build an artificial political order that would protect rights. The teaching held that human beings should be primarily understood as individuals, with family and communities in the background. Secondly, the state of nature posited the equality of all people. Both arrangements, Legutko observes, are far from self-evident and radically reduce the complexity of human beings.

I disagree with Legutko's characterization of equality in one crucial respect. He quotes Hobbes' strained attempts to justify the intellectual and physical equality of human beings in order to underscore how difficult equality is to accept as a self-evident notion. But Legutko does not provide an argument for how we can be considered equal under the law on the basis of our shared human nature. And surely, an equality rooted in our human nature that also grounds our liberty under law is essential to warding off the egalitarianism run amok that we presently confront. I agree with Legutko's argument that the state of nature teaching offered a new creation story for human beings to think about freedom, equality, and politics. Where I leave off is the subtle hint that maybe political equality is only a myth.

He further compounds this error by leveling criticisms of the Declaration of Independence as an unsupported egalitarian document containing unfocused language that seemingly paves the way for the tyranny of liberalism. Quoting Legutko: "in no way can one justify a statement that all men 'are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights [...] among these [...] Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.'"¹ Legutko argues that nothing in the Christian tradition nor in the history of philosophy could justify such an "outlandish contention." The Declaration of Independence, however, should not be read as a theological or philosophical treatise, even the important second paragraph must be understood as a political statement in a negotiated document, drafted by Thomas Jefferson and revised and agreed to by the Continental Congress.

"We hold these truths" means us, we, those assembled here representing the independent states make a judgment that man comes to our political order with certain rights which will be protected by the government. Legutko does not note that much of the Declaration is rooted in English abuses of common law rights and norms that precipitated the push for colonial independence. The statement of their equality is a claim that they have the authority as a constituted political community to separate from the British Empire under this long train of repeated abuses.

As to Christianity, the very notion that human beings cannot be defined by an official government ideology and possess the liberty to pursue their Happiness is a difficult notion to arrive at apart from the inheritance of Christianity which has ennobled human nature with the teaching of the Incarnation. Our freedom matters greatly and it exists apart from the government. Moreover, Americans firmly understood, as Tocqueville notes at length, that their liberty was exercised under God and the law. They were accountable for their actions to God, family, and their wider community. The Declaration's claims were

¹ Ryszard Legutko, *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols* (New York: Encounter Books, 2021), 31.

understood by no one to license the empty and nominalistic autonomy that characterizes much of the public mind in contemporary western democracies. The deformations of American liberty come from other sources, not from the ideas of the Declaration. True, abstractions can be lifted from the Declaration to justify an endless train of new rights, but this is done without the full measure of the moral, philosophical, and religious meaning that informs the Declaration.

Legutko quickly returns to firmer footing in analyzing how unbounded rights claims have undermined freedom and a morally serious form of republican politics. The legitimacy of the state is now judged by how decisively it upholds rights claims, this has become the ultimate mandate for action. And those claims are not limited to prepolitical rights but encompass everything that citizens can implore on behalf of the public order for their individual benefit. Thus does the European Court of Justice's dictates of humanitarianism become the arbiter of legitimacy for European state governments. Left out of this kind of a politics is the actual representation of the nation's concrete interests. Instead, we see the transformation of communal political interests into an individualistic idiom.

We have two abstractions: the autonomous individual and humanity writ large. The rights-based republic struggles to engage in substantive deliberation about what a political community might need to thrive as a collective whole. Legutko notes that human rights emerged in an antipolitical sense "through declarations and charters – that is, through an arbitrary political act of will that by definition requires no prior rational validation."² And it is this antipolitical sense that rights claims have nailed into Western law, removing us from deliberation and compromise, we struggle to value our relational obligations that lift us above mere individualism.

Legutko notes that negative freedom – the most sober understanding of rights-based politics – is insufficient for human action, which is not to dismiss the need for space more or less sealed from the government in which we can pursue our interests. But such space does not provide us with a compelling rationale for freedom and its defense. It is true, Legutko notes, that in shaking off tyranny, people appeal to lives unburdened by harsh, arbitrary power. However, that newfound freedom is usually filled by people who place in it "their most precious aspirations, usually those that tyranny has subdued."³ We love freedom, but "We attach to it many, often too many, of our hopes and ideals, and we hardly ever distinguish between freedom itself and the hopes and ideals that go along with it."⁴ These include objectives like meaning, justice, "fairer laws," and a collective freedom that is ennobling. While negative freedom is important, the life of a territorial people who must live and function together as a nation under law is what historically has driven the desire for freedom overall, Legutko states.

