BALKAN JOURNAL
OF PHILOSOPHY

Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

"The issue is co-soponsored by the project BG051PO001/3.3-05-001 "Science and Business" of the Operativ program "Development of human resources" of the European Social Fund".

CONTENTS

Discussion

Book reviews

Information for contributors

SPECIAL ISSUE OF BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY 2012

COMMUNICATION

After the end of the cold war and the decline of wholistic ideologies, the modernist paradigm, based on the idea of a subject-centered universe, has been challenged by many different contenders. One such contender is "communicative rationality" which points to "the rational consensus of all the parties affected" as the only possible source of legitimacy of social norms and, more generally, collective decisions. This dialogical interpretation of the values of humanism, according to which "every voice should be heard", i.e. every rationally substantiated claim should be taken into consideration, offers a plausible alternative both to the "cold" individualistic universalism of liberal philosophical theories and the oppressive solidarity preached by communitarian theories. Furthermore, communicative rationality presents itself as a prospective methodology through which philosophers can make sense of the shift from class struggle to "clash of civilizations" as explanatory instruments for the problems of humanity today. The issues of ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law, and philosophy of culture, as well as gender and human rights issues, etc. look quite different when regarded in the frame of reference provided by this dialogical approach.

The implementation of this approach, however, raises questions which refer no less to theoretical philosophy (e.g. epistemology and philosophy of language) than to practical philosophy (e.g. political philosophy and ethics):

- What are the necessary/sufficient epistemic conditions for achieving "rational consensus"?
- Should we admit the legitimacy of different types of rational consensus, following for example Max Weber's notion of types of rationality? Or should we look for a definition of "rational consensus" which refers to deeper, possibly universal, structures of rational communicative actions?
- How does the idea of "successful communication" change across the various understandings of "rational consensus"?

These and related questions have been traditionally discussed in different philosophical contexts varying from that of the German style critical theory and its descendants (Horkheimer, Habermas, etc.) to analytic philosophy of language (Davidson, Grice, Quine) and to recent developments in decision theory.

In compliance with its mission statement to serve as a bridge between different philosophical traditions, BJP opened a CFP on Communication with the primary aim of bringing together research that has addressed the questions above from different perspectives. The papers which were accepted for publication present a large diversity of philosophical "genres": from political philosophy and philosophy of religion, through epistemology and semiotics, to philosophy of culture.

Johannes A. van der Ven, the author of *Religion's Political Role in A Rawlsian Key,* addresses the issue of the public role of religion in contemporary democratic societies. The theoretical problem here is how the general public can be convinced that certain public policies should be changed if this initiative is motivated by beliefs and values which are specific to a certain religious community and are therefore not shared by most of the public in question. J. van der Ven presents a "case study" (Luke's account of St Paul's speech to the Areopagus in Athens), and further explores different opportunities for finding a "common ground" between the participants in such dialogues. His thesis is that this common ground can be found in the political domain, and more concretely – in democratic legal culture.

Plamen Makariev's paper, *Non-public and Public Reasons: Rawls's "Proviso", Habermas's "Translation" and the Issue of Cultural Rights,* deals with the largely acknowledged problem of the split between two kinds of reasoning – non-public (culturally dependent) and public (characteristic for the procedures of policy design and, more generally, of making generally binding decisions in the institutions of power). The "barrier" between non-public and public reasoning is hindering the progress of recognizing minority rights and accepting the input of religiously inspired ideas into public life. The author's thesis is that these difficulties can be avoided if the communication between non-public and public discourses does not involve a transition from substantive to procedural kinds of reasoning, but proceeds entirely in the procedural dimension.

Carl G. Wagner's *Universality and its Discontents* is a contribution to the theory of rational consensus building, transcending the firmly established paradigm of social welfare theory. The author sees a substantial limitation of the latter in its inability to deal with special cases when carried over to the realm of judgment aggregation, especially in the case of probabilistic judgment. This is due, in his opinion, to the postulation of universality conditions, derived from fundamentally ethical considerations. The author considers as an alternative the consensual distribution to be constructed state-by-state. Such an approach would make it possible to produce a rational consensual probability distribution for every logically possible "profile" of individual distributions.

The paper by Nenad Miscevic, *Offensive Communication: The Case of Pejoratives*, focuses on the semantics and pragmatics of one important kind of offensive communication – pejoratives. The author argues in favor of a cognitive interpretation of the use of pejoratives as opposed to a merely expressive one. In his opinion the moral, legal and political implications of this kind of offensive communication can be better understood if the offensive characterization of the target is regarded not as an expression of personal opinion, but as a truth-claim about the target from which an exhortation to despise or even mistreat her/him logically follows, as well as an appeal to build solidarity against her/him.

In his *The Relation of Similarity and the Communication of Science* Ioan Biris studies the role of the relation of similarity in the construction of scientific images (theories) – especially concerning the relationship between the scientific image and reality, between the scientific image and the communicated image, as well as the ascension forms from reality to the scientific image and communicated image. On the basis of this investigation 10 criteria for evaluating scientific communication are proposed, such as e.g. topological isomorphy, relational isomorphy, clasial isomorphy, transitivity, plurality of potential models, etc.

Martina Blečić's paper *Communication, Implicature and Testimony* is a study in the field of the epistemology of testimony and more concretely concerns the theory of conversational implicatures. In most general terms "testimony" is defined as a speech act with which the speaker transmits information to a hearer, and "conversational implicatures" are defined as messages conveyed indirectly through the speaker's utterance in which there is a gap between the speaker's communicative intention and the literal meaning of the words s/he uses in her/his utterance that needs to be filled in by the hearer, provided that there is some common ground between speaker and hearer. The author's thesis is that the use of and the decoding of implicatures is a rational process and that correctly formed implicature-based beliefs are justified because of their rationality.

Iris Vidman discusses in her *Communicative View of Literature* the cognitive value of literature, regarding literary works as a kind of testimony. More concretely, she deals with the distinctions between the aesthetic and the epistemic aspects of the cultural functions of literary fiction as well as between testimony in the narrow sense as a source of propositional knowledge and as source of new beliefs or awareness and ultimately of new understanding.

The subject matter of Claudiu Baciu's *Language as Symbolic Form in Ernst Cassirer* is Cassirer's interpretation of language as symbolic form in the context of his general functionalist conception of knowledge. This functionalism was developed by Cassirer in his early work *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*. Later, the results of this investigation evolved into a new understanding of human cultural activity as an activity of creating meanings. Through linguistic expressions sense perceptions are brought under class-concepts which are designated by general ‚names'. The act of ‚naming' is regarded by Cassirer as a prerequisite of the very conception of objects, i.e. of the idea of an objective empirical reality.

In *The Communicational Perspective of the Unhistorical Image* Corina Daba-Buzoianu analyzes the dialectics of the historicity of cultural images, such as archetypes, myths, symbols, and social representations. The study is focused on the rich diversity of cultural forms through which such ancestral structures as archetypes are historically interpreted and exert influence on social life. Special attention is given to myth as a cultural product through which people resolve archetypical themes.

Anton Adămuț offers to our readers, in his *Polemics as Subtle Form of Communication (the Case of a Romanian Philosopher - Camil Petrescu)*, an intriguing picture of intellectual life in Romania in the interwar period, marked by the activities of authors such as Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Eugen Ionesco, Petre Comarnescu. Presented in the paper is the common denominator of the exemplary case of polemics in this inspiring environment , namely, the participation in them of the philosopher Camil Petrescu, a brilliant but „inconvenient" thinker who had the talent of provoking heated debates.

From the Editorial Board
of Balkan Journal of Philosophy

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

RELIGION'S POLITICAL ROLE IN A RAWLSIAN KEY

Johannes A. (Hans) van der Ven

Radboud University Nijmegen
e-mail: J.vanderven@rs.ru.nl

Abstract:
In Political liberalism (expanded edition) Rawls repeatedly urges religions to accept liberal democracy for the right reasons, including reasons that are based on their own religious premises and not simply as a modus vivendi. This article is an exploration of that field. The first part is a hermeneutic analysis of Luke's account of St Paul's speech to the Areopagus in Athens, as it tries to find common ground with Hellenistic philosophy by means of deliberative rhetoric. In the second part these two characteristics (i.e. finding common ground and using deliberative rhetoric) are examined as building blocks for intrinsic acceptance of liberal democracy, albeit in a formal rather than a substantive key. The common ground Luke explored was religious, whereas in our day, at least in North-Western Europe, religion is espoused by a cognitive minority. But intercontextual hermeneutics metaphorically permits us to use the following quadratic equation: as the Lucan Paul related the Christian message to his philosophical context in order to find common ground with his listeners, so we have to relate this message to our context, the common ground being not philosophical but political. This article advocates playing a bilingual language game for religion to present its convictions to public debate and, in due course, translate them into the language of public reason. Such translation requires deliberative rhetoric and argumentation, in accordance with the logical and epistemological rules of practical reason.

Key words: religion, political liberalism, hermeneutics.

Ever since my first reading of *Political liberalism* I have been puzzled by Rawls' observation that religion should not accept democracy purely as a modus vivendi but on intrinsic grounds. What intrinsic acceptance means and how it comes about is dealt with fragmentarily in the rest of the book. Rawls maintains that it does not have to be based on exclusively political considerations, but on actual religious doctrines also (Rawls 2005, 461). He affirms the view of the Islamic scholar Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, who argues that Muslim grounds for such acceptance may not be derived from the teachings of the Medina period but from the earlier Mecca period (Rawls 2005, 461, n. 46). However, it is merely suggested and there is no attempt to work out the implications for the Christian religion. Rawls acknowledges Catholics' right to reject a proposal to pass legislation that legalises abortion, but requires them not to offer violent resistance should such a law be passed by legitimate political institutions according to public reason (Rawls 2005, 480). That is sufficient to legitimatise such a law politically, but it is not a religious legitimisation, for the question is actually: on what religious grounds can and should Catholics respect the legislative decisions of legitimate political institutions? Habermas, Rawls' cofounder of deliberative democracy, does not get us much further. He holds that all major religions should accept the principles of a liberal state in terms of their own premises. In Europe, he says, those derive from the Judaeo-Christian tradition because of its genealogical connection with the evolution of democracy (Habermas 2005, 268–269). Accomplishing this task requires reviewing and reconstructing inherited articles of faith in terms of modern institutions, more specifically political ones (Habermas 2005, 144). To my opinion it is more adequate to speak of the Jewish and Christian traditions in the plural, and consider the genealogical relationship marked equally by moral assent and political conflict, evidenced by many forms of religious persecution, extermination, inquisition, conflict and war, the latter being mentioned also by Rawls (2005, 476–477, n. 75). In any case, Rawls takes the challenge that this entails concretely: "How is it possible for those affirming a religious doctrine that is based on religious authority, for example, the Church or the Bible, also to hold a reasonable political conception that supports a just democratic regime?" (Rawls 2005, xxxvii–xxxviii, 458–460). An intrinsic religious acceptance is also required, since this helps to clarify the difference between the role of being a member of a religious community and that of being a citizen, in one and the same person. This makes the challenge to such religious legitimisation all the more pressing and weighty.

Are political theorists justified in dismissing the problem in this way? Is it not part of their professional task to mark out a trail in the religio-political *terra incognita* in which we operate and map it for us? Do the positive functions attributed to religion in a socio-political context (e.g. strengthening morality, public order and cohesion), as well as its negative functions (e.g. religious ideologising of conflict, struggle and war), not call for systematic reflection on the relation between religion and democracy? Rawls probably turned his back on the religious task because he was opposed to the holocaust and even more fiercely to the nuclear attacks on Japan, which were allegedly permitted by God's will (Maffetone 2010, 3–4). But quite apart from these profound theodicy problems and despite his resistance to the orthodox Christian view of God's will, to those who knew Rawls personally he remains someone with "a deeply religious temperament that informed his life and writings" (Cohen & Nagel 2009, 5). This is evident in his statement *On my religion*, which reveals a kind of universal faith in God, a generic theism (Adams 2009, 101). In fact, Rawls there confesses that he was fascinated by the constitutional lawyer Jean Bodin's *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* of 1588 (Cohen & Nagel 2009, 23; Rawls 2009, 266). The book is a detailed record of a discussion between a Jew, a Catholic, a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a Muslim, a philosophical naturalist and a sceptic, concluding with a quotation from one of the participants, the Catholic Coronaeus: "Lo, how good and pleasing it is for brothers to live in unity, arranged not in common diatonics or chromatics [i.e. polyphony and counterpoint, condemned by the church – VdV], but in enharmonics with a certain, divine modulation." In the end Bodin concludes: "However, afterwards they held no other conversation about religions, although each one defended his own religion with the supreme sanctity of his life" (Bodin 1975, 471). This silence may have inspired Rawls, or maybe he recognised himself in it and saw fit to dispense with systematic public reflection on (his own) religion.

In any case, this article is, at least partly, my (audacious) attempt to fill the gap that Rawls left. Why partly? I confine myself to legitimatising democracy on the basis of a few concepts that are peculiar to the Christian religion, leaving aside other religions for pragmatic reasons only as I am not a specialist in any of them. To that end I make a hermeneutic analysis of a pertinent pericope from the Acts of the Apostles by the evangelist Luke, the fifth book in the New Testament. It centres on Paul's address to the Areopagus in Athens. The way Luke depicts Paul and the discourse that, according to Luke, he conducted *en plein public* yields some hermeneutic concepts that are relevant to the role of religion in the public sphere (part 1). These concepts are not meant to provide a religious legitimisation of every facet of democracy as a whole, but merely of Rawls's notion of the role of religion in the deliberative public debate. I see this not as a contribution to theology but, via religious studies, to political theory (part 2).[1]

1 Hermeneutic analysis of the account of Paul's address to the Areopagus

The Areopagus, situated near the Acropolis in Athens, was famous in antiquity. It was the name of a hill about 100 metres high, the hill of Ares (*Areios pagos*). It was also the name of the building which

[1] Both theology and religious studies are concerned with the Christian religion and other religions, albeit in terms of different formal objects, and both use insider and outsider perspectives. The relevant features of religious studies (for the purpose of this article) are its object, goal and freedom of research. The object is not God, but faith in God or gods, or even more broadly: religion/religions, in terms of their historical and present identity, including bio-ecological, psychological, social, cultural, political and legal aspects. The aim is to describe, explain and interpret religion, using literary, historical, empirical and systematic methods. The premise is not to affirm or deny the existence of God or gods in a metaphysical sense, but in that description, explanation and interpretation to dispense, epistemologically, with any active or passive divine intervention. The distinction between metaphysical and epistemological is crucial. Freedom of research implies that the criteria of establishing truth are not divine revelation, religious tradition or authority, but human reason before the religious forum (Van der Ven 2010a, 88–131, 155–156 en 334, n. 95).

on this hill housed the council of the city state Athens, an administrative and advisory council for judicial, cultural, moral and religious affairs. The council formed part of the administrative centre of Athens, which for centuries had been known as the cultural capital of the inhabited world.

1.1 Paul's address according to Luke's classical text

Luke's account of Paul's address is a classical text that has consistently intrigued many successive generations up to the present. Like all classical texts, it opens up a perspective on questions that have always occupied, and continue to occupy, human beings. It stimulates, challenges, provokes and shocks. It can bring the reader to true recognition and acknowledgment both of prevailing conditions of human life and of possible conditions for the future. It may, in fact, transform the reader (Gadamer 1986, 87–133, 290–312). This also applies to Paul's speech before the Areopagus in Athens. Viewed retrospectively, its earth-shaking significance is apparent at the interface of two cultures: those of Jerusalem and Athens, Judaic religious culture and Greek Hellenistic culture. What concerns us is how in this Lucan narrative Paul bridges the divide between these two cultures. There is every reason to delve into this question, for in our time we, too, are at the interface of various religious and nonreligious cultures.

The account of the oration

The Lucan account of Paul's address, we have said, forms part of the Acts of the Apostles. According to that book Paul ended up in Athens on his second major missionary journey, probably in 52 CE, after his tour of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. The assumption is that stories about this visit that were in circulation were reconstructed and produced in narrative form by Luke, the author of Acts, resulting in the text we have today. That was probably about two generations later, towards the end of the first or the start of the second century.[2] It means that the character in this article is Paul according to the author of the book of Acts, in which Paul plays a leading role. In other words, we are looking at the Lucan Paul.

To any number of authors in antiquity 'acts' constitute a literary genre recounting the great deeds of cities and nations. In early Christianity 'acts' are a familiar genre recording the great deeds of the apostles (Klauck 2008). The New Testament Acts tells a story mainly about Peter and Paul. In Paul's case it is interesting to note the diverse ways in which Luke deals with various types of orations (Witherington, 511, n. 180): those to a Christian audience (29: 18–35), a Jewish audience (13:16–41) and a Hellenistic audience (17:22–33). Luke also writes about orations with a forensic objective (22:1–21; 24: 10–21; 25: 8–12; 26:1–23; 28: 17–20; 28: 25–28). Another point of interest is how Paul handles the different contexts in which, according to Luke, he proclaimed his message, such as Samaria where he was confronted with a kind of magical religion (Ac 5:8ff.), his defence before the Roman magistrates (Ac 24:10ff.), or his address in the presence of philosophers in the Areopagus (Ac 17: 16ff), which is the focus of this article.[3] However variegated the stories, including the one about the speech to the Areopagus, collectively they represent a narrative construction by the writer, Luke.

By and large the story of that address boils down to the following (Ac 17: 16–34). After only a brief stay in Athens, the story starts, Paul was perturbed by the many statues of gods displayed in that city. We are told that he spoke to Jews in the synagogue and argued with everybody he met in the market place, among them philosophers from the Epicurean school and Stoics. These observed that he was preaching about foreign deities. It caused a stir. They asked for a more detailed explanation, because his teaching struck them as strange. "What do you mean?" they asked him. They took hold of him (*epilabomenoi*) and brought him (*egagon*) to the Areopagus. The fact that they were surprised or concerned is understandable, since the Athenian polis was characterised by a close relation between religion, society and politics. Religion ensured social cohesion and provided a symbolic universe. Society

[2]According to some scholars Acts was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, others date it to the 70s or the early 80s. One argument in favour of the latter dating is the discrepancy between Lk 21:20ff and Mk 13:14–23. Yet others point out the use of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus's works on the wars of the Jews against the Romans (*Bellum Judaicum*) and on the history of the Jews (*Antiquitates Judaicae*) by the author of Acts, which leads to a dating around 100 or later.

[3] I thank my colleague Jan van der Watt for his comments on the first part of this paper.

had its administrative machinery that was integrated with the state. The state was not an institution separate from society, as it is to a greater or lesser extent in our day, but a 'society state' (Anderson 2009). Hence any change in religion could cause society and the state to change, thus jeopardising social stability.

Faced with the Areopagus, Luke tells us, Paul launched into his oration. He started by observing that the Athenians were highly religious. Not only were there altars for all the gods known to everyone in the city, he said, but also one bearing the inscription "To an unknown god" (17:22–23).[4] Then he comes to the crux of his address (17:24–31), in which he expounds who this unknown God is. He is the God who created everything, but does not dwell in temples. Neither does he need to be served in temples: he does not need anything. Indeed, it is he who gives life and breath to everybody. He appointed the seasons and inhabitable areas. His intention is that people should seek him and, gropingly, find him. In Luke's version Paul says that finding God is not difficult, for "he is not far from each one of us". To this he adds: "In him we live and move and have our being." And, Luke records, Paul says: "As even some of your own poets have said, we too are his offspring." Then, according to Acts, Paul informs his listeners that God calls them to start a new life. In concluding the address he refers to a man appointed by God to judge humankind, a man that he raised from the dead.

Origin and function of the story of the speech

This narrative has been called the climax of Acts (Von Harnack 1924, 103), as well as the most Hellenistic part of the most Hellenistic book in the New Testament (Van der Horst 1988, 9–36, 10). This raises the question of the origin of the ideas in the story.

This origin is traced to the Judaeo-Hellenistic diaspora in the Middle East. In this diaspora Jews practised their religion by means of beliefs and practices that they picked up in the Hellenistic life world in which they found themselves. As a result Judaism was influenced by Hellenism and, conversely, Hellenism, especially the later Stoics, were subject to Semitic influence via Jewish propaganda (Norden 1974, 10 and 122). This mutual influencing was basic to constant interaction between Judaism and Hellenism, so close that there is often a strong likeness between Hellenistic and Jewish texts. Against this background Paul's speech as recorded by Luke contains a substratum of ideas shared with the Athenian audience, the Stoics and Epicureans – a common ground (Von Harnack 1924, 392; Norden 1974, 127).

The origin of the ideas in the speech is one thing, their goal is another. That goal can only be determined by looking at the aim of the book of Acts as a whole. In traditional biblical exegesis the question of the aim of Acts was approached in diverse ways (Torkki 2005, 338–340). One was to read the book as an historical account of the ministry of the apostles, especially Peter and Paul (cf. Lüdemann 2002). But in the case of the address to the Areopagus that approach was abandoned. A second approach is dogmatic. It sought to harmonise Acts with subsequent ecclesiastic and theological doctrinal pronouncements. But this method led to fruitless and even fatal confessional debates between and within churches. They were also based on an anachronism, as though the oration was directed to specialists in later confessional orthodoxy rather than to philosophers in antiquity. A third approach is missiological. Paul's speeches, including the one in Athens, are seen as instances of missionary preaching. But the primary aim of Paul's ministry in Athens was not to convert his listeners. It was to present the Christian religion as a credible *paideia*, that is a

[4] In Pergamum (Asia Minor) and Mesopotamia inscriptions have been found with the text, 'to the unknown gods', but these are later than the 1st century. They function as an *ex voto* (Pervo 2009, 433) in the framework of theodicy: evil that befalls people unexpectedly and undeservedly is partly attributed to foreign gods, whose mercy is invoked in supplicatory prayer (Van der Horst 1988; 1998; Van der Toorn 1985, 94–97). Paul's speech does not mention an inscription in the polytheistic plural ('to the unknown gods'), like those found elsewhere, but in the henotheistic or monotheistic singular ('to the unknown god'). What was the reason for this change, and when and where did it happen (Norden 1974, 121)? No such inscription has been found in Athens. It could be that the reference is not to an inscription but to the actual dedication of an altar to an 'unknown god' (Dibelius 1939, 16; Pesch 1986,136). In a narrative analysis of Acts such questions are less weighty if the expression 'to the unknown god' is seen as a literary motif (Von Harnack 1913, 33), of which there are parallels in books later than Acts (Taylor 1994, 289-294). It is not a matter of the metaphysical unknowability of the 'unknown god' as a form of negative theology (Dibelius 1939, 21–22), but of actual foreignness (Van der Horst, 1988, 24ff.).

guideline for education, morals and culture – one that could stand up to Hellenistic *paideiai*.

Rather than an historical, dogmatic or missiological approach, I settle for a narrative analysis of the address, combined with rhetorical analysis. This entails taking the text of the address as an account of plastic episode in Paul's ministry with a dramatic quality (Plümacher 1972; Torkki 2004; 2005). The aim of the story is rhetorical, as indicated above: presenting the Christian religion as a plausible *paideia*. To this end it employs a special form of rhetoric – the deliberative kind. While still aimed at influencing, it operates argumentatively, not emotionally; it seeks to persuade rather than to convince. To underscore the credibility of the Christian religion the address, according to Luke's account, is not set in some obscure town but in the illustrious city of Athens, a small city to be sure, at that time not comparable to Antioch or Alexandria, but still with an age-old philosophical and cultural reputation. Hence it is staged as a debate, not with ordinary urbanites, but with intellectuals, at that time the Stoics and Epicureans. And it does not occur just 'somewhere' in Athens, but in the Areopagus, the centre par excellence of education, morality, culture, politics and law. Finally, that is why, as will be seen, the story refers to Socrates, classical representative of the philosophical quest for freedom and truth – in that order.

Commentary on the verses of the text

Let us look more closely at the verses of the account of the address and see how the common ground of biblical and Hellenistic motifs features in them.[5]

> **22** *Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said: "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.* **23** *For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god'. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.*

Is verse 22 merely a ritual opening sentence to establish contact with the audience, a *captatio benevolentiae* to gain the Athenians' favour (Conzelmann 1972, 106) – simply a rhetorical tactic? Or does it take the story straight to its substantive core? To the author of Acts it was essentially, as noted above, a matter of putting the common ground of Christian and Hellenistic beliefs in the spotlight, hence I see the opening sentence as a substantive statement. "Athenians," he has Paul say, "I see how extremely religious you are." Verse 23 is a continuation of this statement. According to Luke Paul says that they are so religious that they even have an altar inscribed "To an unknown god". This serves as a substantive link with Paul's key message.

> **24** *The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands,* **25** *nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.*

What is the key message? Many exegetes claim that for Paul the unknown God to whom the Athenians brought offerings was actually God, the creator of the world. But is creation in fact the theme sustaining the address (Conzelmann 1972, 107; Pesch 1986, 136)? Or is it just a secondary theme supporting the main theme, which is criticism of the Athenian altar and temple rituals, especially those performed before idols – a cardinal theme of Judaic religious critique (Assmann 2000; 2001; 2003)? Paul remonstrates with the Athenians that they pray at the altar of an unknown God, knowing full well that this God, unlike idols, is not made by human hands and does not need offerings, for he is not a human creation but the very source of creation. The focal point is rejection of the idolatrous cult; thelegitazimation is creation (Witherington 1998, 531).

The temple criticism does not contrast Hellenistic polytheism with biblical monotheism, nor the pantheon of gods with the one, henotheistic god. There is no explicit reference to this in the text. It is all the more striking because there was a clear trend towards henotheism, even monotheism emerging in Hellenism (Nock 1986, 56–57). The real contrast is between a fabricated and a living God, a visible and an invisible God. The focus is not on the existence of either God or many gods, but on the manner of worship. God has no need of supplicatory or propitiatory offers, of food, drink or clothing. More than

[5] Unless indicated otherwise, I quote from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1989).

that, being the giver of life to all humans, it is he who fulfils *their* needs, not the other way round.

This ritual criticism rests on common ground in the Bible and Hellenistic philosophy (Bornkamm 1969, 30–35; Witherington 1998, 525–526; Pervo 2009, 432). Rejection of idolatry can be found throughout the Jewish Bible (Is 1:10–20; 40:19–20; 44:9–20; 44: 9–20; 46:6; Jer 6:20; Wisdom 13), and in the works of numerous Greek and Hellenistic authors, especially among the Stoics (Conzelmann 1972, 107), even though neither the Stoics nor the Epicureans abstained from worship, at least as it occurred publicly (Nock 1986, 59). God's lack of any needs also has sources in both the Jewish Bible (e.g. Ps 50: 8–13; Pesch 1986, 137) and Hellenism, especially among the Stoics (Pervo 2009, 435) and the Epicureans because of the gods' perfect happiness, even though they are not accorded the role of creators (De Witt 1976, 249). God does not want for or need anything.

> **26** *From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth , and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live,* **27** *so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us.*

Verse 26 starts with the myth of Adam, but without mentioning his name. It is not a question of the creaturely origin of all people in one man, Adam, as taught by monogenism in contrast to polygenism.[6] It is a matter of the unity of the human race intended by God. It suggests that the Christian *paideia* is destined for all people, as stated afterwards in verse 29. The same unity was propounded by the Stoics (Pesch 1986, 137; Pervo 2009, 435). The key Greek terms used in this context – the Greek *kairoi*, rendered as 'times of their existence', and *horothesiai*, rendered as 'boundaries of places' – can also be interpreted more abstractly as God's creative grace in time and space (Pervo 2009, 436). That contains the germ of not just a biblical but also a Stoic notion of divine providence (Piettre 2004, 60).

The next verse (27) reflects God's gentle character: His intention is that humans should go in search of him, which may take a lifetime, for it is conducted off the beaten track, gropingly, almost like a blind person. The optative 'perhaps find him' (*euroien*) indicates that finding him may well be beyond human reach (Conzelmann 1972, 109; Pervo 2009, 437). What is needed is to decipher the traces of divine providence in nature and history (Pervo, 2009, 429–430). This search for God and desire to find him may be seen as an allusion to the Jewish Bible (Wisdom 13:6), but also to Stoicism, which sees creation and providence as mutually implicit (Norden 1974, 16–17; Pesch 1986, 138; Pervo 2009, 430). The search may emanate from the will or be conducted mentally. In contrast with the Jewish Bible (Deut 4:29; Is 55:6), the reference here is to a mental quest. In that case finding God is not taken for granted (Conzelmann 1972, 109). Again there are Hellenistic parallels (Dibelius 1939, 9–10).

But it is perfectly possible gropingly to find God, for he is never far from anybody. Indeed, the psalms constantly point out that he is close by (Ps 139:7), as does Stoic literature, for instance Seneca (*Epistula* 41:1): "God is close to you, with you, in you." This suggests God's inherence in human beings, which has a parallel in the Epicurean rejection of fear of the gods in folk religion. The gods in fact cherish friendship and love towards humankind (De Witt 1976, 250).

> **28** *For 'in him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring'.* **29** *Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.*

---

[6] My colleague Ellen van Wolde provided the following reference. With reference to the lexicographic data, Clines (1993, 123–124) indicates that 'adam' refers to "collective, humanity, people (as distinct from God or animals), persons in general (usually without regard to sex, e.g. Gen 5.2), human race as a whole, also with reference of smaller groups, e.g. inhabitants of a city; of persons in general. Distinction between adam as collective and as individual not always clear." As for the exegetic data, it is generally concluded from Genesis 1:27 that 'adam' has a collective meaning on account of (a) v. 26, 'man' as the counterpart of 'God' or 'gods', (b) v. 27b, the relation of all people to God as beings created in his image, not just one being that resembles him, (c) v. 27c, the differentiation of adam into male and female beings (in the Hebrew 'male' and 'female' are adjectives), (d) the parallel with Gen 5:1b–2, where all these facts are combined in one sentence, (e) Gen 6:1–4, which refers to sons of God and daughters of men. For the exposition of Genesis 1:1–2:4[a,] see Van Wolde (2009).

Verse 28 starts with a triad, elaborating on the intimate relationship between God and humans. It constitutes the core of Hellenistic testimony, whereas it is foreign to the Bible. Thus in a prayer to Zeus in Epimenides's *Cretica* Minos says: "You live and stay for ever, for in you we live, move and have our being" (Conzelmann 1972, 109. This is not Parmenides's immovable God but the moving God, the source and process of becoming (Piettre 2004, 60). There are other Greek and Hellenistic parallels combining two of the three concepts, 'live', 'move' and 'being', inter alia in Plato (Timaeus 37c), and especially in the Stoics Seneca and Cicero (Norden 1974, 19–24).

Many exegetes emphasise the opening expression of the verse, 'in him' (*en autooi*), so as to obviate the interpretation, 'through him'. The latter suggests distance, whereas 'in him' does not. This 'in him' indicates an inverse 'inherence', that of humans in God (Dibelius 1939, 31–32). In other words, the inherence is reciprocal: God inheres in people, they inhere in him. Here inherence refers to inner rather than external ties. God is intimately linked with humans, and they with God.

Reciprocal inherence expresses the relationship between God and humans more accurately than the paired concepts of transcendence and immanence or theism and pantheism that exegetes often use in expounding this verse. The trouble with these latter concepts is that they are fraught with a surfeit of conflicts about orthodoxy both within and between Christian denominations. The same applies to the concept of panentheism, which supposedly falls midway between theism and pantheism, but which some exegetes slant towards theism and others towards pantheism (Von Harnack 1913, 23, n.1; Dibelius 1939, 25 Pervo 2009, 438). All these concepts obscure the 'interwovenness' of God and humans.

Verse 28 concludes with the quotation, "For we too are his offspring." Exegetes' usual response to this line, the only non-biblical poetic quotation in the New Testament, is astonishment, shock or silence (Clivaz 2005, 491). This is prompted by the accompanying comment that this quotation stems from Hellenism, namely from "some of your own poets". Which ones? Their names are not mentioned. Exegesis proposes Aristobulus, a Jewish philosopher in Alexandria in the 2nd century BCE, who linked Judaism with Hellenistic thought. He cited the poet Aratos on the intimate relation between God and humans: "we are all his children" (*Phaenomena* 5; Conzelmann 1972, 110; Torkki 2004, 162–165). Another reference is to a parallel in the hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes (Pesch 1986,139, n. 42).

The quotation indicates humans' descent from God, hence the unity of the human race. The theme of divine descent is by no means foreign to biblical thought but neither to Hellenistic ideas either, evidenced for instance by Seneca (Dibelius 1939, 30–32). The theme of the unity of the human race has parallels with the notions of sophists and cynics about the brotherhood of all people (Nock 1986, 58). Luke included it in Paul's address, because the Christian message was intended not only for Jews but for all people, especially those who stemmed from the Hellenistic legacy of Alexander the Great. In his oration Paul completes that legacy, which embraced the inhabited world (*oikoumenē*), in a religious sense (Nock 1986, 69).

Finally verse 29 reverts to the theme of verse 24. Paul again adjures his audience about the impropriety of temple rituals to images of gods, whether made of gold, silver or stone. They are not like the deity. The text does not say 'like God', but 'like the deity' (*to theion*), a *hapax* in the New Testament, but familiar to Hellenistic Judaism (Conzelmann 1972, 110). Those who bring offerings in the temple should know better, for according to the author we are God's offspring. Again we discern that the sustaining theme of the address is not creation but the reciprocal inherence of God and humans and the criticism of idolatrous rituals implicit in it.

> **30** *While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent* **31** *because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.*

Having completed the main theme, the author has Paul work up to a conclusion. It is actually quite abrupt, there is no transition. Its abruptness also lies in the way the deliberative rhetoric, aimed at argumentation and persuasion, makes way for a kerygmatic intention. Even more striking is the contrast between the preceding verses, in which biblical and Hellenistic motifs converge, and the theme from verse 30 onwards, which is explicitly Christian. It is an exaggeration to call the entire address a Hellenistic speech with only a Christian conclusion (Dibelius 1939, 36), for it derives from the Judaeo-Hellenistic diaspora and throughout Acts Paul displays an unmistakably Christian orientation. Nonetheless the difference between the conclusion and the preceding verses is striking, so much so that some aver that the essential message is conveyed only in these verses. On the other hand verses 30 and 31 could also be seen as a more or less separate passage that, in contrast to the preceding deliberative rhetorical themes, contains an explicit missionary programme. Like the missionary preaching in the First Letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1: 9–10), these two verses concern the following aspects: turning away from idolatrous rituals and turning towards God, judgment and resurrection – with no mention of creation (Pichler 1997, 52).

In contrast with the letter to the Romans (Rom 1:16–32; 2:12–16), in Acts (17: 30) the Lucan Paul refrains from charging his audience with their 'heathen' rituals in the past. He simply rejects these and for the rest leaves the past alone. He does not rub it in that they had ignored the God they could have known and whom he is now proclaiming. Probably they had searched for him but failed to find him. Neither does he command them to repent. He merely tells them, in indirect speech, that God does not dwell on their past but calls them to embark on a new life.

In verse 31 judgment and resurrection are mentioned together. The accent is on judgment rather than resurrection, as the text suggests (Witherington 1998, 518). Resurrection legitamizes judgment by a man whom God appointed for that purpose, as the text puts it (cf. Kahl 2009). The judgment will be righteous and will apply to the entire inhabited world. The man to deliver that judgment is Jesus, who is not mentioned by name. Possibly this anonymity was meant to present Paul as an orator innocent of proclaiming foreign gods. Or maybe Luke wanted to convey that Paul's earlier conversations in the market place about Jesus and the resurrection had led to an unfortunate misconception: Jesus was not a foreign god and his resurrection (*anastasis* in 17:18) not a foreign goddess, as the listeners thought (Pesch 1986, 140).

Common ground and deliberative rhetoric

To sum up, rhetorical analysis of the story of Paul's address before the Areopagus has identified two features. The first concerns the question of why Luke has Paul combine Judaic and Hellenistic ideas. Why does he even use purely Hellenistic ideas, such as those about Zeus, that have no link with Judaism? The reason was that he wanted Paul to establish rapport with the cultural elite of Athens. It was a matter of finding common ground. He shows that the 'foreign religion' Paul was introducing corresponds with the thinking of the elite, with whom he was determined to find common ground.

The second feature pertains to the rhetoric Paul uses in this account. He does not try to persuade his audience by playing on their emotions or bombarding them with authoritative arguments. He completely abstains from religious manipulation and indoctrination. He does not try to persuade them but to convince them. His rhetoric centres on argumentation – a deliberative rhetoric. The arguments he advances are aimed at balanced appraisal. I return to these two features in more detail below.

Socrates and Paul

The aforementioned two features are also observable in the speeches of another remarkable historical character not mentioned in any verse in the story of Paul's address. But references in the story to this classical authority and the judicial process he underwent, also before the council of the city state Athens, are too blatant simply to be ignored.

As we have said, the story starts with Paul being suspected of introducing foreign gods in Athens (Ac 17:18). Such suspicions are a recurring topic in the history of the city. A few centuries earlier similar suspicions were fomented against Socrates, a universally admired figure, and are recorded in many writings, including those of Plato. These alleged that he sought to spread new notions and practices involving new gods among the Athenian youth. That was considered a grave danger to the *paideia* and the symbolic universe, hence to social cohesion and stability in the polis. In Luke's story Paul was under similar suspicion.

For that reason, the account tells us, Paul was brought before the Areopagus, where a charge was laid against him, as had happened to Socrates. As noted already, the Areopagus was an administrative and advisory body, also for ordinary and extraordinary legal cases (Schubert 2000). The inquiry that was made – probably a sort of inquest – had to find out what Paul's new doctrine entailed. A similar inquiry was conducted in the case against Socrates, who was 70 years old at the time. And, like Socrates, Paul – in Luke's version – made a speech in his own defence before that council (Plato 2008, 99–139). Both expounded their historically rooted faith in their God or gods and tried to establish common ground with their audience. Both adduced supporting arguments and tried to win over that audience by convincing it rather than through persuasion: they made use of deliberative rhetoric. In the account recorded by Plato Socrates does so provocatively, ironically, yet authentically. Paul was not concerned about his own credibility but about the Christian religion as a credible *paideia*. At all events, in both cases freedom of religious expression was at issue: were they permitted to present the religion they adhered to in a public forum? But the denouements of the two stories differ dramatically. Socrates was condemned to death by poison, a process he underwent with dignity, according to his friends, as befitted a good, wise man of integrity (Plato 2008, 149–227). Paul managed to exonerate himself, a remarkable fact considering that the introduction of new gods was a grave offence (Pervo 2009, 425–428). We are told that at the end of his speech he left the assembly without further ado, a free man. Thus, by analogy, Paul is imbued with Socrates's aura (Plümacher 1972, 19) – a kind of second Socrates (Plümacher 1972, 97–98).

The account of Paul's address to the Areopagus in the Christian tradition

The pericope about Paul's ministry in Athens is not some random excerpt from a biblical book. In Acts Luke, one of the four evangelists, portrays Paul as a Jew to the Jews, a Greek to the Greeks and, as appears from the sequel to Acts, a Roman to the Romans, using the languages and cultures of his time (Piettre 2004, 62). He also presents Paul as a bridge builder between the Judaic and Hellenistic cultures by establishing common ground. He is an authoritative witness to a Hellenistic Christian religion. The story has been the object of many commentaries and much reflection in patristic times, the Middle Ages and the Reformation (Lackmann 1952, 285–363), as well as early modernity (Bodin 1975; Milton 973; Spinoza 1992, 399–401) and the modern era (Ricoeur 1992a, 315; 2007, 105). It is part of the present-day cultural heritage (Kenny 2010, 87, 997; Price & Thonemann 2010, 322).

The fact that Paul's testimony in the Lucan story is not just a peripheral phenomenon in the Christian tradition but actually an authoritative testimony that touches its very core is evident from two elements of Catholic liturgy. The first is the official thee-year cycle known as years A, B and C, which prescribes the biblical readings in Eucharistic services. According to this cycle the account of Paul's address to the Areopagus is not read merely once every three years, but every year, being the first reading on Wednesday of the sixth week of Easter. The second element is even more interesting. One of the two purely Hellenistic verses in the narrative – "In you we live and move and have our being" (v.28) – is focal in the preface introducing the core of the Eucharist, the prayer at the communion table. On ordinary Sundays throughout the year this preface is prayed or sung, and it appears as preface VI in the American *Sacramentary* (p. 440), officially laid down by the Catholic Church. Can it be viewed as anything other than an officially sanctioned form of Hellenistic-Christian syncretism at the very core of Catholic liturgy?

Interim reflection

Paul's address to the Areopagus is a classical text. A text is not classical because it has withstood the test of time but, I have said, because it can bring the reader to the truth of recognition and acknowledgment – recognition and acknowledgment both of the present-day circumstances of human life, and of potential conditions with a view to the future. This applies to the account of Paul's address to the Areopagus.

This poses the challenge of testing this classical text's meaning for our time, realising that its meaning cannot be discovered as if it were given in advance, but has to be constructed anew in every era. The question is not simply what Luke's story about Paul means for our time, as if it can be applied directly to the present age. That would be what Schleiermacher in the early 19th century called a 'lax practice' (Wils 1997, 11). Luke's context and ours are not the same. They are separated by a distance of 20 centuries. The real question is: what would Paul have said had he lived in our context, what would have been his *paideia* for our age? I phrase it tentatively: 'had he lived in our context'. What I say below does not reflect reality, for he did not live in our age. Any attempt at constructive interpretation cannot avoid what I would call a hypothetical *irrealis potentialis*. That is to say, my question is unrealistic (*irrealis),* but the meaning we assign the text may well open up new possibilities for the future (*potentialis*).

In so doing I am in good company. Paul probably visited Athens in 52 CE, but we have said that Luke, the author of Acts, probably wrote his account some two generations later in the late 1st or early 2nd century. The author attempted an interpretive reconstruction. I emulate him in making mine. We cannot but take the fact seriously that the meaning of the narrative depends on differing contexts – Paul's, Luke's and our own. Telling stories and expounding them consists in deciphering their different meanings in different contexts in a never ending reconstruction process (Ricoeur 1992b; 2000). What is needed is an inter- contextual hermeneutics[7] – that is, if we are not to lapse into 'lax' exegesis.

What is the cardinal difference between Paul's and Luke's context in Athens at that time and the North-Western European context today? There are any number of answers to this question, but the one most pertinent to this article is what sociologists call the functional differentiation of modern society. In a nutshell, this complex process that spans several centuries from the late Middle Ages and early modernity up to our time boils down to the following. In premodern times religion dominated society inasmuch as all actions and interactions, individual and institutional ones alike, were regulated, legitimatised and integrated, either directly or indirectly, by religion. But in modern times that hierarchically structured heavenly canopy imploded. The cause was the differentiation of society into functional systems that are not guided by God's will, divine providence or 'the invisible hand' (Adam Smith), but by their own codes, rules and programmes in relative autonomy. Examples are the economic, political, legal, social and cultural systems, as well as the religious system. Religion has become one of many systems, alongside them and not above them. It has lost its overarching function. It is relevant to society only insofar as it is relevant to the other systems and to people and their roles in these systems. I cannot dwell on the process here as I have done elsewhere (Van der Ven 2010a, 359–372). I merely highlight one of its consequences for religion: the secularisation process that is steadily gaining ground in many European countries (Norris & Inglehart 2005). In many European countries today, at any rate in North-Western Europe, believers constitute a (cognitive) minority. The chief division in the population is no longer between Catholics and Protestants, nor between Christians and adherents of other religions like Judaism or Islam, but between religious and nonreligious people, that is those who, in terms of their experience and appraisal, identify themselves as either religious or not.

2 From the Areopagus to the role of religion in a deliberative public debate

The foregoing hermeneutic analysis of Luke's account of Paul's address to the Areopagus serves a clearly defined purpose: in what follows I hope to show that the way Paul shaped his speech, according to Luke's description, could religiously substantiate Rawls' view of the role of religion in public debate. There are two main themes: common ground and deliberative rhetoric.

Common ground

Our analysis raises the following question. In the account of Paul's speech common ground is found in the self-evident status of religion in the city-state Athens, even though religions were locked in mutual competition. In the present-day context there is no religious common ground, considering the plurality of religious and nonreligious worldviews. Can we find common ground anywhere else?

One could look for a common basis for religious and nonreligious worldviews in an underlying philosophical structure that links them together, as opposed to an underlying religious structure. But in view of the multiplicity of philosophies in modern times no such philosophical structure is available: there is no universal or even homogeneous philosophy (Rawls 1985, 223ff). The 20th century alone had many major schools, such as philosophy of life (Bergson), phenomenology (Husserl), existential philosophy (Sartre), hermeneutic philosophy (Heidegger), analytical philosophy (*Wiener Kreis*) and postmodern philosophy (Lyotard). Rawls also maintains that philosophy itself does not have "a form of

[7] In hermeneutics the 'application model', which assumes a one-to-one relation between the original meaning of a text and its meaning today, is countered by inter-contextual hermeneutics (Losonczi 2012.). The latter works with a kind of quadratic equation: the present context relates to the present meaning of the text as the early context relates to the text's meaning in that age (Schillebeeckx 1983; 1989; Boff 1987; Van der Ven 1990, 55–56; 2010, 191–192).

argument that will always prove convincing against all other arguments. There is," he continues, "no such argument." A little later on he argues that "Peoples may often have final ends that require them to oppose one another without compromise" (Rawls 1999, 123).

The pluralism of philosophies can also not be dismissed by seeking common ground in the doctrine of natural law, as though reflection on 'nature' or 'human nature' can or must lead to overlapping consensus (Van der Ven 2010a, 187–225; 2011). What nature is, let alone human nature, is a complex problem in itself considering the advances of evolutionary biology, and the life sciences and cognitive sciences, as well as the intertwinement of nature and culture. What natural law consists in is equally ambivalent. For Thomas Aquinas (SThI-II, 91), a classical authority, natural law was intrinsically linked with eternal law – God – in wich natural law participates. The rare Lutheran and Calvinist interpretations of natural law likewise have religious overtones, especially if their original sources in the 16th and 17th centuries are taken into account (Witte 2007; Nissen 2010). In that time there was even a distinction between natural law before the fall and natural law after the fall. Which natural rights are covered by natural law is equally debatable. In view of their historical and cultural variations they have no universal validity (Porter 2009). In 18th century Protestantism, moreover, natural law gradually detached itself from religion and largely disappeared (Bernardi 2007). Along with the *ancien régime* it fell victim to the guillotine of the French Revolution (Schmale 1995, 22). Nowadays – with one exception – it is no more than an internal, insulated language game in the Catholic tradition, which itself is by no means free from dissent. Thus the argument of the Jesuit John Murray, whom Rawls (2005, lf, 477) cites respectfully, to ground religious freedom in natural law evokes mixed reactions. Some Catholics experience it as too Catholic, considering the opposition to it in other denominations and religions. According to Griffin (1997) in his article, "Good Catholics should be Rawlsian liberals," others feel it is not religious enough. Natural law simply cannot provide common ground with other religious, and especially nonreligious, beliefs (Van der Ven 2012). This is very evident from the Vatican's attempt to incorporate 'natural law' and 'natural rights' into the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It came unstuck because of the response of German Lutherans, who insisted that in that case the crux of the Lutheran creed also be included, and the reproach of monopolization from representatives of other religious and nonreligious persuasions (Morsink 1999, 269–280; Vögele 2000).

Political common ground

If common ground for religious and nonreligious worldviews cannot be found in an underlying religious structure, as was possible in Paul's case, nor in a philosophical structure, nor in a foundational structure in nature, what other 'candidate' is there?

I believe that John Rawls' political theory offers a possibility. The political structure that is central to his theory offers all-encompassing religious and nonreligious worldviews (he calls them comprehensive doctrines) reasonably adequate scope to participate in the deliberative debate in the public sphere. To my mind this structure offers common ground. It has three characteristics.

The first concerns acceptance of democracy for the right reasons. Rawls consistently stresses that religious and nonreligious participants in the public debate should accept the basic principles of constitutional democracy because of their intrinsic value. They are: freedom and equality as reflected in civil liberties and rights, plus opportunities to realise these; the rule of law; and the majority principle (Rawls 2005, xlvi, 6, 156–157, 450; Maffetone 2010, 57). It is not just a matter of accepting these principles as a modus vivendi for opportunistic reasons, for instance because they are part and parcel of present-day conventions, or because they yield temporary gains and can be thrown overboard as soon as they are no longer profitable. An exampleof this is the thesis/hypothesis doctrine of the Catholic Church since the 18th century. It decreed that in countries where Catholics formed the majority the minority need not enjoy religious tolerance, but where Catholics were a minority they were entitled to tolerance. This doctrine provoked charges of opportunism (*mauvaise foi*) against the church (Aubert 1952; Dondeyne 1962, 221–224; Schillebeeckx 1966, 196–199). It conflicts with what Rawls (2005, 459) calls acceptance of democracy 'for the right reasons'. The Second Vatican Council revoked it (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, no. 73). But intrinsic acceptance of democratic principles is not enough. Religions also have the task, we have said, to promote these by appropriating them and transposing their secular legitimisation into the key of their own religious premises.

The second characteristic is acceptance of a plurality of religious and nonreligious worldviews, especially when they not merely differ from each other but also conflict with each other, even irreconcilably. This characteristic is based on an epistemological concept that Rawls (2005, 54–58) calls the 'burdens of judgment'. This concept holds that, since truth is inexhaustible, no religious or nonreligious worldview can comprehend all of it, such that any worldview is only an approximation and therefore merely contains some facets of truth. It follows from this that all citizens have a right to raise their worldview for discussion in the public forum, including its metaphysical and/or religious aspects, because otherwise potentially important insights may be lost. It is all the more important because, as Habermas (2005, 137) points out, religious communities have a special capacity to articulate moral intuitions. The example Habermas (2001, 29–31) cites is the concept of humans as images of God, implying that he created and destined them for freedom, which calls for vigilance when, via gene technology, people deprive others of their freedom by forming them in their own image.

Hence the notion that all citizens – including religious ones – have a right to bring their worldview up for discussion is based not merely on the principle of their individual freedom, nor purely on its importance to society, requiring a 'free market' for the exchange of views, but also and especially on the epistemological notion that truth is perspectival and confined to aspects. No worldview encompasses reality or totally corresponds with it, as full-blown realism professes, but each approaches it from diverse angles, illuminating some aspects and leaving others unexposed. This is a result of the spatiotemporal finitude of human life, whose conditions are rooted in contingence.

The third characteristic concerns Rawls's accompanying proviso. I mention it here as one of the three characteristics, but in fact it has been the most hotly debated topic since the beginning of the 21st century. This is the claim that when religious and nonreligious worldviews are debated in the public arena they must at some point, in due course, be translated into the language of public reason. Rawls (2005, 462) deliberately leaves the question of the moment at which such translation should occur, hence what the 'due' in 'in due course' means, open. He also leaves the matter of who should undertake the translation open – members of the religious or nonreligious communities concerned, with or without the assistance of other communities and/or secularists as Habermas (2005, 125–141) proposes? That has to be decided in practice, Rawls says. Some regard this as decisional poverty (Maffetone 2010, 297–288).

Anyway the translation of worldviews into the language of public reason does not simply entail the application of democratic principles, as it were blindly without regard to their historical and current significance. Because the translation is aimed at reasonable understandability and acceptability, it is essential to make the principles hermeneutically accessible (Wils 2010), also, I add, in light of jurisprudence. When it comes to understandability and acceptability, if the translation is hermeneutically sound, it could be that people who do not accept a particular worldview but do understand it may still find its political implications reasonably acceptable. This entails a distinction between actual acceptance of a worldview and its reasonable acceptability. The latter is sufficient for social stability. Reasonable acceptability means that outsiders are able to understand the grounds advanced by adherents of that worldview and its translation into politics without actually appropriating it themselves.

Here the distinction between public and secular reason is crucial. The latter concerns worldviews explicitly based on nonreligious or anti-religious premises and their explicit ramifications and specifications in specific convictions. Secular reason is not the same as public reason, since, being based on the aforementioned democratic principles, it affords access to the public arena for both religious and nonreligious worldviews and not only for nonreligious ones, as secular reason does. Public reason provides a translation of religious and nonreligious beliefs into the language of the democratic principles I mentioned before: freedom and equality, explicated as freedoms and rights, plus opportunities to realise these; the rule of law; and the majority principle. That is important, because if religious beliefs and/or nonreligious views were to confine themselves to their own premises and fail to translate these into public reason, democratic politics would be obliged to take these religious or nonreligious premises as the basis of its legislative, executive and judicial tasks. That would mean that citizens who do not adhere to those beliefs and premises or who reject them outright will be cut out, which is counter to the democratic legal order.

Common ground in political debate and the separation of church and state

Does finding common ground in political debate conflict with the separation of church and state or, more broadly, of religion and state or, even more broadly, of worldview and state? This separation can assume diverse forms (Durham 1996; Bader 2007, 47, 63). In Europe there are, by and large, two basic forms. The first is a democratic state that accommodates religious and nonreligious worldviews equally, for instance in regard to the religious calendar and maintenance of religious buildings, and equal exemption, such as relief or exemption from fiscal obligations. The second is democratic states that entrench laicism in their constitutions, the prime example being France. While that has been a major political factor since 1905, the French state also provides numerous accommodations and exemptions, although it may not always go as far as many other European countries, with the exception of, for instance, the maintenance of cathedrals, basilicas and large, prestigious churches. Legally the laicism of the French state means that the position of the Catholic Church and other Christian churches and religions has been removed from the sphere of public law and they are now treated as legal persons under private law, as has also happened in many other countries (Poulat 2003). Of course, this is not the case in countries with a state church, such as Greece, England, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Malta and Finland (which has two state churches – Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox), but these countries also recognise pluralism of religious and nonreligious worldviews and equality of religions, which also applies to countries, notably Germany and Austria, where churches and religions are public law entities (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*) falling under public law (Van der Ven 2010a, 325–327). In all these cases, equality of religious and nonreligious worldviews is the decisive criterion of the separation of church and state. If the state were to be compelled to commit itself exclusively to a particular religious or nonreligious worldview, exclusive of another/others, it would strike at the roots of the democratic state. That is why the third characteristic is so important, namely Rawls' proviso that religious and nonreligious convictions have to be translated in due course into democratic principles: freedom and equality, explicated as freedoms and rights, plus opportunities to realise these; the rule of law; and the majority principle.

In our post-feudal era equal treatment of religious and nonreligious worldviews in the separation of church and state is embedded in the more general separation between society and the state. The state is not a society-state anymore as it was in the city-state Athens, but a separate institution or a separate collection of institutions. Society on the other hand consists of a host of other institutions and associations with a host of well-nigh immeasurable interests – technological, economic, military, political, social and cultural. Religious and nonreligious institutions form part of that society. All these societal institutions have to be treated as impartially as possible by the state in reasonably understandable accordance with the public interest, the common good.

Nonetheless the separation of church and state does not mean that the state has managed optimally to mete out equal treatment to institutions with religious and nonreligious worldviews. In many Western countries the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches are still more present in the pores of the legislative, administrative and judicial state systems than is considered fair by agnostic and atheistic communities. The same applies to the position of the Islamic communities in African and Asian countries. The great majority of these religious institutions have still not officially accepted the separation of church and state. This is mirrored in the data of the cross-national program Human Rights and Religion among a select sample of higher secondary school students in 14 countries, three African countries (Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania), three Asian countries (India, Indonesia, the Philippines), seven European countries (Belgium, England and Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey) and one Latin American country (Surinam). The data refer to, among other things, state autonomy in fundamental moral issues, like euthanasia and abortion, which is to say that politicians should take decision independently of religious leaders, albeit without excluding asking or receiving their advice. These data show that the means of increasing agreement on a five-point scale vary from 3.1 to 3.3 among Catholic, Protestant and Muslim students and from 3.6 to 3.7 among nonreligious students. The differences between the first three groups and the fourth one are statistically significant (see table). This might be considered an indication that the supporters of the separation of church and state are not Catholics, Protestants or Muslims, but nonreligious people.

Table: *Means of attitudes towards the separation of church and state among senior high schools students in14 countries*

	Catholics		Protestants		Muslims		Nonreligious		
	Means	s.d.	Means	s.d.	Means	s.d.	Means	s.d	Eta
In regard to euthanasia politicians should decide irrespective of any religious leaders' will.	N=1537 3.3[a]	1.1	N=654 3.3[a]	1.1	N=3371 3.3[a]	1.1	N=2528 3.6[b]	1.2[b]	.12[***]
In regard to abortion politicians should take decisions independently of religious leaders.	N=1531 3.1[a]	1.2	N=652 3.3[b]	1.2	N=3366 3.1[a]	1.2	N=2515 3.7[c]	1.3	.22[***]

Range of scale: 1 ('I totally disagree') − 5 ('I fully agree'). Distinctive indices ([a b c]), added to the means, indicate statistically significant differences within the rows. [*] eta p < .05; Games-Howell test p < .05. Van der Ven 2010a, 399–411.

Translation of religious and nonreligious worldviews into the language of public reason, which is mandatory in the separation of church and state, is important not only for the state but also for society, for it can only function on the basis of cooperation and, even more essentially, reciprocity. Rawls consistently underscores reciprocity (Rawls 2005, xliii, 48–54, 441–445). The dialogue required for this is not feasible without such translation (Ferrara 2010).

Religious objections

But is it justified to require religions to translate their tenets into the language of public reason? There are three objections: the first is religious, the second concerns the concept of truth, and the third is moral and political.

The religious objection is the question of whether faith in God or gods is in fact reconcilable with (public) reason. Is it appropriate to explore and test the reasonable weight of religions before the forum of public reason? Is there not a specifically religious reason apart from public reason, to which it cannot and may not be reduced? The so-called axial religions, which include the major religions, have all manner of political ideas, but because of the orientation to the transcendent, the divine, they cannot be reduced to these (Eisenstadt 1986; 2003; Arnason et al. 2005).[8] And in the event of conflict between religious and political reason, does not the former have priority over the latter? The question falls beyond the scope of this article, but that is not too serious, for one can formulate just one epistemological rule that mitigates the objection and reduces it to manageable proportions.

The epistemological rule is that the reasonableness of religion is a matter of practical rather than of theoretical reason. Religion is not a comprehensive doctrine, as Rawls (2005, 59) would have it, but a commitment, a concern for people's existential practice, more particularly their spiritual and moral practice, with a vertical dimension – an orientation to God or gods – and a horizontal dimension, an orientation towards fellow humans, especially those in distress. In spiritual life cognition, emotion and volition converge, naturally in varying degrees. Hence it is not a matter of whether God or the gods exist, or what divine revelation is if it has occurred, but of a reasonable account of religious practice, hence testing the prudential arguments in support of such prac-

[8] The axial religions date back to the 5th century BCE, with roots in the 8th century BCE and offshoots in the 3rd century BCE. Because of their Judaic roots Christianity and Islam are considered axial religions, albeit as a secondary manifestation of these. The term 'axial religions' is intended to distinguish them from pre-axial religions, formerly known as 'primitive religions', because they came to be considered the axis of the history of religions on account of their supra-local expansion, religious abstraction, conceptualisation, institutionalisation and politicisation.

tice (Walgrave 1962; Ferrara 2008). Religious practice is primary, a reasonable account is secondary; after this comes a comprehensive reasonable account and finally comprehensive doctrine arrives. Thus a religion's claim to uniqueness, for instance, may be examined reasonably to determine its implications for daily life, more particularly for daily life in the state and society (Pannenberg 1971, 629–633). This reasonable testing forms part of religion's dynamics and their transformative and self-reflective capacity.

The second objection pertains to the concept of truth, which I have touched on already. Rawls' theory concerning the burden of judgment has to do with perspectives and aspects. But the truth concept of the mainline religions is not simply one of truth, so the objection goes, but that of *the* truth, in the singular and not in the plural, in some instances 'the whole truth' or 'the full truth', 'the revealed truth'. By juxtaposing religious and nonreligious worldviews in public debate, without subordinating one to the other, *the* truth becomes a partial truth on a par with other partial truths, and orthodoxy is put on a par with other orthodoxies, thus obliterating the distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and, in fact, the very meaning of orthodoxy (Locke 1991, 80–85).

This may be true, but it does not alter the fact that in the public debate the religions concerned should in no way be prevented from presenting their truth as *the* truth. The same applies to adherents of nonreligious, atheistic or anti-theistic worldviews – in principle these are, or could be, equally convinced of the fullness of their truth. That is in fact what the public debate is about: which truth claim can hold water, and to what extent, in the forum of reason, in this case public reason. One condition is that representatives of religions and nonreligious worldviews should be prepared to have dialogue in the forum of public reason. If they are not – and that happens in both religious and nonreligious fundamentalism – there is no scope for democratic dialogue, or even for democracy. Then dialogue becomes an exchange of information or a reciprocal attempt at conversion. It cannot but raise doubt about whether democracy is being accepted for the rights reasons, as Rawls puts it, or merely as a modus vivendi, for one's own (religious) profit. That is and remains the key question.

In mitigation one could add – perhaps over optimistically, one might say, following Rawls (2005,170) – that the same mainline religions, apart from their fundamentalist wings, are able to recognise mutual similarities and accept reciprocal additions. In other words, alongside or instead of a purely exclusive orientation they also display inclusive orientations depending on the relative prominence or marginality of the issues concerned. Thus the Christian tradition – both Catholic and Protestant – recognises a hierarchy of truths (*hierarchia veritatum*), comprising a scale of the centrality or marginality of the truths they adhere to. This is evidenced by the much maligned Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Church, *Dominus Jesus* (2000), by then cardinal Ratzinger, now pope Benedict XVI. This document may be characterised as predominantly exclusive, even though some inclusive aspects are discernible. The accent on exclusiveness is evident in the emphasis on God's universal and complete revelation in Jesus Christ, which precludes any approach that regards this revelation as limited or even complementary to revelations in other religions (nos. 6 and 15). At the same time some paragraphs evince some inclusiveness by mentioning positive elements and intermediary participations (*mediationes participatae*) of this revelation in other religions (nos. 8 and 14). The declaration moreover specifies that interreligious dialogue should be conducted in freedom and on an equal footing (no. 22) (Van der Ven 2010a, 72–73).

As we have said, this is a mitigation, but one arising from the psycho-social makeup of human beings, not a smoothing over. It is the typically human capacity, developed at an early age, to transpose oneself to someone else's position and stand in his shoes. It gives one access to the mental and experiential world of others, and enables one to participate in it and become aware of both differences and similarities (Cacioppo & Patrick 2009). The absolute antithesis of insiders and outsiders is fallacious (Jensen 2011). People are not absolutely impermeable to one another, neither are religions. The many forms of (unwitting) historical and present-day syncretism are evidence of this, as noted above with reference to the example of the Lucan story about Paul's speech to the Areopagus.

The third objection is moral and political. It implies that the moral and political implications manifesting in religious practice are narrowed down to individual rights and freedoms, hence to deontological rules that are considered universally valid but are not associated with any real-life practice or context whatsoever. But religion does not comprise only deontological rules. They are no more than a residue of the broad, dense and deep forms of religious life embedded in teleological orientations, in which moral ideals, values and virtues play a key role, functioning in particular contexts of particular spatiotemporal communities, where they also display marked differences (Reder 2008). The aforementioned translation into individual rights and freedoms reduces the teleological richness of religious traditions and communities to abstract, deontological concepts.

A possible solution could be to combine the two moral approaches according to the triad proposed by Ricoeur (1992a, 169–296). He prioritises teleological orientations like the ideals, values and virtues of traditions and communities. He then applies the deontological rules, the cardinal ones being autonomy, respect and justice. He uses these as a critical corrective to test and ‘filter’ the teleological ideals, values and virtues. The aim is to determine whether these deontological rules are trampled underfoot in teleological action patterns and customs such as historical, folk, particular morals that lead to oppression of women, homosexuals, other religions and – even more perverse – blood revenge, extrajudicial execution or genocide. In the process teleological action patterns that conflict with autonomy are filtered out, along with ways of dealing with people suffering from disrespect and violating their rights. Finally Ricoeur advocates applying the teleological orientations, purged by deontological rules, in – not to – real-life situations according to classical *prudentia*.

All this was an attempt to identify common ground where religion and politics can meet: a political common ground. Of course, this common ground differs fundamentally from the common ground Paul used according to the Lucan account of his speech to the Areopagus. His was the common ground of Hellenistic religious culture and philosophy, in conjunction with those of the Judaeo-Hellenistic diaspora in Asia Minor. The common ground in our time, I have argued, is that of a democratic legal culture. Naturally that culture is not (as a matter of course) part of religions with their age-old traditions, and one can cite numerous historical and present-day situations that reveal antagonism between the two. I have, however, refuted some major objections that religions may have against a democratic legal order. I have tried to formally bridge the differences between the Lucan story of 20 centuries ago and our own day and age: the formal resemblance lies in looking for and embarking on common ground as a pre-eminently hermeneutic challenge.

Deliberative rhetoric

In addition to common ground I propose, as indicated above, to look at another feature of the Lucan account of Paul’s address to the Areopagus: the use of deliberative rhetoric.

To understand the nature of deliberative rhetoric it is useful to place it in the broad field of rhetoric as outlined by Aristotle (1358^a36–1359^a29). Rhetoric may be subdivided into two kinds: one that centres on practical reason, and one that does not. The first kind has two subgroups: deliberative rhetoric, used by politicians and citizens with a view to democracy, and forensic rhetoric, used by prosecutors, judges and advocates in law courts. Non-argumentative rhetoric, known as epideictic rhetoric, seeks to thank and praise someone in display oratory.

Deliberative rhetoric applies practical rather than theoretical reason (Aristotle 1138^b18–1145^a14). Freely following Habermas (1982), theoretical reason has to do with observing the (physical, social and psychological) structure of the world and the extent to which interventions in that world are effective. Practical reason is about how we should act in the world, according to which norms and for what reasons. The latter refer to the grounds of the norms and values and the justification for our conduct. Parallel to that are theoretical and practical arguments (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1982, 125), and theoretical and practical syllogisms. Among the latter the *maior* is normative, the *minor* descriptive and the *conclusio* normative once more (Hare 1967; Brennenstuhl 1980; Van IJzendoorn 1980).

Hermeneutically inspired by the Lucan Paul, I list some pertinent features of deliberative rhetoric in public debate, not as in Paul’s case in a thoroughly religious context (“Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way”, Ac 17:22), but in the pluralistic, secularised context of present-day North-Western Europe. The first feature concerns the principle of argumentation in deliberative rhetoric, the second concerns its practical implementation, and third the relevance of appraisal and compromise.

Argumentation in deliberative rhetoric

The first feature of deliberative rhetoric in my sense is the following. Suppose that at some point in the public debate a transition was made, in due course, from a religious language game to a political one and religious beliefs have been translated into the language of public reason. Then it would be wrong to adduce religious 'arguments' for political viewpoints with reference to God's revelation or his will. These are not accessible to people of other religious or nonreligious worldviews, hence contrary to the principle of reciprocity, which Rawls, as noted already, considered extremely important. Such arguments are and cannot be reasonably acceptable to their minds. For public reason in a democracy there is no such thing as *the* truth, neither is there a 'revealed' truth: all religious and nonreligious beliefs are equally free (religious freedom) and equal before the law (separation of church and state). Once the aforementioned translation has been made 'in due course', what is at issue is not 'revealed truth' but a translation into the language of 'public truth', not 'divine reason' but its translation into the language of 'public reason'.

In concrete terms, once the transition from a religious language game to a public language game has been made, a statement like 'official legitimatisation of euthanasia is not permitted under any circumstances, because it is counter to God's will' is out of order. It is out of order, because it is tautological. After all, it says the same thing twice: we are not free, because we are not free (being subject to God) (cf. Schüller 1970; 1973, 182–198; Kuitert 1985, 96). Such statements are also substantively out of order, because God's will falls outside the public language game. Nonreligious participants in public debate do not understand the statement, even supposing that (all) religious people do.

Yet some differentiation is called for, because God's will can be interpreted in two ways. Hugo Grotius (1625, I,1,15) posits out that an act may be good or evil because it is so according to God's will (*justum esse, id est jure debitum, quia Deus voluit*), or because God does not will the act on account of its intrinsic nature, hence it is evil according to reason (*ideo id Deum velle quia justum est*). In the first case divine voluntarism dominates and one ends up with the foregoing tautology; in the second human reason dominates and is challenged to find human reasons for the goodness or evil of the act. In the first case 'God's will' still has to be translated in due course, the second already focuses on the translation.

This does not mean that revealed truth and religious reason are not significant factors in the debate. They are highly significant, because they can motivate and inspire debate. Once it has been decided to translate religious reason into public reason, religion no longer plays a role in an argumentative sense, but it remains a maieutic factor. It may serve as a motivating impulse to activate public reason, may furnish inspiring metaphors and myths and present rituals, thus tempering the harshness of public reason, warming its coldness, bending its rigidity, melting its cynicism – in fact, taking account of human standards, as Habermas (2005, 216–257) interprets Kant.

Deliberative argumentation in practice: exchange of perspectives

After having clarified the first feature of deliberative rhetoric, i.e. its argumentative nature, below I elaborate on its second feature, its practical implementation. After all, the transition from religious to public reason is not once and for all, as though it were a linear process. On the contrary, it is an iterative process, in which the linguistic border between religion and politics is overstepped over and over again from both sides, from religious to political reason and vice versa. Because this easily causes confusion it is important that the distinctiveness of the two languages – religious and public – be kept in mind constantly. To this end mutual exchange of perspectives between the two sets of participants in the discourse is important: religious participants socialised and trained in an age-old religious tradition, and those who were not and are probably more at home with public reason. In an exchange of perspectives the latter may help the former to shift from the religious language game to the public one, and the former may augment, differentiate and even correct the public language (Habermas 2005, 125–141).

An exchange of perspectives in public discourse focusing on deliberative rhetoric is facilitated by applying a few simple logical rules to avoid or clarify misunderstanding. These are: (1) contributions to the debate made with a view to reasonable accounts of religious practices are to be regarded as statements, no matter how emotional and subjective they may be; (2) such statements are subject to the criterion of intersubjective monitoring; (3) they should be distinct from arguments in support of such statements; (4) arguments should be historical, empirical and systematic – references to authoritative traditions and persons are allowed, but do not qualify as arguments; (5) arguments adduced to counter pro arguments and weighed against them enhance the reasonableness of the statements (Schellens & Verhoeven 1994; Hoeken et al. 2008, 148); (6) statements should be free from contradictions; (7) terms should be consistent, unless it is indicated that they are given a different meaning in other contexts; (8) statements, substantiated by solid arguments, culminate in valid conclusions (cf. Pannenberg 1973, 270–273, 275–277).

Of course, these rules are not to be found in the Lucan Paul's address to the Areopagus. They apply to public discourse in societies characterised by modern differentiation and rationalisation (Weber 1980; Schluchter 1979). However, at a higher level of abstraction – counter to the view of the historian Kennedy (1980, 130) – the account of Paul's address certainly has an argumentative structure. If one rereads that narrative, one cannot but discern a concatenation of arguments, based on the religious common ground with the elite of the time – arguments addressed to them, like 'you also oppose temple rituals', 'you also reject the idea that God lives in temples', 'you also deny that he is made by human hands', 'you also maintain that he is close to you and you to him', 'you also aver that we are a single human race'. While Paul undoubtedly argues in terms of a thoroughly religious context, what is important from our point of view is that he does so in terms of common ground. The common ground nowadays is no longer religious but political, as I argued following Rawls, but an argumentative structure is still required, this time a political argumentative structure.

To demonstrate the relevance of the foregoing logical rules I cite some examples of the performance of religious representatives in public discourse when they fail to make the transition from religious to public reason. That happens when, having entered the public arena, they adopt a religious perspective and confine themselves to a claim that they regard as conclusive: 'I represent the doctrine of the Catholic Church and *therefore* euthanasia is intrinsically evil' or '*therefore* homosexual practices are unnatural'. This puts an end to discourse before it gets started and leaves the listeners perplexed, since there is no scope for reasonable reciprocity based on common ground. While the conjunctive 'therefore' may be conclusive to Catholics, to people from other backgrounds who participate in public discourse on the basis of public reason it is not. The same may be said of statements backed up by biblical texts that God is the Lord of life and death, and *therefore* abortion is always murder, no matter what the intention or circumstances may be. Again the conjunctive 'therefore' may be conclusive to Catholics, but not to people of other worldviews who join in public discourse on the basis of public reason – quite apart from the fact that in some acknowledged historical traditions in the Catholic Church a distinction is made between life, human life and the human person (Curran 1982). In such cases little remains for participants but to stare at each other blankly, since there is no mutual exchange of perspectives.

If, as happens in these examples, an exclusively religious perspective is adopted without (valid) arguments in terms of public reason, there is little or no chance that religious statements will convince anybody. My own empirical research in the Netherlands on euthanasia has shown that purely religious notions for or against it have no real influence either on nonreligious students' attitudes towards it, or on those of students who define themselves as Muslim or Christian. Euthanasia has been de-sacralised almost entirely (Van der Ven 2010b, 2–3–207, 222). Unilateral adherence to religious arguments and disregard of public ones pushes it ever deeper down the negative spiral of de-sacralisation.

By contrast there are instances where reasonable reciprocity works. Rawls cites the prophets in the narratives of the Jewish Bible, the parable of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament, the rhetoric of religious leaders in the struggle for the abolition of slavery, and the ministry of the Reverend Martin Luther King in the civil rights movement. He also points out that they play two language games – a religious and a political one. They were 'bilingual' (Rawls 2005, 249–250, 464–465). President Barack Obama expressed it eloquently in his *The Audacity of Hope*: "Surely, secularists are wrong when they ask believers to leave their religion at the door before entering the public square (…). What deliberative, pluralistic democracy does demand is that the religiously motivated translate their concerns into universal, rather than religious-specific values. (…) If I want others to listen to me, then I have to explain why abortion violates some principle that is accessible to people of all faiths, including those with no faith at all" (Obama 2006, 218–219). Another example that Rawls cites approvingly is the way the then cardinal Bernadin of Chicago expressed his view on abortion – the content of which Rawls personally repudiates (Rawls 2005,, 243–244, n.32) – in nonreligious terms, namely public peace, essential protections of human rights (i.e. allegedly the right to life) and commonly accepted standards of moral behaviour in a community of law (Rawls 2005, liv, n. 32, 480, n.82). A final example is the public debate on legislation on euthanasia in the Netherlands that was conducted in the full public limelight over the last 30 years. In that debate the report of the government appointed commission on euthanasia (1985) was directive. The commission comprised members who, under stringent conditions, considered euthanasia justified − albeit not permitted, implying that it was not a right − as well as members that absolutely rejected it. The latter included some representatives of Christian churches. In the course of the proceedings they had and grabbed every opportunity to expound their religious objections, also against a strictly stipulated legal regulation, and to discuss the other members' arguments, both religious and purely ethical, with them. What is significant is that the Christian compilers of the minority report, which was appended to that of the government commission, were commended for translating their arguments about such a religiously charged subject into nonreligious terms with a view to public mutual understanding (Weyers 2002, 185).

Appraisal and compromise

The Lucan Paul likewise set his sights on mutual reasonable acceptability. Viewed from the angle of the story of his speech in Athens, the entire text is marked by an exchange of perspectives. Those who, like Paul, seek common ground with their audience automatically adopt their dialogue partners' perspective along with their own. Without an exchange of perspectives there can be no common ground.

Whereas the first attribute of deliberative rhetoric in our sense is that of mandatory argumentation and the second is the consistent need to exchange perspectives, the third and final characteristic is the following. Sometimes, at the end of a discourse, statements, arguments and conclusions arising from the religious language game and those of the public language game remain diametrically opposed, there is no trace of rapprochement and the conclusion is an agreement to disagree. In other cases a deliberative appraisal is reached (*libra* means pair of scales). Such appraisal may result in compromise. In 2009 the Catholic Church compromised on abortion in the case of a Brazilian girl, Carmen, who, having been regularly raped by her stepfather, was pregnant with twins at a very tender age while living in appalling medical and psycho-social circumstances. However, after some internal deliberation the Vatican turned down the compromise (2009, March 23, July 3 and 10, www.chiesa.espressonlite.it).

Yet compromises are not unknown in religions. Official religious documents, declarations and decisions are not achieved without compromises. This also applies to the Catholic Church, evidenced by Vatican II's dogmatic constitution of the church, *Lumen Gentium*, in which a hierarchical and a democratic view on the church are situated in a kind of seemingly unobserved coexistence. This type of compromised dogmatic pronouncement is also apparent in ecumenical documents such as the 1994 christological declaration by the Catholic and Syriac Orthodox Churches (*Déclaration christologique commune entre l'Église catholique et l'Église assyrienne de l'Orient*), in which centuries-old, competing dogmatic titles of Maria are compromised, Maria the mother of Jesus and Maria the mother of God (Teule 2008, 103–106). Another example, now in the field of politico-ethical issues, is Vatican II's declaration on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), in which all humans are said to have the right to enjoy religious freedom, except for Catholics as they are to obey the church (Van der Ven 2010a, 213–215). Compromises may be considered adequate when religious insights are translated, in due course, into the language of public reason – naturally within the hermeneutic ambit of the identity of the religions concerned.

There are two arguments in favour of such compromises. The first is that in the domain of practical reason there is no question of absolute certainty because of the contingency of practice, the actions which leave their effects and side effects more or less in the dark, certainly in the long run; moreover, these actions cannot be reversed. The same contingency accounts for the spatiotemporal confinement of decisions to act: a decision applies here and now but is naturally not applicable everywhere and for all time. Practical reason never gets beyond deliberative appraisal of arguments for and against some or other variant action. The knowledge it provides is that of estimated probability. When new facts are presented or new ideas evolve there is a need for reappraisal and the decision may turn out differently. In other words, practical reason does not get away from essential fallibility, based as it is on estimate and appraisal. The judgment it contains is reflective (Kant 1951; Ferrara 2008), a judgment based on prudential rather than logical conclusions (Ricoeur 1992a, 297–356; 1995, 185–192; 2000, 413–436). This also applies to practical reason aimed at reasonable accounts of religious practices (Walgrave 1962).

The second argument is that democracy is fundamentally based on acceptance of a plurality of religious and nonreligious worldviews. This requires recognition of reasonably acceptable views of both the majority and minorities. Such recognition is expressed in willingness to compromise. Compromise means that participants in the discourse are not enemies but opponents, whose reasonably acceptable views merit respect because of their human dignity (Ricoeur 2005, 206–216). This is particularly relevant when the debate does not hinge on diametrically opposite ideas about good and evil, let alone absolute good and evil, but, as commonly happens, on notions concerning a mix of good and evil, of second best or the lesser evil (*minus malum*). Clearly the latter does not happen in cases of rotten compromises when a minority group is humiliated by the majority (Margalit 2010).

Paul made no rotten compromise in his address to the Stoics and Epicureans; his compromise is reasonable and substantiated. For throughout his speech we are struck by the fact that, whilst dealing with faith in God and in passing with creation, he does not mention other major Christian themes, such as alienation and sin, forgiveness, redemption and the eschaton. Even the person of Jesus the Christ – the very core and centre of the Christian faith – is glossed over in the conclusion to the speech. Paul does not mention him by name but refers to him as ‘a man’ – as anonymous as you can get – appointed to judge humankind. The compromise is reasonable, because by calling him ‘a man’ he wants to avoid the impression that he was introducing foreign gods, as I indicated earlier (Pesch 1986, 140).

Conclusion

Guided by a hermeneutic analysis of the story of Paul’s address to the Areopagus, I have outlined some conditions for the actions of religious representatives in the public sphere. Paramount is, firstly, the establishment of common ground with participants in the discourse. Without it, we learn from Luke’s account of Paul’s performance, the credibility of religion suffers. In present-day North-Western Europe the common ground is no longer religious or philosophical but, I have argued, political. This requires religious representatives to play two language games: the religious one and, in due course, the political one. The second key requirement is competence in deliberative rhetoric, which is intent on persuading other participants of the credibility of religion, not by using (religious) authoritative arguments that, from a logical point of view, are not arguments at all or by playing on their emotions, but by providing valid reasons for it. Deliberative democracy calls for a capacity for deliberative argumentation, including the ability to exchange perspectives and arrive at reasonable compromises.

In other words, whereas Rawls advocates acceptance of liberal democracy by religions and requires them to adduce intrinsic reasons for doing so, this article tries to show that part of these premises, at least as far as Christianity is concerned, is the inter-contextual hermeneutics that is a hallmark of Luke’s account of Paul’s speech to the Areopagus. Such an inter-contextual hermeneutics is, both historically and systematically, the mainspring of religious dynamics, critical self-reflection and transformation.

References

Adams, R. (2009). The Theological Ethics of the Young Rawls and Its Background. In: J. Rawls. *A Brief Inquiry into the Meaning of Sin and Faith. With “On my Religion”*. Edited by Th. Nagel (24–101). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Anderson, G.(2009).The Personality of the Greek State.*The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 129(2009)1–22.

Arnason J., et al. (2005). *Axial Civilizations and World History*. Leiden: Brill.

Assmann, J. (2000). *Herrschaft und Heil. Politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa*. München: Hanser.

Aubert, R. (1945). *Le problème de l'acte de foi. Données traditionnelles et résultats des controverses* Louvain: Warny.

Bader, V. (2007). *Secularism or Democracy?* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Bernardi, B. (2007). *Le principe d'obligation. Sur une aporie de la modernité politique*. Paris: Vrin.

Bodin, J. (1975). *Colloquium Heptaplomeres de Rerum Sublimium Arcanis Abditis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bornkamm, G. (1969). *Early Christian Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Brennenstuhl, W. (1980). Ziele der Handlungslogik. In: H. Lenk (Hg.). *Handlungstheorien. Interdisziplinär.* Bd I (35–66). München.

Cacioppo, J. & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness. Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection.* New York: Norton & Company.

Clines, D. (eds.) (1993). *Dictionary of Classic Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Clivaz, C. (2005). L'analyse narrative signale-t-elle l'arrivée du *muthos* en exegése? Histoire et Poétique autour d'Ac 17,28. In: C. Focant & A. Wénin (eds.). *Analyse narrative et bible* (483–496). Leuven: Peeters.

Conzelmann, H. (1972). *Die Apostelgeschichte*. Tübingen: Mohr.

Cohen, J. & Nagel, Th. (2009). Introduction. J. Rawls. *A Brief Inquiry into the Meaning of Sin and Faith. With "On my Religion"* (1–23). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Curran, C. (1982). Abortion: Its Moral Aspects. E. Batchelor Jr (eds). *Abortion. The Moral Issues* (115–128). New York: The Pelgrim Press.

De Witt, N. (1976). *Epicurus and his Philosophy*. Westport: Greenwood.

Dibelius, M. (1939). *Paulus auf dem Areopag*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Dondeyne, A. (1962). *Geloof en wereld* (221–224). Antwerpen: Patmos.

Durham, W. (1996). Perspective on Religious Liberty. A Comparative Framework. In J. Witte & J. D. van der Vyver (eds.). *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective. Legal Perspectives* (1–44). The Hague: Nijhoff.

Eisenstadt, S. (ed.). (1986). *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Ferrara, A. (2008). *The Force of Example. Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ferrari, S. (2010). Introduction to European Church and State Discourse. In: L. Christoffersen et al. (ed.). *Law & Religion in the 21th Century. Nordic Perspectives* (23–41). Copenhagen: Djøf.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1986). *Wahrheit un Methode, I. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Gesammelte Werke. Band 1. Tübingen: Mohr.

Grotius, H. (De Groot, H.). (1625). *De Jure belli ac pacis*.

Habermas, J. (1982). *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Band 1–2*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Haberrmas, J. (2001). *Glauben und Wissen*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Habermans, J. (2005). Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Hoeken, H. et al. (2009). *Overtuigende teksten. Onderzoek en ontwerp*. Bussum: Coutinho.

Jensen, J. (2011). Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate: Dismantling a Pseudo-problem in the Study of Religion. *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23(2011)1, 29–47.

Kahl, W. (2009). Paulus als kontextualisierender Evangelist beim Areopag. In: E. Bons (Hg.). *Der eine Gott und die fremde Kulte, Exklusive und inklusive Tendenzen in den biblischen Gottesvorstellungen* (73–94). Neukirchen: Neukirchener.

Kant, I. (1951). *Critique of Judgment*. New York: Hafner.

Kennedy, G. (1980). *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*. London: Croom Helm.

Kenny, A. (2010). *A New History of Western Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Klauck, H.-J. (2008). *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

Kuitert, H. (1985). Hebben christenen het recht om zichzelf te doden? *Concilium* 21(1985)3, 93–98.

Lackmann, M. (1952). *Vom Geheimnis der Schöpfung. Die Geschichte der Exegese von Romer I,18–23, II, 14–16, und Acta XIV, 15–17, XVII, 22–29 vom 2. Jahrhundert bis zum Beginn der Orthodoxie*. Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk.

Locke, J. (1991). *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. London.

Lokin, J.H.A. & Zwalve, W.J. (2001). *Hoofdstukken uit de Europese codificatiegeschiedenis*. Deventer: Kluwer.

Losonczi, P. (2012). Perspectives of Imagination: A Case for an Inter-Contextual Study on Europe and India. P. Losonczi & W. Van Herck (eds.) *Secularism, Religion, and Politics: Concepts and Contexts in India and Europe*. New Delhi-London-New York: Routledge. (forthcoming)

Luhmann. N. (1984). *Soziale Systeme: Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhamnn, N. (1998). *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhmann, N. (1999). *Ausdifferenzierung des Rechts: Beiträge zur Rechtssoziologie und Rechtstheorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhmann,N. (2002). *Die Religion der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Maffetone, S. (2010). *Rawls. An Introduction.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Margalit, A. (2010). *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises.* Princeton: Princeton.

Milton, J. (1973). *Areopagitica. A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament. Complete Works of John Milton*. II. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Morsink, J. (1999). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Origins, Drafting and Intent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nissen, U. (2010). Lutheran Natural Law. Thought in the Nordic Countries in the 21st Century. In: L. Christoffersen et al. (ed.). *Law & Religion in the 21th Century. Nordic Perspectives* (413–433). Copenhagen: Djøf.

Nock, A. (1986). *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Norden, E. (1912/⁶1974) *Agnosthos Theos. Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte Religiöser Rede*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Norris, P. & Inglehart, R. (2005). *Sacred and Secular. Religions and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Obama, B. (2006). *The Audacity of Hope. Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream.* New York: Three Rivers Press.

Pannenberg W. (1971). Wie wahr is das Reden von Gott? *Evangelische Kommentare* 4(1971)11, 629–633.

Pannenbegrg, W. (1973). *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Pervo, P. (2009). *Acts, A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Pesch, O. (1986). *Die Apostgeschichte (Apg 13–28)*. Köln: Benziger.

Pichler, J. (1997). *Paulusrezeption in der Apostelgeschichte*. Innsbruck: Tyrolia.

Piettre, R. (2004). Paul et les Épicuriens d'Athènes entre polythéismes, athéismes, et monothéismes. *Diogenes* 205(2004), 52–68.

Plato (2008). Socrates' verdediging. In: *Plato, Feest, Euthyfron, Socrates' verdediging, Kriton, Faidon*. Amsterdam: Atheneum.

Plümacher, E. (1972). *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller, Studien zur Apostelgeschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Porter, J. (2009). Does the Natural Law Provide a Universally Valid Morality? In. L. Cunningham (ed.). *Intractable Disputes about the Natural Law. Alasdair MacIntyre and Critics* (53–95). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Poulat, E. (2003). *Notre laïcité publique. La France est une république laïque (Constitution de 1946 et 1958)*. Paris: Berg.

Price, S. & Thonemann, P. (2010). *The Birth of Classical Europe. A History from Troy to Augustine*. London: Penguin.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press.

Rawls, J. (1985). Justice as Fairness: political not Metaphysical. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14(1985)3, 223–251.

Rawls, J. (1999). *The law of Peoples.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rawls, J. (2005). *Political Liberalism.* (Expanded edition). New York: Columbia University Press.

Rawls, J. *A Brief Inquiry into the Meaning of Sin and Faith. With "On my Religion"*. Edited by Th. Nagel (24–101). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Reder, M. (2008). Wie weit können Glaube und Vernunft unterscheiden werden. In: M. Reder & J. Schmidt (eds.). *Ein Bewusstsein von dem, was fehlt. Eine Diskussion mit Jürgen Habermas* (51–68). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Ricoeur, P. (1992a). *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1992b). *The conflict of Interpretations. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1995). *Le Juste*. Paris: Seuil.

Ricoeur, P. (2000). *La memoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*. Paris: Seuil.

Ricoeur, P. (2005). *The Course of Recognition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2007). *Vivant jusqu'à la mort, suivi de fragments.* Paris: Seuil.

Schellens, P.J. & Verhoeven, G. (1994). *Argument en tegenargument. Een inleiding in de analyse en beoordeling van betogende teksten.* Groningen: Nijhoff.

Schillebeeckx, E. (1966). *Wereld en kerk* (196–199). Bilthoven: Nelissen.

Schluchter, W. (1979). *Die Entwicklung des okzidentalen Rationalismus eine Analyse von Max Webers Gesellschaft sgeschichte*. Tubingen: Siebeck.

Schmale, W. (1995). Das Naturrecht in Frankreich zwischen Prärevolution und Terror. In: O. Dann & D. Klippel (eds.). *Naturrecht, Spätaufklarung, Revolution* (5–22). Berlin: Meiner

Schubert, Ch. (2000). Der Areopag. Ein Gerichtshof zwischen Politik und Recht. In: L. Burckhardt & J. von Ungern-Sternberg (Hg). *Grosse Prozesse im Alten Athen* (50–65). München: Beck.

Schüller, B. (1970). Zur Problematik allgemein verbindlicher ethischen Grundsätze. *Theologie und Philosophie* 45(1970), 1–23.

Schüller, B. (1973). *Die Begründung sittlicher Urteile. Typen ethischer Argumentation in der katholischen Moraltheologie*. Düsseldorf: Patmos.

Teule, H. (2008). *Les Assyro-Chaldéens: chrétiens d'Irak, d'Iran et de Turquie*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Thomas van Aquino. *Summa Theologica*.

Torkki, J. (2004). *The Dramatic Account of Paul's Encounter with Philosophy. An Analysis of Acts 17: 16–34 with Regard to Contemporary Philosophical Debates*. Dissertation University of Helsinki.

Torkki, J. (2005). Paul in Athens (Acts 17: 16–34): A Dramatic Episode. In: A. Nustakallio (ed.), *Lux Humana, Lux Aeterna, Essays on Biblical and Related Themes in Honour of Lars Aejmelaeus* (337–363). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Van Eemeren, F. & Grootendorst, R. (1982). *Regels voor redelijke discussies. Een bijdrage tot de theoretische analyse van argumentatie ter oplossing van geschillen*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Van der Horst, P. (1989). The Altar of the 'unknown God' in Athens (Acts 17:23) and the Cult of 'unknown Gods' in the Hellenistic and Roman Period. In: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. Band 18.2 (1426–1456). Berlin: De Gruyter.

Van der Horst, P. (1998). *De onbekende God* (9–36). Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid Utrecht.

Van Tilborg, Sj. (2001). Acts 17:27 – "that they might feel after him and find". *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 57(2001), 86–104.

Van der Toorn, K. (1985). *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia*. Assen.

Van der Veeken, J. (1994). The Historical Roots of Anti-theism. In: S. Andersen (ed.). *Traditional Theism and its modern Alternatives* (45–58). Aarhus.

Van der Ven, J.A. (2010a). *Human Rights or Religious Rules*? Leiden: Brill.

Van der Ven, J.A. (2010b). *Ondraaglijk lijden zonder uitzicht. Euthanasie vanuit religie, moraal en mensenrechten.* Budel: Damon.

Van der Ven, J.A. (2012). From Natural Rights to Human Rights. A Cultural War in the Modern Era. Aangeboden aan *Religion, State and Society*, te plaatsen in vol. 40 (2012).

Van Wolde, E. (2009). *Terug naar het begin*. Inaugurele rede. Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

Van IJzendoorn, M. (1980). *Moralität und politisches Bewusstsein*. Weinheim.

Vögele, W. (2000). *Menschenwürde zwischen Recht und Theologie. Begründungen von Menschenrechten in der Perspektive öffenbtlicher Theologie*. Güthersloh: Kaiser.

Von Harnack, A. (1913). Ist die Rede des Paulus in Athene ein ursprünglicher Bestandteil des Apostelgeschichte? In: A. Von Harnack & C. Schmidt (Hrsg.). *Texte und Untersuchungen der altchristlichen Literatur*. Dritte Reihe. Neunter Band. Der ganze Reihe XXXIX. Band (1–46). Leipzig: Hinrich.

Von Harnack, A. (1924). *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*. Erste Band. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Walgrave, J. (1962). Redelijke geloofsverantwoording. *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 2(1962)2, 101–126.

Weber, M. (1980). *Wirtschaft und Geselschaft* . Tubingen: Mohr.

Weyers, H. (2002). *Euthanasie. Het proces van rechtsverandering*. Dissertatie Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Wils, J.-P. (1997). *Hermeneutiek en verlangen. Over godservaring en ethiek in het spoor van Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher.* Inaugurele rede. Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

Wils, J.-P. (2010). Die hermeneutische Signatur der kommunitaristischen Liberalismuskritik. In: M. Kühnlein (Hg.). *Kommunitarismus und Religion*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Witherington, B. (1998). *The Acts of the Apostles. A Social-Rhetoric Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Witte, J. (2000). *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment: Essential Rights and Liberties*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Witte, J. (2002). *Law and Protestantism. The Legal Teachings of the Lutehran Reformation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Witte, J. (2007). *The Reformation of Rights. Law, Religion and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

NON-PUBLIC AND PUBLIC REASONS. RAWLS' "PROVISO", HABERMAS' "TRANSLATION" AND THE ISSUE OF CULTURAL RIGHTS

Plamen Makariev

Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria
e-mail: makariev@abv.bg

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to explore the split between two kinds of reasoning – non-public (culturally dependent) and public (characteristic for the procedures of policy design and, more generally, of taking generally binding decisions within the institutions of power). A largely acknowledged problem is that attempts to influence the public policies from the positions of cultural communities cannot be rationally substantiated because the arguments used are in most cases not recognized as valid by the general public, which does not share the particular beliefs and assumptions that guide reasoning in a contextually "embedded" cultural environment. This "barrier" between non-public and public reasoning is hindering the progress of recognizing minority rights and allowing the input of religiously inspired ideas into public life, to say the least.

More concretely, my purpose is to point out certain philosophical debates which can provide, in my opinion, theoretical "instruments" that might help reconceptualize the possibilities for communication between the non-public and the public domains. I mean first of all, but not only, the theories of political liberalism and deliberative democracy as well as the differentiation between "substantivist" and "procedural" kinds of discourse.

Key words: public reason, comprehensive doctrine, "proviso", life-world, substantive, procedural, cultural rights.

By "public issues" I mean in this text ones which are of some concern – actually or potentially – for every member of a given society. We cannot choose to "exit" the sphere of their relevance – in the same way as we can choose, in our private lives, to quit a job, or end a friendship. If we still try to do this, e.g. abstain to fulfill some public duty of ours, we shall most probably face a legitimate punishment. Because of the universally binding nature of the norms of public life, the democratic institutions of legislation, government and judiciary are obliged to justify their policies to the whole citizenry, i.e. to the public. Anyone has the right – in a democracy – to challenge an institutional decision on a public issue, and demand its revision if he or she can prove to the public that this decision is against the public interest. If the respective institution refuses to deal with such a claim properly, i.e. either convincingly refute the opponent's argument, or accept it and correct its decision accordingly, this could influence negatively the performance at the next elections of the political formation in power.

That is why the public justification of institutional acts is addressing all citizens. As far as it is in the form of argumentative communication (e. g. providing reasons for a certain change of legislation) – and I shall be dealing in my paper exclusively with this modus of public justification – the reasons offered should be of such a kind that *anybody* could regard them as relevant. S/he might not agree with them, but still be able to reasonably refute them by offering counter-reasons. In other words, rational public justification can use only reasons, which can fit into an argumentative discussion that is open for all citizens. If this is not the case, the justification would not be public.

Obviously, the latter requirement cannot be met by justifications of claims (e. g. concerning institutional decisions and policies) which originate from non-public domains, such as cultural communities, or sectarian social movements. To the extent that these are groups of like-minded people, whose shared attitudes, beliefs, convictions single them out from the societies in which they live, and their argumentation is based on "doctrinally-specific" assumptions, it has no chance to become subject-matter of a public rational discussion. This is especially characteristic for the communication between representatives of religious communities, on the one hand, and the general public, on the other. Objections against abortion or euthanasia, which are substantiated by references to the Bible, however self-consistent they maybe, cannot be regarded as reasonable by non-Christians. This "barrier" between non-public and public reasoning is hindering the progress of recognizing minority rights and accepting the input of religiously inspired ideas into public life, to say the least. Theoretical endeavors to overcome this barrier have not yet achieved a generally recognized success.

My purpose in this paper is to point out certain philosophical debates which can provide, in my opinion, theoretical "instruments" that might help reconceptualize to some extent the split between the two kinds of reasoning. I mean first of all, but not only, the differentiation between "substantivist" and "procedural" kinds of discourse, and theories of political liberalism and deliberative democracy.

As a frame of reference for the development of my hypothesis I will use the interpretation of the public – non-public dualism that is given by John Rawls in his theory of political liberalism[1]. Rawls regards public reason as *public* in three ways: "as the reason of free and equal citizens, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the public good concerning questions of fundamental political justice, which questions are of two kinds, constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice; and its nature and content are public, being expressed in public reasoning by a family of reasonable conceptions of political justice reasonably thought to satisfy the criterion of reciprocity."[2] Non-public reasons, on the other hand, belong to what he designates as "background culture". "In a democracy this culture is not, of course, guided by any central idea or principle, whether political or religious. Its many and diverse agencies and associations with their internal life reside within a framework of law that ensures the familiar liberties of thought and speech, and the right of free association. The idea of public reason does not apply to the background culture with its many forms of non-public reason nor to media of any kind".[3] Products of the multiple agencies and associations that belong to the background culture are the "comprehensive doctrines" – religious, philosophical and ethical, which encompass views about various kinds of values, virtues and ideals. Whilst the background culture is a domain of *pluralism* (many comprehensive doctrines are expression of conflicting worldviews) and free choice, the "territory" of public reason is a domain of decisions which are *binding for all citizens*.

A key issue for Rawls' political liberalism is the *communication* between these two spheres of social life. How is it possible for ideas, claims, initiatives, which have been generated in a non-public environment, to influence the functioning of the public reason, and in the last account – to contribute to the designing of public policies? An obvious obstacle is the more or less "sectarian" nature of the comprehensive doctrines, which cannot convince the general public on any subject by using reasons that refer to texts or other statements which are regarded as authoritative only within the respective community or circle of people. As it was mentioned above, public deliberations can legitimize certain norms and policies only if the arguments which are used are accessible to all citizens. In other words, they should refer to assumptions and convictions which are universally accepted.

Rawls proposes a condition under which comprehensive doctrines can effectively influence public debates – what he calls "*proviso*": "Reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious or nonreligious, may be introduced in public political discussions at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons – and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines – are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines introduced are said to support."[4] One of the few examples by which the author illustrates this idea is Patrick Henry's reasons in favor of introducing a school prayer in public schools in Virginia in the mid 80-ies of the 18th century. Henry does not refer to the intrinsic virtues of Christianity, but rather to its capacity to "…correct the morals of men, restrain their vices, and preserve the peace of society…"[5], whereas his opponent, James Madison, does not deny the merits of Christianity as a religion, but simply maintains that civil society does not need the help of the religious establishment in order to func-

[1] Rawls, John (1993) *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York; Rawls, John (1997) The Idea of Public Reason Revisited. *University of Chicago Law Review*, 64 (3)

[2] Rawls, John. 1997. The Idea of Public Reason Revisited. *University of Chicago Law Review*, 64 (3), p. 768.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Rawls, John. 1997. The Idea of Public Reason Revisited. *University of Chicago Law Review*, 64 (3), p. 784.

[5] Rawls, John (1997) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) p. 795

tion in an orderly fashion.[6] Rawls concludes that the example of the school prayer "…brings out that the idea of public reason is not a view about specific public institutions or policies. Rather, it is a view about the kind of reasons on which citizens are to rest their political cases in making their political justifications to one another when they support laws and policies that invoke the coercive powers of government concerning fundamental political questions."[7]

The "proviso" has been a matter of lots of comments. One of the most influential criticisms against it focuses on its allegedly too demanding requirement in regard to the adherents of comprehensive doctrines, especially to religious people. For example, J. Habermas, along with certain other critics of Rawls, claims that it is not morally justified in respect to the participation of religious communities in public discourses to place the entire burden of "translation" onto the members of the communities in question.[8] As Habermas argues,

The liberal state must not transform the requisite *institutional* separation of religion and politics into an undue *mental and psychological* burden for all those citizens who follow a faith. It must well expect them to recognize the principle that any binding legislative, juridical or administrative decision must remain impartial with regard to competing world views, but it must not expect them to split their identity in public and private components as long as they participate in public debates and contribute to the formation of public opinions.[9]

From a certain viewpoint this criticism is justified. It is true that Rawls does not claim that doctrinally independent ad-hoc-equivalents of doctrinally specific reasons should be sought in each concrete case, in an opportunistic, "advocate-like" style. He insists that there should be some logical link between a doctrinally specific reason and a universally acceptable one, which leads to the same conclusion as does the former. And this link should be provided by an articulate political conception. "What we cannot do in public reason is to proceed directly from our comprehensive doctrine or a part thereof, to one or several political principles and values, and the particular institutions they support. Instead, we are required first to work to the basic ideas of a complete political conception and from there to elaborate its principles and ideals, and to use the arguments they provide. Otherwise public reason allows arguments that are too immediate and fragmentary."[10]

In other words, we should not seek arbitrarily some doctrinally independent reason, which might *happen* also to support the claim that we are substantiating by reasons which belong to our comprehensive doctrine, but we should rather look at an already existing *complete* conception about political justice and try – systematically and rationally – to find there elements which do the same job. This is really a demanding task and I agree with Wolterstorff and Habermas that it is not just to lay such a burden on the adherents of e.g. a religious comprehensive doctrine, whilst their secular opponents do not face such a challenge.

On the other hand, however, I do not share Habermas' negative evaluation of the alleged "split" of the identity of the people of faith into public and private components, which Rawls seems to recommend. My objection is that in well ordered societies[11] (only they can host, according to Rawls, a liberal political order) the religious people are at the same time also citizens with all the rights and duties which follow from this. And some "dualism" of their *cultural* (private) and their *civic* (public) self is inevitable. Actually this is one of the differences between the adherents of unreasonable and reasonable comprehensive doctrines according to Rawls' political liberalism. A fundamentalist Christian or Muslim is such also because s/he takes seriously only her/his duties which follow from her/his faith and not from her/his civic allegiances. Rawls does not see a problem in a split of identity of the kind meant by Habermas. "To put the case another way, we distinguish between the point of view of people as citizens and their point of view as members of families and other associations. As citizens we have reasons to impose the constraints specified by the political principles of justice on associations, while as members of associations we have reasons for limiting those constraints so that they leave room for a free and flourishing internal life appropriate to the asso-

[6] See ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] An example of such criticism is that of Nicholas Wolterstorff. See Audi, Robert, Nicholas Wolterstorff (1997) *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate,* Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD. p. 105.
[9] Habermas, Jürgen (2005) *Religion in the Public Sphere*, lecture presented at the Holberg Prize Seminar, p.5.
[10] Rawls, John (1997) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) p. 778
[11] Rawls, John (2001) Justice as Fairness, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA. p. 27

ciation in question."[12] Actually in Rawls's theory this dual identity of the adherents of reasonable comprehensive doctrines is one of the conditions which make the so called "overlapping consensus" possible.

Of course, the relationship between one's cultural and one's civic self may be – and in many cases is – quite problematic. However the tensions of this sort are a challenge that should be dealt with and not simply declared to be undesirable. In my opinion the dual identity of the members of cultural communities (and in one way or another we all belong to this category) is a promising resource for the efforts to reduce and even eliminate the tensions between the "lifeworld" (if we use the term from Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy[13]) and society at large. I mean a "resource" in a more general sense than the one involved in Rawls' conception of the "overlapping consensus". If the members of cultural communities are guided in their political behavior not only by their comprehensive doctrines, but also by the awareness that their wellbeing as citizens depends on the wellbeing of the societies in which they live, then it is more likely that the relations among these communities, on the one hand, and society at large, on the other, develop in a "win – win", rather than in a "win – lose" fashion. Would the members of a religious community really benefit from a radical improvement of the status of their religion in their society if they would achieve this through means which would cause a deep disruption of the civic peace in the country, political instability, economic decline, etc.? Wouldn't this be a really Pyrrhic victory?

Why such an awareness is not wide spread is a question which deserves special attention. For the time being I shall only conclude that understanding the identity of adherents of reasonable comprehensive doctrines as a "dual" – both cultural and civic – identity, which is characteristic for Rawls' conception about the communication between the non-public and the public domains, should not be regarded as a shortcoming. However, I consider as really problematic another element of this conception, namely the rather *narrow understanding* of properly public arguments, i.e. ones which include only "reasons that might be shared by all citizens as free and equal"[14]. As mentioned above, these may concern only *constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice*.

From this restriction it follows that a number of publically important issues, such as e.g. those that concern cultural rights, cannot be discussed within the domain of public reason. How can public policies concerning the status of minority languages, minority media, minority education, etc. be designed in such a fashion that they would be legitimate for the general public? What kind of reasons should be used in order to decide, whether it would be more just to use public funds in order to finance the study of the mother tongues of minority students at public schools, or to allow such study if it would be financed only by private funds, or not allow it at all? The most important question in this regard obviously is whether these students, or at least some of them, in this particular society, really need such a study, so that – if the answer is affirmative – an injustice would be done to them, if they would be denied such an opportunity. Do arguments, referring to a cultural identity, have a chance to be recognized as valid by the general public consisting of all free, equal and reasonable citizens? And if not – because most of these citizens do not share the specific self-consciousness of this or that minority community – how can cultural needs be recognized as legitimate by the general public? In my opinion it is not realistic to require from a member of such a community to seek among the elements of a "complete political conception", in Rawls' terms, ones to which s/he might refer in order to compose an argument that would support – in a publically acceptable way – the claim which originally refers to alleged traits of that community's identity. In other words, Rawls' "proviso" is too demanding with regard of claims for public recognition of cultural rights.

Actually, the American philosopher admits that his theory of Political Liberalism is not directly applicable to issues of this kind. He differentiates the conflicts that "set citizens at odds" into three kinds: "…those deriving from irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines; those deriving from differences in status, class position, or occupation, or from differences in ethnicity, gender or race; and finally, those

[12] Rawls, John (1997) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) p. 791

[13] See Habermas, Jürgen (1996) *Between Facts and Norms,* MIT Press, Cambridge MA, p.8

[14] Rawls, John (1997) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) p.772

deriving from the burdens of judgment."[15] Concerning the second type of conflicts (I will leave without comment here the somewhat puzzling setting of social and cultural conflicts into one and the same category) Rawls mentions that: "Political liberalism does not explicitly consider these conflicts but leaves them to be considered by justice as fairness, or by some other reasonable conception of political justice."[16]

Another model of communication between the public and non-public domains is offered, in different terms, by J. Habermas. In his theory of deliberative democracy the non-public domain is represented by the "lifeworld", and the public domain is represented by institutions of power ("strong publics") and the informal public sphere ("weak publics"). The most substantial difference between his model and the one of Rawls is that according to Habermas the territory of public reason is not limited to the institutions where decisions, binding for all citizens, are taken (the legislative and the executive authorities and the judiciary) but includes also the public sphere where decisions of this sort are discussed and legitimated or de-legitimated. Another important difference is that the lifeworld are characterized not only by specific worldviews (as is the case with groups of adherents of comprehensive doctrines), but also by distinct cultural identities - as historically produced complexes of circumstances in which people live, with all the accompanying "contingency of given traditions and forms of life" and "pluralism of existing subcultures, worldviews and interest positions."[17]

Civil society "transmits" influences from the lifeworld to those institutions of representative democracy in which decisions binding for all are taken. Insofar as civil society "hosts" the public sphere, it is capable of fulfilling the function of transforming signals coming from culturally proliferated interactions that take place within the lifeworld into plans and models for the just regulation of relations among all citizens independently of the cultural specificities of their beliefs and interests.

It is the public sphere which, "as a network for communicating information and points of view (that is, opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes)", filters and synthesizes the streams of communication in such a way that they "coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions."[18] Habermas regards the public sphere as a self-regulating network of communication streams that forms the opinions and wills of citizens in an argumentative way. This enables him to discern within it an additional capacity to transform the diverse messages, contributions, and claims which originate in the lifeworld as a result of *"ethical-political"* kinds of discourse into unified forms that regulate social processes in the equal interest of all parties affected. It is through the public sphere that culture-specific arguments are transformed into arguments that are generally accessible to everyone and which function within properly public, *"moral"* (in Habermas's terminology) kinds of discourse.