In considering "Positive Freedom" Legutko introduces us to how liberty, rightly understood, involves qualities of personal excellence. Liberty is really about virtue, and this, Legutko contends, is why Rawls' attempt to set forward a political system for the

² Ibid., 36.

³ Ibid., 41.

⁴ Ibid.

equal uses of liberty displaces what is most needful: the individual using freedom with a certain “aptitude” and skill that enables command and authority. Rawls frets over the size of the social democratic state that can somehow make inequality work for those lesser off, equalizing life’s circumstances. Legutko doesn’t exactly put it this way, but Rawls’ attempt “to give a theoretical description of the system that offers people conditions which would somehow disarm negative freedom’s paradoxes”⁵ never finally equals real human effort. Freedom can’t be portioned out in chunks to citizens in transfer payments or healthcare programs. Legutko’s discussion points higher than entitlements and mandated equality, he wants us to find the soul and meaning of freedom.

So it’s instructive, if not provocative, when Legutko dispatches Rawls and ushers in Aristotle’s free man: “courageousness, a sense of justice, resolution, fortitude, magnanimity, and self-control.”⁶ Aristotle’s free citizen sets goals and objectives to be achieved and makes judgments about the corresponding means. And, Aristotle notes, those who are unfree, who act as slaves, are unable to do so. Legutko observes that Aristotle does not attribute to slavery a natural or born status. In Aristotle’s classical world slavery was a legal status rendered postbellum to the conquered, almost an accident. There were legal slaves with free citizen capacities.

Legutko places before the reader the most elemental position about human nature and freedom to argue that freedom when used well brings order, flourishing, and elevated souls. Are we capable of that freedom, or are we really slaves to our passions, base instincts, and ideologies of progress and emancipation, which in many countries are accorded a secular sacred status?

Liberal democratic societies need the aristocratic virtues, Legutko articulates. Tocqueville argues something very similar throughout *Democracy in America* where he judges democratic societies more just than aristocratic ones, but they incline towards soft despotism if their tendencies toward egalitarianism and pantheism are left unchecked. Enter the aristocratic virtues, which for Tocqueville, involve the associative arts, family, religion, and local government. In these institutions, democratic citizens are raised beyond themselves and must engage in self rule with other people. Legutko, however, urges that the chief aristocratic contribution we should heed is to place the soul higher than the body.

The appeal made by Legutko is to the classical rendering of the soul in judgment over the body and the pressures the body makes for action. The body, Legutko notes, has been in judgment of the soul for too long, and the disorder is all around us. More than this, the aristocrat will reject historical inevitability as a reason to accept any ideology or social trend. The soul looks to our obligations to wisdom, faith, country, family, and friends to determine what should be done. In this, it is captive not to rights but to the duties of human beings. Legutko notes that we don’t break faith with our obligations, rather we use our freedom to uphold our country, our family, our community, our friends, and for those who believe, our faith.

⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁶ Ibid.

The rights-based egalitarian order of present struggles to understand these things as anything but encumbrances to the authentic self. So those who would translate the aristocratic soul into our contemporary system confront powerful countervailing tendencies. And yet, we might say to those who hurl epithets on behalf of the now traditional emancipated individual, living under no one's rule but their own, "Look at what you're defending!" The West is everywhere in demographic, military, and financial decline as its denizens struggle to see the point of even reproducing or doing anything that might imperil or challenge the ever-present suck of the secular person who equates the end of Being with the demise of his mortal body. Western man considers himself beyond the nation, family, religion, i.e., postpolitical, postfamilial, and postreligious, in Pierre Manent's formulation. In the final analysis, contemporary western citizens will find themselves lonely, naked, and afraid.

All that will be left is the soul and the need to build again. We're already there.

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Piotr Nowak

HEIDEGGER'S CLASS

Regardless of their differences, Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss had much in common. What they unquestionably shared was the lack of a car and no ear for religion. They were both German Jews who grew up during the Weimar Republic. They might have sat at one desk in Heidegger's seminars. Both Arendt and Strauss managed to escape from the Nazis and created original political theories in English shortly afterward. Both of them were preoccupied with the so-called "Jewish question" to which they devoted their first works – on Rahel Varnhagen (Arendt) and on Spinoza, Cohen, and Maimonides (Strauss). They were both interested in similar topics: the Ancients; the crisis of Western political thought, associated with the names of Machiavelli, Marx, Nietzsche; and finally, the political weakness and instability of the democratic order. Therefore, it would be difficult to imagine that these two prominent thinkers – so unlike and at the same time so much alike – did not polemicize, even though they did not refer to each other by name or cite from each other's works. However, what Nowak is more concerned with is something else – namely, their attitude not to each other but to Heidegger, whose philosophy was the source of their own thoughts.

Jeff Love and Michael Meng

ROUSSEAU AND HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY OF ORIGINS

In this essay, Love and Meng explore the status of history and origins in modern European thought through two of its most radical and significant thinkers of history. At stake here are some challenging questions that the essay attempts to address through an interpretation of several key texts by Rousseau and Heidegger. What is history? What does it mean to search for origins? What is the status of history as thought and critique? Are nature and science historical? Indeed, is thought preeminently historical (and, thus, political)? In the end, the essay attempts to contribute to ongoing discussions about the status of history, truth, and narrative.

Christopher Merwin

HEIDEGGER'S LATER THINKING OF *XPONOS*: FROM ARISTOTLE TO ANAXIMANDER

This article examines Heidegger's reflections on time by means of the ancient Greek *chronos*. It shifts from his earliest interpretations influenced by Aristotle in the early 1920s through the Dasein-oriented understanding in *Being and Time* and on to a conception influenced by Greek tragedy and Anaximander that focuses on the operation – the *ló chreon* ("necessity" or "allotment") – of an original temporality outside the transcendental horizon of Dasein. The interpretation of necessity and allotment develops out of Heidegger's undelivered lecture course on Anaximander from the mid-1940s where time is conceptualized as a whiling or lingering of presence. The author gestures toward further work that must be done in order to show how the thinking of *chronos* acts as a developmental arc for Heidegger's own thinking of time from the 1920s through to the 1940s.

Otfried Höffe

THE POLIS-ANIMAL: ON ARISTOTLE'S PROVOCATIVE POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Interpreting primarily the first two chapters of Aristotle's *Politics*, Höffe defends three theses: (1) Anthropology did not originate, as the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, for instance, insinuates in early modernity but in Greek antiquity. (2) According to Aristotle, man is not the only political being but is much more so than other beings. For (3), man is suited not just for any kind of community but for a *polis* in the narrow sense that involves the alternation of ruling and being ruled.

Peter Kalkavage

HEGEL'S ROMANCE OF REASON

This article is based on a talk given at the Goethe Society in Washington, DC. In it, Kalkavage presents what he calls Hegel's "romance of reason" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. His focus is Hegel's dialectical incorporation of Goethe's *Faust* in the chapter on reason, with special attention to reason as the interpenetration of subject and object. The article begins by establishing the place of reason in the context of the *Phenomenology* as a whole and the role of Faust as the first Gestalt of consciousness within the realm of active, as opposed to merely observational, reason. Faust is the archetype of active reason in its raw immediacy – reason as a form of desire. Kalkavage interprets, Hegel's highly allusive treatment of Goethe's poem in detail and explores the dialectical implications of Faust's rejection of science, piety, and moral life. He focuses in particular on Faust's seduction of Gretchen and the tragic outcome of that seduction. In Hegel's terms, this is active reason's fall from "pleasure" into "necessity." The essay ends with a brief review of the other two "shapes" comprising the romance of reason (Schiller's Karl Moor from *The Robbers* and the Marquis da Posa from *Don Carlos*) and a reflection on Hegel's power of imagination.

Tomasz Herbich

GOD AND HUMANITY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF ZYGMUNT KRASIŃSKI

Herbich presents a general view of the philosophical ideas of Zygmunt Krasiński, known mainly as the "third Polish poet-prophet." The "philosophical period" in Krasiński's intellectual biography falls on the turn of the 1830s and 1840s. Krasiński's main philosophical work is his treatise *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* (On the position of Poland from the divine and human perspectives), which can be seen as a text that provides an alternative to Cieszkowski's *Ojciec nasz* (Our Father) and that develops in a parallel manner an elaboration of Cieszkowski's idea of historiosophy in terms of religious philosophy. The treatise *O stanowisku Polski z Bożych i ludzkich względów* is also seen by Herbich as an original response to the dilemmas posed by Hegel and his continuators before Polish philosophers. The article states that the philosophical position of Krasiński differs from the standpoints of both Hegel and Cieszkowski, although Krasiński was influenced by Cieszkowski's *Prolegomena do historiozofii* (Prolegomena to historiosophy).