However, the public sphere is capable of articulating and organizing in generally comprehensible forms only subject matter that is generated in post-traditional lifeworld, namely, those in which people are able to relate self-reflexively to their own cultural realities (this element of Habermas' model of communication between the non-public and the public domains is obviously an analogue of the differentiation between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive doctrines in Rawls' theory of political liberalism).

Non-public kinds of discourse, the ethical-political ones, which are characteristic for life-world, are described by Habermas as dealing with topics concerning the good life, collective identity, and the interpretation of needs,[19] and also as a means for the "hermeneutic self-understanding" of groups.[20] It is evident that he regards ethical-political discourses as substantive, that is, the participants in them can communicate with each other in an argumentative manner insofar as they are able to refer to shared beliefs and interests. This is not the case with moral discourses, which serve to regulate interactions in the public sphere in the equal interest – as far as it is possible – of all parties affected. Actually, in Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy communication between non-public and public domains has the form of the "translation" of messages from the substantive "language" of the ethical-

[15] Rawls, John (1997) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) p. 805
[16] Ibid.
[17] Habermas, Jürgen (1996) *Between Facts and Norms,* MIT Press, Cambridge MA, p. 324.
[18] Habermas, Jürgen (1996) *Between Facts and Norms,* MIT Press, Cambridge MA, p. 360.
[19] Ibid., p. 313.
[20] Habermas, Jürgen (1996) *Between Facts and Norms,* MIT Press, Cambridge MA, p. 163.

political discourses into the procedural one of moral discourses.

This idea reminds us of the requirement in Rawls' "proviso" that claims concerning public life, which are formulated from the viewpoint of comprehensive doctrines, are supported not only by doctrinally dependent reasons but also by universally accessible ones. The difference is that while Rawls lays the burden of finding publically applicable reasons entirely on the adherents of the comprehensive doctrines, Habermas relies on the public sphere to carry out the necessary "translation". Since he regards the public sphere as functioning in a two-track fashion ("strong publics" and "weak publics"), he can allow for less demanding requirements for claims that originate from non-public domains. Habermas maintains that they may enter into public circulation in their authentic forms as supported by culture-specific reasons. Although they need to be translated into generally accessible language before they enter "the institutionalized decision-making process at the parliamentary, court, governmental and administrative levels,"[21] they can be discussed in any mode within the informal public sphere. This means that the task of such translation constitutes a challenge shared by both those who put forward such claims as well as the general public, whereby it should be a cooperative undertaking and an element of complementary learning processes.[22]

However, Habermas provides no specific explanation, even in his recent works, of how this can take place. Although he states that both "a shift from the traditional to a more reflexive form of religious consciousness"[23] on the part of religious communities as well as a reciprocal process of revision of the secularists' attitudes toward their religious fellow citizens are necessary conditions for such translation, he goes into no further detail.

So, summing up – neither Rawls' nor Habermas' model of communication between non-public and public domains seems to offer a satisfactory answer to the question: how can claims for cultural rights and adequate minority policies which have been formulated from the viewpoint of members of minority communities get public recognition? Rawls' approach is too restrictive (in the last account only reasons which concern constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice are considered to be worthy of public recognition). Habermas' formulations about the "translation" of ethical-political into moral arguments somewhere in the informal public sphere are too vague. He points out what should be done but never specifies how it should be done, what difficulties may arise in this process and how they can be overcome.

In my opinion the very idea that claims, originating from non-public domains, can get public recognition if properly public arguments in their favor are found or produced by some kind of "translation" of non-public into universally accessible considerations is untenable. I think that a transition of such a nature from a non-public to the public domain is not necessary at all. The same goal – public recognition of non-publically generated claims – can be reached in a more direct way. In order to see how this is possible, we have to use another differentiation between certain kinds of argumentation, namely between *substantive* and *procedural* arguments.[24] Actually the latter opposition plays an important role in both Rawls' and Habermas' models. Rawls characterizes comprehensive doctrines as aiming at the "whole truth"[25] on some matter and public reason as aiming at a fair cooperation by free and equal citizens. Habermas makes a clear distinction between ethical-political discourses concerning the good life within "life-worlds" and moral ones concerning the regulation of social relations in the equal interest of all the affected parties. So, if we reformulate – at the cost of some simplification – the problem which Rawls and Habermas are trying to solve into "how can substantively substantiated claims get procedural recognition", we can see where the difficulty actually is.

Let us think, then, about a different option. Would it not be enough if a claim concerning certain public policies – which is posited by adherents of a comprehensive doctrine (or by "inhabitants" of a

[21] Habermas, Jürgen (2008) *A 'post-secular society' – what does that mean?* p. 8.

[22] See Ibid., p. 9.

[23] Ibid., p. 8.

[24] More on the "substantivist vs procedural" distinction – see Benhabib, Seyla (1996) *Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy*, In: Benhabib, S. (ed.) Democracy and Difference, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Box, Richard C., Gary S. Marshall, B. J. Reed, Christine M. Reed (2001) *New Public Management and Substantive Democracy*, Public Administration Review, Vol. 61, No. 5; Gutmann, Amy, Dennis Thompson, (2004) *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, Princeton; Lever, Jeremy (1999) *Why Procedure Is More Important than Substantive Law*, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 2.

[25] Rawls, John (2001) Justice as Fairness, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, p. 90

life-world) – is substantiated *only in a procedural way*? Wouldn't it suffice to demonstrate that the demanded policy change would not hurt the interests of any of the affected parties? Or – in a reverse formulation – what if the claimants can produce arguments that the policy change is necessary in order to eliminate some injustice which is being done to them or to someone else? In order to convince the general public that certain policies are hurting the interests of someone it is not necessary, in my opinion, to *justify* before that public the vision of the good life for him/her/them. It is not necessary to justify the vision of the good life in order to demonstrate that a policy, which is incompatible in some way with this vision, would be hurting this person's or group's legitimate interests. Such a public justification would be impossible, precisely because of its substantive nature. Instead, in my opinion, the same goal – to delegitimize a certain policy – can be achieved by demonstrating that this policy is at odds with the person's or group's good-life-vision *as such* (without considering the question whether, and if "yes" – to what extent, this vision is justified). This would be an entirely procedural public argumentation.

For example, in order to argue against a prohibition for Muslim women to wear headscarves in public institutions it is not necessary to convince the general public in the country that it is *generally justified* that these women wear headscarves – a hopeless undertaking if the majority of this public are Christian or secular people. It would be enough to claim that these women *consider* it necessary that they wear headscarves. And if they are forbidden to do this an injustice would be done to them. Again, this is an entirely procedural matter.

So, briefly, my hypothesis is that it would be helpful to dissociate the challenges of communication between non-public and public domains from the challenges of the transition from substantive to procedural ways of argumentation. I propose instead that the communication in question proceeds entirely in the procedural dimension.

Of course, such a move presents other challenges. The most obvious of them is the *authentication* of the claims originating from non-public environments. How can we be sure that people who insist that e.g. a right to do certain things *really* matters for them (and consequently the public policies which deny this right to them hurt their *legitimate* interests), are telling the truth? After all, the social practices have shown innumerable times that claims for rights, especially for group-specific[26], cultural ones, may be disguising group leaders' ambitions for a political career, or separatist intentions, or false consciousness, etc. Shall we accept naively, at face value, all kinds of pretensions which could disrupt, in case that they are allowed to influence the public policies, the civic order in the respective society and hurt the interests of the rest of the citizens?

I strongly believe that the challenges of authenticating claims and of balancing cultural and civic interests can also be met by argumentative communication entirely in procedural ways. Some clues in this respect can be found in my papers "*Cultural Rights and Deliberative Democracy: On the Commensurability of Needs Interpretations*" and "*Group-Specific Rights – a Non-essentialist Approach*"[27]. Whatever difficulties we can encounter in working out a methodology of public control on the procedural correctness of non-public deliberations, this is, in my opinion, a more promising orientation in seeking a solution of our problem, i.e. establishing a reliable channel of communication between the non-public and the public domains, than trying to arrange a rational transition from substantive to procedural discourses. Of course, a lot more research should be done in order to achieve results in this field which could be applied in minority policy and for facilitating the public role of religion.

References

Audi, Robert, Nicholas Wolterstorff (1997). *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate,* Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD.

Benhabib, Seyla (1996). *Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy*, In: Benhabib, S. (ed.) Democracy and Difference, Princeton University Press, Princeton

---

[26] About the difference between group-specific and collective rights see Kymlicka, Will (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

[27] *Cultural Rights and Deliberative Democracy: On the Commensurability of Needs Interpretations* (in: McBride, William, ed. Social and Political Philosophy. Proceedings of the Twenty-first World Congress of Philosophy, Ankara, Philosophical Society of Turkey, 2006); *Group-Specific Rights – a Non-essentialist Approach* (in: The Dialogue of Civilizations and the Post-Crisis World, Moscow, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, 2010).

Box, Richard C., Gary S. Marshall, B. J. Reed, Christine M. Reed (2001). *New Public Management and Substantive Democracy*, Public Administration Review, Vol. 61, No. 5 pp. 608–619

Gutmann, Amy, Dennis Thompson, (2004). *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Habermas, Jürgen (1996). *Between Facts and Norms,* MIT Press, Cambridge MA.

Habermas, Jürgen (2005). *Religion in the Public Sphere*, lecture presented at the Holberg Prize Seminar Referenced at <www.holbergprisen.no/images/materiell/2005_symposium_habermas.pdf#nameddest=habermas>.

Habermas, Jürgen (2008). *A 'post-secular society' – what does that mean?*, paper presented at the Istanbul Seminars organized by Reset Dialogues of Civilizations, Istanbul Referenced at <www.resetdoc.org/EN/Habermas-Istanbul.php>.

Kymlicka, Will (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Lever, Jeremy (1999). *Why Procedure Is More Important than Substantive Law*, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 285–301.

Makariev, Plamen (2006). *Cultural Rights and Deliberative Democracy: On the Commensurability of Needs Interpretations* (in: McBride, William, ed. Social and Political Philosophy. Proceedings of the Twenty-first World Congress of Philosophy, Ankara, Philosophical Society of Turkey).

Makariev, Plamen (2010). *Group-Specific Rights – a Non-essentialist Approach* (in: The Dialogue of Civilizations and the Post-Crisis World, Moscow, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia).

Rawls, John (1993). *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York

Rawls, John (1997). *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, University of Chicago Law Review 64 (3) pp. 780–807.

Rawls, John (2001). Justice as Fairness, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

UNIVERSALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Carl G. Wagner

Department of Mathematics
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1320, USA
e-mail: cwagner@tennessee.

Abstract:
In framing the concept of rational consensus, decision theorists have tended to defer to an older, established literature on social welfare theory for guidance on how to proceed. But the uncritical adoption of standards meant to regulate the reconciliation of differing interests has unduly burdened the development of rational methods for the synthesis of differing judgments. In particular, the universality conditions typically postulated in social welfare theory, which derive from fundamentally ethical considerations, preclude a sensitive treatment of special cases when carried over to the realm of judgment aggregation, especially in the case of probabilistic judgment.

Key words: consensus, probability pooling, universality axiom, weighted averaging.

1. Introduction

The thirtieth anniversary of the publication of *Rational Consensus in Science and Society* (Lehrer and Wagner 1981) offers an opportunity to survey and assess certain developments in consensus studies during the past three decades, and I am grateful to the editors of the *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* for their invitation to contribute to this special volume on communication and rational consensus. Since my own work in this area has dealt chiefly with the consensus problem for probabilistic judgments, the theorems and examples that I cite in what follows will be drawn from that area of expert judgment synthesis. But I hope to make clear that the lessons drawn from this survey admit of more general application.

In framing the concept of rational consensus, decision theorists have tended to defer to an older, established literature on social welfare theory for guidance on how to proceed. But the uncritical adoption of standards meant to regulate the reconciliation of differing *interests* has unduly burdened the development of rational methods for the synthesis of differing *judgments*. In particular, the universality conditions typically postulated in social welfare theory, which derive from fundamentally ethical considerations, preclude a sensitive treatment of special cases when carried over to the realm of judgment aggregation, especially in the case of probabilistic judgment. For requiring of a method that it produce a rational consensual probability distribution for every logically possible "profile" of individual distributions more or less forces the consensual distribution to be constructed state-by-state (or event-by-event). And, as I show, state-by-state approaches leave no room for the sort of holistic strategies required to achieve clearly desirable outcomes such as the preservation of epistemically significant cases of independence common to all individuals' probability distributions. More strikingly, suppose that the set of possible probabilities is finite (as it is in all practical cases) and the consensual probability distribution is constructed state-by-state. Then, as I have recently proved, only a dictatorship can accommodate the simple demand that if everyone assigns a state zero probability, so does the consensual distribution. Such results show that a seemingly innocuous desire for generality of application can render the whole notion of rational consensus otiose.

2. Consensus through respect

Suppose that, after extensive discussion and the sharing of evidence, n experts have attained a state of what Lehrer has termed *dialectical equilibrium* regarding the appropriate probability distribution over some countable set Ω of possible states of the world. In this state no one sees any point to further discussion, yet the distributions $p_1, p_2, ..., p_n$ endorsed by these individuals fail to exhibit consensus.

The special case of this scenario in which individuals regard each other as equals on "intelligence, perspicacity, honesty, thoroughness, and other epistemic virtues" (Gutting 1982) has, under the rubric of *the epistemic peer problem*, recently attracted the attention of a number of epistemologists and decision theorists. (Kelly 2005) has argued that individuals in this situation have no reason to further modify their probability assessments, while (Elga 2007), (Christensen 2007), and (Feldman 2007) have all advocated that individuals further revise their assessments to a single distribution that in some sense gives equal weight to each of those assessments. Naturally, this *equal weight view* requires elaboration, and may well admit of more than one reasonable interpretation.[1] As early as fifty years ago, however, (Stone 1961) suggested the weighted arithmetic mean $p = w_1 p_1 + w_2 p_2 + \cdots + w_n p_n$,[2] where the weights w_i are nonnegative real numbers summing to 1, as a reasonable consensual distribution. In the case of epistemic peers one would presumably set each $w_i = 1/n.$ More generally, weights would be chosen to reflect the relative expertise of the individuals.

(DeGroot 1974) and, independently, (Lehrer 1976) proposed a novel method for selecting such weights: Let each individual assign a nonnegative weight to each individual in the group, including himself, with weights assigned by an individual summing to 1. Enter these weights in an n×n matrix $W = (w_{i,j})$, where $w_{i,j}$ is the weight assigned by individual i to individual j,[3] and reflects, in some sense, i's evaluation of the expertise of j relative to other members of the group. In contributing the weights $w_{i,1}, w_{i,2}, ..., w_{i,n}$ to the i^{th} row of W, individual i commits to revising his initial distribution p_i to $p_i^{(1)} = w_{i,1}p_1 + w_{i,2}p_2 + \cdots + w_{i,n}p_n$. The revised profile $P^{(1)} = (p_1^{(1)}, p_2^{(1)}, ..., p_n^{(1)})^t$ is thus just the matrix product WP, where P denotes the $n \times 1$ column vector $(p_1, ..., p_n)^t$. If the revised distributions in $P^{(1)}$ fail to be identical, DeGroot and Lehrer envision the further revision of $P^{(1)}$ to $P^{(2)} = WP^{(1)} = W^2 P$ and, if necessary, of $P^{(2)}$ to $P^{(3)} = WP^{(2)} = W^3 P$, etc.

Theorems about the convergence of powers of such matrices to matrices with identical rows were invoked by DeGroot and Lehrer to identify a single sequence of *consensual weights* to employ in averaging the probability distributions $p_1, p_2, ..., p_n$. Sufficient conditions for such convergence can be cast in terms of patterns of respect communicated among the individuals. Following Lehrer, let us say that individual i *respects* individual j if $w_{i,j} > 0$. There is a *chain of respect* from i to j if there exist individuals $i_1 = i, i_2, ..., i_k = j$ such that i_t respects i_{t+1} for $t = 1, ..., k-1$.

Theorem 2.1. Let W be a weight matrix and let E denote the set of all individuals k for which there exists a chain of respect from every other individual to k (hence, from k to k). If E is nonempty and at least one member of E respects himself, then powers of W converge to a weight matrix L with identical rows. The entries $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, ..., \lambda_n$ comprising each row of L are the unique solution to the simultaneous equations

(2.1) $\quad (x_1, x_2, ..., x_n)W = (x_1, x_2, ... x_n)$

(2.2) $\quad x_1 + x_2 + \cdots + x_n = 1,$

and individual i receives positive consensual weight $(\lambda_i > 0)$ if and only if i belongs to E. Moreover, $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = \cdots = \lambda_n = 1/n$ if and only if the entries in each column of W sum to 1.

Proof. (Doob 1953). □

A more thorough discussion of the above theorem may be found in (Lehrer and Wagner 1981, Chapter 7). In particular, readers will find there an argument for adopting the unique solution to (2.1) and (2.2), whenever it exists, as the consensual weights for averaging individuals' probability distributions, even if powers of W fail to converge.

[1] An analysis of an intriguing geometric interpretation of the equal weight view suggested to the author by David Jehle appears in (Shattuck and Wagner 2010).

[2] That is, for each possible state of the world $\omega \in \Omega$, $p(\omega) = w_1 p_1(\omega) + w_2 p_2(\omega) + \cdots + w_n p_n(\omega)$. It is easy to check that for each ω,

$$\min_i \{p_i(\omega)\} \le p(\omega) \le \max_i \{p_i(\omega)\},$$

and that $\sum_{\omega \in \Omega} p(\omega) = 1$. Stone called this way of aggregating the distributions in question *the opinion pool*.

[3] Such square matrices, with nonnegative entries summing to 1 in each row, are known as *stochastic matrices*, and have been extensively studied by mathematicians, since they define a stochastic process known as a *finite Markov chain*.

3. Weighted arithmetic means characterized

While weighted arithmetic means have the virtue of familiarity and simplicity, they constitute only one class of an extensive family of possible averaging functions. Before ruling out other possibilities, it is incumbent upon us as decision makers to know precisely what we are opting for when we opt for weighted arithmetic means, and that means identifying a set of properties that characterize such means. The first such characterization was given in (Aczél and Wagner 1980), with the following elaboration appearing in (Lehrer and Wagner 1981): Let Ω denote a countable set of possible states of the world, assumed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. A function $p:\Omega \to [0,1]$ is a *probability distribution* (or *probability mass function*) on Ω if and only if $\sum_{\omega\in\Omega} p(\omega)=1$. Each probability distribution p gives rise to a *probability measure* (which, abusing notation, we also denote by p), defined for each $E\subseteq\Omega$ by $p(E)=\sum_{\omega\in E} p(\omega)$.

If n is a positive integer, we call a sequence $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)$ of probability distributions on Ω a *profile*. A *pooling operator* T supplies a method of reconciling the possibly differing distributions $p_1,\ldots,p_n$ in the form of a single, "consensual" distribution $p=T(p_1,\ldots,p_n)$. Of course, many pooling operators are prima facie unacceptable as a method of producing a rational consensus, among them the *dictatorial operators* (for some fixed d, and all profiles $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)$, $T(p_1,\ldots,p_n)=p_d$) and the *constant operators* (which impose a fixed distribution q as the consensual distribution for every profile). There is an extensive literature on probability pooling. See (Genest and Zidek 1986) for a summary and appraisal of work done through the mid-1980s), which has tended to mimic the older literature on social welfare theory as developed, for example, by (Black 1948) and (Arrow 1951). Like social welfare theory, pooling theories lay down certain axiomatic constraints, and then try to identify the pooling operators that satisfy those constraints. Typical constraints have included:

Universal Domain (UD). The domain of the pooling operator T consists of all logically possible profiles $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)$. That is, if Δ denotes the set of all probability distributions on Ω and Δ^n its n-fold Cartesian product, then $T:\Delta^n\to\Delta$.

State-wise Aggregation[4] (SA). For each $\omega\in\Omega$, there exists a function $f_\omega:[0,1]^n\to[0,1]$ such that for all $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)\in\Delta^n$,

$$T(p_1,\ldots,p_n)(\omega)=f_\omega(p_1(\omega),\ldots,p_n(\omega)).$$

Zero Preservation (ZP). For each $\omega\in\Omega$ and for all $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)\in\Delta^n$, if $p_1(\omega)=\cdots=p_n(\omega)=0$, then $T(p_1,\ldots,p_n)(\omega)=0$.

Theorem 3.1. If $|\Omega|\geq 3$, a pooling operator satisfies UD, SA, and ZP if and only if there exists a sequence $(w_1,\ldots,w_n)$ of nonnegative real numbers summing to 1 such that for all $\omega\in\Omega$ and all $(p_1,\ldots,p_n)\in\Delta^n$,

$$T(p_1,\ldots,p_n)(\omega)=w_1p_1(\omega)+\cdots+w_np_n(\omega).$$

Proof. (Lehrer and Wagner 1981) or (Wagner 1982). □

Remark 3.1. When $|\Omega|=2$, any pooling operator satisfying UD necessarily satisfies SA, and there is an extensive class of pooling operators satisfying UD, SA, and ZP (Lehrer and Wagner 1981, p. 110).

Remark 3.2. Note that while condition SA allows for the use of different functions f_ω to aggregate the individual probability assessments $p_1(\omega),\ldots,p_n(\omega)$, this apparent flexibility turns out to be illusory when combined with UD and ZP. Indeed, all of the functions f_ω turn out to be identically equal to a single weighted arithmetic mean.

Remark 3.3. (McConway 1981) has proved a result similar in spirit to that of Theorem 3.1 involving a potentially infinite family of pooling procedures for probability measures on various sigma algebras on an arbitrary set Ω of possible states of the world. In McConway's approach, condition SA amounts to stipulating that pooling commute with marginalization (i.e., with the restriction of probability measures on a given sigma algebra to some sub-sigma algebra).

It is perhaps surprising that axioms UD, SA, and ZP so severely circumscribe the set of acceptable pooling operators. Even more striking is the fact that when the allowable values of the various probability assessments $p_i(\omega)$ and the consensual assessments

[4] State-wise aggregation is often termed *irrelevance of alternatives* or (confusingly) *independence*.

$p(\omega)$ are restricted to a fixed finite subset of the real number interval [0,1], then only dictatorial pooling satisfies these three axioms.

Theorem 3.2. Let V be a finite subset of the real number interval [0,1] satisfying the conditions (i) $0 \in V$, (ii) $x \in V \Rightarrow 1-x \in V$, and (iii) $x, y \in V$ and $x+y \leq 1 \Rightarrow x+y \in V$. Suppose that Ω is countable, and $|\Omega| \geq 3$. Let Δ_V denote the set of all probability distributions p on Ω such that $p(\omega) \in V$ for all $\omega \in \Omega$. A pooling operator $T : \Delta_V^n \to \Delta_V$ satisfies UD, SA, and ZP if and only if it is dictatorial.

Proof. See http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/5196 □

4. Independence preservation

As usual, events E and $F \subseteq \Omega$ are *independent with respect to the probability measure* p if $p(E \cap F) = p(E)p(F)$. Several individuals (Laddaga 1977), (Laddaga and Loewer 1985), (Schmitt 1985) have advocated the following additional axiomatic restriction on probability pooling:

Universal Independence Preservation (UIP). For all $(p_1,...,p_n) \in \Delta^n$ and for all subsets E and F of Ω, if $p_i(E \cap F) = p_i(E)p_i(F)$ for $i = 1,...,n$, then $T(p_1,...,p_n)(E \cap F) =$

$= T(p_1,...,p_n)(E)T(p_1,...,p_n)(F)$.

It is clear that pooling by weighted arithmetic means will often violate UIP. Indeed, only the most extreme forms of weighted arithmetic averaging satisfy UIP.

Theorem 4.1. If $|\Omega| \geq 3$, then a pooling operator satisfies UD, SA, ZP, and UIP if and only if it is dictatorial.

Proof. (Lehrer and Wagner 1983). □

Remark 4.1. If ZP is deleted from the hypotheses of the above theorem, the set of acceptable pooling operators is not enlarged in any meaningful way, consisting merely of imposed, as well as dictatorial, operators (Wagner 1984).

SA is of course a very strong condition, for it requires that the consensual probability assigned to each state ω depends only, via the function f_ω, on the probabilities assigned by individuals to that state. It is not surprising then, that it is difficult to satisfy both SA and UIP, since SA rules out the kind of holistic approach that would seem to be necessary to preserve independence of events, which commonly comprise more than one state. In addition, SA requires that $\sum_\omega f_\omega(p_1(\omega),...,p_n(\omega) = 1$, without any recourse to normalization. Indeed, it is this feature of SA that is the driving force behind Theorem 3.1. It is thus natural to wonder if weakening SA to allow for subsequent normalization might accommodate UIP in some interesting ways. For this would open up the possibility of employing any of an extensive variety of weighted averaging functions to play the role of the functions f_ω.[5] In fact, this gambit does work when $|\Omega| \leq 4$, as shown in (Sundberg and Wagner 1987).[6] But when $|\Omega| \geq 5$, only dictatorial pooling accommodates UD, normalized SA, and UIP (Genest and Wagner 1987).

One response to Theorem 4.1 would be to take issue with the reasonableness of UIP, which demands of a pooling operator that it preserve *every single instance* of independence common to the distributions of the n experts. As pointed out in (Lehrer and Wagner 1983) and (Genest and Wagner 1987) there are many instances of such independence having no epistemic significance whatsoever. Suppose, for example, that you regard a certain die as fair, but I think that the die is weighted so that the probabilities of $1, 5,$ and 6 are each $1/6$, the probabilities of 2 and 4 are each $1/12$, and the probability of 3 is $1/3$. On each of our probability assessments, the events 'die comes up even,' and 'die comes up a multiple of 3' are independent. But this independence is an incidental feature of our distributions to which neither of us is likely to have any theoretical commitment. Why, then, should we take care to preserve this independence in any consensual distribution that emerges from aggregating our individual distributions? On the other hand, agreed-upon cases of physical independence of certain random

[5] Among the possibilities are all of the so-called *weighted quasi-arithmetic means*, constructed by choosing a strictly monotone function τ, along with nonnegative weights $w_1,...,w_n$ that sum to 1, and setting

$f_\omega(p_1(\omega),...,p_n(\omega)) = \tau^{-1}(w_1\tau(p_1(\omega)) + \cdots + w_n\tau(p_n(w)))$.

For example, when $\tau(x) = x^2$, then f_ω is a *weighted root-mean-square*; when $\tau(x) = x^{-1}$, then f_ω is a *weighted harmonic mean*; and when $\tau(x) = \ln x$, then f_ω is a *weighted geometric mean*.

[6] In particular, normalized weighted geometric means (see note 5 *supra*) satisfy UD, normalized SA, and UIP when $|\Omega| = 4$.

variables or of the independence of certain families of partitions of Ω exhibit the sort of epistemic significance that demands preservation under probability pooling. It should be noted that there are principled methods of preserving this sort of independence, both for a fixed, finite family of partitions of Ω, and for a fixed, finite set of discrete random variables (Wagner 2011). But these methods yield pooling operators that apply to profiles of probability distributions belonging to the restricted subset of Δ consisting of just those distributions with respect to which the family of partitions (respectively, set of random variables) is independent. And there is no apparent way to extend the domain of the aforementioned methods in such a way that UD is satisfied. As I argue below, however, this is no cause for concern.

5. Conclusion: Hard Cases Need Not Make Bad Law

Hard cases make bad law. This maxim, familiar to all students of the law, asserts that exceptional legal cases are not suitable as the source for generalized laws. In such cases, jurors are often left with the unpalatable alternatives of failing to do justice or creating undesirable precedents by carving out an exception to a general rule in order to accommodate morally compelling claims. The dictatorship theorems described above might seem to indicate that a similar principle operates in the realm of rational consensus theory. But any such analogy is superficial, for the law must of necessity be prepared to issue judgments in all cases, and in a way that aims for maximal consistency. But why should we subject ourselves to the straightjacket of universality conditions when devising methods of creating a rational consensus from the possibly differing opinions of a set of experts? As noted in the above section, one can do justice, so to speak, to the "hard" cases of epistemically significant, agreed-upon independence. Yet only dictatorial (or imposed) pooling accommodates the demand for *universal* independence preservation. Similarly, demanding of a pooling method that it produce a consensual distribution for *every logically possible profile* of probability distributions (condition UD) leads almost inevitably to the adoption of pooling operators constructed in accord with statewise aggregation (SA), or a normalized version thereof. For how can one specify a consensual distribution for every such profile, by means of a necessarily finite set of instructions, without defining that distribution state-by-state? And we have seen how severely SA, and even normalized SA, circumscribe the set of methods available for achieving a synthesis of expert judgments, precluding the sort of holistic approach one would like to bring to bear on certain special classes of consensus problems. In the realm of rational consensus, it is not hard cases, but the demand to treat *too many cases*, that yields bad (decision-theoretic) law. That so many consensus theorists (including the present author, from whom this essay is a *mea culpa*) failed to take account of this simple observation for so long illustrates the power of faulty analogy in particularly striking form.

References

Aczél J, Wagner C. (1980). A characterization of weighted arithmetic means. SIAM J. Alg. Discr. Meth. 1, 259–260

Arrow K. (1951). Social choice and individual values. Cowles Commission Monograph 12, Wiley, New York

Black D. (1948). On the rationale of group decision-making. J. Polit. Econ. 56, 23–34

Christensen D. (2007). Epistemology of disagreement: the good news. Philos. Rev. 116, 187–217

DeGroot M. (1974). Reaching a consensus. J. Amer. Statist. Assoc. 69, 118–121

Doob J. (1953). Stochastic processes. Wiley, New York

Elga A. (2007). Reflection and disagreement. Noûs 41, 478-502

Feldman R. (2007). Reasonable religious disagreements. In: Anthony L. (ed) Philosophers without gods, Oxford University Press, Oxford. pp 194–214

Genest C., Wagner C. (1987). Further evidence against independence preservation in expert judgment synthesis. Aequationes Math. 32, 74–86

Genest C., Zidek J. (1986). Combining probability distributions: a critique and annotated bibliography. Statist. Sci. 1, 114–148

Gutting G. (1982). Religious belief and religious skepticism. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame

Kelly T. (2005). Peer disagreement and higher order evidence. In: Feldman R., Warfield T. (eds) Disagreement, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp 111–174

Laddaga R. (1977). Lehrer and the consensus proposal. Synthese 36, 473–477

Laddaga R., Loewer B. (1985). Destroying the consensus. Synthese 62, 79–96

Lehrer K. (1976). When rational agreement is impossible. Noûs 10, 327–332

Lehrer K., Wagner C. (1981). Rational consensus in science and society. Reidel, Dordrecht

Lehrer K., Wagner C. (1983). Probability amalgamation and the independence issue: a reply to Laddaga. Synthese 55, 339–346

McConway K. (1981). Marginalisation and linear opinion pools. J. Amer. Statist. Assoc. 76, 410–414

Schmitt F. (1985). Consensus, respect, and weighted averaging. Synthese 62, 25–46

Shattuck M., Wagner C. (2010). Independence preservation in expert judgment synthesis. Aequationes Math. 80: 277–290

Stone M. (1961). The opinion pool. Ann. Math. Statist. 32, 1339–1342

Sundberg C., Wagner C. (1987). A functional equation arising in multi-agent statistical decision theory. Aequationes Math. 32: 32–37

Wagner C. (1982). Allocation, Lehrer models, and the consensus of probabilities. Theory and Decision 14, 207–220

Wagner C. (1984). Aggregating subjective probabilities: some limitative theorems. Notre Dame J. Formal Logic 25, 233–240

Wagner C. (2010). Peer disagreement and independence preservation. Erkenntnis 74: 277–288

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

OFFENSIVE COMMUNICATION
THE CASE OF PEJORATIVES

Nenad Miscevic
University of Maribor and CEU Budapest
vismiscevic@ceu.hu.

Abstract:
Pejoratives carry with themselves as part of their meaning the stereotype containing representations (concepts) of negative qualities ascribed to the target, and the claim that the target is bad because it has these negative qualities. This is the kernel of our conceptual truth conditional proposal that this paper expounds and defends. The paper starts with a brief taxonomy of views, and very briefly mentions the reasons for disagreeing with the majority of them. The paper then argues for our truth-conditional conceptual view from ordinary nasty inferences involving pejoratives, and then passes to figurative pejoratives offering a novel argument from the metaphorical nature of them. Decoding metaphorical meaning is a cognitive task. Since cognition has to do with semantic traits, and since the cognitive task is a good indicator of semantic structure, this cognitive complexity indicates interesting semantic properties of pejoratives, namely that the negative material involved in the traditional uses of such a pejorative is not merely expressive, but is part of its cognitive, truth-evaluable meaning. Some objections and replies follow. The conclusion briefly discusses the pragmatics of pejoratives pointing to the ubiquitous but little noticed use of pejoratives in the third person, slurring in absentia. This use suggests a novel interpretation of the perlocutory nature of the use of pejoratives.

Key words: analytic philosophy, communication, pejoratives, semantics.

I. Introduction

We often think that it is a fine thing that people communicate.[1] Communication is good for many purposes, maybe even good in itself. But not all communication is such. People hurt, insult, mistreat each other in and by talking. Remember Saint James: "(…) the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire" *(Epistle of James, 3.5–6).* In this paper I want to address some of the issues connected with this "verbal pyromania", the attempts to "set ablaze" the forests of our social life by the small fire of verbal abuse. I shall concentrate on one important means of offensive communication, slurs, or epithets or pejoratives, and I want to talk about their semantics. They have been accompanying conflict or long-standing discrimination all over the world. The relatively recent conflicts in the home region of this very journal, have featured prolonged verbal political dueling, often degenerating into exchanges of insults, accompanying and supporting heavy physical violence. On the linguistic side this has generated or resurrected a wealth of slurring terms. In the region of Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian language(s) this resurrection has reached back to names from Nazi times. A typical Serbian nationalist would describe

[1] Thanks go to Dunja Jutronić, Kent Bach, Robert Brandom, Georges Rey, Mark Richard, Michael Glanzberg, John M. Kennedy, David Braun, Isidora Stojanović and Martina Blečić.

all Croats as "Ustaše" (Ustashe), the term originally and officially used by and for the organized Croatian Nazis. His Croatian counterpart would use the term "Četnik" (Chetnik) for all Serbs, alluding to the Serbian military group that also ended up collaborating with Nazis (and, ironically, in the Balkans the very term "chetnik" originally meant "freedom fighter", and in Bulgarian still has a laudatory connotation deriving from fighting against the forces of the Ottoman empire in the nineteenth century). And a Croatian chauvinist would describe himself proudly as an "ustasha". We shall discuss the semantics of these terms later.

Before going on let me clear the ground a little bit. Kent Bach [2]has suggested a useful division of pejoratives into three groups according to their scope. Some of them are generic, firmly associated with a specific genus, etho-national, sexual preferences- or gender-related: "Nigger" "Hun" and "bugger" would belong to such generic pejoratives. Others are sub-generic, involving a reference to some group, for what the members of the group are (supposed to be) doing; Bach proposed "sheister", as used mainly for lawyers; I would add "pig" for policeman. Finally, there are non-specific pejoratives, like "asshole". Cutting across these three types is the contrast between non-ambiguous ones "(Kike"), and those that also have a positive use, like "Nigger" (as used by Afro-Americans themselves), that makes them in this sense ambiguous. I shall here concentrate on generic pejoratives, occasionally helping myself to non-specific types; in the last section I will briefly discuss the problem of ambiguous pejoratives.

Let me briefly put the present project on a map of topics related to pejoratives. A core theory of offensive communication should deal with the semantics and pragmatics of offensive language and discourse, defining the notion of offense and offending, placing it within (a view of) pragmatics. A theory of offensive communication should relate pejoratives to some well-established taxonomy of speech acts, analyzing the standard means of offending. It should then build a bridge towards ethics and legal politics concerning offensive communication. Legal theory has had a lot to say about "fighting words", but this has understandably been done mostly from within a rather narrow perspective. A theory of offensive communication should help the moral and legal debate about the condemning, sanctioning or non-sanctioning of certain offensive kinds of discourse by offering a detailed analysis of the discourse to be sanctioned (or tolerated or even protected, as the case may be), and thus providing some well-organized theoretical material to be used in moral and legal debate. This would form the basis for an applied theory of offensive communication.

Complaints about offensive communication form a rich tradition. We just mentioned the *Epistle of James*; let me add that he further describes human verbal power as untamable: "a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (3.8). These complaints culminate today in the demands of political correctness, and in the debates about the moral status and proper legal treatment of "fighting words" (e.g. Greenawalt, (1993), Rapaport, (2005), Fairman, (2009), and Saunders, (2011)). In these casesdifferent core views on the semantics and pragmatics of "fighting words" might suggest different practical solutions in the applied domain. Take the act of slurring on a gender or racial basis. Suppose one understands it merely as an expressive illocutionary act, manifesting the speaker's negative attitude to women or members of a racial (or "racial") group, and comparable to a gesture of contempt (Hornsby, 2001). Compare this to the understanding according to which the slur semantically entails an appeal to discrimination (Hom, 2008: 431). The later understanding would, at least *prima facie*, legitimize a much tougher sanctioning than the former one, on the ground of an active appeal to a discriminatory practice. The fact of interaction between the pure and applied considerations has to be made clear and explicit, and this has not been done in the literature. The fact of interaction also points to the need of balancing the two: the best overall theory (or small set of theories) would find the optimal fit between a theoretically plausible semantic and pragmatic account of offensive communication, and the morally plausible plus legally respectable (and, within the non-ideal theory, implementable) proposal of its moral and legal treatment. The task is huge, and has hardly been tackled. In this paper I propose a discussion of the purely theoretical question, focusing on the subproblem that has been relatively extensively discussed, namely the nature of offensive terms. I will concentrate upon pejoratives, and especially the morally most problematic sub-group, generic pejora-

[2] In a discussion at Dubrovnik

tives targeting a particular population, on grounds of ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation. Let me introduce the topic by reminding the reader of the beginning of the analytical discussion of pejoratives in Dummett and its direct continuation in Brandom.

Four decades ago, Dummett introduced the example of the pejorative “Boche” and described its use in the following terms: “The condition for applying the term to someone is that he is of German nationality; the consequences of its application are that he is barbarous and more prone to cruelty than other Europeans. We should envisage the connections in both directions as sufficiently tight as to be involved in the very meaning of the word: neither could be severed without altering its meaning.” (1973: 456). Let me illustrate. A person says: “Hans is aggressive”. “Of course, he is a Hun” (or “He is a Boche”), replies a Germans hater. “But Helga is cruel to her subordinates; “Well, she is Hun”. The pejorative P seems to be linked with a constitutive tie to some negative, devaluing idea of the members of some given group, most often with a handful of such ideas (*BOCHE* with *CRUE, AGGRESSIVE, NIGGER* with *STUPID, VIOLENT,*). The constitutive tie licenses inferences of the form “Every P is D”. For instance, the literal use of “Boche” or “Hun” by German-haters licenses the inference from “X is a Boche” to “X is cruel”. If we represent the ties as inferential rules we could think of the following sort of rules (with “N” for neutral characterization, “P” for pejorative, and “D” for a devaluing characteristic):

P-introduction: x is an N
x is a P

P-elimination: x is a P
x has D

In the Boche example, the P-introduction rule allows the German-hater the following inference:

Hans is a German
Hans is a Boche

And the P-elimination rule gives the speaker who hates Germans what he ultimately wants

Hans is a Boche.
Hans is cruel and barbarous.

The same goes for “Hun”:

Hans is a Hun.
Hans is cruel and barbarous.

Brandom (1994) builds on Dummett’s inferentialism. His basic idea on pejoratives is contained in the longish title of the sub-section of *Making It Explicit*, “Non logical concepts can incorporate materially bad inferences”. The Boche inference is a materially bad inference, licensed by the two bad inferential rules we just quoted.

Dummett’s and Brandom’s explanation(s) of pejoratives involve(s) the claim that pejorative expressions have corresponding semantic, i.e. conceptual, content. “Boche” does not just mean “German” with some disapproval added (call this option “mere disapproval view”), but builds properties of cruelty and barbarous character into the concept of being German.

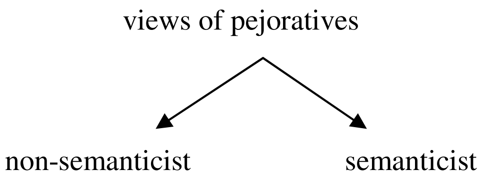
I think this is the right way to proceed. I will dissent from inferentialism, since I do not think that the semantics of nouns like “Boche” or “Hun” is to be given inferentially, but I will retain the crucial intuition according to which there is a conceptual connection German-cruel as part of the very meaning of the anti-German pejoratives. They are linked to a concept(ion) or stereotype linking being German to being cruel and aggressive. So, here is what I aim to do in the paper:

In **Section II** I proceed to a brief taxonomy of views, mentioning (unfortunately) very briefly the reasons for my disagreement with the majority of them. Then, in **Section III** I pass to my own view, the *truth-conditional conceptual* one. First, I offer a formulation of it (subsection (a)), and then proceed to a tentative novel argument for it, one from metaphorical or figurative pejorative. In **Section IV** some objections and replies follow. In the **Conclusion** I summarize the results, and briefly link them to a question about the pragmatic force of offending, thus preparing the ground for a more ambitious future project concerning a general theory of offensive communication .

II. A map of options

I will defend the view that the meanings of pejoratives are conceptual, involving a negative characterization of their targets, and that the negative valence of pejoratives contributes to the truth conditional meaning of sentences in which they figure. Before passing to this task I want to sketch a map of possible positions.

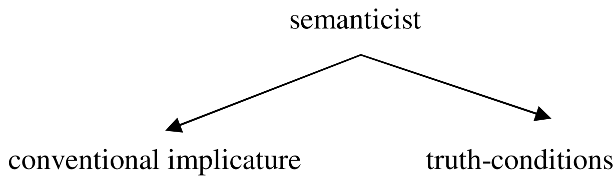
Let me distinguish between two main kinds of views, using “Hun” (or “Boche”) as my example. The first set of views are expressivist or gesturalist. According to these the only truth-related meaning of a pejorative has to do with *neutral* reference to the target group. Huns are just Germans. The negative valence is not semantic, or almost not semantic, in any truth-related sense. I shall call the view non-semanticist. The second and opposite view builds the negative valence and disapproval into the semantics of the pejorative, and links it to truth, directly or indirectly. That Germans are bad is part of the meaning of “Hun”, and contributes, or almost contributes, to truth-conditions of “Helga is a Hun (women)”. So, the main contrast is the following:



On the non-semanticist side the older and simpler views simply stress the disapproval as an emotional attitude. Two decades ago J. Cargile (in his 1991) proposed that the concept BOCHE just is the concept GERMAN, and that the derogatory aspects of the word “Boche” are not factual, but expressive. They are not sense-constituting but limited to the “tone” of the utterance. However, this mere disapproval view has no means to account for the conceptual complexity that goes with the use and understanding of many (although not all) pejoratives. J. Hornsby has proposed that the negative valence can be characterized by analogy with the negative valence suggested by an offending gesture.

More recently, Mark Richard (2008) has offered a sophisticated view, claiming that there is such a thing as getting something completely right—stating the facts in the most stringent sense of ‘stating the facts’—which does not involve thinking or saying anything true. The negative component is not truth-related but performative-expressive. Let me call this view the performative-expressive view. (For extended discussion and criticism see Miscevic, 2011)

On the semanticist side we find Tim Williamson’s idea that the negative valence is not strictly part of truth-conditional content, but very close to it: it is conventionally implicated by the use of the pejorative (2009). I will leave this possibility aside here, with the promise to address it in detail elsewhere. Other options are strictly truth conditional.



We have met the inferentialists, who take the inferential behavior of pejoratives to be basic. Another option is to link them with presupposition: saying “Helga is a Hun woman” presupposes that Helga is cruel and bad. Schlenker (2006) offers a sophisticated account of the truth conditions for this kind of pejorative claim. However, his formula speaks of the denotation of the pejorative given the beliefs of the speaker, not directly about the meaning of the pejorative.

However, truth-linked presuppositions for sentences (used at a given occasion) very often depend on the particular concepts involved, and not the other way around. “Helga stopped biting her husband” presupposes that she was biting him (say, we are discussing a vampire movie), because “to stop φ-ing” means to effectuate the change from φ-ing to non-φ-ing, the concept STOP just is the concept of effectuating such a change. (Schlenker starts his (2010) with the example about the person who stopped smoking, but does not go into the semantics of “stopped”.) Analogously, if the presupposition is tied to the word “Hun” or “Honkey” (Schlenker’s example), as it undoubtedly is, it is something about the meaning of “Hun” or “Honkey”, its concept-meaning,that explains the presupposition, and not the other way round. So, Schlenker’s pressupositional account does not directly address the issue, and in so far as it is relevant to it, it is compatible with several others, depending upon whether we take the negative content and its “dimension of meaning” to be part of the concept HUN, or not.

Using “Honkey” as his example (2007: 237) Schlenker writes:

(1) a. [[honky]] (c)(w) ≠ # iff the agent of c believes in the world of c that white people are despicable. If ≠#, [[honky]] (c)(w) = [[white]] (c)(w)

In other words, the denotation in the world w of "Honkey" uttered by the agent of the context does not fail iff the agent believes in the world of the context that white people are despicable, and then it is just being white. How is the requirement that "the agent of c believes in the world of c that white people are despicable" related to the word "Honkey" is the matter of further discussion.
Schlenker introduces an analogy with French "tu" used in a more intimate communication:

b. [[tu]] (c)(w) ≠ # iff the agent of c believes in the world of c that he stands in a familiar relation to the addressee of c. If ≠ #, [[tu]] (c)(w) = the addressee of c

However, although the use of "tu" points to a familiarity, this is not in the way in which "Honkey" points to despicability. A friend of a a given person cannot say "Since this person is tu, I stand in a familiar relation to her" (*"Etant donne que cette personne es(t) tu, je suis familier avec elle" is ungrammatical as it stands.) But the Black supremacist can say "Since this person is a Honkey, he is despicable" and "…I believe that he is despicable". Intimacy is not a matter of the truth conditions of the tu-sentences, but only its pragmatic correctness conditions. But then, being despicable should have to do with truth conditions of "This person is a Honkey". So much about presuppositionalism (I find the topic fascinating and I regret to have to move on).

This brings us to the proposal put forward by Christopher Hom (2008, 2010) claiming that the meaning of pejoratives is a concept that contains negative valence intertwined with descriptive features (e.g. bad, because cruel because German). This proposal comes closest to the idea I want to propose here, and I agree with this much completely. However, developing his view in the context of an analysis of racial epithets Hom brings in other considerations. Here is his statement:

V. Combinatorial Externalism (later shortened to CE-NM)

Semantic externalism is the view that the semantic values, or meanings, of words are not completely determined by the internal, mental states of individual speakers. Rather, the meanings for words such as proper names, natural-kind terms, and indexicals are at least in part dependent on the external, social practices of the speaker's linguistic community. A particular speaker's beliefs and intentions are not sufficient by themselves to generate linguistic meaning. In addition to having the right kind of beliefs and intentions, a speaker must also stand in the relevant causal relations to the world and to her speech community. The meanings for words are, thus, causally determined in part, by factors external to, and sometimes unknown by, the speaker (2008:430).

And he goes on to say:

On my view, the derogatory content of an epithet is semantically determined by an external source. The plausible candidates for the relevant external social practices that ground the meanings of racial epithets are social institutions of racism. For example, the meaning for the word 'chink' is derived from, and supported by, the institution of racism towards Chinese people. An institution of racism can be modeled as the composition of two entities: an ideology, and a set of practices. An ideology is a set of (usually) negative beliefs about a particular group of people. For racism towards Chinese people, the ideology might include beliefs such as: that Chinese people have slanted eyes, that Chinese people are devious, that Chinese people are good at laundering, etc. In general, the set of racist practices can range from impolite social treatment to genocide. The two entities that make up racist institutions are closely related, as racists will typically justify and motivate racist practices with their corresponding racist ideology (2008: 430-1).

Finally, he introduces a precise formulation:

The meanings for epithets can be presented with the following schematized, complex predicate: ought to be subject to these discriminatory practices because of having these negative properties, all because of being NPC (non-pejorative correlate of the pejorative – NM). These meanings are represented more formally as the following complex property:

ought be subject to $p^*_1 + \ldots + p^*_n$ because of being $d^*_1 + \ldots + d^*_n$ all because of being NPC*,

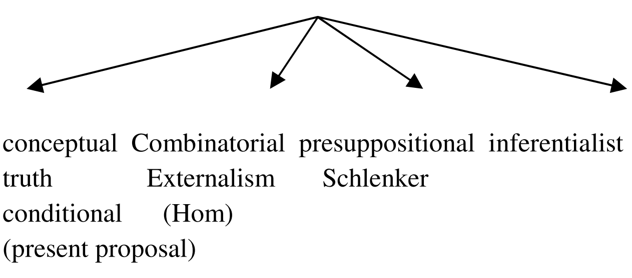
where $p^*_1, \ldots, p^*_n$ are deontic prescriptions derived from the set of racist practices, $d^*_1, \ldots, d^*_n$ are the negative properties derived from the racist ideology, and NPC* is the semantic value of the appropriate non-pejorative correlate of the epithet.(2008:431)

I have doubts about the requirement that "a speaker must also stand in the relevant causal relations to the world and to her speech community." (Hom, 2008:430). I can use the word "Hun" in a derogatory sense without being a member of the original British community of the inventors-and-users.

I am also not sure about the precise form of the negative judgment, and I have doubts that in all cases it is exactly the same as " ought to be subject to these discriminatory practices because of having these negative properties".

So, let me propose my own version of the truth conditional view. We shall then have the following tree:

truth-conditional meaning for pejoratives



The conceptual truth-conditional proposal

a. Nasty concepts

The inferentialists about pejoratives, Dummett and Brandom, have correctly noticed that pejoratives seem to license quite remarkable inferences. Their insight can be harnessed to defend the conceptual truth-conditional proposal. What we need is the additional premise, that the licensing of inferences happens because the pejorative concept suggests them in an analytic (or almost analytic) fashion. Take the Hun example, and consider the following inference:

<u>Hans is a German</u>
Hans is a Hun

The inference seems to be clearly an inference from concept of "Hun". But, the next typical inference does not differ essentially from the first one:

<u>Hans is a Hun   </u>
Hans is cruel and barbarous

The inferentialists see the inferences as basic, or at least Brandom does (I am not sure about Dummett). However, the use of pejoratives certainly does not *start* with inferential rules, but rather with racist, homophobic, sexist or other *negative views* about the referent. At some point the view is encapsulated into an implicit *definition*, and the new concept is born (or, if you are a Platonist about the concept "NIGGER", accessed in the platonic heaven of pejorative concepts). In short, most plausibly *a pejorative concept is a conceptualized (negative) stereotype*. In conceptualization, only the kernel negative features are built into the concept, so that only essential negative properties, denoted by features, are represented in the concept(-definition).

What about expressivism? The inference presented above is certainly not an inference from a merely expressive "tone" of the pejorative, since "tone" is not a kind of thing that can license inferences. Consider: "Hans is aggressive"; "Of course, he is a Hun". "But Helga is cruel to her subordinates; "Well, she is Hun". There is no way to make sense of the conversation(s) if the use of pejorative is non-cognitive, merely expressive and blind to the (alleged) features to be despised. If this were the typical use, the German-hater would have no reaction, since he does not "see" that Hans might be aggressive because he is a German, and that the use of the pejorative is selling this assumption. This points out the fact that the central and standard uses of slurs are cognitive. Since cognition has to do with truth and falsity, and since the cognitive task is a good indicator of semantic structure, it seems that the ascription of negative properties etc. indicates that they belong to the meaning of the slur, and that this meaning therefore confers truth-aptness. I presume that the (nasty) richness of meaning might vary with pejoratives: all of them involve "contemptible because G" at the very least. The most typical ones carry more information. Some of this information is given in the form of conceptual links roughly delineating the core stereotype associated with the pejorative, some in the form of figurative transfer of properties from some vehicle to the target member of G. So slurs are not purely performative and expressive, but semantic in the traditional, truth-directed sense. The truth-gap that might characterize the resulting sentences does not point to pejoratives as not having ambition to say true and nasty things, but only to their failure in the attempt. The ambition defines the truth-directed meanings of the assumptions, the failure just records that these assumptions are false about their targets.

Schematically, one can start with the neutral concept N, cull from the negative stereotype the devaluing features, D1, D2 and so on, add them to the neutral basis constituting N, and build the pejorative concept P. Then the propositions like "P is D1"," P is D2" and so on analyze the new pejorative concept P and have the status of concept-analyzing propositions.

A similar and symmetrical process concerns the deconstruction of negative (racist and similar) views. A great deal of effort, from heroic to routine, has been invested in showing that the particular target group does not *de facto* typically have negative traits attributed to it, and, even more importantly, that such traits are generally not had in virtue of group membership. The Bell curve polemic is a typical case; it is a polemic about *facts* concerning a correlation of race-membership and intelligence. Non-racist and anti-racist scientists produce evidence that the social failure of some members of a disadvantaged group is not due to their lack of capability, that anti-social behavior is not in their genes and so on. The race nominalist line, prominent in recent discussion, goes even further in maintaining that so-called racial characteristics are ill defined, so that the alleged 'race' is not correlated with anything significant whatsoever. The hope is, of course, that people will *change their inferential practices as a result of changed descriptive, theoretical views*: if they learn that 'race' is not correlated with intelligence, they will stop inferring "x is stupid" from "x is Black". Again, belief (or theory) is ahead of normative commitment in the case of deconstruction and criticism in the same way that it is in construction. Brandom himself stresses that "concepts can be criticized on the basis of substantive *beliefs*" (126, emphasis added). To reiterate, it seems that the racist holds the mini-theory about Blacks, encapsulated in the definition of NIGGER, and she does it to some extent on cognitive grounds. Believing all the nasty things from the mini-theory about Blacks causes her to use her nigger-concept and infer various derogatory things about x from "x is a nigger".

These simple facts give support to the semanticist view, and in particular to our version of it, according to which the reading of pejoratives is as follows: There is a concept HUN distinct from the concept GERMAN (and acconcept NIGGER distinct from the concept of black person). It carries, associated with it, a set of concept-analyzing propositions that do the licensing for the racist or xenophobic inferences.

Generic pejoratives say "P" normally express the negative stereotype of the intended referent R. The negative stereotype forms the concept (or conception) of R, and this concept is the truth-conditional meaning of "P". This is the core of my view of pejoratives. I write "concept (or conception)" because I am neutral about the details in question. So, if you allow for stereotype-like concepts, then take this as the meaning of "P". If you abide by the more traditional, necessary-cum-sufficient view of concepts, then take the meaning of "P" to be the conception. The meaning thus encompasses a network of predicates; not all of them are obligatory, but some negative, derogative predicate has to be present. Of course, on the civilized view of nationality and race, these and analogous concept-analyzing propositions are plainly false. The incorrectness of the racist norm derives from the falsity of racist substantive beliefs.

So, take "Ustasha" (or "Hun"). The core pejorative meaning does involve being a Croat (or a German, respectively), being cruel, and therefore morally in the negative (seriously vicious). One optional but very common predicate belonging to the network of "Ustasha" (or "Hun") is that these people do hate "us", the ethno-national group of the speaker, in the present example Serbs (or Englishmen). Call the view "the conceptual truth-conditional view".

What about other kinds of pejoratives? The sub-generic pejorative (say "Pig") seems to weaken the tie between the belonging to a sub-genus (e.g. being a policemen) and the negative stereotype, in the sense that other persons not belonging to the same sub-genus can be allegedly referred to by the same pejoratives; still the prime target is prime and typical. The non-specific ones ("asshole", "cur"), just point to some negative properties and express disgust or some similar attitude.

This view is obviously very close to Hom's "combinatorial externalism" (CE), at least as I see it, but distinct from his in being more liberal about possible concept(ions) . I applaud his defense of a truth-conditional approach. However, as mentioned, I am agnostic about the "externalism". I also leave open the exact content of the negative injunction.

Interestingly, the explanatory power that Hom ascribes to his CE view generalizes to almost any truth-conditional account, conceptual ones included. He first lists "1. Derogatory force: Epithets forcefully convey hatred and contempt of their targets" and comments: "According to CE, calling someone by a racial epithet is much worse than just calling someone 'stupid' or 'lazy' because epithets literally say something significantly more negative by invoking an entire racist ideology along with the discriminatory practices that it supports" (2008:432). Assuming that the concept in question summarizes this kind of ideological valuation, the conceptual view fares equally well on derogatory force. Things stand even better with derogatory variation: "According to CE, the variation in derogatory force associated with different epithets is a result of having different racist institutions causally support their predicative content"(2008: 433). CE introduces a problematic notion of "causal support of a predicative content," such that the conceptual theory can simply point out predicates of different negative intensity associated with different pejoratives, leaving the exact historical explanation to empirical study. Derogatory autonomy, i.e. the independence of derogatory force for any epithet of the attitudes of any of its particular speakers, is simply the consequence of the fact that the concept is the word meaning, as distinct from the contextual "speaker's meaning". Further, Hom's explanation of the fact that "uses of epithets are subject to strict social constraints, if not outright forbidden," namely that "epithets can be so fully loaded with racist content, including not only the prescription of discriminatory practices, but, in many instances, actual threats (e.g. you ought to be lynched because …)", agrees with a conceptual view as well. And the conceptual account happily generalizes to "similar, related language; e.g. sexist, gender-biasing, religious epithets and approbative terms." So much for a brief preliminary defense of the conceptual view.

b. Figurative pejoratives

Let me make a further step and discuss a big group of pejoratives of figurative origin, which have not received the attention they deserve. These pejoratives can teach us a lot about the nature of pejoratives in general. Consider our example of "Hun", the earliest and most hostile English-language term for Germans, and add, for good measure, a more recent but still a bit retro pejorative "red" – used for leftists in the times of McCarthy and a bit later. They are both figurative. "Hun", derives from a belligerent speech by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1900 where Kaiser enjoined his fellow countrymen to be like ancient Huns, merciless with the prisoners, and the British press made a scandal out of it.[3] Other generic ethnic pejoratives, like "Boche" and "Kike" also began as figurative, but have long since lost traces of their origin. Hughes writes: "In his *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), Francis Grose noted that the basic term negro carried the sense of "slave"

[3] On http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/...ocument_id=755 one finds the following quote from the Kaiser, listed as the source of the pejorative:
"Should you encounter the enemy, he will be defeated! No quarter will be given! Prisoners will not be taken! Whoever falls into your hands is forfeited. Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German." The German source quoted is listed as " Johannes Penzler, ed., Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelms II. [The Speeches of Kaiser Wilhelm II]. 4 volumes. Leipzig, n.d., 2. pp. 209-12.," and the following futher info is listed: "Unofficial version of speech reprinted in Manfred Görtemaker, Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert. Entwicklungslinien [Germany in the 19th Century. Paths in Development]. Opladen 1996. Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, vol. 274, p. 357. -Translation: Thomas Dunlap."

in uses like "I'm no man's Negro"" (2006: 327). Staying with English, note that the gender pejorative, "bitch" (generic or sub-generic), is a metaphor from dogs to humans. Similarly with "bugger" derived from the word for 'heretic sodomite.' Apparently, the etymology of "bugger" goes back to French "bougre", originally designating a follower of the Kathar, "Bulgarian" heresy; since all heretics were portrayed by the Church as sodomites, the word "bougre" came to mean "homosexual", and was then transmitted into English. Again we have a figurative origin of a bad word. Similarly for sub-generic pejoratives: "pig", then cow" but also "Lolita" and "minx".

In my native Croatian and Serbian the main fashionable political chauvinistic slurs are synecdoches, transferring negative items from a small historical part of a nation to all its members, past and present. I have mentioned at the beginning of the paper that the Serbian use of "ustasha" for all Croats uses the (official) name of Croatian Nazis and extends its use to the whole nation. Similarly, chauvinists on the Croatian side use "Chetnik" for all Serbs.

Let me call such pejoratives with a live figurative component "m-pejoratives" (using "m" for "metaphor" in the widest sense involving all sorts of "transferred meaning"- metonymy, synecdoche etc.). M-pejoratives thus involve a transfer of meaning. What qualities are being transfered? Return to the pejorative "Hun" and consider the qualities transferred from the "vehicle", the original *Huns* (Let me use italic for the original warriors of Attila) to the target, i.e. Germans. These are negative qualities: cruel, merciless, hating-us, and so on. So the concepts used are already thick concepts, containing in themselves both the descriptive basis and the supervenient evaluative component. Mark them as 'Q_i^-' The picture is of the target instantiating 'Q_o^-',…, 'Q_n^-', and therefore being bad, e.g. my enemies being brutal; sour; quarrelsome; malignant; churlish; uncivil, and therefore bad.

On the side of non-specific pejoratives, take a classical, Shakespearian example. I stay with Hughes *Encyclopedia*, where he writes:

> Shakespeare uses "cur" in Midsummer Night's Dream (1590). In his works it is a term of withering scorn, most memorably in Coriolanus (1608), when the hero castigates the Roman plebs as "You common cry of curs!" meaning "You pack of mongrels!" (III iii 118).(Ibid.)

The word "cur" meaning dog, has several uses.

> "Dr. Johnson comprehensively defined the adjective currish (also first used by Shakespeare) as "having the qualities of a degenerate dog; brutal; sour; quarrelsome; malignant; churlish; uncivil; untractable." (2006:137)

Ironically, Frege's translators use "cur" for his example of the mere "tone", as opposed to content. But, even if with "cur" as used for dogs the negative attitude is (or was) just a matter of tone, it is not so when used for people. Coriolanus transfers the qualities of a degenerate dog to Roman plebeians: they are mongrel, brutal, sour, quarrelsome, malignant, churlish, uncivil and intractable.

Here are then the hypothetical stages of the use of an m-pejorative. At stage one it is a fresh and live metaphor as, for instance, "bitch" and "Hun" once were. At its first sub-phase, the discovery phase, some interesting vehicle –target pair has been discovered. So, the network of concepts standing for various qualities , Q_i^-',…, 'Q_j^-, is being transferred to the target ; a speaker thinks of it as "having typical vehicle-qualities". So, the vehicle dominates: look at female dogs, look at Atilla's *Huns* the speaker suggests.

vehicle:		**target:**
mongrel dog		Roman plebeans
vehicle concept:		**target concept:**
MONGREL DOG	***transferred to*** →	CUR-LIKE HUMAN (or ROMAN)
components:		**components:**
MONGREL, BRUTAL, SOUR, QUARRELSOME, MALIGNANT, CHURLISH, UNCIVIL AND INTRACTABLE		NON-PURE ROMAN, BRUTAL, SOUR, QUARRELSOME MALIGNANT, CHURLISH, UNCIVIL AND INTRACTABLE

qualities pointed to:	**qualities pointed to:**
mongrel, brutal,	non-pure Roman, brutal
sour, etc.,	sour, etc.

At the sub-phase two of the stage one the metaphor is conventionalized, but still very much live; for instance, at some rather early point in history it has become a widely known convention that "cur" is used for people to whom one ascribes the qualities listed (and "bitch" is used for women seen as having such-and-such negative qualities).

At stage two we have metaphor-like pejoratives, our m-pejorative: the appeal to the vehicle is still alive, but qualities take over and the use is fixed. In the "cur" example qualities are relativelly fixed, but the choice in the given context is open (is "cur" suggesting "uncivil" this time, or "of low descent", or "bastard" or all together?). The bad dog (stereotype) link still rules. This is the crucial stage for our proposal, since *the negative qualities are not only alluded to but are standardly pointed to by the m-pejorative. So, the network of quality-concepts behaves like meaning, and this is what conceptual proposal would suggest*.[4]

At stage three the metaphor has died, and we have "de-figured" pejoratives, since the former m-pejorative has shaken off the chains linking it to the old vehicle and only the qualities remain. "Kike" is a good example; originally it was used by rich, well settled Jews for poor newcomers. It comes from "kikel" meaning circle; the newcomers were supposed to be illiterate, and so they signed their name by drawing a circle. (Nowadays, of course, being illiterate is not part of any negative stereotype of a Jew). Similarly, "bugger" meant heretic in the first half of the fourteenth century, sodomite two centuries later, but then was also used for practicers of bestiality. The link to heretics then got lost. We keep forgetting the figurative origin: "knave" has buried it long time ago, and similarly "honkey".[5]

Non-specific -m-pejoratives of religious origin might be on their way to stage three. Take "he is a devil"; few people really think of the devil when decoding the sentence. Now, quite importantly, once the figurative past is deleted (forgotten), the negative valence stays as the part of the target concept (and its exemplifiers), without the help of the distinct transferred negative qualities. "Bugger" targets anal gay sex as negative (probably both disgusting and morally very bad), with no links with heretics; the former negative force has abandoned religious ties and has become focused upon the act itself. Such de-figured examples, like "Boche" and "Nigger" have, however, been prominent in the philosophical discussion, which has caused a lot of harm, obscuring the complexity of the transferred qualities and thus slanting the range of examples in favor of expressivism.[6]

Why believe this story about m-pejoratives? A lot has to be said, but for many pejoratives we can figure out the stages (e.g "bitch"), and our story is the gist of what is usually told about hundreds of pejoratives in the books detailing their histories (see the biography of pejoratives in Hughes, 2006, Keessen, (2009), Saunders, 2011). It fits the independent results of the research on conventionalization of metaphors, for instance D. Gentner's "career of metaphor" account (Gentner, D. and Bowdle, B. (2008)). And it naturally generalizes to laudatives, like "She is an angel" or "He is a daredevil." The origin is recognizable but hardly perceived. The account thus offers a very wide framework for understanding value-laden words.

If we accept this rough account, what can we conclude from it? I want to argue that it support truth-conditional treatment of pejoratives, and in particular the conceptual variant of it. Let me then start with a (sketch of an) argument connecting figu-

[4] What about "bitch"? In a discussion at Richard conference in IUC Dubrovnik in 2010 Georges Rey was claiming that "bitch" is completely dead as metaphor: nobody hears the dog-link any more.But then, how is it that "keep yo bitch on a leash!!" is posted on blogs if nobody associates "bitch" with dogs?

[5] The term derives from Hunky, and is related Hun, diminutive and contemptuous forms of Hungarian, both words being originally applied to a person of Eastern European ancestry, especially a Hungarian or Slav, and often a manual laborer. Honky is thus typical of terms stigmatizing outsiders, especially workers of low status regarded as interlopers. Hughes, 2006: 25o

[6] My student Julija Perhat has pointed out to me that the transfer of negative properties is not in general transitive. Her example are pejoratives derived from words for genital organs. Whatever is transferred from the original anatomical term to, say women in general, need not be conserved when the pejorative is further applied, say, to male cowards (English "pussy" has complicated etymological history, whereas Croatian "pičkica" is a simpler example, with straightforward transfer vulva→women→cowardly man)

rative use with truth-conditional character, as against expressivist accounts. Note that the figurative use involves a lot of cognitive work. The German-hater takes the vehicle “Hun” and projects some descriptive features (real or imagined) of ancient Huns upon contemporary Germans. Then, he transmits the negative evaluation: Germans are as bad as Huns were. The sexist takes the vehicle “bitch- female dog” and projects the features (real or imagined) upon the person. The Croatian chauvinist takes the negative features of Serbian “chetniks” from the Second World War or from paramilitary criminals from the nineties, and projects them upon all Serbs. With negative features there follows a negative evaluation. The mere expressive view has no means to account for the conceptual complexity that goes with the genesis of figurative pejoratives. But there is more. We read the following:

> Bitch has the longest history in the field as a term of abuse, extending from the fourteenth century up to the present. During this long period it has been applied variously to a promiscuous, sensual, mean, or difficult woman, as well as to a man or thing (Hughes, G, 2006: 23).

In all these examples, the speaker is encoding relevant properties (promiscuous or difficult for women, cruel and dangerous for “Hun”) in his use of the pejorative. So, considerable cognitive complexity is involved in the cognitive processing of metaphorical and quasi-metaphorical pejoratives.

From this need for knowledge and the cognitive effort it follows that the central and standard uses of these pejoratives are cognitive. They are not merely expressive. To reiterate, *the figurative basis demands cognitive work both from the speaker who is encoding relevant properties, and from the listener figuring out the properties ascribed, and thus answering the why-question by a because-suggestion.* Since stereotype-linked and/or figurative slurs are so ubiquitous, and since they either assume or demand cognitive achievements (knowledge or encoding, or decoding) we may suggest, that the central and standard uses of m-pejoratives are cognitive.

We are ready for the last step. Since cognition has to do with semantic traits, and since the cognitive task is a good indicator of semantic structure, the cognitive complexity of m-pejoratives indicates interesting semantic properties: if the meaning is cognitive, then it should be truth-conditional; what else would be there to cognize, if there is no truth/falsity around? This is then the sketch of an argument from the figurative to cognitive character of the living nasty concepts, the meanings of m-pejoratives, and from the cognitive to the semantic and conceptual.

What about the de-figured former m-pejoratives like “Kike”? Well, the negative valence was originally cognitive, having to do with the stereotype of the poor, illiterate, miserable immigrant. Why would it stop being cognitive once it has been enlarged and applied to all Jews (on a different basis)? This suggests a more general conclusion: the negative features of pejoratives are cognitive, and should be truth-conditional. I leave it at that, to develop it at another occasion.

There is another good reason for believing that the negative valence is part of the truth-conditional meaning of m-pejoratives. The picture presented by the speaker using the pejorative sincerely and seriously is of the target instantiating negative qualities ‘Q_o^-’,…, ‘Q_n^-’, and therefore being bad, e.g. my enemies being brutal; sour; quarrelsome and so on, and therefore bad. But, in m-pejoratives *the negative value-element is not superadded to the descriptive components; it is carried (over) by thick components already characterizing the vehicle* (the original *Huns*). Let me develop the point a bit. Suppose that the negative valence is not part of the meaning of m-pejorative, but only a superadded element that is merely implied or implicated. Then the core, truth-conditional meaning would be purely descriptive: “Hun” and “Boche” would simple *mean* “German” and stand for the concept GERMAN. But the qualities transferred from the “vehicle”, the original *Huns* to the target, Germans, are already negative qualities, like cruel or merciless. The transfer of ‘Q_i^-’ s has brought already tainted—negatively marked—concepts into the characterization of Germans as “Huns”. Now, if the negative content is broadly semantic where do the negative (and other) Q^- -concepts belong: in the core of the meaning of the m-pejorative, or in the penumbra of meaning, say conventional implicature or impliciture?

Tim Williamson has claimed (in his 2009) that conventional implicature is part of meaning, but on its periphery. Therefore if negative valence is conventionally imply(cat)ed, it is a part of meaning, but not the truth-conditional part. But what is then in the core? Some transferred concepts (Q^- s, like CRUEL) must be present, *otherwise the transfer does not make sense*. The new figurative concept HUN cannot be just the neutral GERMAN, since bad traits are what is being transferred and what makes it a new and figurative concept, so they are essential for it. For m-pejoratives this yields a confirmation of our conceptual truth-conditional proposal. The figurative slurs thus drive home the lesson already adumbrated by stereotypes. This concludes the discussion of the meanings of m-pejoratives. I feel quite certain that they do have truth-conditional nasty concepts as their meanings. Let me now pass to a more daring and hypothetical step.

What about the de-figured former m-pejoratives like “Kike”? The negative valence was originally within the truth-conditional core, contained in “*illiterate* Jewish immigrant”. What happened with it? The most economic option for it was to stay put, right in the core. There is an alternative account of course: the negative valence leaves the core, looses its truth conditional status, and travels to the merely expressive periphery. But why would such a process occur? The better and more conservative solution is the first one, which asks for no change in the status of the negative valence.

Finally, we should aim for a uniformity in our account of pejoratives. Note that there is a continuous path from a novel figurative pejorative through half-dead to dead metaphor-pejoratives. The simplest hypothesis is that figurative ones are not special, so we may tentatively generalize the conclusion to all pejoratives: pejorative meanings are truth-conditional. And, given the weaknesses of its presuppositional rival, the proposed general conceptual account hopefully fits best with this truth-conditional character. To reiterate we claim that non-figurative pejoratives (as well as the figurative i.e. m-pejoratives) carry with themselves the *stereotype* containing representations (concepts) of negative qualities ascribed to the target, and the claim that the target is bad *because* it has them. This is then the kernel of our conceptual truth conditional proposal.

c) Discussion and open questions

Let me now pass to a few objections to our conceptual truth conditional proposal and try to reply to them (with thanks to the critics!). At the September 2011 conference at Dubrovnik several people pointed to what they saw as a problem with empty, non-instantiated nasty concepts: “The concept you associate as the meaning of the pejorative is empty, and that is bad”, they tended to say.[7]

There is a long tradition of decent people declining to use pejoratives. Brandom recounts O. Wilde’s answer to the question, raised by a judge, whether he thinks such and such a passage from his work constitutes a blasphemy: “Blasphemy is not one of my words”. He rightly suggests that a non-racist would have the same kind of attitude to a racist pejorative: “’Nigger’ is not one of my words” would be an appropriate answer by a non-racist to some analogous question. Now, Wilde presumably understood what “blasphemy” means, the same way our non-racist might understand what “Nigger” means” Brandom writes (1994:127). One candidate explanation for this declining is squeamishness: the person does not want to hurt anybody. But the quote and the parallelism suggest something else: there is no such act as blasphemy for someone who is not religious, just as there is no such group as Niggers for a non-racist. If there is no god, you cannot perform an act of blasphemy. And if there are no people who are stupid and brutal just because of their racial (or quasi-racial) belonging, then the word has no non-empty use.

So, what happens in the conversation with a racist is that we interpret him charitably, understanding that he actually wants offensively to talk about African-Americans, but deploys an empty nasty concept. When a child (or an uneducated person) points to a dolphin at a zoo and says, for instance,“I have seen this fish a month ago” we would understand that she wants to refer to the mammal in front of her, misclassifying it as a fish. But these moves are pragmatic, not strictly semantic.

If you don’t like this result, there is a fallback position for the conceptualist. Suppose (with authors like Jackson) that the pejorative concept is like a network linking HUN to GERMAN, CRUEL BECAUSE GERMAN, MERCILESS…, and the like. Then you might think that the HUN- GERMAN link

[7] Hom has the same diagnosis:
Finally, it is important to note that according to CE, while racial epithets are entirely
meaningful, the properties expressed by them have null extensions. No one ought to be subject to discriminatory practices because of negative properties due to their race. 2008: 437

is the most important one, and that given this link, "Hun" does refer to Germans, in spite of other links not holding about the referent. The German-hater is then like the layperson who uses the words "black mamba" to refer to snakes, mambas, dead certain that black mambas are black. We know better and simply dismiss the fact that black mambas are mostly green (the name comes from their black mouth), and still take the word from the layperson's mouth to refer to snakes, and not to empty set.

At the same conference in Dubrovnik Michael Glanzberg and David Braun were raising the issue of diversity: not everybody has the same stereotype, so there are non-standard stereotypes and one can refer to the right target in spite of one's ignorance of the stereotype. I can ask "is a German a Boche?" in a more reasonable manner than if I asked "Is a German a German?", noted Braun. And I can still pose the question, though I do not know the answer, he added. To this critique it is possible to answer: All this is valid for other concepts as well. I can diverge from my co-speakers in having eccentric views on some item, or just being shamefully ignorant, and still do quite well in communication. There is nothing special about pejoratives in these matters.

M. Richard has in writing objected to my account in the following form:

> Miščević comes close to endorsing the view that (1) conventionally associated with a (typical) slur is information contained in an associated stereotype; (2) a sentence in which such a term is used presupposes that this information is true of whomever is discussed in the sentence (or the members of the group targeted by the slur)...
>
> In *When Truth is Out* I argued against several different presuppositional accounts of slurs. Against the view that such presuppositions are a matter of linguistic meaning, I observed that linguistic meaning has to supervene on speaker psychology and use, but the mass of contemporary speak-ers don't have the sort of attitudes that would support thinking that stereotypical information was a conventional presupposition. Miščević responds that I am "over optimistic", and that most "non-intellectuals" are happy to have slurs at their disposal. He in effect makes an empirical claim: when a word functions as a slur in a public language, competent speakers believe that when the word is used without the audience objecting, conversants believe they are supposed to add stereotypical negative information about the slur's target to conversational presuppositions. But this universal claim is surely false, and this was my point in *When Truth is Out*. Even if this were true of some slurs, it is clearly false of many others. This is particularly obvious in the case of slurs targeted at groups that are not generally held in contempt in a society. It is false that if an American speaker uses 'Wop' or 'Mick' slurringly in the U.S., the audience will accept—or think that there's a linguistic requirement that they accept for conversational purposes—that Italians or Irish are in some particular respect inferior. Competent speakers know this (in particular, they know it about themselves), and so don't think that people think that a use of the slur requires them, if objection is not made, to add stereotypes to presuppositions (2011: 201).

To this I would answer that "Wop" and "Mick" are pejoratives with a much weakened negative valence. And negative stereotypes for Italians and Irish are, fortunately, very much watered down in present-day North-American culture. But the weakening and watering down go hand in hand: the negative stereotype and the negative valuation drop out of fashion together. And the force of the pejorative is weakened. Doesn't this point to a very tight connection between stereotype/meaning and the negative valence, just as the conceptual account would predict?

The universal claim that "when the word is used without the audience objecting, conversants believe they are supposed to add stereotypical negative information about the slur's target to conversational presuppositions" is surely false, Richard thinks. But universal generalizations are almost never unexceptionally true in social matters. There will always be etiolated pejoratives, ex-pejoratives changing their valence, and similar two-headed linguistic monsters. This does not show that normal meaning in typical cases is not stereotypical. [8]

[8] Here is one more of his objections. I have argued (in my 2011) against expressivism, Richard's version included, that there are non-empty pejoratives: "bigot" is the one Richard himself uses, and, for the second one, if you

Let me conclude this discussion by mentioning an open problem raised by Dunja Jutronić; namely, the reversal or change of valence. Famously, "Nigger" is good when used by African-Americans, and "witch", "bitch", "dyke", and other pejoratives epithets "turned up in the brave names of small feminist groups" as Hughes notes (2006: 382, following Gloria Steinem). The French word "bougre" from which the English "bugger" is probably derived, has also changed its valence, nowadays, "*Mon bougre*" is a very friendly phrase between (male) friends. There are also parallel uses, positive and negative depending on the user. In my native Croatia the word "Ustaša" "-as-used by Croatian nationalists is positive, "Ustaša" -as-used by an anti-nationalist (or a member of a minority) is negative. An obvious conjecture would distinguish two kinds of processes. For m-pejoratives, with a live metaphorical base, the targeted group has to reverse the evaluation of some (originally negatively viewed) quality; for instance, "bitch" involves a sexual component; BITCH points to the concept LEWD, and LEWD points to SEXY. Well it is sexy to be a bitch (just look up images of "bitch" on Google!), so let us re-value it positively! For de-figured pejoratives one has to reverse the evaluation of the whole, without necessarily focusing on the components. With "nigger" (the origin is forgotten, especially the tie with being a slave), so, it is a de-figured pejorative for African-Americans. but, we blacks think highly of ourselves, so "Nigger" will be good when we use it.

What about semantics? Since the negative valence has been a constitutive part of the pejorative meaning, we have to assume that the new, positive valence grounds a new, non-pejorative meaning. It thus seems that my account has a problem since it postulates too many meanings, Dunja argued. A modified Ockham's razor is needed. I don't think this is a problem. Indeed, the new "good" valences get listed in dictionaries as new meanings. Look at "dictionary.com". Under the entry "bitch" you find not onle female dog but also, categorized as slang

> a. a malicious, unpleasant, selfish person, especially a woman.
> b. a lewd woman.

and then, as a new meaning.

> c. anything memorable, especially something exceptionally good: That last big party he threw was a real bitch.

Of course, this is not decisive, but why not follow the usage since the theory is better if it accords with usage (other things being roughly equal)? Much more needs to be said about the topic of reversal of valence, but this should suffice for the moment to support the proposal.

Conclusion

The negative, nasty force of pejoratives used in offensive communication is part of their literal, truth-conditional meaning. They encode nasty concepts, characterizing their targets in a negative way, and adding some suggestion that they should be despised on account of these negative characteristics. Generic pejoratives add the implicit claim that the targets have the negative characteristics because of the genus they belong to.

This is the view I have been formulating and tentatively defending in the paper. In conclusion, let me return to matters of pragmatics. Pejoratives are normally used in offensive communication to express negative attitudes, so that a typical illocutionary act of using one is expressive. On the perlocutionary side, there is an important thing to say: uses of pejoratives seem to have a *canonical range of*

don't like the behavior of the police in your country you could be pardoned for thinking that "pigs" does properly refer to policemen. Richard accepts the examples (maybe just for the sake of discussion), but comments:

The view I defended in *When Truth is Out* was that slurring typically involves a kind of "performative misrepresentation", one distinct from everyday linguistic misrepresentation. This is how slurs work. But performative representation is not invariably misrepresentation. When it is not, the performative will not trump the semantic, and what is said may well be true, as it is when one says that a bigot is a bigot.

So, when the pejorative does hit its target, the sentence has the truth-value true (e.g. "A bigot is a bigot"). But when it does not "Helga is a Hun" it loses its truth-conditional character. It is not just empty because there are no Huns. No, for Richard the term would refer to Germans, but for him the truth/falsity are out, since the performative has "trumped the semantic". On his view "Helga is a bigot" and "Helga is Hun" both concern Helga's alleged belonging to a group, of bigots and Germans respectively. If the first Is true, how can the second, with exactly the same form, not even be a candidate for having a truth-value? I find this hard to understand and accept.

illocutionary acts associated with them. Most obviously, they are typically used to offend. I agree with Richard that pejoratives are "words whose primary purpose seems to be to hurt, to menace, to subjugate"(2008:6.), and of course, the purpose has to do with perlocutionary force. I would speak of a "canonical (range of) perlocutory intentions", namely intentions that are normally and normatively associated with the serious and literal use of pejoratives. The hurting and menacing part is very much alive in the 2nd person use of slurs, in which the speaker is insulting the interlocutor. But nowadays, 3rd person uses seem at least as common as 2nd person uses; often racists use pejoratives between themselves, in the absence of the target individuals, sexist men routinely use gender pejoratives in the exclusively male company, and the same with chauvinists and chauvinist pejoratives. For the 3rd person uses hurting and menacing are not the right purpose: the target is just not there to be hurt. Also subjugating is not direct. One could argue that the associated perlocutionary act is offending *in absentia* (as Dunja Jutronic proposed in a discussion in Rijeka). However, successfully offending someone presupposes uptake, and offending *in absentia* lacks the right one. We need something else. A line worth pursuing is the following: a typical perlocutionary act intended and often performed between like-minded users of a pejorative in the absence of the target is *building solidarity against the target*. (How far this appeal goes is an interesting issue on the border with socio-linguistics). I am inclined to think that this is the central canonical perlocutionary act-type associated with the use of pejoratives *in absentia* of the target. Be that as it may, the topic of the perlocutionary act canonically associated with the use of pejoratives has not been explored to my knowledge in the context of discussions of pejoratives and offensive communication, and it is, I think, worth exploring in detail.

What about moral, legal and political consequences? The truth-conditional account is, I think, better suited to moral, legal and political evaluation-condemnation of acts of offensive communication than the merely expressive one. After all, if slurring is just expressing one's private attitude, it cannot be morally very wrong, and it can hardly be legally sanctioned in a liberal society. Things stand very differently if slurring involves voicing an offensive opinion dogmatically presented as the truth about the target, and, even worse, a not-so-hidden exhortation to despise or even mistreat her/him. Moreover, if the canonical *intended* perlocutionary range of 3rd person uses is building solidarity against the target, then the action is not just public but deeply social. It can sometimes be the setting ablaze of the social milieu in the way James is lamenting in his Epistle.

References

Brandom, R. (1994). *Making It Explicit,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Cargile, J. (1991). Real and Nominal Definitions in Fetzer, J. H., Shatz, D, and Schlesinger, G. N. (Eds), *Definitions ad definability,* Kluwer, Dordrecht, Boston, London.

Dummett, M. (1973). *Frege, Philosophy of Language,* Duckworth, London.

Fairman, C. M. (2009). *Fuck: Word Taboo and Protecting Our First Amendment Liberties,* Sphinx Publishing.

Gentner, D. and Bowdle, B. (2008). Metaphor as structure-mapping in Gibbs, R. W. Jr.(Ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, J. and Meyerhoff, M. (Eds) (2003). *The Handbook Of Language And Gender* , Blackwell.

Hom, Ch. (2008). The Semantics of Racial Epithets, *Journal of Philosophy*, 105(8): 416–440.

Hom, Ch. (2010). Pejoratives, *Philosophy compass*, v. 5/2.

Hornsby, J. (2001). Meaning and Uselessness: How to Think about Derogatory Words, in French, et al. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Volume 25, Figurative Language*.

Hughes, G. (2006). *An encyclopedia of swearing: the social history of oaths, profanity, foul language, and ethnic slurs in the English-speaking world*, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk.

Keessen, J. (2009). *Cardinal Man and Scarlet Women- A Colorful Etymology Of Words That Discriminate*, Marquette University Press.

Miščević, N. (2011). Slurs & thick concepts- Is the new expressivism tenable?, *Croatian Journal of Philosop*hy,Vol. XI, No. 32

Rappoport, L. (2005). *Punchlines : the case for racial, ethnic, and gender humor* , Praeger Publishers.

Richard, M. (2008). *When Truth Gives Out*. Oxford University Press.

Richard, M. (2011). Reply to Lynch, Mišcevic, and Stojanovic, *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XI, No. 32.

Saunders K. W. (2011). *Degradation -What the History of Obscenity Tells Us about Hate Speech,* New York University Press.

Schlenker, Ph. (2007). Expressive Presuppositions, *Theoretical Linguistics*, v. 33(2), 237–245.

Schlenker, Ph. (2010). Presuppositions and Local Contexts, *Mind*, 119, 474: 377–391.

Williamson, T. (2003). Understanding and Inference, *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. LXXVII, 249–293.

Williamson, T. (2009). Reference, Inference and the Semantics of Pejoratives, in *The philosophy of David Kaplan,* edited by Joseph Almog and Paolo Leonardi, Oxford University Press.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

THE RELATION OF SIMILARITY AND THE COMMUNICATION OF SCIENCE

Ioan Biris

West University of Timisoara, V. Parvan St. 4, Timisoara, Romania
e-mail: ioan.biris@gmail.com

Abstract:
It has been said, not without some justification, that the knowledge process is, after all, a forward from „the identical to identical", which means, firstly, that the advance of knowledge involves the principle of reduction, and secondly, that every step forward in knowledge involves the relationship of similarity, since the operation of reduction can not function without it. But this means, further, that all scientific knowledge must assume the methodological principle of derivation of the future from the past. However, it also means that any communication of science is based on similarity to find those images to match – in a more accessible language – pictures of the more technical languages. Such a situation was acknowledged by some scientists but also by some philosophers of science. In the following we try to reconstruct a possible way of this approach.

Key words: the relation of similarity in the scientific construction; scientific images; the communication of science; criteria of communication.

Hertz's demands regarding the scientific images

In the German scientific and philosophical tradition, besides the Kantian and Neo-Kantian influence regarding the knowledge process, great influence had also come from the great physicists Helmholtz, Boltzmann, Hertz ori Mach[1]. Hertz's idea that, in the end, the mechanic system is made of „images" which are structured in a deductive way and that these images are models of our representations about real things, was almost a „commom good" among the German scientists and philosophers concerned with the theory of science. In the same direction Boltzmann urged scientists and philosophers to consider physics'concepts and assertions as „mental images", models which describe the facts known through experience. In his work *Die Prinzipien der Mechanik in neuem Zusammenhange dargestellt* (1894), Hertz, who probably becomes the most influential physicist in this direction, starts from the methodological request to derive the future from the past, pointing out the fact that we form different interior images or symbols about exterior objects, images which can then be developed by means of other images from the past, considered as models. Hertz also indicated that for the same objects one can have different images, which means, in contemporary terms, that there is a „theoretical subdetermining of experience". With this, Hertz foreshadowed the way successive generations of positivists[2], for whom, just like for Pierre Duhem, for example, the truth should not be sought in individual sentences, but in larger or smaller systems of representations.

What status do these „pictures", these models have about real things? In Hertz's view they need to meet three requirements[3]: a) a logical requirement, that is the requirement that such images are allowed (*zulässig*) that do not contradict the principles of logic; b) an empirical requirement, provided that the images are correct (*richtig*), are consistent with reality, and with reality relations; c) a pragmatic requirement, that is the requirement that images are appropriate (*zweckmässig*), are as simple as possible, and do not contain unnecessary or even empty relations. If the first requirement can be determined

[1] See also Ioan Biris, *The Formal Structure of Experience in Carnap's Aufbau*, Balkan Journal of Philosophy, vol. 2, No 2, 2010.

[2] Giovanni Boniolo, Maria Luisa Dalla Chiara et all., *Filosofia della scienza*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2002, p. 70.

[3] See Mircea Flonta, *Gânditorul singuratic. Critica şi practica filozofiei la Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 159.

uniquely by a formal finding of how a picture breaches or does not breach the principles of logic, and the second one can be established unequivocally through experience, with the third requirement we are in a more delicate situation since the establishment of the appropriateness of an image is generally not an unequivocal decision process. It is rather only through different decisions of researchers and only that a gradual control of multiple images on the time axis can provide us a more appropriate image. One can notice from these requirements and conditionings of scientific models a special care of the German scientist (as a more general concern in the spirit of time) for a logical purity of scientific knowledge, and a simplicity of theory together with a careful experimental foundation. This means that a new logic encouraged in this direction[4], the control of experience was an objective pursued and formulated, and the idea of simplicity was somehow rooted in the mentality of naturalists as a property of the real itself. It is no less true that the goal of simplicity, is more desirable, as it is difficult to obtain, „although apparently simple and unproblematic subject to analysis, the idea of simplicity reveals many sides and issues initially unknown...” [5]. On a syntactic level – as shown by Constantin Grecu in his study of the idea of simplicity – we have three species of simplicity: the conceptual (linguistic or descriptive), that is, postulational and structural simplicity (or logical); semantical simplicity (the content of theories , the meaning of concepts, the value of truth) and pragmatic simplicity (which refers to the difficulty of the inference of consequences of postulates).

Returning to the requirements established by Hertz, you can see his concern with simplicity in all three plans, syntactic (logical), semantic (experimental) and pragmatic. In the concrete practice of his science, he noted, for example, that notions of „force” and „electricity” contain more correlations than is needed and more than they can support. Mechanics often presents itself under the appearance of three different systems with variable fundamental notions: one system is based on the notions of space, time, mass and force; another one has the fundamental concepts of space, time, mass and energy, the third is based only on the notions of space, time and mass. Of these, according to the requirement of simplicity, only the latter should be retained.

Then, naturally, science must not deviate from the principle of observability. In this sense Mach will appreciate that Hertz defines the primary concepts of mechanics (that is space, time and mass) in order to retain only what is really noticeable[6]. This is why Hertz abandoned the concept of force as a primary concept for mechanics, as it was imposed by Newton, since the notion of force raises aspects and issues that go beyond the sphere of observability.

Differences of vision between Newton and Hertz may be due to the underlying mathematical methodology. Newton, in the extension of Kepler, favors the methodology of utmost calculation of laying areas, volumes or lengths depending on the inertia of curved figures (although Newton is one of the discoverers of differential calculus). For Hertz it is more important, for example, to establish the actual dependence of the motion of bodies on the differential equations expressing the coordinates of mass, the rates of exchange being seen as the functions of the independent variable change. If the first mathematical methodology favors the capture of a unit of an area or configuration, the second, differential calculus, especially highlights the dependency relationships within a configuration.

Let us not forget that the science system is made up of „images”, Hertz thinks. How to get to these images? What is their foundation? Let us remember that the foundations of mathematics had passed through a deep crisis with the discovery of non-Euclidean geometries, that one had entered into a crisis of the fundamentals of physics, with some philosophers of science hoping to find a solid foundation of science in the soil of logic. However, paradoxes had appeared (especially highlighted by Russell). Here’s why some tried other options too such as the psycho-physiological paradox in the line of Mach. A brilliant program in this direction was offered by Carnap, in his famous work *Der logische Aufbau der We*lt (1928).

The relation of similarity in scientific construction: from Carnap to Quine

On the footsteps of Mach, Carnap considers – in *Aufbau der Welt*[7] – that the starting point in building scientific images should be basic sensitive experi-

[4] See Ioan Biriş, *Conceptele ştiinţei*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucureşti, 2010.

[5] Constantin Grecu, Aspecte ontologice, gnoselogice şi logice ale simplităţii, în vol. *Logică şi ontologie*, Editura Trei, Bucureşti, 1999, p. 325.

[6] Giovanni Boniolo, Maria Luisa Dalla Chiara et all., *Filosofia della scienza*, p. 69.

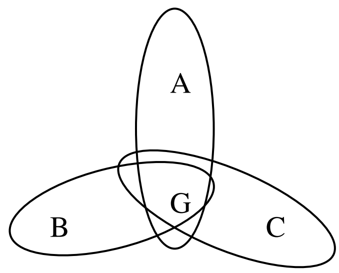
[7] Rudolf Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1998.

ences, in their quality of original elements (Urelemente), but „ elements” in the gestaltist sense, *i.e.* structures in which the emphasis is on relations. At the base stands the relation of similarity as a background where the whole construction can begin, for sensitive basic experiences cannot be „reunited” if there is no similarity.

Moulines interprets this as a dyadic relationship, such that in the phenomenal temporal aspect of reality we have an asymmetric relation, *the memory* (a subject or Turing machine can remember in moment t that they had a partially similar experience in moment $t - s$); while structurally we have a symmetric relationship, the relationship of *partial similarity*, which is constitutive to sensitive qualities. The dyadic relationship of *memory of similarity* (Ähnlichkeitserinnerung) is thus the cornerstone of the entire construction. Quine will characterize this relationship in the following terms: „Carnap’s fundamental relationship between elementary experiences is that of a *memory of similarity*, a relationship which I will note with R. An elementary experience, say x, is found in the relationship R with another basic experience, y, if x includes a recognition of y as partial similarity with x”[8]. In his 1995 work Quine agrees, along with other contemporary American philosophers, that Carnap's project *Aufbau* is again concerned with actuality and that the evolution of science and epistemology requires reconsideration of the stakes of the Viennese philosopher. By the end of his life Carnap did not need, Quine points out in his latest work, additional predicates to denote elementary experiences as an elementary experience may be in relation R with any other experience, ultimately with anything else. In Quine's terminology, scientific stimuli are the very basic experiences of Carnap’s language.

In the constructionist theory of *Aufbau*, the objects (or concepts) in each level are „built” of objects (concepts) from the previous level. In this process one must take into account at least the following main aspects: a) basic level features, a level on which all other levels are built; b) determination of forms of ascent by which we rise from one level to the next; c) investigation of how different types of objects can be constructed by repeated applications of upward form; d) the form of the system resulting from such a construction. While the base level from which we start consists of extralogical entities, other levels are logical constructs, that is forms of rise in the construction, forms of the object and forms of the system. A system built in this way is not of the classifier type, but is derivational, and genealogical. Based on the relationship of similarity, the derivational process highlights partial similarities, circles of similarity, quality classes, partial identities, similarities between qualities, and sensory classes[9].

In a graphical representation we can express – like Mario Bunge – classses as ensembles determined by a single property, and gender as an intersection of classes, as in the figure below:[10]



(A, B, C = classes;
G = the gender of classes A, B, C)

M. Bunge argues that for a more nuanced understanding one needs to establish the degrees of similarity and the dual modes of dissimilarity and of differentiation. Two objects with a gender identity can have a degree of similarity, a weaker or stronger one, a superficial or profound one. One must specify the fact that the relationship of similarity should not be confused with that of equivalence, since similarity is reflexive and symmetric but not transitive[11]. Understood as a function, similarity can be expressed in a formal way as follows:

$$\sigma(x, y) = p(x) \cap p(y)$$

(σ = similarity; x, y = objects; p = property, quality)
The degree of similiarty can be calculated using the formula:

$$s(x, y) = \frac{|\sigma(x, y) \cap B|}{|p(x) \cup p(y) \cap B|}$$

(s = degree of similarity; B = finite subset of p)

[8] W. V. O. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts/London, 1995, p. 10.

[9] More broadly on these issues see Ioan Biris, *The Formal Structure of Experience in Carnap’s Aufbau*, Balkan Journal of Philosophy, vol. 2, No 2, 2010.

[10] Mario Bunge, *Ontology,* Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht-Holland/Boston-USA,1977, p. 143.

[11] Max Kistler, Le concept de génidentité chez Carnap et Russell, în vol. Sandra Laugier (ed.), *Carnap et la construction logique du monde*, Vrin, Paris, 2001, p. 166.

In turn, the degree of dissimilarity can be established on the basis of the dissimilarity function, and on the relation of differentiation:

$$\delta(x, y) = p(x) \cup p(y) - \sigma(x, y)$$

(where δ = dissimilarity)

Starting from this function, the dissimilarity degree can be established with the formula:

$$d = \frac{|\delta(x, y)|}{|p(x) \cup p(y)|}$$

(where d = degree of dissimilarity)

Naturally, the values of $s(x, y)$ and those of $d(x, y)$ are found in the range <0, 1>. But beyond the accuracy obtainable in the calculation of similarity, that which in the philosophical plan remains questionable is the property of transitivity or non-transitivity of similarity. Both for Carnap and Quine assumptions seem to work (which are neither logical nor empirical) of at least a local convergence of a quality series of continuity, monotony and homogeneity[12]. Starting from here, in the opinion of J. Ph. Narboux, Goodman's criticism at Carnap's construction based on the similarity relation encloses *Aufbau* in a dilemma: either the predicate of similarity is considered transitive as Carnap uses, and then you have to accept that the approach is circular, or it is non-transitive (as suggested by Goodman and, in the same line, Bunge, as we saw above), in which case the construction system is questioned. Quine manages to avoid this dilemma by postulating the following perspective: if by the abstract operation one does not determine something specific (the abstracting selects, retains something, but does not determine it) the result is that one can give up its procedures for at the level of primitive induction we already have a generalization that is non-formal, not „abstract".

From Carnap, Quine will emphasize that in the primitive sense of similarity we find a certain complexity of structure: *a* is more similar to *b* than *c*. This means that within this structure, in the similarity of substance between *a, b* and *c*, there is difference of degree, the similarity between *a* and *b* being greater than that between *a* and *c*. What does this structure mean? It means that our sensitive experience masters to a certain extent the individuation situation, and that the entities *a*, *b* and *c* are circumscribed and differentiated on the similarity field. How does this happen? In the primitive induction we are already performing some generalizations that can be seen in the process of ostensive learning. In this sense Quine objects to Wittgenstein that it is not the same thing acquiring in an ostensive way the reddish-brown color (sepia) with what represents a rabbit, for example. Quine argues that it is a big difference between „sepia" (color) and „rabbit" since „sepia" is a mass term (such as „water", for example) and „rabbit" is a term of divided reference. And it is clear that this split reference can not be seized in the absence of the principle of individuation[13].

This observation is very important for Quine when dealing with natural kinds (Natural Kinds). A crucial question that arises is whether the individuation problem can be mastered by ostensive learning. If we consider the similarity structure mentioned above (*a* is more similar to *b* than *c*), some believe – Quine points out – that this structure is very complex, as the likeness depends fundamentally on the aspects under which things are seen, whether that be its similarity in terms of color, shape, etc. In this respect, learning through an ostensive way of the color „yellow" will depend on the fact that previously we know in some way what color means. However we need a „general rule of resemblance" of comparative similarity. Such a „standard of similarity" – says Quine – is innate (*A standard of similarity is in some sense innate. This point is not against empiricism, it is a commonplace of Behavioral psyhology*). Such a position by Quine may raise some perplexities among empiricists, but the American philosopher wishes to clarify that, after all, empiricism can accommodate the thesis of some „innate" standards as the psychology of behavior accepts them.

In line with his naturalism, Quine thus supports a „innate space of qualities" as a necessary space for all forms of learning, but which can not be taught, since it is innate. Such „spaces" represent some conditions of possibility for different forms of learning, which means that ostensive learning alone cannot control the principle of individuation. We thus answer the question above. The „innate" character of the similarity standard can be truly and accurately interpreted, Quine believes, in terms of animal and human behavior. For example, the different expecta-

[12] Jean-Philippe Narboux, La construction: abstraction ou schématisation? Quine et Goodman lecteurs de l'Aufbau, în vol. . Sandra Laugier (ed.), *Carnap et la construction logique du monde*, p. 160.

[13] W. V. O. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, Columbia University Press, NewYork, 1969, p. 31.

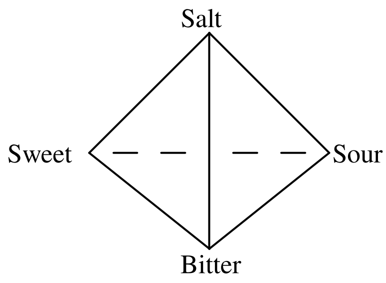
tions of the animals, their salivation in the presence of stimuli, their avoidance movements in certain situations, etc., are clearly dependent on their appreciation of similarity. Induction itself depends on an assessment of similarity, and the ostensive learning of different words is nothing more than a default case of induction. But how do you explain that innate quality spaces are matched in the induction process with the natural situations, with what exists in external reality? Quine's answer follows from Darwin: innate spaces that have the greatest success in inductive processes are those that tend to predominate through natural selection. The naturalistic position is very clearly recognized, and from this position Quine will argue that philosophy should not be a propedeutic for science, but on a continuum with science, epistemology being thus part of biology.

Quine agrees that induction may have obvious defects. Naturally, colors impress people; Hempel was impressed by the „black crows", Goodman by „green emeralds" etc. On a cosmic scale, though, what represents a color contrast may be of a secondary importance. If in the space of inner qualities color can have a crucial role, at a cosmic scale it may be indistinct in the circles of similarity and thus cannot form natural kinds. No doubt color is very helpful for man in the purchase of food, so that at the level of which, based on induction, our quality space is inclined towards certain colours we will survive. But if at this level color contrast can be crucial to human activity, itcan be insignificant for the most comprehensive level of theoretical science. That is why the innate similarity which is helpful for a particular sphere of activity will become an impediment to another area. But according to scientific objectives the standards of similarity may change. Through a process of trial and error different things can be regrouped in different genders or new species when one uses better inductions than the old ones. A classic example of this is the exclusion of certain whales from the class of fish.

There is, therefore, Quine assures us a certain progress of similarity standards. When we define similarity based only on animal and human behavior we do not have a definition to please science, since we cannot yet say what it actually means that *a* is more similar to *b* than to *c*. But for a chemist, for example, a higher similarity between two molecules can be expressed more precisely by the fact that two molecules have an equal number of atoms or an equal atomic weight. The modern physicist can call on the theory of elementary particles located in space-time, and the biologist can discuss degrees of similarity in terms of genres, etc. After all, even common-sense language about beliefs and opinions could be replaced with a scientific one about the neuronal determinants of behavior, as, for example, the qualitative term „soluble" may be replaced by statements about molecular structure. In general, replacing a discussion about dispositions with one about structures is related to Quine's[14] strategy, as it is for Carnap in the *Aufbau*.

Back to objects! Cognitive Theories

The Carnap-Quine line of philosophizing about the structural description of knowledge experience based on a similarity relation and quality spaces seems to be increasingly supported in recent years by research from a cognitive perspective. Recent studies in this area of investigation point out that different concepts of knowledge are structured and that we speak of *conceptual spaces* (of concepts organized in the space of colors, of sounds, etc.). Any conceptual space contains a certain number of qualitative dimensions and these dimensions can have both a sensory character and a non-sensory one, and they form the context in which we can assign objects of knowledge and relations between them. Each quality dimension has a structure which may be of a geometric, or a topological nature. For example, the dimension of time can be modeled in one-dimensional ways as an isomorphic structure with the line of real numbers, at least in Western culture (in other cultures this structure can be shaped circulary or in other ways). An illustrative example can be the structure of the taste space[15]:



[14] J. J. C. Smart, „Quine's Philosophy of Science", în vol. Donald Davidson and Jaakko Hintikka (eds.), *Words and Objections. Essays on the Work of W. V. Quine*, D. Reidel Publishing Company/Dordreht-Holland, 1969, p. 12.

[15] Peter Gärdenfors, *Simbolic, Conceptual and Subconceptual Representations*, Cognitive Science, Lund University, Sweden, p. 9 (http://courses.media.mit.edu/2002fall/mas962/MAS962/gardenfors%204.1.pdf, 3/16/2009).

To those seen here, where the emphasis is always on ways of describing objects andtheir properties, one can raise a question of principle: cannot one proceed the other way around? Cannot one start directly from objects, and not from their description? Such questions are taken seriously by the cognitivists. But when we want to start from objects, another question immediately arises: does not the scientific imageor the scientific concept require a reviewer of a general type or an individual, single reviewer?

Unlike Wittgenstein's solution – family resemblances – the cognitivist orientation of recent years raises the question of the „typical effect" theorized for the first time by Eleanor Rösch[16]. In this perspective, a reviewer can be identified as a member of a class if it matches the representative type of that class. In other words, it is not only about family resemblances, as in Wittgenstein's conception, where similarities are sufficient if they fall within the same family, for one should also consider global similarities, those that are typical for a class or a gender. This means that between members of the reference there is a clear discrimination that the classical theory blurred.

In fact, say the cognitivists, some members of the field concept can represent the concept better than others. So the typical representative properties may apply to most members of a class, but not all, as alleged by the classical theory. But there are cases when, in the absence of typical properties or those related to the core concept, the reviewer is placed without difficulty in its class. Famous in this respect is the example given by Ziff[17] with the tiger that has only three paws. Although in the core concept of tiger there is the defining property of „quadruped," the actual copy of a tiger with only three paws is identified as a member of the class of tigers without difficulty.

Classical theory encountered further complications. Aiming at an onto-logical support for concepts, a number fo questions arise for classical theory. For example, what status is given to the concept when the determination of the properties in its content is made on an ontological base? Can we still say that it is a mental entity? Then, if we consider that the determination of these properties is made starting from the intension of the concept, how will we proceed when the intension is not sufficient to determine whether an object belongs to or does not belong to a class? In Sylvand Benjamin's opinion, according to classical theory, the concept as definition can be expressed as follows:

Object x is expressed by the concept of α if and only if it possesses characteristics

$$\Phi \ \{c1, ..., cn\}.$$

That is concept α is a function of attribution defined on two values, so the object x possesses or does not possess these characteristics:

$\alpha \to 0, 1$

$$\text{To conclude:} f : x \to \alpha \begin{cases} 1 \text{ only if } x \text{ possesses } \Phi \\ 0 \text{ if } x \text{ does not possess } \Phi \end{cases}$$

This function is basically a categorizing function[18]. Since Φ characteristics must be necessary and sufficient that any object must be categorized in one class at the same level:

$$\forall \alpha \ \forall x \, (x \in \alpha \vee x \notin \alpha).$$

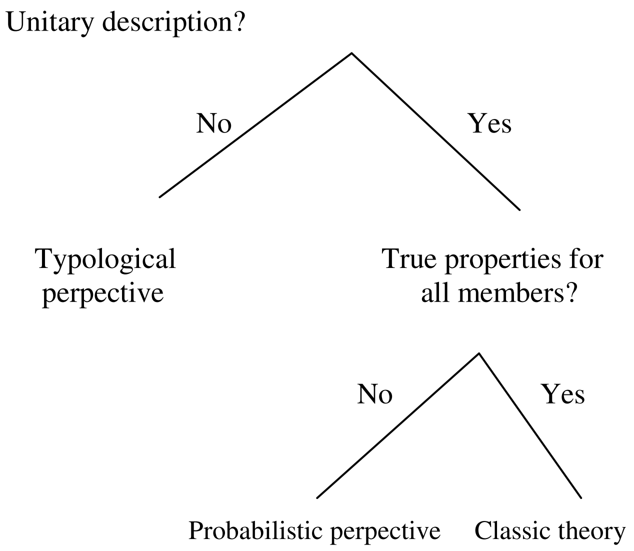
In comparison with classical theory one can raise two fundamental questions: 1) is there only one description or a unitary description for all members of a class of objects?; 2) are the properties specified in the unified description true for all class members? Classical theory answer yes to both questions. But we have seen that cognitivist studies point out that among the members of a class of objects and between reviewers within the scope of a concept there are usually some differences, so not all the members of a class are representative to the same extent and the specific properties of that class are found in certain degrees of probability in one class member or another. Therefore, from a probabilistic perspective, you can answer yes to the first question but not to the second. And from a typological perspective (view sample) one cannot answer affirmatively to the first question, making superfluous the second question. This situation can be rendered more expressively in the following figure:[19]

[16] Eleanor Rosch, Cognitive representation of semantic categories, în *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 104, 1975.