Anna Dziedzic

EDWARD ABRAMOWSKI: BETWEEN EPISTEMOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND METAPHYSICS

The text presents the development of Edward Abramowski's psychological and philosophical thought from phenomenistic epistemology (presented in the 1895 book *Theory of Mental Units*) to the project of experimental metaphysics. Abramowski's original phenomenism was to determine the correct methodology of psychological research, denying the existence of unconscious psychic events implied in the positivist, associationist theory of mind. In the name of a phenomenistic struggle with the residues of metaphysics in psychology, Abramowski argued that neither the existence of psychic elements nor their association is given in our internal experience. As an alternative approach, Abramowski proposed the idea of an active cognitive subject who, through apperception – attention, thought, and will – creates a world of phenomena from the original material of intuition, which appears as a holistic moment of awareness. However, Abramowski's phenomenistic Kantian assumptions contradicted his ethos of empiricism and the belief in the possibility of direct experience. Further research brought a revision of Abramowski's views on the psychology of cognition: Abramowski stated that we have direct, non-apperception-mediated access to intuition data and that consciousness is divided into intellectual and intuitive, feeling consciousness. He developed the concept of subconsciousness, talking about the "agnostic states" below the threshold of the intellect and about memory containing feelings. Finally, the psychology of subconsciousness led to a reformulation of phenomenism. The part of perception that is unknown to apperception was recognized by Abramowski as "a thing in itself" that manifests in experience. Consequently, he put forward a thesis about the possibility of and need for experimental metaphysics. In this respect – as Abramowski argued in his 1917 lectures on experimental metaphysics – Kant was right in his critique of metaphysical theories constructed on the basis of concepts.

Jerzy Ziemacki

THE CLASSIFICATION OF THEAISES BY WINCENY LUTOSŁAWSKI

The Polish philosopher Winceny Lutosławski (1863–1954) gained worldwide fame after publishing his research on Plato, especially *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic* (1897), written in English. The Polish scholar coined the term "stylometry," a method of literary analysis used to establish the full chronology of Plato's works. In this article, the author presents an outline of Lutosławski's biography and indicates that he did not want to be treated merely as a researcher but rather wished to establish himself as an original philosopher. Aside from his work with stylometry, Lutosławski created a classification of "views of the world," which he called *theasis*, a term derived from Greek. In this classification, the first *theasis* is materialism, which is followed by idealism, pantheism,

spiritualism, mysticism, and messianism. This classification is best represented in Lutoslawski's late work *The Knowledge of Reality* (1930), recently reissued by Cambridge University Press.

Karolina Filipczak

AESTHETIC EMANCIPATION IN THE ESSAY "ARIEL" BY JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

In this article, Filipczak gives a new perspective for interpreting the essay "Ariel" by José Enrique Rodó. This Uruguayan author is one of the most important Latin American thinkers, and his greatest work is certainly the essay "Ariel." Well acquainted and chewed over by the Latin American community, this text has become an important voice in the discussion about Latin American identity. The multiplicity of interpretations and criticism during the 1960s questions the currency of "Ariel" and prompts a search for new interpretative perspectives.

Filipczak proposes that this essay be read as a comprehensive emancipatory project. Its essential element is aesthetic education, which becomes the basis for the creation of a new political community based on a community of feeling. The analysis of the essay serves to indicate the path that the Uruguayan essayist is marking out from aesthetics to politics. First, Rodó combines aesthetics with free time (*otium*), then shows its links with morality. The next step is to demonstrate its impact on building a healthy society. The last step is the creation of a new social structure that is based on a community of feeling. This interpretation makes it possible to go beyond the typical interpretation horizon – the democratic/antidemocratic project – that has been present in commentaries on this essay for a long time and to show Rodó as a thinker proposing radical egalitarianism. This interpretation of the project references the writings of Kant, Schiller, and Rancière.

Ivan Dimitrijević

THE APOCALYPTIC DEVIANCE

After briefly exposing the main, political, aporia present in Franco Basaglia's antipsychiatric philosophy, Dimitrijević explores the relation between madness and politics by investigating de Martino's conception of cultural apocalypse. From this perspective, madness appears as the loss of political practice, the crisis of the domesticity of the world – a condition that human beings constantly build through their actions. As such, madness represents a normal possibility that can nonetheless be regarded as a form of political deviance. Yet such deviance is not to be measured against an abstract norm of conduct but against the anamnesis of the good life that represents the aim of politics.