[17] Paul Ziff, *Semantic Analysis*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1960.

[18] Benjamin Sylvand, *Concept et Changement de concept*, Université Paris IV – Sorbonne, 2005, p. 71.

[19] Edward E. Smith and Douglas L. Medin, *Categories and Concepts*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England, 1981, pp. 3-4.



But we have seen that the typological theory also has problems with the categorization of objects. That is why in cognitivism there is the prototype theory. This theory, developed mainly by Eleanor Rösch, is, in the opinion of some authors, an effort of refining the theory of typology. The model or prototype has as a leading role the recognition and identification of objects, which means that the body would have a prior representation of the object[20]. But we can ask whether this representation is iconic or procedural, and if it is inferred from conduct or otherwise obtained. Either way, the theory of the prototypes relies on the calculation of similarities for the objects subsumed into a concept, a calculation which can be quite accurate, as we have already shown.

Moreover, the similarity calculation implies the idea of a point of balance between the objects belonging to a concept, and the Nash type equilibrium point that maximizes the aggregation of different properties just in the case of the prototype, the equilibrium point being thus the representative of the concept. If, in the classical theory of concepts, the belonging of an object to a concept was determined by a strict list of properties deemed necessary and sufficient, with prototype theory this requirement is much relaxed, making room for a space of gradations, of less precise measurements, so that an object may be quite in a position to belong in a higher or lower degree to a certain concept, depending on its proximity to the prototype[21]. One speaks then of a „threshold" input in concept, a minimum limit depending on which one can assess whether a particular object may or may not be subsumed to the concept. Noting that membership in this case is not assembled, but is based on the degree of similarity, thus calling into question the transitivity of the properties and of prototypes is called into question.

Perhaps it is more about *mental images* rather than concepts? Are our senses a sort of „specialized detector"? Understanding to retain what is valuable in prototype theory, Jesse Prinz proposes the term „proxytyp" as a kind of meta-set, i.e. a set of sets of properties, which is enough to trigger the detection of a concept. For example, for proxytype „dog", we have properties like „fur", „barking" and „body".The proxytype can be instantiated in this case through the assembly of four components: all components detected by „fur" and „barking"; all components detected by „fur" and „body", all components detected by „body" and „barking", all components detected by these representations. Unfortunately, in this case we are rather at a perceptive level, not at a conceptual level.

Conclusions: possible criteria for communicating science

The cognitivist orientation remains essentially at a perceptual level, but points out the importance of the object for knowledge and for establishing the field of concepts (through categorization). Science cannot remain in the perceptive, it needs theorization, namely treating concepts as theories. Taking into account the suggestions made in the line of development supported by Hertz, Carnap and Quine one can formulate the following principles for the communication of science: 1) the existence of an isomorphic relationship between the scientific image (theory) and reality; 2) the existence of an isomorphic relation between the scientific image and the communicated image; 3) an ascension of forms from reality (R) to the scientific image (IS) and communicated image (CI) are transitive.

Based on these principles, we believe that one can outline the following criteria for evaluating scientific communication:

1. *Topological isomorphy*: the scientific image elements (technical, for practitioners) meet the elements of reality, and the elements of the communicated image (for non-specialists) have the corre-

[20] George Vignaux, *Les sciences cognitives. Une introduction*, Éditions la Découverte, Paris, 1992, p. 188.

[21] Benjamin Sylvand, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

sponding elements in the scientific image (isomorphy of places);

2. *Relational isomorphy* : the relations between elements of the scientific image should be isomorphic with the relations between elements of reality and the relations between the elements in the communicated image should be isomorphic with the relations between elements of the scientific image;

3. *Clasial isomorphy* (where isomorphy between elements is not possible or is not significant); here we must ask to what extent a class or structure can be projected onto another class, or to what extent a predicate can be designed (from IS to IC) (i.e., the predicate of „quarq" first appeared in astrophysics, could not be taught in quantum physics until the predicate of „subatominc particle" had not occurred);

4. *The ontic condition*: „the elements" of reality investigated are extralogical entities;

5. *Logical condition*: constructed images should be allowed, if they do not contradict the principles of logic;

6. *The empirical condition*: provided the built images are correct, they are in line with reality;

7. *Pragmatic condition*: images constructed should be adequate, that is as simple as possible (simplicity criterion) and do not contain superfluous elements and relations;

8. *Transitivity*: IC concepts are built from concepts of IS (based on similarity relation and the metaphorical construction);

9. *Plurality of potential models*: the extent to which the IC construction allows repeated application of transition from IS to CI (based on similarity, transitivity and metaphorical construction) resulting in more potential models of IC;

10. *Metaphorical effectiveness of IC* (for example, metaphors in mathematics: sets are containers; functions are curves; the logical independence is geometric orthogonality; recurrence is circularity, etc.)

References

Biriş, I. (2010). *The Formal Structure of Experience in Carnap's Aufbau*, Balkan Journal of Philosophy, vol. 2, No 2.

Biriş, I. (2010). *Conceptele ştiinţei*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucureşti.

Boniolo,G., Dalla Chiara, M. L. et all.(2002). *Filosofia della scienza*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano.

Bunge, M. (1977). *Ontology,* Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht-Holland/Boston-USA.

Carnap, R. (1998). *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg.

Flonta, M. (2008). *Gânditorul singuratic. Critica şi practica filozofiei la Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti.

Gärdenfors, P. (2002). *Simbolic, Conceptual and Subconceptual Representations*, Cognitive Science, Lund University, Sweden, (http://courses.media.mit.edu/2002fall/mas962/MAS962/gardenfors%204.1.pdf, 3/16/2009).

Grecu, C. (1999). Aspecte ontologice, gnoselogice şi logice ale simplităţii, în vol. *Logică şi ontologie*, Editura Trei, Bucureşti.

Kistler, M. (2001). Le concept de génidentité chez Carnap et Russell, în vol. Sandra Laugier (ed.), *Carnap et la construction logique du monde*, Vrin, Paris.

Narboux, J. Ph. (2001). La construction: abstraction ou schématisation? Quine et Goodman lecteurs de l'Aufbau, în vol. . Sandra Laugier (ed.), *Carnap et la construction logique du monde*, Vrin, Paris.

Quine, W. V. O. (1969). *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, Columbia University Press, NewYork.

Quine, W. V. O. (1995). *From Stimulus to Science*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts/London.

Rosch, E. (1975). Cognitive representation of semantic categories, în *Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

Smart, J. J. C. (1969). „Quine's Philosophy of Science", in vol. Donald Davidson and Jaakko Hintikka (eds.), *Words and Objections. Essays on the Work of W. V. Quine*, D. Reidel Publishing Company/Dordreht-Holland.

Smith, E., Medin, D. L. (1981). *Categories and Concepts*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England.

Sylvand, B. (2005). *Concept et Changement de concept*, Université Paris IV – Sorbonne.

Vignaux, G. (1992). *Les sciences cognitives. Une introduction*, Éditions la Découverte, Paris.

Ziff, P. (1960). *Semantic Analysis*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

COMMUNICATION, IMPLICATURE AND TESTIMONY

Martina Blečić

Department of Philosophy, University of Rijeka, Croatia
e-mail: martina.blecic@gmail.com

Abstract:
Conversational implicatures, as a widely examined instance of indirect communication, can enrich philosophical pursuits in many domains. Applied to the field of the epistemology of testimony, the theory of conversational implicatures raises many questions that could in turn provide novel insights about how we should treat other people's testimonies. The problem is not whether people acquire knowledge and form their beliefs on the basis of other people's words or on the basis of their beliefs – the problem lies in being able to detect those cases in which beliefs and words do not match. I suggest that the use and the decoding of implicatures is a rational process and that correctly formed implicature-based beliefs are justified because of their rationality. I also suggest that minor differences between the speaker's and the hearer's communicative moves can generate cases of epistemic (bad) luck that can be treated as predictable outcomes of a communicational faux pas.

Key words: communication, conversational implicature, testimony, justification, rationality, epistemick luck.

1. Introduction

The crucial communicational act (or process) of transmission of information through language goes under the technical name of "testimony", and testimony, associated with the pragmatic phenomenon known as "conversational implicature" will be the main topic in what follows.

Some of the most important epistemological questions are those related to the sources of knowledge and belief. Perception, introspection, reason, memory and testimony are the most widely discussed and accepted among such sources. They are often divided into two classes: generative and preservative sources (see for example Audi, 1998 or Bernecker and Pritchard, 2011). Traditionally, perception, reason and introspection are considered generative sources while memory and testimony are considered preservative sources of knowledge. More recently the view about testimony has changed and the difference between memory and testimony was emphasized so that testimony is increasingly seen as a legitimate generative source of knowledge and belief. Since testimony is the transmission of belief and knowledge through language in communication it is very difficult to draw a sharp boundary between the problems of testimony and those associated with language, and especially those from the domain of pragmatics. We can define testimony as a speech act with which the speaker transmits information to a hearer. This is a very broad and general definition of testimony but it will suffice for the purposes of this paper.

There is a wide range of information that the speaker can convey to the hearer. I can form the belief that the "Mutiny on the Bounty" plays on TV tonight based on the information provided by my neighbor, the belief that the food which my friend is eating is not tasty by looking at her facial expression, the belief that there are neutrinos faster than light based on a magazine article or the belief that my sister is happy based on her e-mail. These are all cases of testimony. But there is a crucial difference between the first and the third case on one hand and the second and the fourth on the other. The information acquired in the first and in the third case can be acquired by non-testimonial sources. I can form the belief that the "Mutiny on the Bounty" is playing tonight by looking at the TV-guide and the belief that there are neutrinos faster than light by joining a team of scientist and taking part in the experiments they conduct. On the other hand, even if I acquire such beliefs through testimony I can non-testimonialy verify them. For the second and for the fourth case such verification or the acquisition of such beliefs by non-testimonial means is not possible[1]. Such cases are exactly the ones that make testimony a truly generative source of knowledge.

How do we form beliefs and acquire knowledge through testimony? The traditional view is that the speaker transmits his beliefs to a hearer along with the epistemic proprieties it possesses. Jennifer Lackey challenges this view and proposes the idea that "both causally and epistemologically, *statements*, not beliefs, are the crucial items in a testimonial exchange" (Lackey, 2006:79).

Another important contribution of Jennifer Lackey to the discussion about testimony and communication in general is her dualist theory of the nature of testimony: "In order to acquire testimonial knowledge, *both* the speaker and the hearer must make a positive epistemic contribution to the knowledge in question, the former through the reliability of her statements and the latter through her positive reasons" (Lackey, 2008:2).

Even though I agree with her dualist account I disagree with her main thesis that we should stop looking at what speakers believe or know and focus on what they say. It is certainly true that we learn from other people's words since we don't have direct access to their knowledge or to the beliefs they hold, but through testimony the speaker, at least in the cases of cooperative communicative exchange, wishes to transmit a certain belief, or any other kind of mental state – the speaker thus uses words to express mental states – so that words that do not represent mental states are empty and the hearer cannot learn or form a belief from them[2]. Difficulties arise from the fact that the uttered words do not always correspond to the mental states we possess and with the message we wish to send to our collocutors.

In this paper I will analyze one particular case of testimony in which generative testimony meets the phenomenon known as conversational implicature. The conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of this particular case can be generalized into an account of the importance of conversational implicatures for the field of testimony and epistemology in general. I will start with a brief presentation of Grice's notion of conversational implicatures. I will then provide some possible interactions between a speaker's intention and a hearer's uptake. I will briefly explore the questions about a speaker's competence and benevolence. Then I will proceed with the rationality of conversational implicatures, the justification of implicature-based belief and conclude with cases of knowledge and epistemic (bad) luck generated by conversational implicatures.

2. Conversational Implicature

The famous creator of the theory of conversational implicatures is H. P. Grice. Since his account of conversational implicatures is widely known I shall summarize it very briefly without getting into details. The account is tightly related to his notion of conversation as a cooperative endeavor based on what he calls the Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1989: 26).

Grice individuates four Kantian-sounding categories related to the Cooperative Principle – Quantity (make your contribution as informative as is required), Quality (try to make your contribution one that is true), Relation (be relevant) and Manner (be perspicuous) (Grice, 1989).

Conversational implicatures are usually generated in those situations in which the speaker does not respect one of the four conversational categories proposed by Grice or some more specific maxims that fall under them. Even though at first it could seem that this kind of behavior could lead to communicational problems, in fact, in the majority of cases, it offers to the speaker new conversational possibilities[3].

[1] I can, for example, form the belief that my sister is happy on the basis of my father's testimony, but this is clearly still a case of testimony. I can also form the same belief by reading her diary. The latter can still be considered testimony (in a broader sense), even though there was no intention on the part of the testifier to make such a testimony publicly available.

[2] In the majority of cases of cooperative communication speakers will tend to transmit their beliefs. Of course, if the speaker is trying to deceive his collocutor his communicative intention will differ from the transmission of positive belief through direct or indirect speech acts – sometimes he will in fact intend to convey *p* even though he believes ~*p*. We could argue that when the speaker is lying we can associate with him a particular mental state of *wishing to deceive*.

[3] Let's use an example proposed by Grice in order to illustrate how conversational implicatures are generated: "Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on his job, and B replies, *Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet.* At

Even though Grice did not provide a definition of conversational implicatures he presented a general pattern for the working out of a conversational implicature: “He has said that *p*; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q* is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *q*; he intends me to think, or at least willing to allow me to think, that *q*; and so he has implicated that *q*” (Grice, 1989: 31).

We can see that conversational implicatures require some common ground between speaker and hearer. The speaker’s communicative intention in saying *p* is to communicate something different than *p*, namely *q*. In order to successfully communicate *q* the speaker must rely on the hearer’s capacity of working out the conversational implicature and recognize his real message. Such communication will not be successfully carried out if the speaker and the hearer do not share at least some of the communicative conventions that govern their society and other general knowledge.

The phenomenon of conversational implicature can, just as the phenomenon of testimony, be viewed broadly or narrowly. Just as in this paper I will use a broad account of testimony I will do the same thing with implicature. I will not address the problems associated with the distinction between figurative language, conventional implicature, impliciture etc. and conversational implicature. We can thus define conversational implicatures as messages conveyed indirectly through the speaker’s utterance in which there is a gap between the speaker’s communicative intention and the literal meaning of the words he uses in his utterance that needs to be filled in by the hearer.

As we briefly mentioned earlier, the gap between the uttered words and the speaker’s intention generates various epistemological problems related to the phenomenon of testimony. If the speaker’s words can differ from his communicative intention how can we ever know what his real message is? How can a hearer justify the beliefs she has formed on the basis of a conversational implicature?

3. Possible interactions between speaker’s intention and hearer’s uptake

Due to the fact that conversational implicatures are not mandatory parts of everyday conversations, we can sometimes find ourselves in a situation in which it won’t be completely clear if our collocutor conversationally implicates something by her utterance or if her utterance has to be interpreted as literal and explicit.

Imagine the following conversation:
A: Are we going to the cinema?
B: I am tired.

Let’s assume that A’s and B’s date to the cinema was previously arranged and that the conversation occurs when A visits B’s home in order to pick her up. Let’s further presuppose that A and B are new acquaintances who still don’t have a concretely elaborated opinion of one another and thus cannot base their belief forming processes on their previous experiences or mutual character analysis.

Should B’s utterance always be interpreted as an implicature carrying one? Let’s explore some possible interactions between the speaker’s meaning and the hearer’s uptake related to the above mentioned example.

The communicative possibilities for the speaker are the following[4]:

1. B can sincerely say that she is tired and implicate that she doesn’t want to go to the cinema.
2. B can sincerely say that she is tired without implicating that she doesn’t want to go to the cinema.

this point, A might well inquire what he meant by saying that C had not yet been to prison. The answer might be any one of such things that C is the sort of person likely to yield to the temptation provided by his occupation, that C’s colleagues are really very unpleasant and treacherous people, and so forth. (…) It is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant in this example, is distinct from what B said (…)” (Grice, 1989: 24).
Why would B mention that C hasn’t been to prison yet? It seems that he violates Grice’s maxim of relevance – at first this answer does not have anything to do with A’s question. But the hearer can, without too much effort, grasp the speaker’s real message. There can be various reasons for the speaker not to convey his real message directly; not wishing to condemn an acquaintance without firm evidence could be one of them.

[4] Of course, with the utterance of “I am tired” the speaker could be conversationally implicating other things besides that she is too tired to go to the cinema. For example, uttering this sentence while licking her lips and winking at the hearer the implicature would certainly differ.

3. B can lie about her tiredness and implicate that she doesn't want to go to the cinema.
4. B can lie about her tiredness without implicating that she doesn't want to go to the cinema.

The hearer's possible interpretations are the following:

1. A can accept that B is tired and accept the presumed implicature that she is not willing to go to the cinema.
2. A can accept that B is tired and reject the presumed implicature that she is not willing to go to the cinema.
3. A can reject the idea that B is tired and accept the presumed implicature that she is not willing to go to the cinema.
4. A can reject the idea that B is tired and reject the presumed implicature that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

Joining these possibilities we get sixteen combinations: B can say that she is tired and implicate that she will not go to the cinema and A can accept both her literal utterance and the implicature, otherwise, he can accept the literal utterance but reject the implicature or reject both literal utterance and implicature. B can say that she is tired without implicating that she is not going to the cinema and A can accept her literal utterance and wrongly include the possible implicature in his interpretation and so on.

Let's now take a closer look at the possible beliefs formed by the hearer and at possible justifications for the respective beliefs that he can offer on the basis of the speaker's words. Here are some possible interpretations of B's utterance and the resulting beliefs held by A:

1. B is tired and she is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

A's interpretative strategy: B did not answer my question, but I see no reason for her to avoid the answer. Tiredness could be one possible reason for her to turn down my invitation. Offering a good reason instead of a plain rejection could be her attempt to avoid hurting my feelings.

2. B is tired and she is not implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

A's interpretative strategy: Since our date was previously arranged and given that she could have easily telephoned me to cancel it in order to spare me the effort of driving to her house, she is not implicating anything negative with her utterance. Since her answer is not relevant to my question I can assume that she considered my question as a rhetorical one that does not really require an answer and that she just wants to point out that she had a tiring day and that she would like to talk about it on our way to the cinema.

3. B is not tired but she is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

A's interpretative strategy: If B were really tired she would have called me in order to cancel our date. Her failure to do so indicates that she forgot about our arrangements and that she is lying in order to keep me from getting upset.

4. B is not tired and she is not implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

A's interpretative strategy: B is not really tired but she is just saying so in order to warn me to shut up during the ride to the cinema because she finds my stories boring (and if she had someone else to take to the cinema she would have done so).

These four beliefs and their respective justifications can all be considered valid and can, on particular occasions, turn out to be true. But how should we generally form our implicature-based beliefs? Which of the four possible interpretations of the speaker's words are epistemologically privileged and why?

4. Speaker's competence and benevolence

In interpreting B's words A should take into consideration many aspects related to B and to the conversational context. From the epistemological point of view the two main questions A should consider are those regarding B's competence and B's benevolence.

I suggest that A has no reason to doubt B's competence about this testimony since she is testifying about her personal physical and mental state to which she has direct access and could not be wrong about – she knows for certain if she is tired and whether she is willing to go to the cinema or not [5].

The answer to the question whether B is benevolent or not is perhaps more complex. The epistemology of trust is a vast field of disparate views about trust and about when trust is justified. The two

[5] I will here set aside possible counterexamples from psychoanalysis or psychology in general, but I hope to address them elswere.

most radical rival accounts are the following: on one side are those who claim that we always have the epistemological right to trust others (anti-reductionist view), on the other side we find those who argue that testimony is never a reliable source of knowledge and should always be reduced to more basic sources of knowledge (reductionist view). Between these two extremes there are a myriad of intermediate epistemological positions.

Grice solved the question of benevolence by including *by fiat* the speaker's truthfulness as one of his fundamental conversational principles. Under his category of Quality falls a supermaxim – "Try to make your contribution one that is true" – and two more specific maxims:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence (Grice, 1989: 27).

As a constitutive part of the Cooperative principle the speaker's truthfulness is the prerequisite of cooperative conversations.

Since Grice does not explain the reasons one has to adhere to these maxims we can turn to David Lewis and proclaim truthfulness and trust to be conventions: "My proposal is that the convention whereby a population P uses a language £ is a convention of *truthfulness* and *trust* in £. To be truthful in £ is to act in a certain way: to try never to utter any sentence of £ that is not true in £. Thus it is to avoid uttering any sentence of £ unless one believes it to be true in £. To be trusting in £ is to form beliefs in a certain way: to impute truthfulness in £ to others, and thus to tend to respond to another's utterance of any sentence of £ by coming to believe that the uttered sentence is true in £" (Lewis, 1983: 167).

Such a convention is necessary for all types of communication, and its existence is the reason why there can be lies which are exactly the violation of the convention of trustfulness. If people would not adhere to such conventions communication and the acceptance of new beliefs would be made impossible. Following Lewis we can say that no one has reason to deviate from such convention under the condition that others conform to it too. We can add a normative aspect to this convention that would be expressed through the punishment of violators through the lack of trust in future situations or even through institutionalized punishments (in schools and courtrooms or any other work place)[6].

J. L. Austin has also stressed the importance of trust: "Naturally, we are judicious: we don't say we know (at second hand) if there is any special reason to doubt the testimony: but there has to be *some* reason. It is fundamental in talking (as in other matters) that we are entitled to trust others, except in so far as there is some concrete reason to distrust them. Believing persons, accepting testimony, is the, or one main, point of talking" (Austin, 1961: 50).

We can certainly say that failing to trust the speaker without any reason to do so leads to bad communication, but so does the blind acceptance of other people's words as true. It is thus important to point out that we don't have any epistemological right to accept testimonies as true if they are presented by testifiers with a bad reputation or if there is clear evidence that the testifier is lying. On the other hand, distrusting the speaker without any concrete reason to do so will completely block any possibility for the further advancement of the conversation in question. Besides, the initial acceptance of the speaker's utterance as true does not mean that such a belief has to remain unchanged in the future. Every belief presented in the absence of evidence pointing to its falsehood can be accepted as true and then calibrated in the light of evidence that challenges its truthfulness. One view about how calibration takes place has been recently proposed by Sperber and his collaborators: "Comprehension involves adopting a tentative and labile stance of trust; this will lead to acceptance only if epistemic vigilance, which is triggered by the same communicative acts that trigger comprehension, does not come up with reasons to doubt." (Sperber *et al.*, 2010:368,369)

According to the authors, humans "have a suite of cognitive mechanisms for epistemic vigilance, targeted at the risk of being misinformed by others"

[6] What about cases of figurative speech? Are such cases counterexamples to the idea that there is a convention of truthfulness and trust? The truthfulness of a non-literal sentence cannot be assessed without a proper context and it will not depend on the literal meaning of the words used in the sentence but on the speaker's communicative intention. If A says to B that their mutual acquaintance is a weasel B will form the belief that the acquaintance is a treacherous person. The truth of the sentence depends on whether or not the person in question is a treacherous person – if he is, then the sentence is true, if he is not, then it is false. The fact that he is not literally a weasel is completely irrelevant.

(Sperber *et al.*, 2010:359). What exactly epistemic vigilance is can be perhaps better captured from the review of the experimental literature from the domain of children's trust proposed by Fabrice Clément. Clément, one of the authors of "Epistemic Vigilance", shows that children do not accept indiscriminately what is communicated to them even though they have the tendency to trust others:

> On one hand, non-reductionists cannot appeal to the credulity principle in the case of children; we have seen that these latter do not swallow indiscriminately what is communicated to them. Nevertheless, if no contradiction with information already possessed is detectable and the speaker does not demonstrate signs of untrustworthiness, children will accept the communicated propositions and enrich their stock of beliefs. On the other hand, reductionists are in a way relieved of the infant/child objection: children's knowledge is somewhat justified because incoming information is submitted to inferential processes in order to check their veracity. However, contrary to the view that conceives the acquisition of knowledge as involving a kind of reflexive performance by the receiver, children (and adults) are biologically equipped to perform basic epistemological checks. If there is a virtue in this process, it has to be ascribed more to natural selection than to conscious intellectual effort. (…) individuals are endowed with basic mechanisms that protect them from naïve gullibility. (Clément, 2010: 545).

Regarding the question of the speaker's benevolence I will thus side with those who regard truthfulness and trust as basic requirements for a cooperative conversational interaction unless something indicates that the speaker is not being honest. Trusting the speaker in a cooperative conversation in the absence of any evidence that would point to the fact that the speaker has bad communicative intentions is a rational thing to do since if we distrust her in situations like this that would mean that we are opting out of the conversation, terminating it, without any reason to do so.

5. The rationality and the justification of implicature-based beliefs

Once we have defined the speaker B in our example as *prima facie* competent and benevolent we can turn to the conversational implicature that she could be conveying with her utterance. Should the hearer take the conversational implicature into account and why should he do so?

I wish to argue that the hearer has a valid justification for including the presumed implicature in the interpretation of the speaker's words due to the rationality of conversational implicatures and that such rationality is exactly what offers to the hearer a justification for his implicature-based belief.

5.1 The rationality of implicature-based beliefs

In her paper "Two conceptions of rationality in Grice's theory of implicature" Marina Sbisà explains two possible views of the rationality of conversational implicatures. From Grice's writings Sbisà extracts two distinct hypotheses about why conversational implicature can be considered rational:

1) Conversational implicature is rational insofar as it is part of rational communicative behavior to maximize understanding (gather as much information as possible, etc.)
2) Conversational implicature is rational because it is calculable (Sbisà, 2002: 237)

The first hypothesis links the rationality of conversational implicatures to the rationality of the Cooperative Principle as something that is, by Grice, reasonable and rational for us to follow. The second hypothesis links the rationality of conversational implicatures to their calculability. The inferential path, that is, the calculation outlined by Grice is the general pattern for the working out of a conversational implicature mentioned earlier.

Sbisà merges these two possible hypotheses of the rationality of conversational implicatures with the notions of instrumental and argumentative rationality and defines them as follows (basing her second definition on Grice's own ideas):

> *Instrumental rationality*: A course of behavior is rational if it is characterized by the agent's non-accidental use of effective means, or of means believed to be effective, for achieving his or her goals.
>
> *Argumentative rationality*: Rationality is a concern that one's moves are justified and a capacity (to some degree) to give effect to that concern (Sbisà, 2006: 241, 242).

According to Sbisà: "When implicature is viewed as instrumentally rational, it is natural enough to consider it as a means for the optimization of communication (in various possible senses) and to this aim it is quite reasonable, or perhaps even mandatory, to assume that it has to do with how communication actually functions, that is, with the processes actually occurring in the minds of speaker and hearer" (Sbisà, 2006: 242).

On the other hand: "Argumentative rationality comes into the picture because a rational being is for Grice a being who seeks for justification for his or her choices. A person, or essentially rational being, is a kind of being who does not behave like this only accidentally or on occasions, but in whom seeking for justification is essential: such a being, therefore, essentially possesses argumentative rationality" (Sbisà, 2006: 243).

Sbisà claims that the second hypothesis about the rationality of conversational implicature, based on argumentative rationality is more plausible but she admittedly leaves open several questions about the distinction concerning the rationality of conversational implicatures and instrumental and argumentative rationality.

I am of the opinion that both proposed hypotheses and both general conceptions of rationality are helpful tools for the analysis of conversational implicatures.

The speaker is always in the position to weigh her words before she utters them and is thus in the position to choose the way in which to present her thoughts and intensions to the hearer. Therefore, choosing to convey her message by means of implicatures is for the speaker an instrumentally rational thing to do in a particular situation. If she is asked for the reasons she chose conversational implicature as a communicative strategy she can justify her choice through arguments, that is, through argumentative rationality. As for the hearer, he is only in the position to justify the belief he formed on the basis of the speaker's utterance through arguments, that is, to rely on argumentative rationality which offers him a sound epistemic justification for the beliefs he forms on the basis of the speaker's utterance.

Instrumental and argumentative rationality which can explain the phenomenon of conversational implicature make it reasonable for the speaker and for the hearer to use conversational implicatures as a communicative or interpretative strategy. It is reasonable for the speaker to express her thoughts, in certain occasions, by means of conversational implicature, and it is reasonable for the speaker to interpret the speaker's utterance as an implicature-carrying one if the context of the utterance indicates the presence of an implicature. Implicatures provide a widespread, perhaps socially conditioned, way of conveying information that differs from the direct expression of thoughts. We could even say that the use of conversational implicatures is conventionalized.[7] This conventionalization can help us explain why hearers are able to read the implicature into the speaker's message in the case that the speaker's words offer him such opportunity – that is, if the speaker did not cancel the implicature in any way[8].

5.2 The justification of implicature-based belief

If we think that someone used an implicature in order to fulfill his communicative intention indirectly we can prove it with an argument that will include all (or at least the majority) of elements involved in the specific speech act. Such a calculation does not have to be an actual one, but competent rational hearers must be in the position to carry it out. As we previously saw the calculation of an implicature is a valuable justification for the belief that the hearer reads from the utterance.

What is the nature of such a justification? I suggest that we must have a justification of our belief

[7] The conventionalization of an implicature can be the result of many factors – linguistic economy, good manners and the avoidance of misunderstanding are among them. Once the implicature is conventionalized it is rational to include it in the interpretation of the speaker's words and the calculability of the implicature provides us with a justification of the belief we form on the basis of her words. If the use of conversational implicatures was not conventionalized its use could confuse our collocutors, but this is clearly not the case in the vast majority of situations. The conventionalization of implicatures is an interesting subject on its own and a deeper analysis of this topic would go beyond the scope of this paper.

[8] „Since, to assume the presence of a conversational implicature, we have to assume that at least the Cooperative Principle is being observed, and since it is possible to opt out of the observation of this principle, it follows that a generalized conversational implicature can be cancelled in a particular case. It may be explicitly canceled, by the addition of a clause that states or implies that the speaker has opted out, or it may be contextually changed, if the form of the utterance that usually carries it is used in a context that makes it clear that the speaker is opting out" (Grice, 1989: 39).
Grice extended the cancellability of conversational implicatures from generalized conversational implicatures to all implicatures (see Grice, 1989:44), but the notion of cancellability is sometimes questioned (see for example Weiner, 2006)

based on the interpretation of an implicature that will be both internal and external.

Let us remind ourselves of the distinction between internalism and externalism: "(…) the difference between internalism and externalism concerns the sorts of factors that make beliefs epistemically justified. According to internalism, the epistemic justification of a subject's belief is entirely determined by factors internal to the subject's perspective. Externalism, in contrast, denies that epistemic justification depends entirely on factors internal to the subject's perspective" (Lemos 2007: 108, 109).

I shall treat internal and external justification in the case of implicature-based belief as complementary.

Roderick Chisholm, as an advocate of internalism, claims that "[w]e presuppose (…) that the things we know are justified for us in the following sense: we can know what it is, on any occasion, that constitutes our grounds, or reasons, or evidence for thinking that we know" (Chisholm 1977:17).

Justification through the calculation of conversational implicature has thus an important internal aspect since we have direct access to the reasons that we have for a certain belief we read from an utterance carrying an implicature.

Recall our example:

A: Are we going to the cinema?
B: I am tired.

Let's assume that the belief formed by A is that B is tired and that she is not willing to go to the cinema. If a person C asks A why he thinks so, he can present his interpretation of the utterance as a justification for his belief: "B did not answer my question, but I see no reason for her to avoid the answer. Tiredness could be one of the possible reasons for her to turn down my invitation. Offering a good reason instead of a plain rejection could be her attempt to avoid hurting my feelings."

B has access to his reasons for the belief that B is tired and that she is not willing to go to the cinema and he recognizes such reasons as good reasons for his belief. If he did not have access to such reasons he could not justify his belief.

On the other hand, such a belief can also be externally justified. We will turn to reliabilism as the most prominent externalist theory of belief justification in the cases of belief formed on the basis of implicature-carrying utterances. Basically, reliabilism holds that a belief is epistemically justified if it is a product of a reliable cognitive process. As Alvin Goldman puts it "the justificational status of a belief is a function of the reliability of the process or processes that cause it, where (as a first approximation) reliability consists in the tendency of a process to produce beliefs that are true rather than false" (Goldman, 1979: 10)[9].

What is the reliable cognitive process involved in the formation of implicature-based belief? Grice's general pattern for the working out of a conversational implicature could once again be of use: "He has said that *p*; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q* is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *q*; he intends me to think, or at least is willing to allow me to think, that *q*; and so he has implicated that *q*" (Grice, 1989: 31).

Such a pattern could be considered a reliable belief forming process if it had a tendency to produce beliefs that are true rather than false. If this belief forming process is reliable, then a person who uses it to form a belief has an external justification for the belief in question.

---

[9] Goldman has applied reliabilism to the domain of social epistemology, more precisely to the phenomenon of testimony: "For a testimonial belief to be justified it suffices that the general process of accepting the reports of others mostly yields truths. Accepting the reports of others is really a specific pattern of inference, where inference is construed as a process that takes some beliefs as inputs and generates new beliefs as outputs. In the testimonial case, the inputs include beliefs of the form "Person R reports X" and the outputs are beliefs of the form "X". What is required for this process to be reliable? Assuming that hearers accurately represent speaker's reports, what is further required is that those reports be generally true. So credulity achieves reliability if and only if it is exercised in an environment in which speaker's reports are generally true. If this condition is satisfied, then the (simple) reliabilist theory of justification assigns the status of "justified" to testimonial beliefs, whether or not believers have an inductive basis for regarding testifier's reports as reliable." (Goldman, 1999: 129, 130)

In this quote we find another justification four trusting other people's testimony. But what about conversational implicatures? In the case of an utterance carrying an implicature a person R does not report X, on the contrary, he wishes to report something different from X.

I hope that within this broad general pattern one can detect a kind of reliable cognitive process that can be considered a reliable process type, while every particular interpretation of an utterance carrying an implicature would qualify as a process token. Such a process does not have to be perfect in order to be a valuable belief forming process. A process that is not perfect can still be a valid source of justification if the majority of beliefs that are produced by it are true. Interpreting an utterance carrying an implicature through argumentative reasoning involving conversational principles, the speaker's truthfulness, the context of the utterance and other factors could be considered as a reliable belief forming process.

What is the relation of the proposed internalist and externalist accounts of justification of beliefs based on the analysis of implicatures? It seems that even though we can explain the justificational status of conversational implicatures both internally and externally we should use a joint account for a thorough explanation of this justification. The justification is internally accessible by the hearer but it partly depends on an externally valid belief forming process. On the other hand, we can say that a hearer is justified in his implicature-based belief only if he is aware of the rational process that leads to his belief. Such justification can be latent, but once the hearer is asked for it he has to be able to argumentatively justify his implicature-based belief.

The reliable process type (in this case an abstract rational pattern) has a variety of process tokens (concrete usages of the general pattern) in which the internal justification is crucial – we build our belief based on the reasons we have and the consciousness of a reliable belief forming process that supports our belief. If we are not aware of such a process we cannot be said to have a justified belief.

Recall once again our example:

A: Are we going to the cinema?
B: I am tired.

With the utterance of "I am tired" a cooperative speaker who respects conversational principles will intend to convey a message similar to "I am too tired to go to the cinema". Had B intended to cancel the implicature she could have done that verbally, saying something like "I am tired, but I would still like to go to the cinema", or contextually, putting on her coat and grabbing her purse while uttering the words. The same rule applies to the hearer – a competent hearer should read the utterance of "I am tired" as "I am too tired to go to the cinema". He should do so because if he is a competent language user he ought to be aware of the linguistic conventions that govern talk exchange and know which process to use for the interpretation of utterances that have the potential to carry a conventional implicature.

I suggest that speakers and hearers usually behave like that[10], and that such behavior is rational.

6. Implicature in the cases of knowledge and epistemic (bad) luck

In the last part of the paper I will return to the initially presented four communicative possibilities for the speaker and the four belief possibilities for the hearer related to our example:

A: Are we going to the cinema?
B: I am tired.

While presenting those possibilities we have pointed out that joined together they yield sixteen different combinations. We shall now very briefly explore the epistemological status of every one of those possible combinations.

The case in which B conversationally implicates that she is too tired to go to the cinema and A reads the intended implicature from her words is a case in which a justified true belief is formed, therefore we can say that A possesses knowledge. Indeed the belief forming process behind A's belief is rational and justifiable internally and externally. Moreover, the formed belief is not the outcome of a lucky guess or of a lucky course of events.

What about the other possible cases? I suggest that among the sixteen combinations there are, besides one case of knowledge, three cases of epistemic luck, three cases of epistemic bad luck and nine cases of unjustified false belief. All the mentioned cases can be represented as follows:

[10] As previously stated, the conventionalization of implicatures is an important issue related to the problems dealt with in this paper, but unfortunately due to the lack of space this topic cannot be addressed any further. It is important to mention that the conventionalization of particular implicatures does depend on the particular language community in which the utterance takes place, but that the possibility of conveying a message using conversational implicatures and the "calculation" of implicatures present a much wider phenomenon.

B - speaker

A - hearer	Truth/Implicature	Truth/~Implicature	Lie/Implicature	Lie/~Implicature
Truth/Implicature	Knowledge (T)	Epistemic Bad Luck (F)	Epistemic Bad Luck (F)	Epistemic Bad Luck (F)
Truth/~Implicature	Unjustified Belief (F)	Epistemic Luck (T)	Unjustified Belief (F)	Unjustified Belief (F)
Lie/Implicature	Unjustified Belief (F)	Unjustified Belief (F)	Epistemic Luck (T)	Unjustified Belief (F)
Lie/~Implicature	Unjustified Belief (F)	Unjustified Belief (F)	Unjustified Belief (F)	Epistemic Luck (T)

Table 1: Sixteen possible combination between the speaker's communicative intention and her mental states and the hearer's uptake. The letter "F" in brackets indicates a false belief and the letter "T" a true belief.

Let's start with epistemic luck. The three cases of epistemic luck (shown in the diagonal of the table) are the following:

a) The case in which A forms the true belief that B is tired but that she is still willing to go to the cinema.
b) The case in which A forms the true belief that B is lying about her tiredness and implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.
c) The case in which A forms the true belief that B is lying about her tiredness and that she is willing to go to the cinema.

In these cases the speaker is not acting cooperatively since she is not implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema even though her utterance clearly points to the contrary or since, in other cases, she is lying that she is tired when she, in fact, is not. If the hearer would interpreted her utterance as that she is telling the truth and reading from her utterance that she would like to stay home, as I argue that he should, he would have been wrong.

Why are these three cases instances of epistemic luck? We turn to Duncan Pritchard's account of epistemic luck. He proposes the following two conditions for epistemic luck:

> (L1) If an event is lucky, then it is an event that occurs in the actual word but which does not occur in most of the nearest possible words to the actual world (worlds which most resemble the actual world).
> (L2) If an event is lucky, then it is an event that is significant to the agent concerned (or would be significant, were the agent to be availed of the relevant facts) (Pritchard, 2004:197, 199).

The worlds that appear to be the closest to the actual one are those in which the speaker is reliable, and benevolent, since it is rational to speak the truth in a cooperative conversation. Moreover, it seems that in such worlds the speaker's communicative intention would be to use the utterance "I am tired" in order to conventionally implicate that she is not willing to go to the cinema. A competent language user would not use utterances that have the potential of carrying a conversational implicature if she does not have the intention to implicate something with it since such behavior would be deceitful, and deceitful behavior is not rational in a cooperative communicative exchange. As for the hearer, it seems that in the closest possible worlds he would succeed, being a competent speaker, to grasp the speaker's real communicative intention, that is, to interpret the utterance taking into account the potential implicature (unless the implicature was cancelled contextually or verbally).

Even though the belief can be justified by the hearer[11] it is still not an instance of knowledge since it is the outcome of a lucky communicational event. The belief would have been wrong if the speaker had been cooperative and if the hearer had interpreted her utterance as he rationally should, that is, as if the

[11] For example with a reasoning similar to the following: "she is not implying that she is too tired to go to the cinema since our date was previously arranged and she could have easily telephoned me to cancel it in order to spare me the effort of driving to her house. Her answer is not relevant to my question so I can assume that she considered my question as a rhetorical one that does not really require an answer and that she just wants to point out that she had a tiring day and that she would like to talk about it on our way to the cinema."

speaker were telling the truth and implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

On the other hand the cases of epistemic bad luck (shown in the first row of the table) are the following:

a) The case in which A forms the false belief that B is being honest and that she is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema while in fact B is speaking the truth without actually implicating that she is too tired to go to the cinema.
b) The case in which A forms the false belief that B is being honest and that she is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema while in fact B is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema, but lying about her fatigue.
c) The case in which A forms the false belief that B is being honest and that she is implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema while in fact B is both lying that she is tired and not implicating that she is not willing to go to the cinema.

These cases are instances of epistemic bad luck because A has done everything in his power in order to rationally form a belief, he has fulfilled his epistemic duties – he considered B as benevolent (there was no evidence pointing to the contrary), competent (she was testifying about her personal state she has direct access to) and has taken into account the implicature that was offered by B's utterance. In all the nearest possible worlds B's belief would turn out to be true since he followed a reliable belief forming process, related both to the speaker's benevolence and competence and to the conversational implicature.

Moreover, besides the fact that in two cases B was plainly lying about being tired we could claim that B has also unintentionally deceived A in the case that she uttered the sentence "I am tired" (that would normally carry the implicature that she is too tired to go to the cinema) not taking the implicature into account without bad intentions. On the other hand, we could say that she was clearly lying if she knew that her utterance would be normally read as carrying a conversational implicature but she still carried it out with the intention to deceive.

The remaining nine cases are instances of unjustified (false) beliefs. Since those are the least interesting ones I will not consider them in detail.

7. Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to present some common problems which pragmatics and the epistemology of testimony have to face together. Since testimony can be defined as the speech act which is performed by the speaker in order to (intentionally) transmit some information to the hearer it is impossible to draw a sharp boundary between the epistemology of testimony and pragmatics. What does pragmatics, the study of language in use, bring to one of the pillars of philosophy, namely, epistemology? The advance of social epistemology opened the door to a more *down to earth* epistemological pursuit and the question of how we learn from the interaction with other people became a basic one. We learn from other people through the use of language, written or spoken, and that makes language an epistemological medium *par excellence*. Language is the most sophisticated tool which enables human communication, and communication is an important source of human knowledge. The standard questions related to testimony are those related to the speaker's competence and benevolence. In the analysis of these questions it is presupposed, at least in the majority of cases, that communication, the transmission of beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge is literal and direct. But what about the cases of figurative and non-literal communication? These cases are an important part of everyday communication and leaving them aside in the inquiry about the transmission of knowledge and belief can be considered as tampering with the evidence one uses in order to build up a theory of knowledge. One instance of indirect speech acts is the phenomenon of conversational implicature. How can the hearer know that the speaker wishes to implicate something with his utterance? Why should he take into consideration such an implicature? I suggest that the speaker's use and the hearer's interpretation of conversational implicatures are rational processes that should be considered as a proper justification of implicature-based beliefs. Further generalizations can be offered by the analysis proposed in this paper, and we can, tentatively and programmatically, summarize them as follows:

1) In a cooperative conversation it is rational to be a truthful speaker and, when you are a hearer, to consider the speaker as truthful.
2) It is rational to take into consideration implicatures in all the cases in which they can be detected or used.

3) Cases in which the hearer takes (1) and (2) into consideration while forming a belief and the belief turns out to be false are cases of epistemic bad luck.
4) On the contrary, cases in which the hearer and/or the speaker fail to take into account (1) and (2) but the beliefs they form converge are cases of epistemic luck.
5) Uttering a sentence that would normally carry an implicature without canceling the implicature gives the hearer a rational right to take into consideration the implicature while interpreting the utterance. If the speaker does not mean to convey the implicature it can be surmised that she is (unintentionally) misleading or (intentionally) lying.

The analysis of just one simple example could be considered a serious obstacle for drawing any conclusions about the topic to which the example refers. But I still hope that from the example presented in this paper at least some generalizations can be extrapolated; later they can be reinforced with other examples, and that will be, I hope, done by me elsewhere.

References

Audi, Robert (1998). *Epistemology – A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Routledge, London.

Austin, John L. (1961). „Other Minds“, *Philosophical Papers*, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, Oxford University Press.

Bernecker, Sven and Pritchard, Duncan (2011). *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology*, Routledge, New York.

Chisholm, Roderick (*1*977). *Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Clemént, Fabrice, (December 2010). "To Trust or not to Trust? Children's Social Epistemology", *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 4. pp. 531–549.

Goldman, Alvin (1979). „What Is Justified Belief?“, *Justification and Knowledge*, ed. George S. Pappas, (Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel,), pp. 1–23.

Goldman, Alvin (1999). *Knowledge in a Social World,* Oxford University Press.

Grice, H. Paul (1989). „Logic and Conversation“, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England.

Lackey, Jennifer, (2008). *Learning from Words – Testimony as a Source of Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Lackey, Jennifer, (July 2006). „Learning from Words“, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol, LXXIII, No. 1, pp. 77–101.

Lemos, Noah (2007). *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Lewis, David (1983). *Philosophical Papers*, Volume 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Pritchard, Duncan (2004). „Epistemic Luck“, *Journal of Philosophical Research*, Vol. 29, pp 194–222.

Sbisà, Marina (2006). "Two Conceptions of Rationality in Grice's Theory of Implicature“, *Rationality in Belief and Action*, ed. E. Baccarini and S. Prijić-Samaržija, Rijeka, pp. 233–247.

Sperber, Dan; Clemént, Fabrice; Heintz Christophe; Mascaro, Oliver; Mercier, Hugo; Origgi, Gloria; Wilson Deirdre (2010). „Epistemic Vigilance“, *Mind and Language*, Vol 25, pp. 359–393.

Weiner, Matthew (2006). "Are All Conversational Implicatures Cancellable?", *Analysis*, Vol 66, Issue 290, pp. 127–130.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

COMMUNICATIVE VIEW OF LITERATURE

Iris Vidman

Dept. of Philosophy
University of Rijeka
e-mail: ividmar@ffri.hr

Abstract:

It is often said that literature is cognitively valuable, and that there are many things that we learn from literary fiction. But it is hard to say how exactly this process of acquiring new beliefs and expanding our knowledge takes place through engagement with literature. In this paper, I develop an account of this process, claiming that literary works are a special kind of testimony. I then go on and claim that testimony can not only transfer knowledge from one person to another (this is the role testimony is traditionally given), but can also help an audience in reaching some other cognitive states considered valuable, such as understanding. Grounding literature in its social (institutional) setting and insisting on its humanistic aspect, in the last part of the paper I develop the roles of author-as-testifier and reader-as-audience and try to show how a reader can in fact learn from literary fiction.

Key words: fiction, knowledge, literature, testimony, understanding.

1. Preliminaries

In what follows, I will present a rather bold thesis: there is a sense in which it is plausible to claim that a work of literary fiction can be seen as a special kind of testimony. My grounding for this claim is strictly epistemological, triggered by some recent work on the problems of testimony, particularly by C. A. J. Coady's analysis of the pathologies of testimony. It seems to me that if we want to explain the cognitive value of literature and give it epistemic, rather than aesthetic grounding[1], our best chance is to see the similarities that exist between fictional and non-fictional testimony and to claim therefore that at least some cognitive benefits (or payoffs) that are available to us from regular, non-fictional testimony, are at least in principle available from fictional testimony. Obviously though, due to the specific nature of literature we will have to be careful in showing just how it can be that a literary work can trigger knowledge. Here I presuppose that some form of literary cognitivism (such as the one advocated for by Gordon Graham or John Gibson) is true.[2] However, I am not concerned here with providing any kind of definition of literature or theory about aes-

[1] It is important to note that my approach is epistemic, not aesthetic. The problem of cognitive value of art in general and literature in particular has a special and important place within aesthetics and the philosophy of arts ever since Plato. Two main arguments are advanced: those who subscribe to some kind of aesthetic (literary) cognitivism claim that (1) art is cognitively valuable, which means that it can give us knowledge about reality or that we (i.e. the audience) can learn something about the real world from artworks; and (2) this cognitive value of art advances, or even determines its overall aesthetic value. An aesthetic cognitivist then has to show how art does this. To deny one or both of these theses is to advocate anti-cognitivism: to claim either that art is cognitively trivial (it teaches us only things we already know) or that it doesn't have at its disposal means necessary to carry out this cognitive labour. Either way, it is wrong to insist on its cognitive dimension because by doing that, we are not approaching an artwork as a work of art and that is wrong. For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Gaut (2005, 2006 and 2007). What I mean when I say that my approach is epistemic is that I am not concerned with the conjunct (2), that is, I do not discuss whether and to what extent the cognitive value of art determines its aesthetic value. Some may claim that neglecting conjunct (2) makes my whole discussion trivial, because what is important and interesting is not to see whether art is cognitively valuable (of course it is!) but what role these cognitive values play in the overall value of artwork. I think however that there is a lot that an epistemologist can say about art, leaving it to aestheticians to determine how that fares with an aesthetic theory of the value of art.

[2] See for example Graham (1995) and Gibson (2003, 2007). The point is that art (literature) is cognitively valuable, in the sense that it reveals something about the world. Throughout the paper, I will use the terms cognitively and epistemically interchangeably: if something is cognitively valuable, it should be recognized as such by epistemology. In that sense, it represents epistemic value.

thetic value and the way it is connected to cognitive value. Also, I will for the most part ignore one very important distinction that literary theorists insist upon, and that is the one between literature and fiction. The reason for this is primarily economical: it would take us too far away from the main problem to give an elaborate theory about literature and fiction and where the two overlap. I do accept the 'evaluation criterion' according to which "[l]iterature, unlike fiction, is an evaluative concept and a work is recognized as a literary work partially through the recognition of the intention to present something to the reader that is humanly interesting"[3], but I also think it is important to note that there are fictional elements in every literary work. For reasons of simplicity, let's just say that the literary examples I offer along the way will have to do. One other way to avoid this problem is to say that my concern is primarily with narrative art, which can then be stretched enough to include literature and literary fiction[4].

2. Epistemic grounding

In order to claim that literary works have cognitive value(s) which can be explained if we treat literary work as testimony, I have to provide a wider account of how I see testimony and what epistemic benefits I attribute to it. My claim is that testimony cannot only transfer knowledge from one person to another (this is the role testimony is traditionally given), but can also help an audience in reaching some other cognitive states considered valuable, such as understanding. To this I will turn in this part.

2.1. Testimony: learning from what others tell us

There has been an extensive discussion on testimony over the last two decades in epistemology and many epistemologists have directed their attention to defining testimony. The core idea is that testimony has to do with 'people telling things' from which we can learn something. Rather than discussing different accounts, I will present my own view of testimony and the way it enriches us cognitively.

Testimony is today widely and generally accepted as a source of knowledge. Roughly speaking, it has to do with one person – speaker or testifier – providing another person – hearer or audience – with knowledge through mere utterances. Here is the account of testimony I embrace:

i) Testimony has to do with words, not beliefs: statement view of testimony

According to the traditional and rather influential view on testimony, a speaker, in delivering his testimony, is in fact stating his beliefs, and the propositions he uses are merely vehicles for expressing them. In a nutshell, the idea is that in the act of testimonial exchange, a speaker's belief gets transferred together with its epistemic properties, on to the hearer, as long as the speaker is sincere and competent[5]. The outcome of this view is that whatever is known (or justifiably believed) by the speaker, will also be known (justifiably believed) by the hearer; this is why testimony is said to be a preservative (rather than generative) source of knowledge.

Jennifer Lackey has criticized such a view and claimed that we learn from what people tell us, from their words, not from what they believe. Although her arguments against the belief view of testimony are very interesting and illuminating, for reasons of space I cannot go into details here, but will only present one of her main examples that is to count against the claim that a speaker must himself believe what he is saying in order to communicate knowledge (i.e. must be a reliable believer in order to deliver reliable testimony). Lackey gives an example involving Stella, who is devoutly Christian and as such believes in creationism despite being aware of the overwhelming evidence against that view. Stella is however also a fourth grade teacher and in delivering the biology lesson to her students, asserts that 'Present day homo sapiens evolved from Homo erectus'. In preparing her lectures, Stella consults reliable scientific sources and bases her lectures on scientific evidence which advance evolutionism. Lackey claims, and I concur, that Stella's students can in fact learn that 'Present day Homo sapiens

[3] Lamarque and Olsen 1994: 276.

[4] One last point in this preliminary account. The term fictional testimony could easily be replaced with the term literary testimony. However, I opted for fictional in order to stay close to some other problems specific to literature, such as (the problem of) fictional characters, (the problem of) fictional emotions (sometimes termed the paradox of fiction). In all of these examples the term fictional does not exclude a detailed survey of literature and literary works. In the same vein, my term fictional testimony covers primarily literary works.

[5] The condition of sincerity is important in order to prevent speakers from intentionally delivering false testimonies. The condition of competence (or authority) is necessary because, according to this traditional view, testimony is offered as evidence supporting the claim.

evolved from Homo erectus' even though Stella doesn't believe it. What matters is what she says, and whether her statement is grounded in a reliable source, not what she believes[6].

To claim that testimony has to do with words (propositions, statements or, I claim, texts) giving rise to knowledge can perhaps imply that any kind of statements work: doubtful statements, deceitful statements, statements unsupported by evidence, even false statements. However, I think that it would be wrong to conclude that. Putting lies aside (they are distinctive in that they presuppose an intention on the part of the speaker to present false content as true, and to deceive the audience), some recent epistemic work suggests that it is in fact possible to learn from false testimony (testimony which is delivered by a sincere speaker who for some reasons lacks knowledge).[7] This is one line of argument that might be pursued against the claim that even doubtful or false claims pass as knowledge generating, but I will not pursue it here. Rather, I want to defend the epistemic importance of the speaker: to claim that what matters in testimonial exchange is what the speaker says does not mean that he can say anything that comes to his mind, without paying attention to the correctness of what he says. On the other hand, a hearer is also expected to actively participate in testimonial exchange, which means that he needs to have some kind of a reason to accept the testimony To show that, I will again turn to Lackey's account on testimony.

ii) Respecting the dual nature of testimony: speaker and hearer and their epistemic responsibilities

One aspect of Lackey's account of testimony that I think is extremely important (and often neglected in other accounts) is what she calls the dual nature of testimony. As she sees it, we should recognize a distinction between "testimony as intentional act on the part of the speaker and testimony as a source of belief or knowledge for the hearer"[8]. This division is important for at least two reasons. First, in claiming that testimony is a source of belief for the hearer, Lackey highlights an important aspect of testimony: whether or not a specific act of communication is a source of knowledge is on the hearer to decide. That means that an act of communication (that is, the content of that act) that can be seen as trivial or well known by the speaker can represent a new piece of information for the hearer (if for example she is not yet familiar with it). My point is, a speaker cannot know in advance whether her act of communication will be a source of knowledge/belief for the hearer. That means that there does not have to be a clear intention on the part of the speaker to convey knowledge, but to state something.[9] Second, Lackey's dualism clearly sets the two parties included in the testimonial exchange apart, attributing to each a different role. As she sees it, a speaker, who is delivering the testimony, should do enough epistemic work in order to be certain that her testimony is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive. A hearer, on the other hand, should also do her part, that is, have positive reasons for accepting the testimony and have no undefeated defeaters for accepting the testimony[10].

iii) Testimony has no limitation to subject matter or audience

At this point in my discussion, I depart from Lackey. I think she is right in insisting on testimony being defined in terms of an act of communication, and I accept her division of epistemic labour between speaker and hearer, but I object to her view on what exactly counts as testimony. The crucial notion for her was the notion of information, i.e. the act of communication which is informative, in the sense that there is some kind of proposition p that is known by the speaker, and that this p is in a sense a new piece of information for the hearer. I think that testimony should be defined so as to include those acts of communication that do not only transfer knowledge or belief (captured by proposition p), but that provide a hearer with the raw material for pursuing cognitive labour on his own and that can result in some cognitive state (such as thinking things through, examining things from a different perspective, expanding, modifying and restructuring worldview, etc.). Support for this claim comes from a broad view of testimony[11]. My intuition is that tes-

[6] For a detailed account of this view see Lackey 2008: 48.

[7] See for example Goldberg 2001: 512-526.

[8] Lackey 2008: 27. In what follows, I will have to simplify Lackey's account due to the lack of space.

[9] Lackey discusses the importance of this condition in cases where a hearer overhears someone's testimony, and her aim is to show that some other accounts of testimony (such as Graham's or Coady's) which include the claim that testimony is offered as evidence of the truth of what is testified or that it is offered only when there is some dispute or unresolved issue are wrong. See her 2006 and 2008.

[10] For a full account of dualism see Lackey 2008: 177.

[11] Representatives of this view are Elizabeth Fricker, Robert Audi and Ernest Sosa. General idea, stated by Fricker, is that testimony has no restrictions, either on

timony cannot only be the source of knowledge or that it can trigger new beliefs; I think it can also be the source of what is usually called non propositional knowledge. For example, from the act of testimony delivered to me by my friend Sara, who has recently found out that her husband has been unfaithful to her and has therefore decided to go and visit a marriage ounsellor, I can learn things that can be expressed by propositions such as 'Sara's husband has been unfaithful', 'Sara feels hurt', 'Sara has decided to visit a marriage ounsellor'. But there is a sense in which it is plausible to say that I have learnt something else: from what Sara tells me, I can see what it feels like to be in that situation (if I myself haven't been in it), what it means to be faced up with such a circumstance, what emotional impact infidelity can have on partners, etc. From Sara's testimony, I can also get some practical knowledge, such as how to recognize cheating behaviour. This is inspired by Dorothy Walsh and the division of knowledge she defended in her book *Literature and knowledge*. As Walsh argues, our knowledge, in general, is not exhausted by knowing that and knowing how; we should also recognize knowing as knowing what something – a particular experience – feels like. My claim is that testimony has a valuable role to play here. It is implausible to say that knowing how my friend feels in this particular situation is information, or that its informative aspect is what matters. John Gibson has, following Stanley Cawell, claimed that some instances of knowledge make demands upon us, ask us to react in some way, or to acknowledge circumstances and situations[12]. I think the same holds for situations such as the one involving Sara.

iv) It should be recognized that in some cases, what the hearer gets from testimony is not propositional knowledge, but either non-propositional knowledge, or some other cognitively (i.e. epistemically) valuable state that has only recently started to get attention from epistemologists

So, what we have so far is the following: testimony should be defined along the lines presented by Jennifer Lackey's statement view of testimony, which means that a hearer should be interested in what a speaker is saying, rather than in what she believes. Next, a speaker should, in presenting her testimony, make sure that it is reliable or truth conducive and should not (knowingly) make a false statement. A hearer, on the other hand, should not accept testimony without having some kind of evidence that the speaker is reliable and that what she is saying is true[13]. The crucial point becomes what counts as testimony. For Lackey, it is only those statements that are informative. I agree with that, but still think she defines it too narrowly. Because of her claim that testimony should be seen as a source of knowledge/belief for the speaker, I think a wider definition should be allowed: a speaker is to decide what a source is for him. Also, with my Sara example, I tried to show that even those tellings that do not aim to be primarily informative (we can claim that Sara's intention is to talk to me as a friend, to share her emotional burden, not to inform me of her marital situation) can be seen as a source of knowledge, although non-propositional knowledge. So it seems to me there are strong reasons to claim that testimony can be defined either narrowly, as communicative speech acts that are information conveying (and that can be specified by some proposition(s) p (q, r, s)0, but also in a wider sense in which the speech act does not have to be made with the intention to be informative; a speaker can simply desire to express her worries, troubles, thoughts, to raise some questions on the matter under discussion or to present a hearer with her view on the matter. My claim is that there is a lot of cognitive work that can be done by the hearer upon hearing this: thinking or rethinking about these matters, changing her opinion on something, seeing things from different perspective, realizing what something is like, etc. All of these exercises of epistemic agency are important and valuable and it is my main claim that testimony can be a very helpful tool in reaching these epistemic aims, which have of recently became interesting for epistemology. Among them, understanding occupies central place. Up until recently, epistemologist were mostly, if not exclusively, interested in knowledge and the debate was on whether or not there is such a thing as testimonially based knowl-

subject matter or on the audience. Audi claims that testimony includes people's telling us things. According to this view, testimony is not offered as evidence for the claim, but it is still claimed that speaker is delivering his thoughts. (I rely here on Lackey's account of the broad view).

[12] See Gibson 2003 and 2007.

[13] Lackey offers nice illustration of how a hearer is to do that. She claims that hearer can recognize epsitemically reliable context, different kind of reports and reliable speaker (Lackey 2008: pp.182-183). I will develop this in more details in 4.2.

edge and what are its limits. It is my intuition however, that testimony we gain from others (defined not only as an act of communication that is informative, but, as the Sara example shows, as an act of communication that is primarily revealing of some situation, emotion, aspect etc.) can (at least instrumentally) be a very powerful tool in helping us reach all those states that are epistemically valuable, even though not necessarily being thought of as knowledge. However, not everyone working on testimony would find this valuable. According to Coady, a precondition for giving testimony is “some degree of authority or competence, no matter how minimal”[14] on the part of the speaker, and what matters is the passing of knowledge from speaker to hearer. According to him, it is not important what epistemic work a hearer does after hearing the testimony, what matters is the transmission of knowledge[15].

Another reason to doubt my claim comes from the view of testimony according to which the epistemology of testimony should only deal with testimonially based knowledge (like the epistemology of perception deals only with perceptual beliefs), and not with so-called hybrid knowledge, which might be partially based on testimony but is ultimately dependent upon some other sources, like perception, memory or inferential thinking[16]. Notice that from what I say, testimony in the wider sense initiates the chain of reasoning, thinking, calculating, etc., which can (but not necessarily) result in the acquisition of some new piece of knowledge (p), or in a change of attitude or perspective. Obviously, then, a hearer ends up with hybrid knowledge. I do not mind this (for one thing, because I think it does justice to how we form beliefs and expand our knowledge, but also because I am in general more concerned with epistemic agency and the way it is carried out). My support comes from those epistemologists, led by Jonathan Kvanvig, who advocate the so called pluralistic view of epistemic aims.

2.2. Plurality of epistemic values

Here is Kvanving commenting on the task of epistemology:

> [Epistemology is in great part concerned with] certain aspects of our cognitive endeavors (…) Within its purview are various kinds of cognizing, including processes such as thinking, inquiring and reasoning; events such as changes in one’s world view or the adoption of a different perspective on things; and states such as belief assumptions, presuppositions, tenets, working hypothesis and the like. Also within its purview is the variety of cognitive successes, including true beliefs and opinions, viewpoints that make sense of the course of experience, tenets that are epistemically adequate, knowledge, understanding, theoretical wisdom, rational presuppositions, justified assumptions, working hypothesis likely to be true, responsible inquiry and the like[17].

One thing that is obvious here is the expansion of the classic view of epistemology (i.e. dealing with truth and knowledge) towards a more encompassing view which recognizes that in our epistemic endeavours we not only get to the truth and thus to knowledge, but we also do a lot of (cognitive) work, such as entertaining propositions, trying to make sense out of them, building a picture of the world, shifting view points, changing perspectives from which we see the world, etc. All of this can be triggered by different incentives and it is my claim that testimony (particularly in its widest sense) can act as such an incentive that makes us either see or think about the world differently.

One thing that authors of a pluralistic view insist on is the recognition of understanding as a state

---

[14] Coady 2006: 265.

[15] It is possible that I am overstating here. Perhaps Coady would have no objections to my claim that there is some kind of epistemic work done by the hearer that can result in valuable cognitive states, but that he would object to treating it as testimonial. However, from his analysis on pathologies (to be discussed in the next part), it seems to me he doesn't see it as enough to establish the value of testimony. Here is a quote: “One thing that might be noted as an epistemic merit is the power of rumour in providing hypotheses for further exploration. By itself rumour may be poor epistemic coin, but investigating it may lead to expanding one’s knowledge in direct and indirect ways. The direct route is that of confirmation or falsification of the rumour’s contents. The indirect route may be the discovery of interesting information that explains the rumour’s genesis, or it may be the discovery of a genuine truth that the rumour misleadingly presents” (p. 264). This attitude is to be expected given that he sees testimony as being offered as evidence for the claim in case of some disputed or unresolved issue. I have obviously rejected (following Lackey) the claim that testimony is offered only when there is some disputed issue.

[16] See Lackey 2007: 78-97. This is the reason she rejects arguments such as those presented by Goldberg which aim to show that there can be testimonially bases knowledge from false testimony.

[17] Kvanvig 2005: 286.

that is 'more valuable than knowledge and should thus be given precedence in epistemology'[18]. Different problems emerge at this point: how precisely to define understanding, is understanding a state in its own right or is it just a type of knowledge, are there necessary and sufficient conditions of understanding, etc. Unfortunately, many of these issues are still not given a definite or agreed upon answer. It seems to me that Pritchard has it right in claiming that understanding differs from knowledge and that it presents a sort of cognitive achievement. I also believe that a very promising definition of understanding recognizes that understanding has to do with "comprehension of nonpropositional structures of reality" and "systematic or explanatory coherence among one's beliefs"[19].

***

So, just to summarize my conclusions from the brief discussion of testimony and epistemic aims: testimony in the narrow sense can be the source of (testimonially based) knowledge. But, in the wider sense, it can be the source not only of propositional knowledge but of new beliefs (which can turn out to be justified or not). What I find important is that a hearer will engage in epistemic work- different cognitive processes such as thinking, and wondering, changing ones perspective, coming to a (better or deeper) realization or awareness, etc. – that can in the end result either in new knowledge or in states such as understanding.

In what follows, I want to leave regular cases of testifying aside and show that there is a sense in which literary work can be seen as testimony (in the wider sense). If it is testimony, it is obviously of a distinctive kind due to literature's own distinctive nature. My inspiration for this view comes from Coady's analysis of what he calls the pathology of testimony.

2.3. Pathologies of testimony: testimony gone bad

The notion of pathologies was first introduced to epistemology by C.A.J. Coady. As he sees it, we rely on the testimony of others (i.e. on what they tell us) and we find them to be trustworthy. In the case of pathology, however, these conditions have gone bad: there's either no reason to trust our informant or to find him trustworthy. According to Coady, pathologies "present as distortions of or diseases of the normal case of telling and relying on what is told"[20]. So, at the most general level, pathology is a case of testifying that has gone wrong for some reason, and the outcome is that testimony can no longer serve its function of conveying knowledge. Coady sets himself to examine three candidates that under closer scrutiny might turn out to be pathology: gossip, rumour and urban myth. My aim here is not to analyse Coady's account or to debate with him[21], but I think he is responsible for illuminating the similarities that exist between non-fictional testimony and fictional testimony. As he sees it, urban myth is somewhere between testimony and fiction, but it can still be seen as a testimony because it is composed of propositions. We saw with Lackey that testimony has to do with words (i.e. propositions), not beliefs. It is my intuition that the whole of a fictional work can be seen as a set of propositions. My question is: what are the epistemic benefits that emerge out of a fictional work? Coady is right in claiming that the cases he examines as possible candidates for pathology differ from other sets of propositions that are counted as testimony in that they are "highly narrative in form; they are presented in a dramatic mode, sometimes even in song or poem, and they often contain, explicitly or implicitly, strong interpretative and evaluative elements"[22]. As I see it, fictional (literary) works satisfy this form: they are narrative in form, they consist of propositions, and very often the very nature of the body of these propositions is testimonial in form. I am well aware that many might find my intuition unusual, not to say unacceptable. But if we want to show that literature can be seen as a source of epistemic values (and that is my main concern), our best chance is to see it as a form of testimony. The question then remains: what kind of testimony? Is it a pathology (as Coady would in all likelihood argue), or does it or can it fulfil the role of transmitting knowledge?

Before going on, let us just give an account of pathology as defined by Coady. From what he says,

[18] This is roughly the view that Duncan Pritchard advocates. See his 2009.

[19] These in turn come from Linda Zagzebski (2001) and Wayne Riggs (2008).

[20] Coady 2006:253.

[21] There are two reasons for this. First, as my brief discussion on testimony shows, I part largely from Coady's view on testimony, mostly because of the arguments presented by Jennifer Lackey. Second, my agenda is different: my general aim is to defend the cognitive value of literature and I believe this can be done by showing it to be a case of testimony. Obviously however, it is not a genuine case of testimony. Therefore, I use Coady's notion of pathologies in order to set off the discussion.

[22] Coady 2006: 253.

I conclude that there are two things that turn a testimony into pathology:

1) A speaker presents a content that he knows is false as a true one (this is a paradigm case of pathology, namely lying)
2) The justificatory base of the information conveyed is not firm (in Coady's words, the origin of testimony is not witnessing, in the sense of a perceptual encounter or proof or expert judgment

It would appear that both of these conditions are satisfied in the case of fictional testimony: the content of fictional propositions is mostly imagined and false (i.e. it does not correspond to anything in the real world, it does not refer to anything or anybody in the real world), and even when it is not imagined, it doesn't have the function of transferring truth but is part of the subject matter and therefore manipulated so as to serve artistic functions. A justificatory base is nonexistent, given that literary works are based in imagination and not reality (hence the fictional dimension). My claim is that arguments of this kind are deeply mistaken and arise out of a mistaken view about literature and fiction. Rather than viewing fiction as consisting of false propositions, we should focus on the wider practice that surrounds the creation of literature. This will help us determine the proper context within which we can approach literature and treat it as fictional testimony that can have valuable epistemic contribution(s). In order to show that, I will now turn to providing an account of literature that helps us ground its epistemic benefits.

3. Literature and fiction: institutional definition

I believe that the right definition of literature is found in the account developed by Stein Haugom Olsen and Peter Lamarque. They have presented convincing arguments in support of social definition of literature:

> There is some reason to believe that literature is a social institution and literary works institutional objects defined by the function they serve in the institution, seeing that in our culture there has always been a literary practice along the lines of the suggested model, involving notions of artistic unity, artistic function, artistic value, and so on. Given this background, it may be maintained that an inquiry into the 'nature' of the literary work should be an inquiry into the concepts and conventions shared by the community of readers, rather than an inquiry directed at the object itself.[23]

One big advantage of defining literature in these terms is that we turn away from such notions as falsity of reference failure: we begin to recognize that what makes something a work of fiction is not the subject matter or the relations that obtain between sentences and the world, but the conventions that make possible the creation, acceptance and evaluation of fiction:

> The controlling idea is this: *that the fictive dimension of stories (or narratives) is explicable only in terms of a rule-governed practice, central to which are a certain mode of utterance (fictive utterance) and a certain complex of attitudes (the fictive stance).* (...) Defining fiction in terms of a mode of utterance located in a *social practice* involves rejecting certain persistent misconceptions about fiction: for example, the association of fiction with 'reference-failure', or the 'intransitivity of writing', or the suggestion that fiction is 'cut off' from the world, or 'lacks correspondence' with the facts.[24]

The crucial notion here becomes that of storytelling (rather than inventing or imagining): an author, in writing a novel, does not invent something or make something up; his fictive utterance is "ultimately a kind of communication, involving an interaction between speaker (writer) and audience (reader)"[25] and given that both parties are well aware of the practice of storytelling, no one will confuse the fictional content for a report about the real world. It is this insistence on being familiar with the social practice of fiction making that ultimately helps us explain why fiction, treated as testimony, is not pathology. The reader knows that what he reads is fiction and therefore should not be taken at face value. At the same time, we cannot accuse the writer of trying to deceive his readers and present a false content for a true one. What remains to be seen is what makes him reliable, that is, why should readers accept his work as worthy of cognitive labour.

Another aspect of Lamarque and Olsen's analysis of literature and fiction is important for my view here. The view of literature they present is humanistic, which, roughly, means that literature has to do with what interests us as human beings. We have already seen this idea expressed in the introduction, where we tried to note the difference between litera-

[23] Olsen 1987: 81.
[24] Lamarque and Olsen 1994: 32-33.
[25] Lamarque and Olsen 1994: p. 34.

ture and fiction. Literature presents to our view themes that matter to us, that interest us, as human beings. This implies that whatever we find in literature is of great importance for us because it tells us something about our world, other people and the way we act in our world. This particular aspect is sometimes labelled the mimetic aspect of literature. Many authors accept this idea. John Gibson claims that "... literature offers us a window on our world. We might call this the humanist intuition and characterize it as the thought – or hope – that literature presents the reader with an intimate and intellectually significant engagement with social and cultural reality"[26]. James Young also attributes to art (literature included) the capacity to tell us something about the world that goes beyond physical laws: "Notably, the arts can contribute better than other forms of inquiry to the understanding of such complex phenomena as ourselves, our emotions, our relations to each other and our place in the world."[27]

What emerges out of this brief account of a humanistic conception of literature is that whatever *epistemic* value we find in literature has to do with what literature tells us about our world, the people who live in it, the practices they engage in and emotions they experience. But there is another aspect of the humanistic intuition that should be recognized. John Gibson differentiates between direct humanism (stated above) and indirect humanism, which has to do with recognizing the impact literature can have. Literary works can invite modes of reflection, simulation, and imagination that can in turn lead us to a better understanding of our world, it can illustrate possibilities and offer possible ways for organizing experience, it can offer conceptions, stances and perspectives which we can, by using our reflective and imaginative capacities, transform into tools for appreciating reality[28]. At this point it should be clear that there is a similarity between the epistemic values advocated for by Kvanvig and the cognitive values attributed to literature. My claim is that epistemically, this similarity is best explained if we see the reading process as testimonial exchange.

4. Fictional testimony

In order to show that literary works can be seen as testimony, I have to provide an account of how testimonial exchange takes place between author (i.e. testifier) and reader (hearer). Given my account of literature (i.e. its social grounding and humanistic aspect) I take it that it is already clear that I see a literary work as testimony in the wider sense, which means that it can transfer knowledge as well as be an incentive for reaching other epistemically valuable states, such as understanding. One might wonder whether the 'unit' of testimonial exchange is the text as a whole or the individual sentences that make it up. My answer here is again twofold: obviously some sentences can deliver truths about the world and in that sense they can be seen as conveying information (in the sense specified by Lackey), but that is not everything we find of cognitive value in literature. In fact, if that were all, it would seem that literature is indeed cognitively trivial; the debate over the cognitive value of literature never turns on providing factual information. We have to recognize the epistemic potentialities of a work as a whole, particularly if we see it through the lenses of indirect humanism: the impact of literature that indirect humanism insists upon have their epistemic grounding in the pluralistic picture of epistemic aims provided by Kvanvig. It can then be plausible to claim that works such as Faulkner's provide not only factual information about the American South and its racial issues, but also provide a deeper understanding of what it is like to live in a community that hasn't moved beyond racial issues, a community where individuals are still dealing with their mixed race and cannot determine their identity.

Let us now turn to specifying in more details the testimonial roles that author and reader must fulfil.

4.1. Author as testifier

We saw in our brief discussion on testimony that a speaker should be sincere and trustworthy in delivering her testimony. Roughly, this means that she should not aim at deceiving and should say only what she knows (or has good reasons for believing) is true. It might appear then that an author of a literary work cannot fulfil these conditions, if for no

[26] Gibson 2007: 2. He goes on and claims that humanism „marks in literary aesthetic a very modest proposal: that there is an important link between literature and life, and that this link, whatever it may precisely consist in, accounts for one of the central reasons we value literature" (pp. 15-16). This link between literature and life means that „we have grounds for claiming that part of the project of many (though certainly not all) literary works is to articulate an insight into some specific region of human experience and circumstances" (p. 17).

[27] Young 2001: 97.

[28] Many aestheticians who advocate literary cognitivism insist on this 'indirect' aspect. See Novitz (1984), Gaut (2005, 2006), Kieran (2005).

other reason then because of the fictional dimension of literature. Apart from that, it is questionable what precisely gives him the authority over the themes he writes about[29]. However, I have already said that these are too hasty arguments for dismissing the epistemic authority of an author.

A lesson from Lamarque and Olsen was that we should recognize the distinctive nature of a literary (fictional) stance that a reader should take towards literary work. Although they define it in aesthetic terms, I think we can use it in order to state that the awareness of being immersed in literary practice prevents readers from taking at face value what they read. Given that they recognize and appreciate the author's intention to write fictionally, they will not see him as trying to deceive anyone. In that sense, there are no grounds to claim that literary works have the same status as lies. This means that we are on the safe side: there's no reason to claim that fictional testimony is pathology. However, the question still remains, given the fictional – or imaginative - dimension of literary works, what is their epistemic status?

There are several different things to point out here. First of all, many arguments were put forward in order to show that imagination is not the same as fantasy and that it can have a very important cognitive function. In that sense, the mere fact that an author writes from his imagination should not mean that everything is false and that the learning process should be blocked.[30] However, I do not want to pursue this line here. I think there is even stronger epistemic grounding for an author. Obviously, how strong this grounding is will depend on the particular genre and period of literature. For my claim it is enough to show that at least in some cases it is plausible to claim that an author is in just as good a position towards his 'testimony' as the speaker is in non-fictional testimony. This is most easily argued for if we invite autobiographies, authors like Anna Akhmatova or Ayaan Hirsi Ali, whose works are strongly grounded in their personal experience. In this case, I believe that even Coady's most strict sense of testimony is satisfied: testimonies delivered by the authors are grounded in perceptual encounter. However, I believe that even if this were not so, there would still be a lot of cognitively valuable aspects to these works. For example, in reading the poems by Akhmatova and the horror she describes, one might wonder why she refused to escape from Russia, to protect herself, to find 'safe heaven'. However, her poems also reveal a deep love toward one's country, a willingness to stay and fight for it, a determination to persist in hard times. This can influence how one sees his own place within his country, and it can influence how one sees a political regime and his own identity within it.

Similar argumentation regarding the epistemic authority of a writer can be made in favour of realistic literature[31] and the authors influenced by this style. Given the fact that many literary critics often emphasize how deeply concerned with portraying truthful accounts of different aspects of reality these authors were[32], there's no reason to deny them their epistemic authority. However, in all of these examples, it is obvious that cognitive richness is not exhausted by the factual descriptions presented, but by the development of a theme as well. No matter how many details regarding the states of science and scientific knowledge of the period, or social and political movements of the 19th century France we can pick up from Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pecuchet*, what gives the work its uniqueness and what triggers the cognitive engagement of a reader is the way Flaubert elaborates the theme of human stupidity, as well as the perpetual search for happiness and fulfilment. How a reader is to pick these up is up to him to decide, in the sense that the cognitive aspect in the literary work is only an incentive for cognitive work

[29] N. Carroll tries to answer this problem, see his 2007. I think he is right in claiming that (realist) writers are mastering their skill of observation (society, social changes, values etc), which makes them reliable when writing about it. I would also add that many authors emphasize the meticulous research that they do prior to writing. I believe a good argument can be made here in favour of the epistemic authority (or reliability) of authors, but I will not pursue this line here.

[30] To my knowledge, the strongest defence of learning from imagination comes from B. Gaut (particularly his 2007). He sees the cognitive value of literature in that it directs our imagination towards different aspects of reality. Imagination can be a great source of knowledge about the world, oneself and other people. Powerful and convincing arguments in support of the value of imagination for our epistemic endeavours can be found in *Imagination, Philosophy and the Arts* (eds. M. Kieran and D.M. Lopes). The role of imagination in fictional testimony is developed in Prijić-Samaržija and Vidmar (forthcoming).

[31] Noel Carroll pressed this line in his 2007, where he argued that realistic literature can generate knowledge.

[32] See for example R. Edmonds 1957, Introduction to the *War and Peace* (penguin classics), D. Magarshack 1955, Introduction to *The Idiot* (penguin classics). Wayne C. Booth discusses the obsession with truth on the part of Flaubert and James, see his 1961.

on the part of the reader. If a reader doesn't feel moved by what he reads or doesn't find it worthy of considering, he can still enjoy it as a literary work or as a pass time. Even then he can pick up a few facts, but it is my claim that he will miss something that is intrinsically valuable.

4.2. Reader as hearer

It remains to be seen what the role of a reader is on my account. My point was that testimony in its wide sense can trigger our cognitive processes that can result in a change of perspective, a deeper realization or awareness over something, a change in attitudes toward something, etc. All of this can happen only if the recipient is willing to actively contemplate the content of what he is being told. That is, the content of the testimony can be seen as triggering cognitive work only if the hearer engages in active contemplation about the various aspects of what he is told. In order to do that, he must move beyond mere propositional knowledge using his own capacities for judging, evaluating and thinking about things he sees or is told about. In that sense, I claimed, testimony in its wide sense can help one make connections between beliefs he has. I now claim that, in order for a reader to gain any cognitive benefits from literary work, he must engage in those same intellectual processes and actively contemplate the content of the literary work. Again, we must be careful here. It is one thing to approach a literary work *as a work of art* and search for aesthetic values in it. It is another thing to approach it *as a (possible) source of cognitive values* and search for epistemic benefits. Hume is perhaps the best known for providing an account of how the former is to be done. Peter Kivy and Peter Lamarque have taken his true critic and developed it into an account of a trained reader[33]. I agree with that view and would argue for it within aesthetics. However, my approach here is epistemic, not aesthetic, so on my view, a reader doesn't necessarily have to concern himself with artistic/aesthetic values[34]. In order to show how a reader is to pursue his epistemic work, we must, for one thing, have in mind Lackey's claim about a hearer's ability to recognize (i) epistemically reliable context and contextual features, (ii) different kinds of reports and (iii) epistemically reliable speakers. I think an analogous account can be developed in regard to literature. We already know (from Lamarque and Olsen's account) that a reader is aware of the intention of the author to write fiction. This awareness (that is, familiarity with genre conventions) includes the expectations that the reader has: one knows (through being immersed in the reading practice) that different norms are at work in a realistic novel than in a novel from romanticism. This is close to the ability to recognize different kinds of reports: a trained reader is aware of a difference between novels by Henry James, Theodore Dreiser, Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky and novels by Hedwig Courths-Mahler. The difference I have in mind includes above all the depths of psychological, sociological, political and economic portrayal. One example should prove the point: social and economic circumstances surrounding the development and working of factories feature in both Dreiser and Courths-Mahler. However, while in Dreiser this dimension is described in depth and provides a psychological grounding for the motivation of the main character, in Courths-Mahler the whole setting is notoriously unrealistic, unconvincing and obviously presents a false view of industrial development. The same goes for the psychological portrayal of characters and their relationships, social movements, etc. A well trained reader obviously recognizes the differences. This is again connected to the ability to recognize epistemically reliable speakers. The portrayal of human psychology in Dreiser and Courths-Mahler differs radically precisely because Dreiser is epistemically more reliable, more 'true to life' as some would claim. The demand thus placed upon the reader may seem 'too heavy', but it is not. In fact,

---

[33] See Kivy 2006 and Lamarque 2009.

[34] Several points are needed here. In one sense (which I would be inclined to embrace), cognitive value contributes to aesthetics and in that sense, one cannot contemplate aesthetic value without also contemplating cognitive value. It is also true that, if we think of aesthetic value as being in some degree at least determined by how themes are developed, and thematic level is the level where cognitive values are best depicted, then obviously the two aspects are inseparable: grasping the cognitive dimension already includes an evaluative judgment on the aesthetic achievement of a work. On this basis it is (I suspect) easy to show that part of what makes great, canonical art great, and what is missing in those works which are not thus classified is precisely this cognitive element. Pursuing however these lines would lead us to grounding cognitive value of literature in aesthetic terms, while, as I said in the introduction, I want to ground it in epistemology. Nothing I say however, prevents one from shifting perspectives between the aesthetic (i.e. treating a literary work as a work of art) and the epistemological (searching for cognitive benefits and evaluating a work exclusively on those grounds). See Olsen (1978) for his account on deciding what attitude to take.

many aestheticians who defend the cognitive value of literature claim that it is only possible to learn something (or, we can now add, reach understanding) if the reader can actively engage with what he is reading, if he has the relevant background knowledge and if he shares this background with the author. Peter Kivy[35] develops this even further, while authors like David Novitz, James Young and Michale Huemer emphasize the active role of a reader and demand that a reader tests his newly acquired beliefs against the real world before accepting them as true[36]. What this shows is that a lot of work needs to be done by the reader before he can actually say to have learned something. I think the same goes for other epistemic aims: changing a perspective on something is a process that doesn't happen without active engagement. Obviously, not every literary work will have the same impact on every reader, nor will the cognitive benefits be the same. In some cases a reader can pick up wrong beliefs or form a new perspective which can in some way be morally bad or misleading. But I do not think we are protected from that in non-fictional testimony. Non-fictional testimony can contain false statements, present wrong perspective or be trivial. Therefore, we fare no better or no worse if we listen to what the author has to say.

References

Booth W. (1961). *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Carroll N. (2007). "Literary Realism, Recognition, and the Communication of Knowledge" in *A sense of the world, essays on fiction, narrative and knowledge*, eds. J. Gibson, W. Huemer and L. Pocci, New York and London: Rutledge

Coady C. A. J. (2006). „Pathologies of Testimony" in *Epistemology of Testimony*, eds. Lackey J. and E. Sosa, Clarendon Press, pp. 253-271

Edmonds R. (1957)., „Introduction to War and Peace" in Tolstoy L. *War and Peace*, (Penguin Classics)

Gaut B. (2005). „Art and Knowledge", in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Levinson J., Oxford University PressGaut B. (2006). „Art and Cognition", in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. M. Kieran, Wiley-Blackwell

Gaut B. (2007). *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Gibson J. (2003). „Between truth and triviality", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43, (3), pp. 224–237

Gibson J. (2007). *Fiction and the weave of life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Goldberg S. (2001). „Testimonially Based Knowledge from false Testimony", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 205, (5), pp. 512–526

Graham G. (1995). „Learning from Art", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35, (1), pp. 26–37

Huemer M. (2007). „ Why read literature? The cognitive function of form" in *A sense of the world, essays on fiction, narrative and knowledge*, eds. J. Gibson, W. Huemer and L. Pocci, Routledge, pp. 233–245.Kivy P. (2006). *The Performance of Reading: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literature,* Wiley-Blackwel Kieran M. (2005). *Revealing Art*, Rutledge

Kvanvig J. (2005). „Truth is not the Primary Epistemic Goal", in *Contemporary debates in epistemology,* eds. M. Steup and E. Sosa, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 285–295

Lackey J. (2008). *Learning from Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Lamarqu P. and S. Haugom Olsen, (1994). *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective,* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Lamarque P. (2009). *The Philosophy of Literature,* Blackwell Publishing

Magarshack D. (1955). „Introduction to The Idiot " in Dostoyevsky F. M. *The Idiot* (Penguin Classics)

Novitz D. (1984). "Fiction and the Growth of Knowledge" in *The Worlds of Art and the World*, ed. Margolis J., Amsterdam: Rodopi

Olsen S. H. (1987). *The Structure of Literary Understanding*, Cambridge University Press

Prijić-Samaržija S. and I. Vidmar (forthcoming), „Fikcijsko svjedočanstvo", *Prolegomena*

Pritchard D. (2009). „Knowledge, understanding and epistemic value", in *Epistemology*, ed. A. O'Hear, Cambridge: University Press, pp. 19–43

[35] See Kivy (2006). His claim is that literary experience has a sort of afterlife, a period during which „the images and content linger on in the mind to be savoured and thought about" (p.108). In his afterlife, a reader „is meant to reason over the hypotheses that serious works of literary fiction present to him for acceptance or rejection…" (p. 108).

[36] See Novitz (1984), Young (2001) and Huemer (2007).

Riggs W. (2008). “The Value Turn in Epistemology“ in *New Waves in Epistemology*, eds. V. Hendricks and D. H. Pritchard (Ashgate) (http://www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/css/documents/NewWavesRiggs2.pdf)

Walsh D. (1969). *Literature and Knowledge*, Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press

Young J. O. (2001). *Art and Knowledge*, London: Routledge

Zagzebski L. (2001), „Recovering understanding” in *Knowledge, truth and duty*, ed. M. Steup, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 235–251

COMMUNICATIVE VIEW OF LITERATURE

Claudiu Baciu

Institute of Philosophy and Psykchology "Constantin Radulescu-Mortu"
of the Romanian Academy
e-mail: cbasiuro@yahoo.com

Abstract:
In this paper I discuss Cassirer's interpretation of language as symbolic form by looking at it from the perspective of his general functionalist conception. This functionalism was developed by Cassirer in his early work Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff in relation to an analysis of the modern science. Later, the results of this investigation evolved into a new understanding of human cultural activity as an activity of creating meanings.

Key words: synthesis, function, science, symbolic form, language.

A. Ernst Cassirer's understanding of scientific knowledge

Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) may be considered one of the last great humanists, a true *Uomo Universale*: he masters both Einstein's physics and Hegel's philosophy, the Culture of Renaissance and Goethe's works, the history of religion and the history of science. His method is a synthesis between Kantian and (apparently in a paradoxical manner) Hegelian philosophy, on the one hand, and structural and functional thinking of science, on the other. Educated in the school of the Neo-Kantian H. Cohen and considered his most important student, Cassirer develops Cohen's ideas, therefore being himself considered a Neo-Kantian, although a special one. This Neo-Kantianism was, in other respects, the reason why, from the beginning of the thirties, in Europe at least, Cassirer's thought remained, until recently, at the periphery of philosophical interest. Interest in his work awoke when one discovered in it anticipations of structuralism and postmodernism.

Many of his books seem to be only historical works, presentations of writings and ideas belonging to authors of the past. Despite his immense erudition, Cassirer is not only a historian of ideas, but also an original thinker, for whom the appeal to the past is an opportunity to assess and acknowledge the contributions of his precursors in the development of certain ideas or disciplines. For any problem he deals with, Cassirer first presents its history and the different approaches to it in the course of time. In this way he succeeds not only in giving a very accurate presentation of also problem, but also shows the manner in which other conceptions have conditioned it and given it its actual form during its history. We have to emphasize this particularity of his method, a particularity that corresponds to his general philosophical conception, i.e. the philosophy of symbolic forms. Cassirer himself maintains that his method is indebted to Hegelian phenomenology, namely to a "science of the experience of consciousness" (Hegel 1986, 596) (as was the first title of the famous Hegelian work), which means a science that describes the experiences through which consciousness (human spirit, in general) has to go through in order to reach its present stage. Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms necessarily implies this historical dimension, because only through it can one observe the progress, the materialization of a certain symbolic form. Historicity remains therefore also for Cassirer, as for other contemporaneous thinkers of him, Heidegger for instance, a fundamental trait of the human being. But this historicity seems to be paradoxical, knowing that Ernst Cassirer is considered a Neo-Kantian philosopher, because it is not so easy to comprehend how the pre-eminence of science and logic (one of the main features of the Neo-Kantianism) may be placed on the same level and associated with the historicity of man.

When at Davos M. Heidegger criticizes Cassirer for his Neo-Kantianism, he explains that this philosophical stream interprets Im. Kant's work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as being only an epistemological treatise, only an attempt to found mathematical physics. Neo-Kantianism should also consider, according to Heidegger, that the only domain of culture which may be seen as being the true object of philosophy remains a specific type of science:

> One can understand the common feature of Neo-Kantianism, says Heidegger, only by reflecting on its origin. This origin is the embarrassment of philosophy when faced with the question of what is left to do for it in the total body of knowledge. All that seemed to remain was just this knowledge of science rather than of what there is. This perspective determined the entire 'Back-to-Kant' movement. Kant was seen as the theoretician of a mathematico-physical epistemology. (Hamburg 1964, 214)

On account of such an interpretation, all other domains of culture would be depreciated to the level of a gratuitous play of the human spirit. We would find true knowledge only within science, and the model of every truth would remain scientific truth, which is a "universal" and "necessary" truth, as proposed by Kant. Cassirer's answer is very suggestive of his theoretical approach:

> The status of the mathematical sciences of nature is only a paradigm for me and not the philosophical problem in its entirety. There is one point, though, on which both Heidegger and I do agree and that is the central importance of the productive imagination for Kant. I was led to this insight by my work on the symbolic (forms). Imagination is the relation of all thought to intuition (*Anschauung*), a 'synthesis speciosa'. Synthesis is the basic power of all pure thought. (Hamburg 1964, 214)

Thus, we see that for Cassirer the problem area of philosophy goes beyond the sphere of the mathematical sciences of nature, even if these sciences represent a paradigm for philosophy. But the sense in which we must understand this paradigm is given by the last sentence, which, in my opinion, expresses exactly the essence of Cassirer's entire thought. For him, certainly, synthesis is the fundamental power of every thought, the aim of philosophy being in this sense to explore this "basic power" of synthesis which belongs to the human spirit, in all the domains of its materialization. This program also continues the investigations of H. Cohen. Therefore, says Cassirer, „I do not look upon my own development as a defection from Cohen" (Hamburg 1964, 214), who, also for him, is not only an epistemologist.

Cohen has emphasized that understanding the activity of consciousness must not be restricted, as Kant has done, only to the mathematical sciences of nature. The unity of consciousness, understood as a *unity of the cultural consciousness*, has to become the main research object of philosophy (Görland 1906, 15). Cohen saw the unity of consciousness, in the Kantian sense of it, as a *synthetic* unity, and the idea of a cultural unity of the consciousness means for him that the entire human culture is the result of the synthetic act of the consciousness and must be investigated as a materialization of it. But what does it mean to speak of this synthetic unity of consciousness, and the concept of "synthesis" that was considered by Cassirer as being the "basic power of all pure thought", i.e. of the spirit?

This concept comes from Kant's philosophy, where it may be seen as the true cornerstone of the whole Kantian system. One knows that Kantian philosophy distinguishes between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon, and that on account of this distinction the concept of knowledge with which Kant operates is one which is valid only for the phenomena: we know the phenomena, says Kant, but not the thing-in-itself. Our knowledge presupposes a matter of knowledge (the sensations) and a form of knowledge (the concepts). In its most general meaning, conceptual activity is seen by Kant as an ordering activity whose object is the "manifold" of intuitions. But this ordering activity presupposes a criterion, an instrument of operating such that the undetermined manifold of intuitions can be arranged in representations, namely, that they can be built into a *unity*. Certainly, our representations do not appear chaotically in our consciousness. This composing is the result of a double activity of the human soul: a) an activity of the productive imagination, which arranges our intuitions in different concrete relations to one another, the results of which we see in our current experience; and b) an activity of the intellect, which produces the meaning of these representations. The "meaning" of our representations is the concept, and this is actually a function, i.e. the result of the activity of bringing a multitude of representation under one common representation: „All intuitions," says Kant, „being sensuous, depend on affections, concepts on functions. By this function, I therefore mean the unity of the act of arranging different representations under one common representation. (Kant 2, 1881, 60) We may say that Kant is the philosopher who introduces the term of „function" into the philosophical tradition. But this „function" is only one of the aspects of the activity of the human spirit. The other aspect, the one that is correlated with it, is „synthesis". As Kant describes this pair of activities:

> In its most general sense, I understand by synthesis the act of arranging different representations together, and of comprehending what is manifold in them under one form of knowledge. (....) We shall see hereafter that synthesis in general is the mere result of what I call the faculty of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but the existence of which we are scarcely conscious. But to reduce this synthesis to concepts is a function that belongs to the understanding, and by which the understanding supplies us for the first time with knowledge properly so called. (Kant 2, 1881, 68–69)

Hence, synthesis, as an activity of the (productive) imagination, combines images, builds from different representations a new one, as, for instance, from a succession of perceptions about a mountain the *unique* intuitive image of that mountain. The function of the intellect allows for this manifold to be recognized and comprehended as forming a single object: the mountain. Therefore, when Kant considers human knowledge as being a continuous process of bringing a manifold of representations under a common one, i.e. as a functional unity that belongs only to the human consciousness, he believes that he has the right to consider human reason as not only a pupil of nature (as we could think, if we understand knowledge as being related only to what appears to us), but a true judge of it:

> Reason, holding in one hand its principles, according to which concordant phenomena alone can be admitted as laws of nature, and in the other hand the experiment, which it has devised according to those principles, must approach nature in order to be taught by it: but not in the character of a pupil, who agrees to everything the master likes, but as an appointed judge, who compels the witnesses to answer the questions which he himself proposes. (Kant 1, 1881, 368)

This concept of knowledge excludes therefore the idea of a simple mirroring of nature. It excludes the understanding of knowledge as an activity of reflecting the outside of human being in his inner consciousness. Human knowledge is not a result of reflecting, but is a construction. However, it is not an arbitrary construction.

For Cassirer too, as we have seen, both the idea of Kantian synthesis and the idea of the (intellectual) function remain fundamental terms. Actually, these two notions, due to the fact that they represent different aspects of the same act, are often used, even by Kant, as interchangeable concepts. For Cassirer too, knowledge has a functional character, namely, the act of bringing a manifold of representations under a common one. Unlike for Kant, this activity no longer expresses the unconscious operations of the human spirit, but is rather an activity by which the object itself is created.

In his work *Substanzbegriff und Funktiosnbegriff*, Cassirer introduces a distinction that will become fundamental for the entire XX century. The major theme of this writing is the way of building our concepts, both the building of scientific concepts and our common concepts. Cassirer starts his investigation by describing Aristotle's manner of explaining this building. For Aristotle our concepts reflect a true resemblance that exists between things. This is why we speak about a correspondence between these concepts and the real things. „For Aristotle, at least," Cassirer argues,

> the concept is no mere subjective schema in which we collect the common elements of an arbitrary group of things. The selection of what is common remains an empty play of ideas if it is not assumed that what is thus gained is, at the same time, the real *Form* which guarantees the causal and teleological connection of particular things. The real and ultimate similarities of things are also the creative forces from which they spring and according to which they are formed. The process of comparing things and of grouping them together according to similar properties, as it is expressed first of all in language, does not lead to what is indefinite, but if rightly conducted, ends in the discovery of the real essences of things. Thought only isolates the specific type; this latter is contained as an active factor in the individual concrete reality and gives the general pattern to the manifold special forms. The biological species signifies both the end toward which the living individual strives and the immanent force by which its evolution is guided. The logical doctrine of the construction of the concept and of definition can only be built up with reference to these fundamental relations of the real. The determination of the concept according to its next higher genus and its specific difference reproduces the process by which the real substance successively unfolds itself in its special forms of being. Thus it is this basic conception of *substance* to which the purely logical theories of Aristotle constantly have reference. The complete system of scientific definitions would also be a complete expression of the substantial forces which control reality. (Cassirer 1923, 7–8)

Hence, for Aristotle, whose ontological thought dominated Western thought until the end of the Middle Ages, our concepts reflect the real substances, those substances which are effectively *in re*. Between knowledge and reality there is no insurmountable wall as in the case of Kant. This understanding of knowledge determined that ancient and medieval science had mainly a qualitative character, unlike modern science, which had a quantitative character. Ancient and medieval science tends to grasp the inherent substance of the thing, and not the relations between them. Even more, mathematics, for us the science of these relations, was considered by Aristotle an obstacle on the way to this grasping. Nevertheless, states Cassirer, in mathematics and geometry we deal with a different type of concept building. Mathematical concepts do not reflect outer realities, so that numbers and geometric forms cannot be considered to be such reflections. On the contrary, in mathematics we encounter a real *Setzung*, a creation of concepts. And the same thing happens in the entire modern science of nature. This science which separates itself only with difficulty from a substantialist conception, namely from a self-understanding of knowledge as a knowledge of real substances, founds its theoretical undertaking by certain conceptual constructions, by means of which it can investigate reality afterwards. On account of these fundamental concepts that are elaborated by scientists, one makes a *selection* in the multitude of the aspects of reality. We find such a selection in every science, says Cassirer. Further, this selection takes place even on the level of our common perception. Hence, we encounter reality only while starting from a previous concept about the thing that we shall encounter. This is the new functional model of understanding knowledge that is supported by Cassirer, a model in which reality is given to us according to the concepts which are already possessed by us:

> Without a process of arranging in series, without running through the different instances, the consciousness of their generic connection – and consequently of the abstract object – could never arise. This transition from member to member, however manifestly presupposes a *principle* according to which it takes place, and by which the form of dependence between each member and the succeeding one, is determined. Thus from this point of view also it appears that all construction of concepts is connected with some definite form of construction of series. (Cassirer 1923, 15)
>
> The connection of the members is in every case produced by some general law of arrangement through which a thoroughgoing rule of succession is established. That which binds the elements of the series a, b, c, ..., together is not itself a new element, that was factually blended with them, but it is the rule of progression, which remains the same, no matter in which member it is represented. The function F (a, 6), F(b, c), ..., which determines the sort of dependence between the successive members, is obviously not to be pointed out as itself a member of the series, which exists and develops according to it. (Cassirer 1923, 17)

And finally:

> Every mathematical function represents a universal law, which, by virtue of the successive values which the variable can assume, contains within itself all the particular cases for which it holds. If, however, this is once recognized, a completely new field of investigation is opened for logic. In opposition to the logic of the generic concept, which, as we saw, represents the point of view and influence of the concept of substance, there now appears logic of the mathematical concept of function. However, the field of application of this form of logic is not confined to mathematics alone. On the contrary, it extends over into the field of the knowledge of nature; for the concept of function constitutes the general schema and model according to which the modern concept of nature has been molded in its progressive historical development. (Cassirer 1923, 21)

The transformation of the concept of function in Cassirer's thought in comparison with Kant's concept of function consists in the fact that function means for him no more the conceptual recognition of the "unconscious" activity of the soul, but a process which is treated for itself and not in relation to a background that is external to knowledge.

Cassirer renounces the Kantian assumption concerning the primacy of the unreflected experience, i.e. the premise of the existence of such an experience about objects, which must be given first to us in order that we may reflect on it and that we can build concepts about the objects that belong to it. His argument, as we have seen, is that any science, namely any true knowledge, does not proceed in this way, but, on the contrary, while it posits and builds certain concepts, it opens for itself a certain horizon of objects, a certain plain of objects *which have not existed prior to and apart from that concept*:

> The individual thing is nothing for the physicist, but a system of physical constants; outside of these constants, he possesses no means of possibility of characterizing the particularity of an object. (Cassirer 1923, 148)

Every science, on the ground of its fundamental principles, creates a domain of objects that will be investigated by it in the course of its development.

These principles are no more, as they are for Kant, conditions of a universal experience, but conditions of a special experience, the particular experience (i.e. the relationship with the objects) of the concerned science, an experience that is not reducible to any other kind of experience. Thus, even the term of "phenomenon" changes: the phenomena are no longer the objects which are conceptually determined by the intellect, objects that we find in all of our experiences, but every scientific domain encounters a special kind of phenomena. Using its own principles and concepts, a science creates a network that permits it to create a particular type of phenomena, i.e. the objects which it investigates are thought and described starting from those principles:

> It is only owing to the fact that science abandons the attempt to give a direct, sensuous copy of reality, that science is able to represent this reality as a necessary connection of grounds and consequents. It is only through going beyond the circle of the given, that science creates the intellectual means of representing the given according to laws. For the elements, at the basis of the order of perceptions according to law, are never found as constituent parts in the perceptions. If the significance of natural science consisted simply in reproducing the reality that is given in concrete sensations, then it would indeed be a vain and useless work; for what copy, however perfect, could equal the original in exactness and certainty? Knowledge has no need for such a duplication, which would still leave the logical form of the perceptions unchanged. Instead of imagining behind the world of perceptions a new existence built up out of the materials of sensation, it traces the universal intellectual schemata, in which the relations and connections of perceptions can be perfectly represented. Atom and ether, mass and force are nothing but examples of such schemata, and fulfil their purpose so much the better, the less they contain of direct perceptual content. (Cassirer 1923, 164–165)

Because science thinks every object starting from its principles and schemes, induction, which is the fundamental procedure of science, takes place not as a paradoxical and incomprehensible generalization, not as an extending or generalizing of particular data (which can be observed at the beginning of our research) to the entire class of objects. Every induction, says Cassirer, is founded on a certain way of conceiving the individual case. That means that from the beginning induction projects in the particular case a content that transcends it radically, transforming this particular case in the exponent of an ideal rule. The reality is that the process of adding through empirical observation of new cases actually confirms the rule which existed from the beginning in the mind of the researcher and not that these cases are those which direct the researcher to discover the rule:

> The logical act of 'integration' which enters into every truly inductive judgment, thus contains no paradox and no inner difficulty; the advance from the individual to the whole, involved here, is possible because the reference to the whole is from the first not excluded but retained, and only needs to be brought separately into conceptual prominence. (Cassirer 1923, 248–249)

In this way all the objects that a certain science investigates are not only phenomena – a concept that emphasizes only the difference between the content of knowledge (which only "appears" as the concept expresses it) and reality –, but are also "symbols", that is entities which exist only because they express an immanent rule:

> Each particular member of experience possesses a symbolic character, in so far as the law of the whole, which includes the totality of members, is posited and intended in it. The particular appears as a differential that is not fully determined and intelligible without reference to its integral. (Cassirer 1923, 300)

Thus every science generates its own symbolic field. Moreover, the human being, on account of his entire activity and life, is, as Cassirer later argues, an *animal symbolicum* (Cassirer 1944/1972, 26). This means that in each domain of his activity the human being encounters objects *only* because he thinks them by means of a certain formula, of a certain scheme of understanding, of a certain sense, because he thinks them in a certain way. Therefore, the existence of a layer of experience that could precede thinking and its instrument, judgement, is denied by Cassirer:

> The fact that there is no content of consciousness, which is not shaped and arranged in some manner according to certain relations, proves that the process of perception is not to be separated from that of judgment. It is by elementary acts of judgment that the particular content is grasped as a member of a certain order and is thereby first fixed in itself. (Cassirer 1923, 341)

Arriving at the conclusion that perception, the elemental act of human consciousness, is pervaded by a symbolizing character, on the one hand, and the conclusion that the different sciences have – each of them – a symbolic approach, irreducible to other factors (thus asserting that there exists an irreducible plurality of symbolizing acts), Cassirer may now generalize the idea of a symbolic character by conceiving man in general as a symbolic being, a being which, through his entire activity, projects around him an autonomous network of meanings. Cassirer does not develop this idea in his writing *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*, but acknowledges that he discovered it while working on this book (Cassirer 1, 1977, V).

B. The language as symbolic form

We find the development of the previous idea in the writing which represent the systematic work of Cassirer, the expression of his philosophical conception, namely in the volumes of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. At the beginning of the first volume, Cassirer maintains that the project he has commenced in his writing about substance and function must be developed by showing not only the way as the symbolic activity of man takes place in the sciences of nature, what he actually realized in that work, but also in other domains of the human existence. In other words, it was necessary to investigate the different modes by means of which man encounters the "world" and their articulation. Also it was necessary to present the specificity of those modes and their irreducibility to other faculties of the human spirit.

In general, writes Cassirer,

> under a symbolic form should be understood every energy of mind through which a mental content of meaning is connected to a concrete, sensory sign and made to adhere internally to it. (Cassirer 1956, 175)

The term "symbolic form" has three meanings in Cassirer's philosophy. First, it signifies the relationship established between the symbols of a certain domain. In this sense Cassirer uses terms such as "symbolic concept", "symbolic function" or the "symbolic character" (*das Symbolische*). A second meaning of this term concerns those domains of culture where these symbolic relationships are materialized: myth, art, religion, language, science. Finally, "symbolic form" refers to the fundamental categories of thought (space, time, cause, number, etc.), categories which acquire a specific form in each of the domains mentioned before (Hamburg 1949, 77). We have seen earlier that the term "symbol" is conceived by Cassirer as it is used in the sciences, namely, as a sign which stays in a predefined relationship with a totality of signs. The symbol is not so much a sign that is related to something real which is substituted by it, as it is a sign that receives its meaning only on the ground of its intrinsic relationship with a totality of signs that it is included within. Cassirer would then subscribe to Husserl's idea, that "to signify is not a way of being a sign in the sense of being an indication" (Husserl 1901, 23).

Hence, the sign has no existence through itself, but is produced by a law of generation, by a principle of generation, which produces that totality of signs within which each particular symbol is included. This principle of generation, which is precisely the "symbolic form", founds the great domains of culture. But each domain has a specific symbolic form, and own law of generation (Cassirer 1, 1977, 12). Only from a formal point of view can we talk about a universality of symbolic form as all domains of culture presuppose the existence of a certain act of relating their contents. But the act of relating that belongs to a domain is completely different from the act of relating that belongs to another domain, such that these domains are all irreducible one to another. Language, as symbolic form, is not reducible to a simple transformation in a linguistic sound of an emotional reaction caused by reality. Even if the linguistic sound is also such a reaction, the fact that the human being, in this primal stage of his development, has different emotional reactions before different aspects of reality proves the existence of a selecting activity regarding the contents of reality, a selection which, for Cassirer, is possible only on the ground of a certain function. In the same way, the contents of myth are not reducible to language (asproposed by a certain direction of myth interpretation), nor to other faculties of the human spirit. The myth is the result of an autonomous symbolic activity. Therefore, says Cassirer, the philosophy of symbolic forms does not search for the categories of the consciousness of objects only in the intellect, but begins from the assumption that such categories must act everywhere, in general, where from a chaos of impressions a cosmos, a characteristic and typical "image of world" shall be built. Each such image of the world is possible only by means of specific acts of objectification, i.e. of transformation of the simple "impressions" in representations which are determined and well articulated in themselves (Cassirer 2, 1977, 39).