Dario Gentili

CRISIS AS ART OF GOVERNMENT, PRECARIAT AS FORM OF LIFE

Gentili aims to identify and analyze the so-called "dispositif of crisis" starting from the ancient Greek conception of *krisis* in the fields of medicine and politics. The medical meaning of the term "crisis" was prevalent until modernity (see the entry "Crise" in Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*), and it is also present in Marx and Engels's theory of capitalist crises. On the strength of the biopolitical genealogy of crisis, Gentili argues that the diffusion and pervasiveness of the term "crisis" are not at all signs of semantic "vagueness," as Reinhart Koselleck affirms, but rather denote the highest effectiveness of its dispositif, which is apparent nowadays, when the crisis has become the dispositif of the neoliberal art of government. As a matter of fact, according to Michel Foucault, the neoliberal art of government presents itself not as the best form of government but as the only one. The nature of each crisis has set a specific concept and practice of conflict and, therefore, a specific process of political subjectification. Unlike in the past, today the predominant dispositif of crisis has a manifest biopolitical nature, and so it implies neoliberalism's axiom that "there is no alternative" and therefore tends to neutralize the conflict and to marginalize in precariousness the forms of life that could be a constituent expression of it.

Davide Stimilli

THE LUXURY OF TEARS: DE MARTINO AND WARBURG ON PIANTO AND KLAGE

Ernesto de Martino and Aby Warburg taught us to explore the "mimic of *góos*," as de Martino titled one of his notebooks for *Death and Ritual Weeping* (*Morte e pianto rituale*), using the Homeric term for "lament," or what Warburg called the "pathos formulae" (*Pathosformeln*) of lament that he saw emerge out of "the pagan figure of the dancing maenad." It is certainly a worthwhile and indeed eye-opening endeavor to dwell on such seminal images under their guidance and in the context of the highly seductive visual atlases that they assembled: Warburg's *Mnemosyne* and de Martino's "Pictorial Atlas of Weeping" (*Atlante figurato del pianto*), the photographic appendix to *Death and Ritual Weeping*. In this article, Stimilli focuses instead on the language of *góos* and even more so on the way Warburg and de Martino spoke about what the Greeks called *yóoc* and, by extension, on the ways we do so in different modern European languages such as German, Italian, and English. De Martino's and Warburg's considerations on the expression

of grief through language and gesture, in *Wort und Bild*, to use Warburg's favorite hendiadys, are shaped by the languages they respectively speak. The article aims thereby to make explicit an assumption that is implicit in their arguments – namely, that language matters no less than gesture when we express our pain and also, and perhaps more importantly, when we talk about our expressions of pain. In the process, it also draws attention to important differences between the two that may matter to our understanding of their respective stances, as well as of pain and its articulation.

Carlo Ginzburg

UNINTENDED CONVERGENCES: ERNESTO DE MARTINO AND ABY WARBURG

Ginzburg explores the possibility of using *Rezeptionsgeschichte* as an instrument of textual philology by focusing on Ernesto de Martino's early development in order to cast a light on a potential connection of his thought with Aby Warburg. After investigating the authors, the problems, and the personal experiences that the two may have in common, Ginzburg concludes that de Martino's personal investment in the topics of his research casts an oblique light on the relationship between Warburg's personality and his own work.

Damian Mrugalski

THE FORMS AS GOD'S THOUGHTS IN THE PLATONIST TRADITION: A POLEMIC WITH JOHN DILLON'S THESIS

John Dillon, in his monograph *The Roots of Platonism*, put forward the thesis that the doctrine of Ideas as God's thoughts had already appeared in the Old Academy and was continuously present in the Platonic tradition preceding the emergence of Middle Platonism. However, so far researchers have assumed that the first thinker who explicitly identified Ideas with God's thoughts was a Jewish thinker, Philo of Alexandria. Dillon supported his argumentation on very uncertain and unclear sources, which are some of the statements contained in fragments of Speusippus, Xenocrates, and Antiochus of Ascalon. According to the Irish researcher, Philo was familiar with this philosophical tradition, and therefore his doctrine of the Logos of God, in which the world of Ideas is located, is by no means original. In this paper, Mrugalski aims to prove that the Jewish thinker of Alexandria was able to build his doctrine of Ideas as God's thoughts himself. In fact, this concept arises within the allegorical commentary on the Pentateuch, which, on the one hand, uses numerous philosophical concepts and, on the other, continues to be a biblical commentary. Meanwhile, biblical theology hypostatized divine attributes such as the wisdom of God or the Logos long before Philo and assigned them eternity and creative power. It is true that the thinker of Alexandria knew and even quoted the works of Plato, Aristotle, or the Stoics. Sometimes he also argued with their concepts. Yet we are not sure whether Philo knew the fragments of the philosophers of the Old Academy to which Dillon refers. Moreover, we are not sure whether the doctrine of Ideas as God's thoughts appears in these fragments at all. However, we have access to the biblical texts on which Philo commented, and we can trace the argumentation within which he came to the conclusion that God is an intellect that eternally thinks and by thinking creates the world, first the intelligible one and then the perceptible one.