The relation of a concrete symbol (of a certain symbolic content) to reality is thus always mediated by the principle of generation specific to the domain where that symbol belongs, a principle that realizes the synthesis of all of our “impressions”. The “indication” of the real thing is possible only on the ground of that mediation. Therefore the indicated real thing is from the beginning an exponent of the symbolic function and not an autonomous existence.

The symbolic dimension indicates not only the building of a functional unity of meanings, but it is also a process of objectification. The term “objectification” comes from the era of German Idealism. We find it in Goethe and in Fichte, but most of all in Hegel. Here we meet the idea of the objectification of Absolute Spirit. This Spirit has an existence that objectifies itself by means of its creations, that is by means of its activity. In Cassirer’s philosophy, where the assumption of such a universal Spirit does not exist, objectification means only that a certain content of the consciousness becomes an object of it. The fact that an emotion objectifies itself means that it becomes an object of consciousness, this emotion being now given to the consciousness as an object and consciousness being able to apprehend and to know it. But the objectified content is not identical with the supposed content that would exist before the objectification. „The expression of a feeling,” says Cassirer, „is not the feeling itself – it is emotion turned into an image. This very fact implies a radical change. What hitherto was dimly and vaguely felt assumes a definite shape; what was a passive state becomes an active process.” (Cassirer 1974, 43)

Thus, the perception, when it is objectified into language, acquires a different kind of reality, it becomes an object, is given to consciousness as an object. On account of this objectification, perception is no more what it was in a supposed pre-linguistic state. But the objectification, as transformation in an object, materializes itself according to the functional laws of the domain where it takes place. The appearing object builds itself not spontaneously, in the absence of every kind of conditioning, but it builds itself starting from the conditions that make it possible (i.e. intelligible) as an object in the concerned domain.

> In language we objectify our sense perceptions. In the very act of linguistic expression our perceptions assume a new form. They are no longer isolated data; they give up their individual character; they are brought under class-concepts which are designated by general ‚names’. The act of ‚naming’ does not simply add a mere conventional sign to a readymade thing – to an object known before. It is rather a prerequisite of the very conception of objects; of the idea of an objective empirical reality. (Cassirer 1972, 45)

We may extend this description of linguistic objectification to all sorts of symbolic forms. Each of them, in the very moment in which they take over a certain content and objectify it, subordinate this content to its specific object concept, and thus confer on it a meaning that has not existed before, removing its individual, particular character. By becoming an “object”, that content can now be known better and better, its features can be articulated more and more in the course of the experience with it. Thus, for instance, starting from the investigations of Usener, Cassirer affirms that the divinities of the developed pantheons have evolved from original deities that were undetermined and appeared instantly as „momentary deities”. They were, in Cassirer’s opinion, a kind of peculiar emotional state that was later described as a divine presence. The determination and assignation of more and more complex qualities to these primal divinities takes place by means of experience, implying also the historicity of the human being. Actually, „the momentary deities” are grounded in a layer of mythological thought which is earlier as structured religion, i.e. earlier to a personalization of the divinity, being grounded in the representation of *mana*.

Between the building of a religious pantheon and the constitution of the empirical world of objects there is an incontestable analogy. In both of them, says Cassirer, we can observe the transcending of the stage of isolation of the immediate given thing, and we can observe that man understands all individual existence as being integrated in a network that forms a totality (Cassirer 2, 1977, 100–101). On account of this integration, different perceptions do not remain on the stage of an “aggregate” (of a disorganized mass), but advance gradually to the condition of a „system” (of a multitude, that has an inner organization) (Cassirer 2, 1977, 101). Hence, objectification means for Cassirer also the act of integrating in a determined form (in science, in a “conceptual” form) an undetermined impression. This integration in a form is not accidental, but is realized according to the specific logic of the respective domain. Thus any symbolic form may not be seen either as a true copy of reality, nor as an arbitrary creation of the mind. Such a symbolic form has an internal logic, and it materializes itself according to an “order of foundation” (*Fundierungsordnung*, as Max Scheler says), namely according to a synchronic but also to a diachronic determination of meaning. All contents that are once objectified effect *all* the future experience of the individual human being and of mankind in general (Cassirer 2, 1977, 235).

Cassirer sees in the evolution of language three stages: on the first stage language is only a mimic expression of reality, in the second stage language is an analogical expression, and in the third stage language becomes a symbolic expression of reality. In the first stage, the mimic one, we encounter the belief that language and its components copy reality or are believed to be an immediate expression of reality. The fear that a certain object provokes exteriorizes itself in a certain sound, a sound which is then understood as being the object itself. There exists on this level a complete identification of the word with the thing. The word is not seen as having a separate existence from the thing. In the second level, the linguistic sound, although seen as existing apart from the thing, is considered to have the power and the capacity to replace the thing. Only in the third level does the consciousness that the linguistic sound, the word, is only a sign that we use for the thing appear. We observe that in the course of this evolution the critical consciousness evolves, from the entire identification of the word with the thing to the consciousness of the fact that this word is only a sign for the thing. We encounter the same evolution, says Cassirer, in the domain of myth and mythical thought. If at the beginning every mythical creation was considered as being the reality itself, gradually the mythical consciousness transforms into a religious consciousness, a consciousness in which there exists the understanding that the reality (in this case the divinity) and its representation are absolutely different, the representation being only a symbol of the divinity (Cassirer 2, 1977, 285), a symbol that expresses very vaguely the transcendent reality of the divinity that it signifies. Only by reaching this third stage of evolution of mythical thought is the critical faculty of human thought sufficiently developed for understanding that the mythical images are projections of the human mind, and not expressions of reality itself.

Language, as all symbolic forms, is thus the result of a *sui generis* way of man's relating to reality. We may only describe this relating, the way it develops itself in its own horizon, as we cannot discoverthe "causes" of its apparition. Language is an autonomous world, and as in the case of Kant, every attempt to determine the origin of the world leads us to a dialectics of reason, i.e. to a theoretical impasse, so all attempts to explain language by means of other capacities of the soul annihilate it and make incomprehensible the ubiquitous presence of one of the most important spiritual realities of the human history. Only by recognizing its specific character as symbolic form may language be seen as staying in continuity with the other manifestation of man and may contribute to a better understanding of him.

References

Cassirer, Ernst (1923). *Substance and Function and Einstein's theory of relativity*. Chicago-London: The Open Court Publishing Company.

Cassirer, Ernst (1956). *Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Cassirer, Ernst (1977). *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Erster Teil, *Die Sprache*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Cassirer, Ernst (1977). *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen,* Zweiter Teil, *Das mythische Denken*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Hamburg, C. H. (1949). Cassirer's Conception of Philosophy. In *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. P. A. Schilpp. Evanston, Illinos:The Lybrary of Living Philosophers, Inc.

Hamburg, C. H. (1964). *A Cassirer-Heidegger Seminar*. In Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 25, (2).

Hegel, G. W. Fr. (1986). *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Husserl, E. (1901). *Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. II. Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Görland, A. (1906). *Index zu Hermann Cohens Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*. Berlin: Verlag von Bruno Cassirer.

Kant Immanuel. (1881). *Critique of pure reason*. First Part. Trans. F. Max Müller. London: Macmillan and Co.

Kant Immanuel. (1881). *Critique of pure reason*. Second Part. Trans. F. Max Müller. London: Macmillan and Co.

THE COMMUNICATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNHISTORICAL IMAGE

Corina Daba-Buzoianu

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi;
National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: corina.buzoianu@comunicare.ro

Abstract:
The paper begins from the idea that an image is being shaped in the communication process and depends for this shaping on social interaction. The unhistorical elements of the image (archetype, myths and symbols), together with the historical ones (representation and stereotype), are transmitted through communication processes that depend of the ways that individuals and groups relate. Considering this, the paper argues that we may discuss a certain historicity of myths and symbols if we approach a communication point of view, as they are forms of interpreting and decoding reality.

Key words: unhistorical image, archetype, myths, symbols, communication through image.

A. Ernst Cassirer's understanding of scientific knowledge

The image is a symbolic representation born out of the communication process. Without it, images could no longer be transmitted or rooted and they could no longer influence individuals' actions. Although the image is formed at the individual level through processes that remain unconscious and are expressed in the form of opinions, attitudes, convictions and mentalities or cultural symbols[1], it is transmitted through communication and social interaction. The unhistorical forms of the image, archetypes, myths, symbols and also its historical forms, social representations and stereotypes are part of the cultural baggage of a society and are transmitted through communication processes. This paper analyses the ancestral structures – archetypes – and their way of expressing human emotion – symbols and myths – in order to reach their historical forms, logically determined and which ensure the shift of the unfamiliar into the familiar – representation and assumption. This approach is based on the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss according to whom a society is a group of people who communicate[2] and attempts to identify the connection between the image before history and social communication mechanisms.

The concepts defining the pre-logical or unhistorical layers of an image (archetype, myth, and symbol) express the essence of symbolic thinking; they describe the thought patterns which individuals consciously relate to, coalescing into a structural model for processing information and making the unknown accessible and thus guiding individuals within societies. If the image is a symbolic processing of the world, we are faced with the question of what influences this processing, which is the coding method for interpreting reality? Seeing as the image describes a hyper-reality, interpreting the image becomes the pathway to deciphering individuals. Through images, individuals relate to the micro and macro cosmos and create their own symbolic dimension. However, this interaction does not remain individualistic; instead it is subject to the symbolic rules of society.

The study of images implies an understanding mental processes and the reference system of an age. First of all, any image has an archetypical background[3], but its model is transformed depending on

---

[1] Ion Chiciudean, Bogdan-Alexandru Halic, *Imagologie. Imagologie istorică,* Bucureşti, comunicare.ro, 2007, p. 33.

[2] "A society consists of individuals and groups which communicate with one another. The existence of, or lack of, communication can never be defined in an absolute manner. Communication does not cease at society's borders. These borders, rather, constitute thresholds where the rate and forms of communication reach a much lower level. This condition is usually meaningful enough for the population, both inside and outside the borders, to become aware of it". (Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, New York, Basic Books, 1963, p. 296).

[3] „The term was introduced by Carl Gustav Jung (1919) to connote archaic images (the dragon, paradise lost) that constitute a common background of humanity as a whole.

the answer provided by individuals to particular geographies[4], and on the ancient mentality of a civilization. Due to social mimesis and mental contagion, individuals of a certain era will adopt similar ways of processing reality, and thus coherent images and specific representations are constructed for particular societies or historical periods. The manner in which people respond to natural and social challenges and the conditions present during the formation of a language or a mental structure have an influence on the way in which those people will perceive the world and the temporal and spatial social processes and phenomena[5]. This is possible precisely because the archetypical representational model, although in essence unhistorical, will eventually be adapted to the needs of individuals to respond to some fundamental issues. The answer is the essence of the beliefs of a people, an era and represents the becoming of an archetype. This constitutes the knowledge basis because decoding archetypes allows for understanding essential references and the models which individuals consciously use[6]. From the perspective of Fernand Braudel, the way people respond to challenges is the response of the environment or geography, a response which benefits the emergence of a certain religion that, in the end, generates the type of society/civilization[7]. Basically, people are relegated to the solutions they can imagine, considering that their representations of the world are built on the way they interact with the world and on the way they symbolically and practically resolve conflicts. Thus, "during each era a certain representation of the world (…) penetrates the entire mass of society. This mentality dictates attitudes, informs options, solidifies biases and shifts to one side or the other social movements"[8]. In Braudel's terms, representations within a society are the result of cohabitation and the method for surviving in a certain space.

In that sense, the image has bot h a powerful unhistorical component, if we are to keep in mind archetypes, myths and ancestral symbols, as well as a significant historical dimension, subject to becoming, and the connection between the two is ensured by the communication process taking place between individuals. Essentially, if we consider the archetype to be a pre-representational model, we must underline that it gains meaning and significance in a social setting, through the interaction of individuals and in connection with the mentality of the respective era.

An image, as it is an unconscious representational process and at the same time a purposeful mental process, inherits the specie's tracks onto which it lays the accomplishments of each individual existence. The image becomes a synthesis of the collective and individual unconsciousness because it bears in its nucleus the archetype, social consciousness, individual awareness and all that individuals manage to amass at the mental level therein. The multiple approaches to archetypes place their study in the field of the unconscious, perceiving them as pre-logical creations emerging from collective thought or, rather, from the collective processing of the world. Archetypes designate the original models whose nature determines the way in which things are formed[9]. In the words of Carl Gustav Jung, the archetype is the quintessence of the mythological works of all peoples[10] and it is materialized as an image of primordial time we remain unaware of[11]. Archetypes can only be defined through the collective unconsciousness, since archetypical images are expressed through mythological themes which are *probably* common to all races and all times, creating a "typical fundamental form of a certain emotional state, continuously repeated"[12]. However the unconscious does not remain merely at the stage of an inherited, ancient representational model which engrains the archetype. Jung delineated within the unconscious a layer he defined as the personal unconscious, which is the product of the accumulations throughout the person's individual

We can find them in any given person, at any time and any place together with personal memories. Perpetuated through fables, mythology, fairy-tale and legends, archetypes manifest themselves in dreams, deliriums and visual arts." (Norbert Sillamy, *Dicționar de psihologie Larousse,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, sv. *arhetip*).

[4] Fernand Braudel, *Gramatica civilizațiilor,* Bucureşti, Meridiane, 1994, *passim.*

[5] Ion Chiciudean, Bogdan-Alexandru Halic, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[6] „Man's curses against devastating thunderstorms, his terror of the unchained elements- these affects anthropomorphize the passion of nature, and the purely physical element becomes an angry god." (Carl Gustav Jung, *Puterea sufletului* (antologie)*,* II, Bucureşti, Anima, 1994, p. 73).

[7] „Each civilization is connected to a space with nearly stable borders; from where, for each of them, a *particular geography* of itself, which implies a series of possibilities, of given restrictions, some cvasi-permanent, never the same from one civilization to the other. (…) The challenges differ and in no small measure the answers.' (Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 45).

[8] *Ibidem,* p. 55.

[9] Simon Blackburn, *Dicționarul de filosofie Oxford,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 1999, sv. *arhetip.*

[10] Carl Gustav Jung*, op. cit.*, *passim.*

[11] *Ibidem,* p. 162.

[12] Carl Gustav Jung, *Tipuri psihologice*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1997, p. 477.

existence, a conscious psychological factor[13]. This unconscious is layered over the common unconscious and comprises the personal contents of man and the acquisitions of the individual existence. The personal unconscious is the individual's landmark that helps guide them along the inherited pathways. In this sense, images are the expression of both the personal unconscious, as well as the collective unconscious, thus determining the intentional conscience.

Nevertheless, the ways in which the conscious and the unconscious manifest themselves resemble each other, and are therefore subject to logic. The analysis of these ways, such as symbolic expressions, indicates that we can speak of a certain logic of the symbol[14], and, implicitly, of the unconscious, as there are groups of symbols which can be translated in the terms of reason[15] and which mean to set men free of their profane condition, thus proving that symbols are coherent and systematic[16]. The lack of a logic to symbolic forms is merely appearance, as Edmund Leach[17] argued; it is itself the essence of the symbol, which is interested more in metaphysics than in physical existence, and more in faith than in knowledge. No matter the content and extensions of symbolic manifestations, these are a "never-ending line of shapes that in the meandering plane of the dream, the myth, the rite, theology, mysticism, metaphysics attempts to achieve the archetype"[18], all of which reveals a certain rationality among the unconsciousness elements. In that sense, it is important to point out the fact that, unlike the Freudian unconscious which contains the repressions and frustrations of the individual, the unconscious, in Jung's and Eliade's conceptions is not populated by monsters but rather by gods, fairies, heroes who are all mythological creatures that hide archetypical themes.

The unconscious generates mythical expressions, whose analysis highlights the fact that we can speak of a mythical state of mind, which Romulus Vulcănescu[19] thought of as a permanent component of global thinking. For the author, the categories of mythical thought[20] are fundamental notions that help us to understand mythical entities and to frame them in a subjective reality which competes with our objective reality. Thus the "actual conscience takes over and processes the data and the elements of mythical thought on the basis of sufficient reason: the subconscious through a sympathetic or emphatic effect and the unconscious through genetic code"[21]. Therefore, for Vulcănescu, mythical thought belongs, to some extent, to all of consciousness' levels, fulfilling a function within each one and thus articulating according to the mechanisms which govern each individual structure.

However, the reduction from the conscious to the unconscious and the image's fragmentation and the gradual removal of its elements in order to reach the ancient, archetypical background are only relevant insofar as it regards individual consciousness and the individuals' capacity to use its unconscious heritage. Hence, the representational process has particularities which belong to each individual. "The reduction, due to which we reach, through analysis, the fundamental element and which has the tendency to project results on the universal level, must be seconded by a synthetic integration regarding individualisation. The archetypical symbol ties the universal to the individual"[22]. Myths and symbols resume archetypical themes, affix exemplary models in order to give significance to people's actions and contend with their fears and dreams. Thus, through myth the story of the

[13] *Idem, Personalitate şi transfer,* Bucureşti, Teora, 1997, p. 20.

[14] Mircea Eliade, *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 45.

[15] „Man's place in the world, from whichever angle we look at, is expressed through key-words which contain the idea of binding-chaining, attachment. In the magical plane, man uses knot-amulets to defend from the bindings of demons and wizards; in the religious plane he is bound by God, caught in his *net*; but even death binds him – concretely, the dead body is tied with ropes – or metaphorically – the demons bind the soul of the departed (…) Everywhere, the common goal is to free himself from *bindings,* mystical initiations in the labyrinth, during which man learns how to untie the labyrinthic knot, in order to free it when the soul will reencounter it after death, matching the philosophical, metaphysical initiation, whose purpose it is to unravel the veil of ignorance and liberate the soul from the chains of existence." (*Ibidem*, p. 146).

[16] „Researching the symbolism of *ascension*, the creations of the unconscious present a structure and meaning perfectly approvable, on the one hand, with the ascensionary myths and rituals and, on the other hand, with the metaphysics of ascension." (Mircea Eliade, *Tratat de istoria religiilor*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1992, p. 413).

[17] Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 70.

[18] Mircea Eliade, *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 150.

[19] Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologie română,* Bucureşti, Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1985, p. 15.

[20] In Vulcănescu's opinion the categories of mythical thought are also at the same time ontological: space, time, causality and finality. (*Ibidem*).

[21] *Ibidem,* p. 31.

[22] Jean Chevalier, Alain Gherbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

world's creation and of man's beginning on the Earth is told.

Archetypes are universal because the symbols and myths through which they are expressed are polyvalent, generating meanings and multiple significances in each cultural space. Being a product of the collective unconscious, archetypes are the raw material which, in order to gain substance, also need to be transposed in the language of the age[23]. However, from the analysis of the symbolic forms of archetypes, it is not entirely clear that they contain an image, as Jung had argued[24]. In fact, research does not illuminate two essential issues of archetypes: if and to what extent an archetype can be considered a *representational model* and if the archetype is inherited by individuals through their descent from the species. We may say that the second issue can be resolved through Jung's clinical studies[25], in which he identifies representational models of people from various cultures and civilizations. Nevertheless, the first issue seems to remain dependent on an alternative explanation derived from the interpretation of mythical thought, according to which the analysis of myths and symbols is the analysis of archetypes. Eliade's writings argue that traditional societies reject autonomy from archetypes and manifest their hostility towards any form of *autonomous history*, that is, history with no archetypical pattern[26]. For the historian of religions an archetype is an image of origins because an image is true only as a "bundle of meanings, not just one of its meanings or just one of its multiple planes of reference"[27]. Eliade, however, does not sufficiently clarify the problem of the archetype as a bundle of meanings because he only emphasizes the spiritual meaning of an image, through the archetype's extensions, and not the content of its basic meaning. Basically, we reach the point where an archetype is considered an image just because its' multiple symbolic valuations generate images. Thus, the primordial element (the archetype) is considered to be what superior layers became, symbolic products derived from it. However, this argument eludes the fact that the archetype is removed from history. From this point of view, this paper proposes an analysis of archetypes departing from the investigation of symbolic representations of the primary civilizations established by Arnold Toynbee[28], in order to see if we can speak of inherited representations transmitted through myths and symbols or of motifs of representation. After all, this approach should clarify if archetypes give meaning to objects or only designate objects of significance.

The archetype of divinity, fertility and the archetype of the leader are questions which are *objectified* in accordance with *particular geographies*, a society's specificity as well as with the individual's standby and interpretation horizon. For example, the theme of fertility/fecundity enhances the archetype of the endlessly renewing life, as the synthesis of matter and spirit which ensures the survival of the individual and the community. The analysis of the multiple representations of the archetype of fertility in the frame of primary civilizations emphasizes that myths and symbols convey a theme and not an image. In the old Egyptian civilization fertility was governed by the king Osiris, who later became a god, together with his wife Isis [29]. Osiris is the source of all of creation[30] and

[23] Carl Gustav Jung, *Puterea sufletului* (antologie), II, Bucureşti, Anima, 1994, p. 45.

[24] „ It is self-evident that any mythology and any revelation are derived from this matrix of experiences and therefore any future idea about man or the world will also be derived from here. It would be, of course, a mistake so suppose that these images of fantasy sprung from the unconscious can find an immediate utility – as a revelation for example". (*Ibidem*).

[25] „We are speaking about a re-vitalized archetype, as we elsewhere termed these original images. The primitive and analogous to the dream way of thinking is what produces ancient images. We are not speaking of an inherited representation, but of inherited tracks." (Carl Gustav Jung, *Personalitate şi transfer,* Bucureşti, Teora, 1997, p. 22).

[26] Mircea Eliade, *Mitul eternei reîntoarceri,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 1999, p. 7.

[27] *Idem*, *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 19.

[28] According to Toynbee, the primary civilizations are the Egyptian, Sumerian, Sinica, Minoan, Andean and Mayan ones. (Arnold Toynbee, *Studiu asupra istoriei*, vol II, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1997, pp. 101-113).

[29] According to the old Egyptian religion, although Osiris was killed by his brother, who attempted to take power, his wife, Isis, become pregnant with him, and afterwards buries his body. Horus, the son of the two, fights to avenge his father and manages to revive him in the royal tomb. Osiris is therefore resurrected as a spiritual person, as vital energy. According to tradition, he ensures crop fertility and all reproductive forces, coming to symbolize the fountainhead of fertility and reduction. (Mircea Eliade, *Istoria credinţelor şi ideilor religioase,* vol. I, second edition, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1991, pp. 103-104).

[30] „Whether I live or die I am Osiris I enter in and reappear through you, I decay in you, I grow in you. (…) The gods are living in me for I live and grow in the corn that sustains the honored ones. I cover the earth whether I live or die I am barley, I cannot be destroyed. I have entered the order, I am the master of the order, I emerge in the

even becomes a role model for any who would attempt to defeat death. In the old Middle East the mother goddess[31] had a very important role as she was the mistress of crops and birth. In the Hittite religions the mother goddess is revered as the queen of the country, the skies and the earth[32], evidently with a protective role considering her native land. Also Hittites had multiple celebrations for fecundity goddesses from whom they expected crop bounties[33]. We also encounter a grand goddess of fecundity in the Sumerian civilization, a patron of families, flocks and fields who was basically the only important feminine deity[34]. Fecundity myths are stories that articulate a fundamental theme without imposing a common image on more peoples. The answer given by old faiths to the theme of fertility is to a significant extent the *answer of the place,* its particularities being connected to the characteristics of the area and the resources people had access to[35]. For example, in certain places in the Iranian cultural space, Christianity and in gnosis, the pearl is considered a symbol of fertility[36]. Whereas in areas that are mainly agrarian, soil will carry the role of mother goddess, based on the belief that seeds represent the power of life[37]. Similarly, in societies invested in animal husbandry, animals are invested with the power of ensuring fertility.

The differences and particularities of archetypes' expressions – myths and symbols – highlight the fact that an archetype cannot be a representation or an image, but rather designates a fundamental theme, problem and/or question for which the primordial man finds an answer by communicating. If the archetype of fertility would contain within it a representational model, than it would need to express the attributes of fertility, its manifestations, the ways in which it can be imagined. In the same way if the archetype of the leader would contain his image then it would be hard to explain the substantive differences between the kings of different religions and cultures and it would be hard to understand how it is possible to transform the image of the king in time, submitting it to conditioning by history, society and the economy. The major themes of the leader or of fertility generate images based on the culture in which the person's thinking is framed and on social communication.

At the end of the XIX[th] century, when everything was passed through the filter of scientific knowledge, and the beginning of the XX[th] century, myth was seen as a mistaken attempt to explain human and natural phenomena. James George Frazer[38] saw it as the scientific process of primitive men, born out of their incapacity to understand the world. Frazer's[39] cultural-historical perspective on mythology places the myth at the beginning of man's spiritual development, going through three stages: magic, religion and science. In the same vein, the founder of experimental psychology, Wilhelm Wundt analysed myths from the perspective of their relationship to poetry and art, believing that myths are involuntary and collective, whereas art is individual and voluntary. For Wundt, myths belong to primitives and are generated by infantile imaginations. Frazer's analysis of myths remains constrained to the area of primitive cultures, as he considers that religions originate in primitive magic and express themselves through symbols. For the British anthropologist, the myth is the product of a savage world with no reason or meaning, although his approach ignores the spiritual dimension of the ancient world and its capacity to give meaning to the world[40].

body of order." *(Texte des Sarcophages,* 330; trad. Rundle Clark, p. 142 apud *Ibidem*, p 104*).*

[31]*Ibidem,* p. 115.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 144.

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 145.

[34] Ovidiu Drîmbă, *Istoria culturii şi civilizației,* vol. I, Bucureşti, Saeculum, 1997, p. 109.

[35] Clams, oysters or sea shells act as creative forces, favoring births. "The analogy with fecundity is recorded even by some terms naming certain bivalve molluscs, evidenced by the old Dutch name for the clam (kudefisk); similitude also attested to in Japan." (Mircea Eliade, *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 159).

[36] „A tradition of Oriental origin explains the birth of the pearl as the fruit of lightning that penetrates the clam, the pearl being the product of the mating between Fire and Water. Saint Ephrem uses this old myth to illustrate both the immaculate conception of Christ, and his spiritual birth in the baptism of fire." (*Ibidem*, p. 183).

[37] Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *Dicționar de simboluri: mituri, vise, obiceiuri, gesturi, forme, figuri, numere,* Bucureşti, Artemis, 1994, sv. *sămînță.*

[38]James George Frazer, *Adonis: étude de religions orientales comparées,* Paris, Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1921, *passim.*

[39] *Idem*, *Creanga de aur,* Bucureşti, Minerva, 1980, *passim.*

[40] This may be the reason why Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote in 1930 that „Frazer is much more savage than most of his savages, for these savages will not be so far from any understanding of spiritual matter as an Englishman of the 20[th] century. His explanations of the primitive observances are much cruder than the sense of the observances themselves" (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical occasions, 1912-1951,* Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1993, p. 56).

Due to the new breath within the field of anthropology – the history of religions as well as psychoanalytical studies – the XXth century brought a new perspective on myths. In this new perspective myths and symbols were considered the answer to the awareness of a certain position of man in the cosmos, which implies a particular metaphysical position. Myths and symbols pick up archetypical themes, and establish new exemplary models in order to give meaning to man's actions and in order to reply to man's fears and dreams. These are not arbitrary creations of the psyche, as they respond to a need and fulfil a function revealing the most secret ways of being[41], thus expressing a primordial model, a fundamental theme which dominates the unconscious. The XXIst century approaches myth from the perspective of its connection to the sacred, revealing the metaphysical condition of the world beyond. The end of the XXth century and the beginning of the XXIst marked the size and social role of myth, with researchers considering it as a narrative-discursive product rooted in language and culture and which influences individuals in their complex social behaviour[42].

Regardless of the period when it was investigated, myth is approached either as an untrue story, full of fantasy, a product of intellectual limitations and primordial man's naiveté, or as a resource of eternal truths. And yet, in both cases, myth describes phenomena that cannot be understood through an individual's experiences[43]. It is interesting that on the one hand the two approaches exist simultaneously as myths are taken to be false fairy tales when they speak of other cultures and cannot be believed through the prism of our experiences. On the other hand, the stories about our own heroes and gods are trusted as eternal truths. In that sense, for a Christian the rebirth of Christ is a hierophany, whereas the rebirth of Osiris is an unlikely story. The difference between the two approaches is due to the myth being rooted in the groups' beliefs. Although a Christian will never believe that Osiris procreated after his physical death, and for an Egyptian the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary and his rebirth is a piece of fiction, the two events seem to be connected through a common, universal theme. From this point of view, myths are connected to humanity's cultural identity, their veracity thus becoming less important, as highlighted by David Leeming: „Mythical stories are elements belonging to the universal culture shared by individuals from all corners of the world"[44]. In that sense, Jeppe Sinding Jensen assimilated myths into Karl Popper's third world because in "traditional societies, particularly the pre-literacy ones, myths and mythologies are collections, archives that include objective knowledge and that become accessible to society in the same way as collective memory"[45].

The myth is a story of creation, of a beginning in which supernatural beings created the universe. It expresses an exemplary model of all human actions as it relates an event occurring *in illo tempore,* a landmark for all of life's moments as evidenced by Mircea Eliade[46]. Appealing to the Tibetan culture, according to which an event is of importance only to the extent to which its origins are known, Phil Cousineau argued that when people construct stories about the origins of things they attribute to them a sacred dimension[47]. Through reviewing events, man transcends chronologic time and is placed in the unhistorical. The myth's time is sacred, and reliving that time means bringing the sacred into the daily and renewing it through contemporary ritual re-edits. Archaic man lives through the sacred, retells it through myth and renews it through ritual in order to transform it into an eternal present which makes it perpetually contemporaneous with the sacred. Eliade highlighted man's capacity to live through the myths that express a religious experience through which he renews fabulous events that had taken place in a primordial time. In that sense an object or act does not become real unless it *imitates* or *repeats* an archetype. People would unconsciously have the tendency to become archetypical and paradigmatic. Man's need to have a story which explains the origins of the world can also be witnessed in contemporary society, where, according to Phil Cousineau, through family reunions, religious ceremony and celebrations, the individual takes part in the permanent process of constructing myths[48]. That is why Cousineau underlined

[41] Mircea Eliade, *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, pp. 14-15.
[42] Jeppe Sinding Jensen, *Myths and Mythologies: a reader,* London, Equinox, 2009, p. 4.
[43] David Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. xi.
[44] *Ibidem*, p. xii.
[45] Jeppe Sinding Jensen, *op.cit.,* p. 48.
[46] Mircea Eliade, *Aspecte ale mitului,* Bucureşti, Academia Română, 1977, pp. 5-6.
[47] Phil Cousineau, *Once and Future Myths: The Power of Ancient Stories in Modern Times,* Berkeley, California, Conari Press, 2001, p. 9.
[48] *Ibidem*, p.9.

the paradox of the myth as an event that never existed although it has always been eternal[49].

Semiotics approaches myths and mythology from the perspective of a complex of signs, a series of significant elements which generate communication processes, and even stories, when they gain a narrative frame. Evidently, this combination of signs needs to respect certain rules and a certain logic in order to make sense to the community. For this reason Jeppe Sinding Jensen argued that the semiotic perspective requires a sociological dimension. The analogy of myth and language, espoused by semiotics, can also be found in structuralist studies, particularly in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. While anthropologists had demonstrated how family ties had worked in primitive societies, Lévi-Strauss saw them as a system of communication with its own grammatical rules[50]. Essentially, with Lévi-Strauss we can observe a paradigm shift with regards to the study of myths. If for many anthropologists myths shaped the rationality of primitive societies, for Claude Lévi-Strauss they are logical and this is due to the fact that the world itself is imagined and symbolized in myths and cosmologies, which describe it with the help of symbols taken from everyday life.

In the work of Pascal Boyer[51], the myth is approached from a cognitivist perspective, as the French author studied the relationship between memory and cultural manifestations. Boyer argued that in order to be credible and memorable (mythical) stories need to surpass the common plane, and yet, at the same time, they need to be anchored in reality and to answer to some universal expectations that people have about the world. Actually, in order to survive, myths combine common elements with impossible facts and phenomena. Moreover, what anthropologists such as Frazer and Wundt considered infantile thinking, cognitivists argue was in fact the very strategy of the myth, with it being structured and organised in such a way as to answer man's need for symbolic representations. Boyer's analysis[52] highlighted the fact that mythical thought is proof of evolution and the flexibility of the human brain. As it is a story, the myth also has a construction of the imaginary[53], with words as symbols and ideas transporting archetypes. The myth acts as a story that legitimizes this or that religious or magical belief orlegend and its explanatory injunctions, the popular fairy-tale or the fable[54]. In that sense this is a journey in the paradise lost which explains and justifies life and the existence of man.

While investigating modern perspectives on the interpretation of myth, Lauri Honko defines myth as "a story of gods, a summary of the world's beginning, of creation, fundamental events, a moment of establishing order (…) Myth expresses and confirms values and religious norms within society, it casts behavioural patterns, attests to the efficacy of ritual with its practical purposes (…) The true environment of myth is that which establishes rites and religious ceremony"[55]. In that sense, a myth is a true instrument of social communication and of interpreting reality, the way it was seen by Roland Barthes who defines it as a system of communication circumscribed by formal and unsubstantial borders and barriers[56]. Seeing as myth belongs to speech, as the meaning of things, mankind's history transforms reality into words, governing the life and death of the mythical language. Therefore, in Barthes's view, one can speak of very old myths but not eternal ones, as mythology can only have a historical basis, due to the fact that myth is spoken: it does not emerge from the nature of things[57]. From the perspective of semiology, a myth is a symbolic story about the world and the human condition, but it can also be a mystification in which there is a change of sign.

If we could admit that myths are created from the start of mankind, then man within History would be in a continuous repetition of inherited myths, incapable of creating new myths and therefore it would be very difficult to explain how it was possible to create myths such as that of Dracula[58]. Limiting the concept

[49] Phil Cousineau, *op. cit*., passim.

[50] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The elementary structures of kinship,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1969, *passim*.

[51] In his studies Pascal Boyer aims to identify the elements that give memorability to the oral tradition, systematizing thusly, the way in which religious representations defy everyday logic and the ideas people have of the characteristics of the physical world. For Boyer the memorability of myths can be called *cognitive optimum,* resulting from the combination of common narrative elements with innate mental predispositions, such as the belief in supernatural beings. (Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religions Thought,* New York, Basic Books, 2001, *passim*).

[52] *Ibidem.*

[53] Gilbert Durand, *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului*, Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic, 1998, *passim.*

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 343.

[55] Lauri Honko, *Problem of Defining Myth,* Stockholm, 1972; Extract from „Studies of Religion", 2, 1972 apud Romulus Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[56] Roland Bartes, *Mitologii,* Iaşi, Institutul European, 1997, p. 235.

[57] *Ibidem,* p. 236.

[58]The deliberate actions of Vlad the Impaler to modify individual and collective perceptions and behaviours and

of myth to just a creation of primordial man, we could not understand how the legend of Vlad the Impaler transformed into the myth of Dracula. We must remember that the unconscious is populated in equal measure by gods and demons as it reflects the good-evil duality, the order-chaos through which people can find both hope in life and blame for the challenges they cannot surpass. In that sense, the myth of Dracula is the response to an archetypical theme of evil, of the demon that does not respect cosmic order and instead breaks laws and manifestations of the sacred. Also, fundamentally, the myth of Dracula spread because it had communication channels available through which the message sent was adapted to the larger horizon of interpretation of the medieval era, where terror and extreme physical punishment were widespread.

One of the problems of defining myth is, as we have mentioned above, related to the fact that it is seen as a creation of the imagination and is not anchored in history, because it describes an event that never happened. In an analysis of emblematic myths Willem Frijhoff defined historical myths as a narration or intentional piece of fiction which expresses the perception individuals have of the historical meaning of certain events and occurrences which have as a goal affirming the meaning of that community's identity[59]. From this point of view, myths are not random fiction and need to be seen instead as a subject separate from the study of history and culture. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff highlight in their work *Myth in History, History in Myth*[60] the changes that have taken place since 1975 in the way myths have been defined. The authors noticed a change in attitude when it comes to the historical dimension of myths[61], and they believe they should be seen as a legitimate form of discourse. From their perspective the extension of myths to the meaning of historical story is not only a new field of study[62], but also a surpassing of the structuralist paradigm, which could not conceive of myth outside of classic antiquity.

Regardless of their content, myths have an important historical component, which helps them stay anchored in the era's reality, using authentic events and people, in order to transmit stories of universal validity. In that sense, among the forms of conscience manifestation, religions rely most on the basis of historical myth, among which Christianity and Islam are only two examples. The stories of Christ and Mohammed are articulated in the same ways as myths, so their structure and meaning can be analysed with instruments similar to those used in analysing myths. Both religions are based on real, historical events and characters that are transformed depending on the needs of the individuals in a certain area, the era's conditions and its specific politics[63]. However, this transformation does not alter the universal, archetypi-

the wilful imposition of a satanic image has generated, in a certain context and due to certain interpretative horizons, collective representations of Dracula that in time transformed in a myth. „It should however be noted that Vlad the Impaler is not the practitioner of these rituals, but merely the inspiration, the corrupter, in fact the satanic agent who influences/beguiles others. Other than these main themes, to the shaping of Vlad the Impaler's image other aspects, which resonate and are relevant to the collective mentality of the era, contribute (…) The Romanian ruler, associated with the great bloodthirsty Christian torturers like Herod, Nero, Dioclectian and other pagans, ridicules and reverses, according to satanic rituals, the Christian service, desecrates the holly ground around the church, feels good surrounded by cadavers, gladly eating his meals among them encircled by fetid odors – another element common to satanic agents – without being bothered at all." (Ion Chiciudean, Bogdan-Alexandru Halic, *op. cit.,* p. 329).

[59] Willem Frijhoff, *Emblematic Myths: Anneke's Fortune, Bogardus's Farewell, and Kieft's Son,* in Laura Cruz, Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *Myth in History, History in Myth,* proceeding of the conference *Third International Conference of the Society of the Netherlandic History,* New York, 2006, published at Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 117.

[60] Laura Cruz, Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *op. cit.,*, pp. 1-15.

[61] C. A. Tamse, *The Political Myth*, in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (eds.), *Some Political Mythologies: Papers Delivered to the Fifth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference* (The Hague: Hijhoff, 1975); Van Dale, *Groot woordenboek van de Nederlandse taal* (Utrecht/Antrewp: Van Dale Lexicografie, 2008), 2234; „The Myth is a narrative fiction which usually implies supernatural characters, actions and events and uses generally accepted ideas about natural and historical phenomena": *The Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed., vol. X, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 177 *apud* Laura Cruz, Willem Frijhoff (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[62] The historical approach to myths departed from the studies: Willem Frijhoff, „Ritual Acting and the City History: Haarlem, Amsterdam and Hasselt", in Heidi de Mare, Anna Vos (eds.), *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands. Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture and the Urban Environment,* Assen, Van Gorcum, 1993, pp. 93-106; Alain Cabantous (eds.), *Mythologies urbaines. Les villes entre l'histoire et l'imaginare*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004.

[63] The idea of similarities between religions is argued by the British anthropologist Mary Douglas, who justifies them, mainly, through the complexity of human social interaction. (Mary Douglas, *Introduction,* in Markham J. Geller, Mineke Schipper (eds.), *Imagining Creation,* Boston, Leiden, 2008, pp. 1-13).

cal message hidden in any myth, but only modifies the shapes, the representations through which the story is communicated. Furthermore, Cain's crime in the Old Testament is a motif often found in the Mesopotamian mythology, and the religion of Israel was influenced by middle-eastern myths. Essentially the discrepancies between mythologies and their particularities are not the result of differences in human nature, but are instead generated by the different reactions and answers individuals give to the environment creating the myth. In this way, a myth's particularities do not affect its continuity.

Just like identity, ethnicity and nationality, myths and religions are discursive constructs whose existence depends on social, cultural, economic and historical components. In a study of religion in the New Testament, Burton L. Mack[64] shed light on the way in which Christianity borrowed different mythical characters and events from ancient times in which the individuals found answers to existential questions they struggled with, such as life beyond death, salvation or the need to believe in a supernatural force. This phenomenon is widespread and there are many local components to the same religion due to the fact that it used the old pantheon in order to take root. The Romanian space is such an example: a large number of Christian saints took over the prerogatives of the old pagan deities, who were meant to solve problems specific to the area. In fact, the common point of religions throughout time is in pre-representational motifs, which the individual inherits and which belong to the species' path, of his or her need to explain the world and life, to find solutions to the critical situations which crop up.

Contemporary approaches to myths depart from the way in which the modern world is imagined and constructed. Marc Augé[65]even argues that it becomes more and more fictional as myth transforms into fiction. In the modern world myth's metamorphosis is generated by the mass media, particularly by television and the digital media. In Augé's opinion, television transforms reality into fiction, to the point at which it imitates it[66]. It is then not surprising that a consumerist society, such as the contemporary one, uses fiction, imagination and myth to present and promote its products to the public. This phenomenon can be encountered in nearly all modern industries – from car manufacturers, to electronic equipment, to clothing and all manner of games – all of which appeal to myths and symbols and which promise the individual a new dimension of reality. Just a quick overlook of the advertising messages and images may confirm the presence of representations and desirable states for the individual, which are in fact not very different from what we call the *utopia of traditional myths*. In that sense the myth of the *happy family*, of *ravishing beauty*, of the *saviour-leader* or of the *earthly paradise* are no more realistic than *fertility given by seashells and oysters, touch healing* or *Noah's survival during the flood.* The difference is merely in the shape in which these *new* myths reach the individual and the way in which they are propagated. If in the past myths were stories about what happened during primordial times, today myths take a part of the respective events and promise the individuals that they can take part in them by using certain products, services or by choosing certain leaders.

Doubtless, the diversity and complexity of myths present in different cultures and religions imposes a certain historical perspective on myth, as it seems to be an answer that is historically and socially determined, a cultural product through which people resolve an archetypical theme. Practically, the myths of creation, of the rescuing hero or of fertility are stories through which people in a certain space succeeded in solving the mysteries of creation and birth, to surpass their condition and to pass through the barrier of death. Furthermore, studies[67] point out that myths appear and disappear and we can speak of ritual behaviours gaining new meanings and of the possibility for today's societies to create modern myths[68]. In as much as the spontaneous creations of primordial man were of a symbolic nature, it becomes evident that symbols function as an instrument of knowledge and understanding of mankind and its emotionality. Furthermore, symbolic thinking is rooted in people to the extent that it allows for overcoming cultural barriers, spatial and temporal borders in order to communicate. As they are a cultural convention, symbols can be

[64] Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and the Christian Origins,* New York, Harper Collins, 1993, p. 149.
[65] Marc Augé, *The War of Dreams: Studies in Ethno-Fiction,* London, Pluto Press, 1999, p. 85.
[66] *Ibidem*, p. 108.

[67] Monique Segre (coord.), *Mituri, rituri, simboluri în societatea contemporană,* Timişoara, Amarcord, 2000, p. 10.
[68] „In modern myths, heroes are no longer antic gods, but men holding the power of destruction. Myth gathers facts and re-arranges them, reveals by hiding and has the role of legitimizing a situation, making it acceptable to a vast social entity" (C. Riviere, „Mythes modernes au coeur de l'ideologie" in *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie,* vol. XC, 1991 apud Monique Segre *op. cit.*, p. 13).

understood by deciphering the communication mechanisms and means in a society, because it defines the ways in which the individuals of a group understand the world. Symbolic thought, myth and religion are more than human phenomena; they are to the same extent social, linguistic and economic phenomena because man cannot be conceived of outside of collective language and life.

References

Books:

Augé, Marc (1999). *The War of Dreams: Studies in Ethno-Fiction,* London, Pluto Press.

Barthes, Roland (1997). *Mitologii,* Iaşi, Institutul European.

Blackburn, Simon (1999). *Dicționarul de filosofie Oxford,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic.

Boyer, Pascal (2001). *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religions Thought,* New York, Basic Books.

Braudel, Fernand (1994). *Gramatica civilizațiilor,* Bucureşti, Meridiane.

Chevalier, Jean, Gheerbrant, Alain (1994). *Dicționar de simboluri: mituri, vise, obiceiuri, gesturi, forme, figuri, numere,* Bucureşti, Artemis.

Chiciudean, Ion, Halic (2007). Bogdan-Alexandru, *Imagologie. Imagologie istorică,* Bucureşti, comunicare.ro.

Cousineau, Phil (2001). *Once and Future Myths: The Power of Ancient Stories in Modern Times,* Berkeley, California, Conari Press.

Drîmbă, Ovidiu (1997). *Istoria culturii şi civilizației,* vol. I, Bucureşti, Saeculum.

Durand, Gilbert (1998). *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului*, Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic.

Eliade, Mircea (1977). *Aspecte ale mitului,* Bucureşti, Academia Română.

Idem. (1994). *Imagini şi simboluri,* Bucureşti, Humanitas.

Idem. (1991). *Istoria credințelor şi ideilor religioase,* vol. I, second edition, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiințifică şi Enciclopedică.

Idem. (1999). *Mitul eternei reîntoarceri,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic.

Idem. (1992). *Tratat de istoria religiilor,* Bucureşti, Humanitas.

Frazer, James George (1921). *Adonis: étude de religions orientales comparées,* Paris, Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.

Idem. (1980). *Creanga de aur,* Bucureşti, Minerva.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1997). *Personalitate şi transfer,* Bucureşti, Teora.

Idem. (1994). *Puterea sufletului* (antologie)*,* II, Bucureşti, Anima.

Idem. (1997). *Tipuri psihologice*, Bucureşti, Humanitas.

Leach, Edmund (1976). *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Leeming, David (2005). *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Levi-Strauss, Claude (1963). *Structural Anthropology*, New York, Basic Books.

Idem. (1969). *The elementary structures of kinship,* Boston, Beacon Press.

Mack, Burton L. (1993). *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and the Christian Origins,* New York, Harper Collins.

Segre, Monique (eds.) (2000). *Mituri, rituri, simboluri în societatea contemporană,* Timişoara, Amarcord.

Sillamy, Norbert (1996). *Dicționar de psihologie Larousse,* Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic.

Sinding Jensen, Jeppe (2009). *Myths and Mythologies: a reader,* London, Equinox.

Toynbee, Arnold (1997). *Studiu asupra istoriei*, vol II, Bucureşti, Humanitas.

Vulcănescu, Romulus (1985). *Mitologie română,* Bucureşti, Academia Republicii Socialiste România.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1993). *Philosophical occasions, 1912–1951,* Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company.

Papers in volumes:

Douglas, Mary (2008). *Introduction,* in Markham J. Geller, Mineke Schipper (eds.), *Imagining Creation,* Boston, Leiden, pp. 1–13.

Frijhoff, Willem (1993). „Ritual Acting and the City History: Haarlem, Amsterdam and Hasselt”, in Heidi de Mare, Anna Vos (eds.), *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands. Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture and the Urban Environment,* Assen, Van Gorcum, pp. 93–106.

Proceedings of International Conferences:

Cruz, Laura, Frijhoff, Willem (eds.) (2009). *Myth in History, History in Myth,* proceeding of the conference *Third International Conference of the Society of the Netherlandic History,* New York, 2006, published at Leiden, Brill.

Tamse, C. A. (1975) The Political Myth, in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (eds.), Some Political Mythologies: Papers Delivered to the Fifth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference, The Hague: Hijhoff.

BALKAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2012

POLEMICS AS SUBTLE FORM OF COMMUNICATION:
THE CASE OF A ROMANIAN PHILOSOPHER – CAMIL PETRESCU

Anton Adămuț

Departament of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences,
„A. I. Cuza" University, Iaşi, Romania.
e-mail: antonadamut@yahoo.com

Abstract:
Camil Petrescu (1894-1957) was a Romanian novelist, dramatist, poet and philosopher. His PhD thesis in philosophy was entitled The Aesthetic Method of Theater, and wasinfluenced by Joseph Gregor, Julius Bab, Gordon Craig, Constantin Stanislavski, Adolphe Appia, and William Butler Yeats.. His thesis was published in 1937. In Romanian literature, he was the initiator of the modern novel, with the volume The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War (1930). As a philosopher he was influned by and continued to studyPlato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, James, Bergson and Husserl. Petrescu is the first Romanian philosopher to write a micro-monograph about Husserl (1938). His main philosophical work, entitled The Doctrine of Substance (deposited in 1942 to the Library of Vatican), was published in 1988 (The Doctrine of Substance, volumes I-II). In this paper, I present a placement of the Romanian philosopher in his time and in the relations he has with his contemporaries, some of them of world-class (Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionesco, Emil Cioran, inclusiv Constantin Noica).

Key words: philosophy, Romanian philosophers, criticism, literature, polemic, Camil Petrescu.

1. The Discontents of an Irritable Philosopher

By the middle of last century, Constantin Noica, a remarkable Romanian philosopher who has been for Romanian philosophy what Jan Patočka has been for Czech culture and philosophy, hoped that "although the Romanian material is not yet processed for philosophy and neither is the philosophical researcher according to the difficulties that this material raises, Romanian philosophy must keep its right of exploration. Without this, it will never know its sources and will appear as a simple individual success sometimes, as it is the thinking of a Conta, or as collective helplessness, as it was decided with his prophecy of desert spirit, Titu Maiorescu"[1]. Such a program that would surpass the phenomenon of individual success could only take place synchronously. And so the philosopher continues: "maybe we will learn to better study the philosophy of West, when we will stand in front of the task of clearing the Romanian thinking"[2].

The fact is that Camil Petrescu had the vocation of discontent. In a text entitled *Despre eseu sau tutti fruti* he states that "between the Carpathians and Danube all is essay". He continues: "Romanians is smart [...]. They does not have to study so much in order to know [...]. You «can make a summary for them», there is no need for thick books [...]. You show them what it is all about"[3]. He continues by saying that "Romania is a country between 18^0 and 20^0 in the longitude of east and it mainly produces grain, essays, spinach, cattle, oil and conference listeners". about the phrase "Romanians is smart", is older andsignificant for a certain mentality. It must be connected with the second edition of the novel *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* - 1930 (*The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War*). Şerban Cioculescu, an appreciated literary critic, says in his book, *Amintiri*: "At page 177 (from

[1] Constantin Noica, *Pagini despre sufletul românesc*, Colecţia Luceafărul, Bucureşti, 1944, pp. 52-53.
[2] *Ibidem*, 52.
[3] Camil Petrescu, *Opinii şi atitudini*, EPL, Bucureşti, 1962, p. 198.

Ultima noapte de dragoste, second edition – *n.m.*), where the author made on purpose a character say: - «Mister, Romanians is smart [...]. I'm telling you», it appeared corrected «Romanians are smart». Camil has reestablished the text and has written on margin «here, the stupidity of the reviser has "corrected" me»"[4].

The portraitist attempts to answer for the testimonies of contemporaries, from any direction they might come, and for the testimonies of the author himself. As far as the manner of restoration of a personality is concerned, this seems to me to be the best way. Here are, selectively and, therefore, incomplete, episodes from the life of Camil Petrescu.

2. Camil, Eliade, Noica *et alii*

The summer of 1928 offered, in the journals *Universul literar* and *Cuvântul*, a polemic on the concept and the reality of "the new generation" between Camil Petrescu and Mircea Eliade. Eliade, after Petrescu called him a "frantic and mystic phrase-monger", answers: "I was wrong, I confess. I thought he was smart and – somewhat – read. I was wrong. So what? Does he have to get mad? As if only Mr. Camil Petrescu is stupid and illiterate in our republic? Mr. Camil Petrescu must not despair. Continuing the careful browsing of *Larousse*, maybe he can gather knowledge directly remunerative"[5]. Two weeks later Eliade answers to an article signed by Petrescu in *Universul literar*: "[...] Mr. Camil Petrescu believes about all his adversaries that they are removed from circulation due to polemics. He recently told us that – due to his polemic – «we are classified for good». Thus, the natives of Fiji island, when they say about a person that he is dead – it is useless to prove to them life through the exercise of organic functions; he is considered dead for good and it is proceeded to mortuary toilet"[6]. It is beyond doubt that they were both wrong, at least one regarding the other, both regarding several. As a matter of fact, nine years later, in the article "Dictatura şi personalitatea", Eliade will write: "What champion of personality has helped Camil Petrescu for the prime of intelligence and of personal values? As far as I know, no politician has offered Camil Petrescu, for instance, a department that he can run. All nullities have been promoted, all smatterers and scoundrels of public life, all the slaves from Levant"[7].

Interesting here is the fact that only a few months before, for New Year, Camil has written to Eliade on a postcard: "I miss fighting some more with you"! And Constantin Noica will write in the same paper: "However, when Mr. Camil Petrescu, a distinguished doctor in philosophy, and nothing more as title, will reveal his ideas on aesthetics, the public will be tried by an extra factor of interest"[8].

In a letter dated on the 13th of July 1943, Noica wrote to Petrescu: "according to my impression, if some one has genius in the Romanian world, it is not excluded to be you. Except that you spend your genius in defending something that is not always worth defending". Petrescu, Noica reveals, was for the generation of Eliade, Emil Cioran, Eugen Ionesco, Petre Comarnescu, a strange intellectual, extraordinary, and of a susceptibility that would rapidly cause him antipathies. And again Noica, in a letter, addressed to Florica Ichim, wrote: "it missed him (to Camil – *n.m.*) only a little (not even today would I be able to say exactly what) to be a genius"[9].

3. An Extremely Inconvenient Philosopher: Camil Petrescu

Camil could feign anything and was the owner of a nature that defied the protean. This kind of man could only be inconvenient. "He became so inconvenient that even if he lived alone on an island lost in the ocean, he would argue with the moon, the sun, the trees, and even with the grass of which he pretends that it is good only to stuff the stomach of his people"[10]. This issue is very well caught by the philosopher and aesthetician Mihai Ralea: "A polemic, at least an extra conversation, is a bliss for the eminent journalist of Bucharest. He seizes the first opportunity for picking a quarrel, he is delighted when he can find someone with whom to start a little scandal, of course, not without noise. In our disagreeable job, in publishing, the most illustrious enemy is again ignorance, silence. A little noise around a name is always welcomed: the public can

[4] Şerban Cioculescu, *Memorii*, Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1975, p. 181.
[5] Mircea Eliade, "...şi Camil Petrescu", în *Cuvântul*, 4 iulie 1928.
[6] Idem, "Final de polemică", in *Cuvântul*, 18 iulie 1928.
[7] Idem, "Dictatura şi personalitatea", in *Vremea*, 28 martie 1937.
[8] Constantin Noica, "Filosofia şi Universitatea", in *Vremea*, 24 octombrie 1937.
[9] *Scrisori către Camil Petrescu*, edition taken cared of by Florica Ichim, vol. II, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1981, pp. 122-123.
[10] Constantin Nestor, "Un om incomod", in *Cuvântul*, 5 februarie 1929.

hear that you exist [...]. He is anxious and intrepid to see the public admire his qualities, which are in fact real, to sweep in one night all old glories, which still throw inconvenient shadows. Mr. Camil Petrescu is one of those people who cannot define themselves but against someone. Terrible drawback. Because then solitude means cancellation. No. Mr. Camil Petrescu must learn to exist also in himself, not only against someone. I say this with all my friendship"[11].