Łukasz Perlikowski

PHILOSOPHY AND MONETIZATION AS COMMON EXPERIENCES OF THE EAST AND THE WEST

Richard Seaford's thesis, which generally says that the beginnings of philosophical activity are clearly related to the phenomenon of monetization, should be considered bold and revealing. He outlined its main principles in the book *Money and the Early Greek Mind* (2004). Through the archaeology of thinking, it reveals to the reader the relationships between concepts and facts that undoubtedly deserve attention. In the book Perlikowski reviews, *The Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India: A Historical Comparison* (2019), Seaford takes his research to the next level. The main tasks that he carries out in this work are to improve the justification of the argument about the importance of monetization for intellectual life and to show an extremely broad context, which he achieves by juxtaposing the Indian and the Greek intellectual traditions. His work has enormous value already at the stage of comparative analysis because it often highlights issues and regularities in the intellectual life of both cultures that at first glance are invisible. In short, his comparative endeavors are very fruitful. The author does not stop at this stage, however, and proves that, in both cultural circles he describes, there were similar processes related to the fact that introducing money into the general circulation is a substantial manifestation of the impersonal perspective. According to the author, this perspective is an achievement common to both India and Greece. Moreover, it is the interiorization of this perspective, that is, the opening to the external world, which begins in the individual human soul, that constitutes what we understand by the concept of inner self. Not only is the work of Richard Seaford, therefore, a historical comparative study or a genealogy of philosophical thinking, but it provides information about who man is and what his rudiments are.

Jeff Love

HEIDEGGER, BALAAM, AND JOB

In this review, Love examines three recent books dealing with Heidegger's Nazism and his comments about the Jews: Michael Chighel's *Kabale: Hebräischer Humanismus im Lichte von Heideggers Denken*, as well as two books by Elliot Wolfson, *The Duplicity of Philosophy's Shadow: Heidegger, Nazism, and the Jewish Other* and *Heidegger and Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiesis*. These books provide a distinctively Jewish response to Heidegger's comments about the Jews and Judaism. Love gives a brief outline of this response as articulated by each author and suggests how these responses are both polemical, providing a challenge not only to Heidegger's comments on the Jews and Judaism but to some of the most basic aspects of his thought as well.

Richard M. Reinsch II

WHY WE NEED THE FREEDOM OF ARISTOCRATS

Polish statesman and political philosopher Ryszard Legutko has written an essential guide to understanding the ongoing debasement of freedom. In *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols*, Legutko analyzes the main contours of modern freedom: negative freedom, the pyramid scheme of rights, inner freedom, the nonexistent self, and the minimal self. He finds them hopelessly deficient and, when understood correctly, he argues, these concepts of freedom are playing a shell game. They traffic in soft concepts of toleration, compromise, authenticity, openness; but, Legutko rejoins, modern understandings of freedom are hardened ideologies that evict classical and religious notions of freedom from respectability and the public square. Modern freedom is anything but neutral regarding how people should live.

The philosophical quarterly *Kronos* was established in 2007 by scholars connected with the University of Warsaw and the University of Białystok. Metaphysics, the philosophy of politics, the philosophy of literature and religion, history of psychoanalysis comprise the thematic scope of the journal. The editors of the quarterly strive to familiarize the Polish reader with new translations and commentaries of classic works (Plato, Joachim of Fiore, Nicholas of Cusa, Shakespeare, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, Heidegger, and many others), as well as the work of contemporary philosophers.

The annual *Kronos Philosophical Journal* (in English) was established in 2012 as a companion edition to the quarterly, to supplement it, yet without repeating the content of the Polish edition. The papers presented in the annual might be of interest to the readers from outside Poland, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the dynamic thought of contemporary Polish authors, as well as entirely new topics, rarely discussed by English-speaking authors. One of the issues published so far contained passages from previously unknown lectures by Leo Strauss on Aristotle; another issue was dedicated to the Russian phenomenologist Gustav Shpet.

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