This, however, does not work either! – as reported by his ex-desk mate from second grade at "Sfântul Lazăr" High-school in Bucharest and friend till the very end, Constant Ionescu, Camil frequently claimed that "I want to have the final word even and, especially, to myself"!

Another example, another one among many others, I find in *Jurnal* of Mihail Sebastian. The end of note from 20th of October 1937 reports: "Camil is telling me a conversation of his with Toma Vlădescu – and then, with ingenuousness, asks me:

– But, after all, what does Toma Vlădescu have to do with you?

I had to remind him that, in 1931, when I was in good relations with T.V., he – Camil – introduced me, without consulting me, without asking me, in his dreadful polemic with V.

I do not regret, but isn't it spicy that today I am still «at swords' points» with Toma Vlădescu, while Camil has breakfast with him and angelically asks me «what's wrong» [...]?"[12]. It does not matter too much that the relationship Camil-Vlădescu has always been tensed (for example, in 1932, 25th of January, in the first issue of *Calendar*, Nichifor Crainic's newspaper, Vlădescu writes about Camil that he is "a backstairs boy", "an individual", "a spinster", "a silly fool", "a catastrophic idiot", that he has "a PhD in stupidity" and that he is "the scary imbecile").

Together with Toma Vlădescu, enemies of Camil have included Dan Botta, Petru Manoliu, Dragoş Protopopescu, Nicolae Carandino - all important names in the Romanian interwar period. In the campaign against the play written by Camil Petrescu and entitled *Mioara* (*The Ewe Lamb*), a campaign managed by Toma Vlădescu in 1943, Dan Botta addresses, in the paper *Duminica*, no. 9, 2nd of May 1943 an "Opened Letter" to Vlădescu where Camil is called, on a row: "maker of rubbish", "protuberance with boots", "the no. 1 infection of Romanian literature". And this after Dan Botta had written in the dedication from the volume of poetry *Eulalii* from 1931: "To Mr. Camil Petrescu, owner of the supreme Principles: of Lyre and of Spirit". But, in fact, is this something new under the sun?!

The relation with Petru Manoliu was very cute. Four numbers of the journal *Credinţa* (1170, 1171, 1178, 1179), all from October 1937, cancels Camil Petrescu, fromthe first text – "Metafizician cu telefon" - to the last one: "Jos masca, domnule Camil Petrescu". In the first one, Dan Botta writes: "If he were a genius, he would be Husserl, while like this he is just Mr. Camel, hysterical like a flea and smart as a button". In the latter one we read: Camil has "a few popularized readings of philosophy", and the author of the article wonders, and he was not the only one, if we deal with an "irresponsible or paranoiac". It all started from Camil's habit ofgiving away his books for reading before they were published. Here it is about the volume *Teze şi antiteze*, a text of Petrescu that did not excite Manoliu in any way who then, on the 12th of April 1939, wrote to Camil: "Please receive the purest and sinless thoughts". As chance would have it, from the 10th of February 1939, Camil had been delegated as Director of National Theater instead of Ion Marin Sadoveanu, who received the position of undersecretary at Cults and Arts. Finally, on 23rd of May 1956 the same Petru Manoliu sends Camil a missive that begins with "Dear Camil" and ends with "I hug you with strong friendship". Here he speaks of Mallarmé after and according to his correspondence and observes that, in reality, "the poet (not a specific one but the poet in general – *n.m.*) sees before the philosophers". Interesting and relevant references to Hegel, Schopenhauer, Husserl and Heidegger complete the letter's text. Only one year later Camil dies, while Manoliu outlives him by 19 years, surviving until 1976.

4. A Brief Episode of Phenomenological Philosophy

In a dispute unnecessarily extended, Camil states that "A very arrogant gentleman invites us in a piece of paper of theater to a chat about phenomenology. It is the same person who mistakes «introductory» with «of first plan» and believed that spontaneity and intuition are something shameful as irresponsible and instinct". "The arrogant gentleman" was Nicolae Carandino, the piece of paper of theater was the weekly *Bis* and Camil writes the lines above

[11] Mihai Ralea in *Cuvântul liber*, 15 septembrie 1925.
[12] Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 126.

in the paper *Lumea*, 28th of October 1945. What is the story? In *Lumea*, (14th of October 1945) Camil publishes a text entitled *Hai să discutăm* where he puts in place the ignorance regarding phenomenology of Nicolae Carandino. He answers in *Bis* (21st of October 1945), taking over Camil's title. In *Fapta* (6th of November 1945), Camil gives a lesson of phenomenology to Carandino. Only one sample: Carandino claimed that in phenomenology the terms *concrete* and *essential* do not go together. Camil is not surprised and serves him a quote from *Ideen* (Max Niemeer edition, 1929, p. 29): "a dependent essence is called an abstract, a completely independent essence is called a concrete". And ends, without ever coming back to the subject: "You cannot cheerfully take the crooks by the neck and then brotherly complain of the fact that your wallet is missing from your pocket". Carandino does not forgive him, nor forget him, as he is not credible when he states that "I had the personal polemics with the *man*"[13].

5. Camil and the Demon of Polemics: the Quarrel with Eugen Lovinescu

Camil is a nostalgic, that is true, except that Camil's nostalgia is one in the tradition of Maiorescu's polemics, logically argued, and full of accuracy. At least this results from the problematical article *Polemicele* from 1924, taken again in Camil's paper *Teze şi antiteze*. "There are no longer polemics," Camil complaines, long polemics that would bring face to face "armies of hostile arguments". A true "theory" of polemic is developed by Camil. In this, the polemic seems to be strictly personal ("the more personal it is, the more honest"), with style, without insult and indiscretion, and is intransigent and irreducible, "for art itself is not reducible".

I exemplify "the theory of polemic" by recalling the well-known debate between Eugen Lovinescu (the most important Romanian literary critic, after Titu Maiorescu) and Petrescu. We find the debut of this polemic in volume II of Eugen Lovinescu's *Memorii*, in several episodes[14]. To begin, in the literary circle of the cenacle of *Sburătorul*, Petrescu read his play *Jocul ielelor*. Without any authority in his voice, nervous, disturbed by the audience, the interpretation of the reading and the text do not have the success that, of course, the author hoped for. In *Note zilnice* Petrescu tries to impute to himself, in society, a "master's tone", and tries to remove the bad impression that he could make. How does Eugen Lovinescu see him? "When he sneezes, Camil looks around with the satisfaction of a new action: no matter what you do, it was done before by him and any idea that you express, it has been expressed by him in an old article from at least five years ago. He is not only the first in time, but also the first in what value is concerned; he is the greatest journalist and polemicist; he is the greatest poet and literary critic, he is the smartest man". Camil gets mad, pretends that Lovinescu does not respect the rules of polemic when he banters the pleasure for alcohol of the noocrat. There is however a joke, Camil himself will narrate, in *Rampa* from 11th of October 1933, to the event. Constant Ionescu, an old and faithful friend of Camil, retakes the joke in his memories[15].

Here is the story: "at a *game*, at the famous restaurant Iordache, Camil made a bet with the artists Gh. Storin, Ion Manolescu and Const. Stăncescu – Al. Buzescu being arbiter – that he will drink more than them without getting drunk. Winning the bet, he confessed *the trick*: to swallow before a glass of oil mixed with water! A fantasy from his early youth, which did not give the right to the critic to invoke it while trying to prove *the lack of talent* of the writer. As Camil used to say very reasonably, to Perpessicius and myself, at pub Mercur from passage Imobiliara: - What does one have to do with the other?" And Camil ends, narrates Constant Ionescu: "My erudite professor of philosophy, Coco Demetrescu-Iaşi and Iancu Brezeanu were intoxicated congenitally: who would have thought to question, for this, their talents"?

Lovinescu points out: "with such a throbbing and unequal attitude, it is easily understood, the area of hostility or of caution created around him as the areas of wilderness voluntary created around them by the agglomerations of the old Germanic tribes [...]. And it would be high time for this little man, hasty, edgy, always in a hurry, with his sight down as if he were looking for something that was lost, with the back of his hand lit, burned with fevers, quarrelsome, full of talent but also of conceit, to stop from his frantic race, in order to find himself again, as well as the peace without which no one can be completely accomplish"[16].

[13] Nicolae Carandino, *De la o zi la alta. Memorii*, Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1979, p. 253.
[14] Eugen Lovinescu, *Memorii*, vol. II, 1916-1931, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1931, pp. 106-117.
[15] Constant Ionescu, *Camil Petrescu. Amintiri şi comentarii*, EPL, Bucureşti, 1968, p. 169.
[16] Eugen Lovinescu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

Here is one of the most successful portraits of Petrescu, and not by accident has the accuracy with which he was captured bothered him so much. The reply is very quick and, as it is easily understood, also very violent. The pamphlet *Eugen Lovinescu supt zodiac seninătății imperturbabile* is of a rare virulence and the developed critique is destructive. From the beginning Camil Petrescu denounces a deficiency that he believes he can impute to Eugen Lovinescu: it is about the deficiency of intuition. Then Eugen Lovinescu is accused of plagiarism. The charge is based on an article from *Revista Română* (no. 1, 1924) entitled "Limba literară", which the author of *Memorii* would have used without prejudice in *Istoria civilizației române* (vol. II, 1925, pp. 220-224). In his pamphlet, Camil divides in two columns his own study and the fragment from *Istoria civilizației române*. It is easily understood what he desires to prove. The situation is more complicated if we take into consideration the fact that Camil's action was determined by an answer, in *Sburătorul*, labeled by Petrescu as being "unexpected and mean" after he had made, in the journal *Cetatea literară*, an eulogistic presentation of Lovinescu's book. Moreover, before the release of Petrescu's article, Eugen Lovinescu entitled himself "the champion of literary language" and blamed the lack of literary talent of Tudor Arghezi and Gala Galaction on the fact that they made an abuse of neologisms. That is why he also asks for the foundation of a Society for the Protection of Language (S.P.L.).

Petrescu blames "the reviews", the coming-back and reconsiderations of Eugen Lovinescu, as well as his obsession to "pin" everything, believing that the task is, with necessity, only for him. And if Eugen Lovinescu finds in this singularity an excuse, it is because he took advantage of "the mutation of esthetic values", a phrase assumed also as a title for volume V of *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* (according to the bibliography of Călinescu of the works of Eugen Lovinescu). Camil appreciates the phrase from the perspective of the owner and restores it to the rightful one – to Anatol France. What Camil aims at here is the esthetic doctrine of Lovinescu. According to Camil, the works that are admired in Eugen Lovinescu's vision are those that no one has examined. The fact that Lovinescu's aesthetic is a psychological and psychologizing one belongs to the ignorance of the phenomenological dimension and of nothing else. "The psychological aesthetic inevitably leads to the cancellation of criticism", writes Camil, annoyed[17]. And Eugen Lovinescu does nothing else but a psychological aesthetic. Of course, the blame is total. Lovinescu mistakes the critical spirit, which phenomenologically cannot fail, with his own critical spirit. What could follow in the end of the pamphlet? Nothing else, but another accusation: "this is the sad adventure of a man pathologically conceited, in whose spiritual structure lacked the faculty of intuition"[18]. *Notele zilnice* also registers a reference to Eugen Lovinescu: "Lovinescu came back and handed in for printing the second volume of his *Memorii*. I am in it, too. What strange courage has Lovinescu to judge the world, he, who is not capable of an objective judgment"[19]. Shortly, Camil denounces at least three aspects of Lovinescu's criticism:

- the musical inspiration of Lovinescu's "ideology" (doctrine). Camil says: "Lovinescu does not have critical taste at any time, [nor] ideas [or] power of penetration, except when he falls in some sort of musical trance". Hence the aesthetic relativism imputed to the critic;
- Lovinescu has no intuitive capacity. His literary diagnostics have been, usually, wrong. For example, a play of Victor Eftimiu – *Cocoşul negru*, is compared with *Faust*. Lovinescu does not have a nose, he is called "the critic without nose" by Camil;
- together with the deficiency of aesthetic intuition (in literature), Camil denounces also the psychological intuition (in Lovinescu's portraiture), the critic being characterized by psychological opacity.

As for Camil, what can I say? Either his abuses have been sober, or his sobriety has been excessive. A sobriety of the accountant, calculated, without capital errors, of a strictness that could scare a more libertine mind. He recognizes it, as a matter of fact, as a pragmatic intention of the philosopher himself in an interview given to Vasile Netea where he says that only when he will be 40, as far as he is concerned, can the return to philosophy will take place[20].

[17] Camil Petrescu, *Eugen Lovinescu supt zodiac seninătății imperturbabile*, Caietele Cetății Literare, Bucureşti, 1932, p. 124.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Idem, *Note zilnice*, Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1975, p. 63.
[20] Vasile Netea, "De vorbă cu Camil Petrescu", interview in *Vremea*, 14 februarie 1943.

6. Camil, Eugen Ionesco and George Călinescu

The quarrel between Eugen Ionesco and Camil Petrescu from volume *Nu* is well known and deserves to be mentioned. If in *Nu* Petrescu is "not" being suppressed it is because he represents a negative "case". What is less known is a saying of Eugen Ionesco from *România Literară* (25th of March 1932), from the same period: "Camil Petrescu is characterized – essentially – by a dialectical dynamism [...]. He is one of the rare analytical heads of the country". This beyond a certain *palinode* from an annex of the recent republication in Romanian of *Nu*.

His contemporaries accused him of "saying enormous things". Yes, says George Călinescu, but "Camil Petrescu's enormity is a consequence of the good faith with which he has conversations". And the critic concludes with a sketch: "With a Bedouin face, with transparent eyes, he is nervous, agitated [...]. Mr. Camil Petrescu is impetuous in conversation, getting as far as extravagance with despair and lucidity, but his weapons are serious, and I believe he is one of the most important dialecticians that was given by the post-war generation"[21].

Camil also enters into a polemic with George Călinescu. It will be, however, one of his few "cordial polemics", a "friendly polemic", "comradely". He debates on the theme: *towards where is the Romanian novel going?*, and the result will be the division of Proustians and Balzacians.

7. A Lucid that cannot be Adaptable

Quarreled with everybody, except with himself, the author, building a singular self-status, is singled by means of ignorance by others as well. This in the best case. The idea of suicide insinuates, becomes constant, is mathematically calculated, becomes a logical solution. He then leaves the idea of suicide through a conversion specific to his own character. "I must behave like a master and not to care anymore about others' opinion" becomes the substitute for suicide. He is extremely rough in writing: "a butcher does not ask the opinion about him to the ox he is cutting. Therefore, I do not need the esteem of my good neighbors of life"[22]. He is at war, he destroys manufactured personalities, he throws the world at his feet for the denial to bend in front of him, something that, as a matter of fact, no one asks for. He tries to be indifferent to the esteem of contemporaries, but he cannot live without it. If he does not have enemies, he makes them, but when was it that Camil Petrescu did not have enemies? The disease of polemic is for him constitutive and forms him. He complains, gives to himself consolations: "The superiority of a man never consisted of collecting the tributes of the crowd, but in bearing its contempt"[23]. He enjoyed both of them.

He has problems with the rent, and with the misery. "Poverty gives you the soul of a slave. It is dirty." He also has the obsessions of Hegel's annotators. He was compared with Christ and Alexander, with Dante and Napoleon, labeled as *homo duplex*, the man of antithesis, an eternal opportunist. Camil Petrescu likes to compare himself, at 33 years old, with all martyrs, since Christ! And with all great revolutionaries who either die at this fatal age, or foolishly die of old age. Refused in politics, obsolete in the theater for contemporaries, accused of a simulacrum of plagiarism in the novel, he tries to find refuge in philosophy. The disillusion is even bigger. Somewhere, the philosopher Constantin Noica, a good friend of Mircea Eliade, states: "So that you see how far went the insecurity of judgment and our reluctance in what he was concerned (he takes into consideration Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco, Manoliu, Comarnescu – *n.m.*), I shall tell you that we doubted the existence of the philosophical manuscript kept in the Vatican"[24]. A single vice did not miss Camil Petrescu: the vice of a paradox – that of the distrustful, unbelievable man. And what hurt him the most was the distrust in the existence of the manuscript on the philosophy of substance. It is also true that the author has deepened the mystery that surrounded this weird manuscript.

8. An Inadaptable Lucid

A new epistolary episode could maybe clear something if there is or may be was something (to) clear. There is however the need of a generalization of the particular case that I present. In the letter from the 25th of January 1938, addressed to Camil Petrescu, referring to the audience of the play *Suflete tari*, Constantin Noica wrote: "I wish you from the bottom of my heart the understanding of the others – although the public from that night did not seem

[21] George Călinescu," Camil Petrescu, teoretician al romanului", in *Viața românească*, no. 1, 1939, p. 83.
[22] Camil Petrescu, *Note zilnice*, p. 40.
[23] *Ibid*, pp. 41-42.
[24] *Scrisori către Camil Petrescu*, vol. II, p. 123.

enlightened *enough*"[25]. And this formula may extend over the entire destiny of Camil Petrescu.

Camil Petrescu's solutions do not delay in appearing. In what knowledge is concerned he is ubiquitous. At some point he used to prepare a report for the Society of Mathematics where, of course, he brought a personal contribution, suggesting the phrase "mathematic region", and in 1954 he even gives a report to the Institute of Mathematics of the Academy RPR, a report entitled "On an Engaged Mathematics and a Conditional Geometry". The literary critic and historic Marin Popa said it directly: "Camil claims mathematical ideas: a communication with application in the field of astronomical calculation is ridiculous and causes the delight of a competent assistance"[26].

Having contemporaries as adversaries is not enough for him. He has to square off with foes from past, too. Descartes, for example, at first had the fame and only then created the work. And for this you do not need *style*. The style sentences one to non-being even if it is the only one that survives historically. But style does not imply value as well; value is against style.

In the novel *Patul lui Procust*, a novel called a "glossary of existences" (interesting that, in reality, the creator of the "glossary of existences" is not Proust; "the responsible" ones are Stendhal and Gide), note one encourages Ms. T., a character in the novel, to write, and at her denial, when she claims to not know how to and so would only make spelling mistakes, the author breaks loose in a diatribe that aims at the preconceived idea of classicism and style. He states, furious and possessed by the demon of deconstruction: "Art has nothing to do with spelling [...]. Correct writing is the job of the professors of Romanian language. It is not compulsory but for those who are not writers. Great writers are more abundant in misspellings than bankers"[27]. Things are as clear as possible: only those who have something to say must write.

Speaking of what could threaten Camil Petrescu, Felix Aderca points, through a fortunate intuition, to two great dangers: "First of all, not to treasure at their true value the other artistic efforts of the time and to raise in his isolation even higher, till close to the sky where he could have contact only with the interests of the ghosts that escaped from the orbit of human logic; secondly, disappointed by the innocent indifference, after all, of literary crowds, shouldn't Camil Petrescu, from a noble pride, be tempted one day to set the revolver at the temple of illusion and – artistically – commit suicide"[28].

9. Camil, the Man of Concrete

Owner of a "bookish dialectics" and always working in opposition with something, Camil constantly needs the presence of concrete. Danton, the main character in the play with the same title, says in Image XV, Scene II: "I am a man of concrete". Director of *Cetatea literară*, Camil states in the background article of the first issue (19th of December 1925): "Literary value is an act of authority. The public's taste must permanently be used with violence". Immediacy is here invoked as a way of possessing the public. The dialogue with self ends alterity exclusively under the cautiousness of this continual re-use of violence. The authentic concrete does not equalize daily experience. In no case must we confuse *authenticity* with the rendering of daily experience. If we accept a meaning of *normal*, it is associated with an inability to filtrate through conscience, with an indeterminate, exterior, and amorphous daily that is left in exteriority. His relation with substance is impossible. Camil Petrescu's connection is substantial. Aware of the coincidence that he makes with the substantial dimension, the author is willing to nothurry. When P.P. Negulescu, Camil Petrescu's professor at the University in Bucharest, asked him if he does not intend to have a carrier in philosophy, the author answers: "I will write until 25 years old lyrics, because it is the period of illusions and of lyrics; I will write between 25-35 years old theater, because the theater requires a certain experience and a certain nervous vibration; I will write between 35-40 years old novels, because novels require a richer life experience and a certain expressive maturity. And only when I will be 40 I shall return to philosophy, for it is cleverer to make poetry at 20 and philosophy at 40"[29]. And this he will do with the tenacity of an accountant who respects with scrupulosity the schedule that he has established. Maybe from here there is a certain note of artificiality in the writing of Camil Petrescu, a note doubled

25 *Ibid*, p. 121.

26 Marian Popa, *Istoria literaturii române de azi pe mâine*, vol. I, Fundaţia Luceafărul, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 681.

27 Camil Petrescu, *Patul lui Procust*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1993, p. 10.

28 Felix Aderca, *Mărturia unei generaţii*, Editura Naţionala S. Ciornei, Bucureşti, 1929, p. 244.

29 Vasile Netea, "De vorbă cu Camil Petrescu".

by arrogance with sincerity displayed and annoyingly practiced by the author. "Romanian criticism still has to turn over my literary work [...]. Our scientific world does not form a forum of justice for such a paper (it is about the philosophical tome *Doctrina Substanței – n.m.*). This forum could be formed only by today's scientific totality"[30]. He verbally self-flagellates, being convinced that the reaction will be an opposite one: "I know an idiot who had the funny idea of bringing on the market some new merchandise: *Substanțialism*. He died of hunger, ridicule, with the counter around his neck"[31].

About his own philosophical doctrine Camil is convinced that it will mark an era when it will be understood. And this kind of self statement answers for the syndrome of an intolerable self-adoration. As if to confirm this, Mihail Sebastian writes down in his *Jurnal*: "Anişoara Odeanu sent me her novel: «A book that should have had at least ten mottos from *Două mii de ani*». In reality, her manuscript had, true, not ten, but two mottos. She had, however, to remove them at Camil's request. «It is not right to have too many mottos» - he said. Indeed, one is enough – especially if it is from *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*. Charming, Camil"[32]. The irony and cynicism are for him immediate consequences.

10. The Ironies of the Philosopher

I present in this respect, and for their flavor as well, a few ironic fulgurations of the author of *Doctrina Substanței*.

Referring to a symbolist poet and enthusiastic megalomaniac, Camil Petrescu says: if this guy had the sky he would never get off the Ursa Major. And he specifies, after a break for effect: yes, but he would still drive it like Irimia!

About a magazine actress famous for her fruitful interventions before ministers, he said she was a stylish star with takings; and about a minister of industry from the cabinet of Averescu he said that he steals as much as possible from every cardinal point and he always complains that there are only four. Camil calls characters, concretely, insubstantial, shipwrecked, except that "the shipwrecked do not admire the storm". Camil creates it. And the talent with which he does must be admired! "Write no more novels guys, cause I'm writing one now", he says once in front of some ambitious literati. Camil is never second or third. He is either the only one, or the matter has no meaning. And, of course, when he is not the only one, not the first one, the problem lacks meaning! At least his own which, when creating, also customizes it. "I intend to write a drama and a philosophical system", confessed Camil Petrescu to Tudor Vianu. He did both of them. His fight was generous and "intelligence came for him before sensibility which, as a matter of fact, for this man with the finest and the most flexible nerve organization, was very big. Never has Camil given the signs of any spiritual tiredness, and his ending was one of a stabbed young man"[33].

11. An Exhausted Philosopher

"On the 14th of May 1957, at 11:40 p.m., dies, fully conscious and lucid, Camil Petrescu, screaming in the moment of death: «I want to know [...]. I want to know how is it»"[34]. Florica Ichim tells us something else: Camil died on Tuesday, 13th of May, 11:20 p.m.[35]. Pretty romanticized Mihail Ilovici's description. I would rather tend to believe the one of Crohmălniceanu: "he died hard, in agony, in a prolonged cardiac crises and with awful pains, as far as I know. During this, the doctors managed a few times to bring him back on a straight line. The last time, he begged them with the little voice he had left: «Let me die»"[36].

12. An Unfinished Portrait

One of the most successful portraits, I think, that Camil Petrescu received, is the one made by Ion Ianoşi in *Literatură şi Filosofie*. Admitting the exemplarity of the psychological dimension noticed in the mentioned portrait, I quote: "Camil Petrescu was one of our most contradictory authors, i.e. paradoxical; and he continues to confuse the exegetes"[37]. The noocrat is "fearful", "abrupt", "expansionist", "unfaithful", a "never ending experimenter", "a general without army, who – as a stupid soldier – could be

---

[30] *Ibid*.
[31] Camil Petrescu, *Opinii şi atitudini*, EPL, Bucureşti, 1962, p. 198.
[32] Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal*, p. 101.
[33] Tudor Vianu, *Jurnal*, EPL, Bucureşti, 1961, pp. 40, 48.
[34] Mihail Ilovici, *Tinerețea luiCamil Petrescu*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti 1971, p. 5.
[35] Florica Ichim, *Camil Petrescu Teatru*, Editura Gramar, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 379.
[36] Ovid Crohmălniceanu, *Amintiri deghizate*, Editura Nemira, Bucureşti, 1994, p. 18.
[37] Ion Ianoşi, *Literatură şi filosofie*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 182.

humiliated by any sergeant"[38]. Speaking of the reception of the noocrat author, Ion Ianoşi says: "Camil Petrescu's maximalism has been treated by some with humor, was derided, satirized. Camil however did not have a comic organ, he took everything seriously. He was so serious about all that he seemed to be a dreamer. He will arouse smiles from now on too – and he won't notice them. He will follow stubbornly his hallucinations. He will remain a lonely conceited. Young spirits – no matter the age – will discover him again and love him. It is his payback, the one with a complex of non-love. And if his novels will seem to us a little less final than the ones of Rebreanu, and his philosophy a little less completed than Blaga's, the reply shall be found: relativity is the destiny of the relentless ones in taking the absolute by storm. In the Romanian literature of our century, including in the work of Camil Petrescu, there is no character more fascinating – in all that he had aspired, succeeded or failed, with the great talent of transforming even the failures in successes – than Camil Petrescu"[39].

And, frankly speaking, after you "see ideas", normality is being measured completely different.

All these antecdotes speak to an episode in Romanian cultural history. They want to show that, in its wholeness, the Romanian culture of the first half of the XX century was connected to European culture. Camil Petrescu[40] is an example in this respect and at least the friendships and his enemies answer for this. And Mircea Eliade and Eugen Ionesco, next to Emil Cioran and Constantin Noica stand as testimony for this.

[38] *Ibid*, p. 183.
[39] *Ibid*, p. 231.
[40] Camil Petrescu has been a focus of my attention for a long time. I often came back to him from the perspective of the philosophy that he practiced. The most recent approach can be found in my volume entitled *[Şi] Filosofia lui Camil Petrescu*, Editura Timpul, Iaşi, 2008.

References

Adămuț, A. (2008). *[Şi] Filosofia lui Camil Petrescu*. Editura Timpul, Iaşi

Aderca, F. (1929). *Mărturia unei generații*. Editura Națională S. Ciornei, Bucureşti

Carandino, N. (1979). *De la o zi la alta. Memorii*. Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti

Călinescu, G. (1939). "Camil Petrescu teoretician al romanului". *Viața românească*, nr. 1

Cioculescu, Ş. (1975). *Amintiri*. Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti

Crohmălniceanu, O. (1994). *Amintiri deghizate*. Editura Nemira, Bucureşti

Eliade, M. (1928). ..."şi Camil Petrescu". *Cuvântul*, 4 iulie

Eliade, M. (1928). "Final de polemică". *Cuvântul*, 18 iulie

Eliade, M. (1937). "Dictatura şi personalitatea". *Vremea*, 28 martie

Ianoşi, I. (1986). *Literatură şi filosofie*. Editura Minerva, Bucureşti

Ichim, F. (2004). *Camil Petrescu. Teatru*. Editura Gramar, Bucureşti

Ilovici, M. (1971). *Tinerețea lui Camil Petrescu*. Editura Minerva, Bucureşti

Ionescu, C. (1968). *Camil Petrescu. Amintiri şi comentarii*, EPL, Bucureşti

Ionescu, E. (1934). *Nu*, Editura Vremea, Bucureşti

Scrisori către Camil Petrescu. (1981). ediție îngrijită de Florica Ichim, vol. II, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti

Lovinescu, E. (1931). *Memorii*. vol. II, 1916-1931, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova

Nestor, C. (1920). "Un om incomod". 5 februarie

Netea, V. (1943). "De vorbă cu Camil Petrescu". *Vremea*, 14 februarie

Noica, C. (1937). "Filosofie şi Universitate". *Vremea*, 24 octombrie

Noica, C. (1944). *Pagini despre sufletul românesc*, Colecția Luceafărul, Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1930). *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*. vol. I-II, Editura Cultura Națională, Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1932). *Eugen Lovinescu supt zodiac seninătății imperturbabile*. Caietele Cetății Literare, Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1962). *Opinii şi atitudini*. EPL, Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1975). *Note zilnice*. Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1988). *Doctrina Substanței,* vol. I-II, Editura Ştiințifică şi Enciclopedică Bucureşti

Petrescu, C. (1993). *Patul lui* Procust. Editura Minerva, Bucureşti

Popa, M. (2001). *Istoria literaturii române de azi pe* mâine. vol. I, Fundația Luceafărul, Bucureşti

Sebastian, M. (1996). *Jurnal*. Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti

Vianu, T. (1961). *Jurnal*. EPL, Bucureşti

Discussion

Pro and Con Discussion Regarding the Tenets of the Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science (Continuation)

Since the late 1960s studies in the hermeneutic philosophy of science have been gaining currency. In looking at this development from a historical perspective, one can today recognize an independent philosophical tradition. Scientific research is committed to the universe of interpretative phenomena – so the tradition's guiding tenet goes – since it is itself a hermeneutic process. To put it in an extended formulation, those phenomena which philosophical hermeneutics unveils in the being of history, language, and art can also be identified in natural science as a particular mode of being-in-the-world. This is a radical claim that provokes a double confrontation. On the one hand, the hermeneutic philosophy of science opposes the mainstream philosophical picture of science which is spelled out predominantly in terms of objectivism, epistemological representationalism, and cognitive essentialism. On the other hand, a conflict with traditional philosophical hermeneutics is inevitable. On this traditional enterprise, a constitutive view of interpretation might be integrated into a theory of scientific communication, but by no means into a theory of scientific research and knowledge. Due to this double confrontation, the hermeneutic philosophy of science brings into play several interesting debates of general philosophical importance. This tradition is a target of criticism from positions as different as neo-scholastic ontology and neo-positivist epistemology. The publication of Professor Arvin Voss's article documents our desire to initiate on the pages of the Balkan Journal of Philosophy an ongoing pro and contra discussion regarding the tenets of the hermeneutic philosophy of science. To be sure, Professor Voss's elegant criticism of the hermeneutic view about the status of science's theoretical objects as well as his rehabilitation of essentialism concerning the constitution of scientific knowledge will meet a counter-criticism devised by the exponents of an interpretative turn in the philosophy of science.

THEORY AND THEORETICAL OBJECTS IN AN EXISTENTIAL/HERMENEUTIC CONCEPTION OF SCIENCE

Robert P. Crease
Chairman
Department of Philosophy
Stony Brook University
213 Harriman Hall, Stony Brook
NY 11794-3750
e-mail: rcrease@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

An existential/hermeneutic conception of science recognizes that science is only one way in which human beings engage the world, and not the default setting, either. Human beings connect with the world through a matrix of practical attachments – phenomenologists call it the *lifeworld* – that precedes any cognitive understanding. Human beings, moreover, are not automatic information absorbers, but are productive and sense-making; they have an *interpretive* or *hermeneutic* relation to the world and to themselves. While much traditional philosophy of science is thin or anorexic and does not flesh out all of the ways in which science is an interpretive, sense-making activity, or how this activity is bodied forth in the world, it is the merit of the existential/hermeneutic philosophy of science to trace how the interpretive, sense-making activity of science arises out of the lifeworld. The aim of this paper is to discuss the nature of theory and theoretical objects in such a conception, using Dimitri Ginev's work and a recent critique as a starting point.

Dangers of Theorizing about Theory

It will be helpful to begin by reviewing several dangers that beset philosophers who speak about the nature of theory and of theoretical objects in science. A first is to begin by speaking about a particular kind of theory and using that as the emblematic instance, assuming that what is true of it is true of other kinds of theory as well. Theories, after all, are of many kinds and play many roles. Are we talking about mathematically structured theories in physics such as quantum electrodynamics? Are we talking about biological theories such as Darwinian evolution? What about what we mean when we speak of things like "theorizing race?" And of such theories at which stage? A philosophical approach has to beware of knowing ahead of time what something is before inquiring into what it is.

A second danger is to prematurely formalize the process. Many accounts of theory development for instance, looking backwards, reconstruct it as a simple, step-by-step process – "First we hypothesize, then we confirm" – and then claim, "This is how it must have been done!" That's somewhat like reconstructing a child's acquisition of language by saying that the child must have learned language by acquiring one word after another, or reconstructing perception by saying it consists of the apprehension of sense data, then its organization. A philosophical approach has to beware of knowing ahead of time how something works before inquiring into how it works.

Yet a third danger is present in the form of a tradition that tells us what we have to say about something – for instance, that knowledge consists of representation, that the acquisition of knowledge is the acquisition of representations, and that theory is a particular kind of representation. If we begin this way, we already saddle ourselves with insoluble problems. Moreover, we prevent ourselves from being able to connect with scientists; theory and theoretical terms are one place where the experience of scientists, and even students who work in labs, collides with "the story," with what traditional philosophy of science tells scientists how they work and what they do. Small wonder they get incredulous and dismissive of philosophy of science.

An existential or hermeneutical starting point recognizes that scientific practice consists of ongoing inquiry within a changing situation. Each scientist is historically situated within a particular historical, concept-laden discourse and within a particular historical, technological environment, interpreted according to available historical resources. Moreover, in scientific practice it is not a question of a solitary cognitive subject confronting a specific object or problem, nor a collection of objects and problems, but rather of a historical community of living, practically engaged researchers confronting a historical, holistic situation. Even in situations of apparent solitary breakthroughs – Einstein pursuing general relativity in his study, Heisenberg pursuing matrix mechanics on Heligoland – such thinkers were informed by and responding to a community of fellow researchers and a situation. Moreover, this generation of researchers in a given field is not only a different community but faces a different situation from the previous generation, and the next.

All this is simple to state, and fairly obvious once one thinks about it, but is easy to miss. The products of science history are profoundly distracting. How compelling it is to focus on the products of science, or its theories, rather than on the self-creating process to which products and theories belong! Genuine science involves a force, a pressure that extends outwards to the future. Seeing the vestiges of that force in the past does not necessarily help us to understand it in the present. We can call that force curiosity, ambition, desire, and people will understand what we are saying, but this can easily result in a static conception of science. We can edit out this force from our picture of science, but what we see then is only its remainders. Science is a process by which new forms, new concepts are created; growth and change, a movement of differentiation, is integral to it. A true philosophy of science has to not just *allow* for there to be fresh creations, new forms, or a continuous enrichment of the lifeworld, but to show the drive and pressure by which these are produced as a natural movement in inquiry.

It is refreshing to encounter Ginev's work, for he is engaged in an existential/hermeneutical conception of science, is aware of the dangers, and strives to avoid them. In the following discussion of theory and theoretical objects, I shall first summarize relevant parts of his work, then use a recent critique to elaborate my own thoughts about theory and theoretical objects. [1]

Ginev's Cognitive Existentialism

In *The Tenets of Cognitive Existentialism* and elsewhere, Ginev announces a two-step revision of the existential conception of science inherited principally from Heidegger. The first step is to place the practices of science in terms of everydayness; research in progress involves much "everydayness," not just mathematical theorizing. The second is to show that mathematical projection is only one way of doing research. These are, I think, the right moves, and together they constitute what Ginev calls "cognitive existentialism". Science, Ginev thinks, does not so much "de-world" as "re-world", shifting "the horizons of projected possibilities". Scientific domains are "disclosed within a characteristic hermeneutic situation" that can persist across interrelations of practice. "Characteristic hermeneutic situation" then becomes the key concept of cognitive existentialism.

At the beginning of *Tenets*, Ginev announces his ambition "to develop a picture of scientific research as a process of appropriating projected possibilities within the interrelatedness of practices of inquiry." This will involve advancing a view about "the status of science's theoretical objects," which he calls "inscriptions" on a horizon of possibilities for doing research, artifacts of the various practices of science. He describes this, appropriately, as a realism but specifies that it is a "hermeneutic realism," a term that has been used before by others.

The motive for this work is said to be as follows. In dealing with theoretical entitles, hermeneutic phenomenology of science has viewed theoretical objects in a dual perspective: in their relation to (constituted by) other parts of the theory, and as related to (constituted by) what Ginev calls "normal scientific everydayness," or its practices and intentions and so forth. The first has a structural lawfulness and, Ginev fears, courts essentialism. The other amounts to a horizon-projection, and does not run that danger. Hermeneutical phenomenology of science is then faced with the task of characterizing each, and describing their relation.

Ginev refers to "two large hermeneutic circles" in the process. One is the way that theoretical entities, constituted by relation to each other, are "hermeneutic instruments" that supply the background for interpretation of research, opening up domains for exploration, pointing to key problems and likely solutions, and so on. The second circle is the way that theoretical entities arise out of the "everydayness of scientific research," its concerns and practices; the key phrase is "objectifying thematization." Their relation seems a puzzle, a puzzle that Ginev captures in the phrase "imminent transcendence." What is the relation between what he later calls research objects, which you have in the lab, and theoretical objects? What is the line between them?

It's a puzzle, because the theoretical one appears to reach beyond the present context and practices – to be not exhausted by the way it appears in the here and now. It looks like it has a "cognitive essence," and that what scientists' practices do is to "operationalize" these theoretical objects, these invariant objects, by "transforming them into research objects that are ready to hand and present at hand in normal science." Ginev says this is opposite of his view.

Ginev uses Kockelmans's work as a foil to work out some of the main characteristics. Again, it involves a twofold conception, of an "open horizon of mathematical idealizations" and a "constitution of relevant empirical facts in the practices of scientific research." It involves an "ontological projection of a scientific domain," and thus has a transcendental dimension. Ginev also uses van Fraassen's constructive empiricism as a foil in another way, to show the potentials and pitfalls of avoiding reifying

[1] Dimitri Ginev, *The Tenets of Cognitive Existentialism*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011.

theoretical objects. An example involving molecular biology is helpful in elaborating this.

Ginev then refers to the "central problem of hermeneutic phenomenology" as describing the interplay of the world as the organized equipments and practices (intramundane reality) into which we are thrown, and the world as the horizon of possibilities whose "interpretative appropriation articulates" the world in the sense of intramundane reality. In the course of this, he makes an interesting critique of Brandom and his neo-pragmatist approach to the existential analytic, and uses Misch's critique of Heidegger as a foil.

Cognitive existentialism, in short, "rejects the view that scientific research is 'just looking, without circumspection.'" Heidegger is wrong to say this, as he does in *Being and Time*. Rather, Ginev says, "the point of departure of cognitive existentialism" is that "scientific research constitutes its own circumspection." "It does not de-contextualize but rather re-contextualizes what is constituted within the interrelatedness of scientific practices." The real critique of Heidegger, the central one, it turns out later, is that Heidegger's insistence that research is preceded by and opened up by a "mathematical projection" that is independent of and prior to the rest of science is incorrect. Rather, Ginev will say, this research horizon is opened up and disclosed "by the interrelatedness of all practices taking part in its constitution"

Cognitive existentialism, therefore, "defends this autonomy [of scientific research] without presuming any kind of epistemological justification of science's authority … [it] champions the ethos of scientific research without succumbing to scientism."

Chapter Three describes how this happens, via the concept of a "characteristic hermeneutic situation," or the unity of the three elements of the hermeneutical circle "as embedded in a domain's interrelatedness of practices." But it begins with a welcome illustration, from the theory of optics. The point is to show that a domain of research is opened up not by a "mathematical projection" that is independent of and prior to the research, but by "the interrelatedness of all practices taking part in its constitution." Section 2 of this chapter is about the notion of a "thematizing project," by which he means a "macro-historical reproduction of a characteristic hermeneutic situation that stretches beyond the development of particular scientific domains, exhibiting thereby stable (historical) types of scientific research." Ginev distinguishes five principal thematizing projects in biology, which are ideal types on a spectrum stretching from a pole of taxonomic objects to a pole where the objects require maximum "hermeneutic preunderstanding". This is very helpful, and has the effect of warning us against there being any single method in science. This is followed by an interesting discussion of the "disunity of science," and an interesting critique of Galison's notion of the "radical particularization of science."

Chapter Four contrasts this view with two versions of the "postmodern philosophy of science:" a "pluralistic radicalization of epistemology," and an "anti-epistemological deflationist approach". The first is "responsive to the social normative conditions in which this knowledge is produced," and exemplified by the work of Longino, of whom Ginev then provides and interesting critique. Most of the chapter is devoted to a critique of the deflationist model, in particular of Rouse. Rouse's account is deflationary in that science has no "cognitive specificity." It's born of a "respect for the local context." Ginev's critique goes right to the point: Rouse "fails to understand scientific practices philosophically," for he fails to provide ways of conceiving the way theoretical knowledge persists through recontextualization. This extensive critique of Rouse is one of the clearest and best parts of the book. Rouse opposes the "legitimation project," which is the need of science to claim special knowledge of the world. Many kinds of postpositivists are involved with interpreting this project, if only to make sense of its special content. But Rouse wants to back out from the project altogether, denying that there is a special content to science. The project, Rouse says, suffers from "normative anemia." But the task, Ginev says, is not to deconstruct the claim to cognitive autonomy, as Rouse does, but to "show how scientific inquiry succeeds to create its cognitive distinctiveness within its own interpretive horizons."

In the course of the next few pages, Ginev makes a point of supreme importance – that the "democratic process of contemporary societies needs science's cognitive autonomy," lest, strangely, social life become sciencized. This broaches the issue of the role of expertise in modern society – the way that it is or is not incorporated. This issue is so important – Collins, Wynne, Jasanoff and others are wrestling with it with no clear resolution in sight – that I wish Ginev emphasized it more.

Chapter Five is a critical interpretation of the feminist critique that any epistemology reflects and reinforces the masculine point of view. It exhibits "the relevance of the doctrine of cognitive existentialism to a multi-gendered picture of science." It rejects the search for a feminist "standpoint epistemology," as well as a Rouse-like reduction of philosophy of science to cultural studies. This chapter, too, is brilliant and very revealing. Interpretation, he says, is not a "recapitulation of ready-made results of inquiry," but rather is "the ongoing fore-structure of the research process." The key insight is that discarding "representation" and "the reification of scientific knowledge", as Rouse, Rorty, and feminist cultural theorists seek to do – or "discarding the epistemological justification of an internalist view of scientific rationality" – will require disclaiming "science's cognitive autonomy." Another way to put it is that the assumption of these thinkers that the line between science and the rest of culture "can only be drawn within the framework of an essentialist conception about scientific method, language, and/or rationality" is wrong. The alternative – cognitive existentialism – involves "studying a long-term interpretative fore-structuring within a characteristic hermeneutic situation." And this is not necessarily essentialist. This is possible because "the starting point of hermeneutic philosophy is not the plurality of situated standpoints, but the reflection on the situatedness of human agents in their routine settings of actions and interactions. This is an ontological and not epistemological starting point." There is a horizon that "always already goes beyond human agents' 'reality' of appropriated possibilities."

Here's the key passage from this chapter: "The degree of epistemological objectivity depends strongly on the way these presuppositions are reproduced in the configurations of interrelated practices. The more the presuppositions are involved in a domain's constitution, the weaker the epistemological objectivity is, and the more the dimension of recontextualization prevails. A characteristic hermeneutic situation specifies the research process as a process furnished by readable technologies of scientific practices that are carried out between the poles of epistemological objectivity and interpretative reflexivity" (140). This process produces cultural identity without being reducible to it.

Theory and Theoretical Objects

There is much more to speak about in *Tenets,* but let me stop to consider a recent critique by Arvin Vos of Ginev's approach to theory and theoretical objects.[2] This will allow me to elaborate more thoughts on the nature of theory and theoretical concepts within an existential/hermeneutical conception of science.

Vos's principal objections to Ginev's account amount to two. A first is that Ginev places too much emphasis on practice as opposed to inquiry. Inquiry involves much more than practice, Vos suggests. Inquiry is "an ordered process," whose aim Vos seems to think is to reach "an object that identifies a class or set of things." Focusing on inquiry rather than practices, Vos says, "opens the door to a fuller exploration of the dynamic of our quest to understand." This kind of exploration "is significant because it places [theoretical objects] in a larger context, in the full sweep of our experience of knowing." Vos cites Plato as having recognized the importance of inquiry, but adds that it is not enough to say, as he suggests Plato does, that the theoretical objects discovered in inquiry were known in a prior life.

Vos's second main critique is that Ginev fails to account for how theoretical objects arise through practices. Ginev's chief problem is that to avoid essentialism he "describes theoretical objects purely in relation to practices." How, Vos asks, can practices possibly give rise to theoretical objects?

Vos concludes that Ginev is right to want to avoid essentialism but gives up too much in avoiding it; Ginev "eliminates significant features about knowing in order to avoid essentialism," especially concerning theoretical objects. Ginev "has failed to break cleanly with the fundamental assumptions about knowing on which essentialism is based." Vos therefore rejects cognitive existentialism, and offers an alternate in the spirit of

[2] Arvin Vos, "On the Status of Theoretical Objects in Science according to Cognitive Existentialism," *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* 2, 2011.

Lonergan's philosophy, involving a more traditional vocabulary including words such as hypothesis, verification, and the question, "Is it so?"

Vos is correct that Ginev's account is insufficiently developed regarding these two points of critique, but fails to recognize the resources of an existential/hermeneutic conception of science for doing so.

Practice vs. Inquiry

Let us begin by considering practice versus inquiry. It is true that much of science, especially scientific discovery, does not merely involve *praxis* – an application of some skill or technique – but a *poiesis*, a bringing forth of a phenomenon into presence. Science is therefore much like perception, including its possibilities for error and illusion, except that scientific perception is instrumentally mediated.[3] When the novel appears, furthermore, it usually does not do so with Cartesian clarity, but must be made to appear more clearly, so that it shows itself to us – again, through our technologically mediated practices – more as it is.

Moreover, inquiry is spurred by a particular kind of dissatisfaction within a lived situation. Such dissatisfaction takes the form, not merely of discontent or the experience that knowledge is outstanding – of a lack of understanding. There is much that I do not know that I have no desire to inquire into! Rather, the dissatisfaction of inquiry is the experience of a collision between our expectations and what we encounter, of the sense that we ought to understand something that we do not. Dissatisfaction in science arises in many ways. In each case it involves the experience of something outstanding or obscure that, we sense, can and must be brought into the open. Inquiry is a response to this experience, in which we apply what has been historically and culturally transmitted to us in our attempts to transform the dissatisfying situation. We transform the situation in making it our own, so we are more "at home" in it. In Theodore Kisiel's clever phrase, this is the "eigen-function" of research. Yet every clarification does not finalize appearances but brings new dissatisfactions and continued inquiry.

Oliver Heaviside's remark, when he took Maxwell's frustrating and torturous equations and revamped and simplified them, resulting in a huge practical and theoretical advance in the understanding of electromagnetism, that he had inherited something from Maxwell and was simply trying to take what his predecessor had done and "see it clearly" – these words could be said by any genuine researcher, including Maxwell, who took what he had inherited about electricity and magnetism and made it clear for himself. We see such examples multiplied throughout the history of science. Richard Feynman created his famous diagrams for particle interactions, he said in numerous interviews, because he was confused about what he was hearing and wanted to put it in a form *he* could understand; now these diagrams has become the inherited way *we* understand.

The hermeneutical character here is that the concepts involved undergo a process of evolution as they are reinterpreted again and again in different research contexts. To understand such a continuously unfolding process, we have to pay attention to this practical process of inquiry, rather than to the beliefs or theories that are its epiphenomena or products. The world is never fully transparent, we always meet it with historically and culturally transmitted assumptions that reveal and conceal. But what appears in the acts of inquiry serves to unearth the presuppositions, expose the assumptions, that are standing in the way of the thing itself, retuning the connections between our expectations and what we encounter, and deepening our engagement.[4]

Further complicating this process is that technologically mediated experimental performances are involved in this practical process. To pursue scientific inquiry, it is not sufficient to consult what we already have. It is not enough to read more books or talk to more people – this will not change the situation! To further practical inquiries of science, we have to stage events that show us, that give us back, more than what we put into them. What then appears in such experimental acts forces us to reinterpret our situation, recasts our resources, and reshapes our understanding. The "how" of this process includes the designing, enacting, and

[3] Robert P. Crease, *The Play of Nature: Experimentation as Performance*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, pp. 77–89.

[4] *Hermeneutics and the Natural Sciences*, ed. R. Crease, Kluwer 1997.

witnessing of events in laboratory situations.[5] These events are not fully transparent – again, they do not deliver us objects with Cartesian clarity – nor are they permanently segmented from each other, and independent of the performances that stages them.[6] Even theories and theoretical objects do not appear with Cartesian clarity, but need to be worked on before they are clear and consistent; here the convoluted history of quantum theory is an excellent example. When was "the quantum" introduced? Planck's version was different from Einstein's, and Bohr's, and Sommerfeld's, and so forth – and that's only to speak about the "old quantum theory." It is just as ambiguous to say when "quantum theory" was developed as it is to say (as Kuhn famously pointed out) when "oxygen was discovered."

Moreover, we grasp the meaning of such events in relation to everything else that we know; these events are implicated in our understanding of the world. That is why what appears in the experimental act is not merely a set of idle facts that we are free to ignore; they place claims on us. We are already related to these experimental events, even if they are enacted in special laboratory contexts. Thus the fact that these events may only take place in special laboratory contexts does not mean that they are abstract and unworldly. It's the other way around: the special laboratory contexts are what make these events part of the world, and therefore are responsible for them being of pressing concern to us. A laboratory is like a garden where special cultivation and conditions allow things to grow that may not grow "in the wild," so to speak, yet the mere existence of the things grown under such conditions makes a claim on our understanding of the "wild."

Since Plato has been invoked on the subject of inquiry, let me appeal to that example. It is, indeed, my experience in four decades of teaching philosophy that if one thinks that Plato did not get something right, one has not yet appreciated the full subtleties of Plato's account. The discussion of inquiry in question occurs in a conversation between Socrates and a youth named Meno in the eponymous dialogue. Socrates has discovered Meno to be gullible, to balk at difficult ideas, and to be impressed by theological authorities. Therefore Socrates couches his explanation of how inquiry happens inside a legend that, he says, is believed by religious sages. The point of the legend is that learning is neither like something getting handed to you by someone else, nor is it like automatically following a rule. Instead, it is an active and intensely personal process in which you collect enough experiences with what it is you are exploring, in a continually expanding knowledge base, so that when the discovery comes, it feels as if it were a feature that was already there that you had overlooked – like you had it all along. It's like unforgetting something. *That's* why Socrates has invoked the myth about having learned things in a prior life. It's not because Socrates believes it (less still Plato); in fact, Socrates makes a point of distancing himself from the myth. It's rather Socrates' way of making the point that acquiring knowledge is not like filing things in a mental warehouse but a back-and-forth process in which we are constantly moving between parts and wholes, encounters and interpretations.[7] In short, Plato's account is hermeneutical through and through.

The Origins of Theory

Vos's second objection involves a question of how theory and theoretical objects can arise through practice. How can something be discovered in practice, yet also transcend the situation involved in the inquiry?

This, too, is a topic in which hermeneutical philosophy has plenty of resources. A full elaboration is beyond the scope of this paper. Let me begin by saying that this is an area where the traditional approach of considering theories and theoretical concepts as representations leads to insoluble problems. How do theories and theoretical terms arise?

It is important to recognize at the outset that theories are not speculations or blueprints plucked from nowhere and imposed on experience. They are more like maps that tell you how to get around in places you are mostly familiar with; they connect

[5] R. Crease, "Inquiry and Performance: Analogies and Identities Between the Arts and the Sciences," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 28:4 (2003), 266–272; *The Play of Nature: Experimentation as Performance*. Indiana University Press, 1993.

[6] "What is an Artifact?" *Philosophy Today*, SPEP Supplement 1998, 160–168.

[7] R. P. Crease, *The Great Equations*, New York: Norton, 2008, pp. 35–41.

with experience and originated in experiences. Once you discover your relatedness to a group of experiences, you want to reflect on them, and theory is the product of that reflection. It implies already having a familiarity, a knowing how to get around in the natural or experimental landscape. That implies always already having an access to that landscape.

Theories organize what we know and help us look for what we don't. Theories scale, frame, and orient. They scale by showing how to move from one level to another. They frame by giving a solid grasp of the possible and impossible in the here and now. And they orient by "indicating how we can transform the world, by suggesting what new knowledge it is important to seek, and by showing us how to go about seeking it."[8] Theory creates a space for possible disclosure. Experimental performances actually make possible that disclosure in that open space.

Like maps, theories and theoretical terms do not have to be complete to be true; indeed, they cannot help but be incomplete. Scientific theories and terms are usually incomplete not only when initially offered but all the way through their development; "quantum theory" is a good example, as is evolutionary theory. Scientists propose theories and theoretical terms with full awareness and expectation that these will be further elaborated by their successors to capture better what is encountered. Strange particles mutate to K particles and then to quarks and beyond – and throughout all of this it's not so much that prior theories were defective but that what they pointed to appeared differently the more we explored it. This is as true of the Higgs particle theory as it was of X rays.

It is therefore much more illuminating, I have argued, to consider theoretical concepts as something like what Heidegger called formal indicators, descriptions that are at the same time aware that they are pointings. Heidegger developed the notion of formal indicators in trying to develop a discourse that can refer to phenomena in ways that does not prejudge them but leaves open the possibility that such phenomena can appear in different ways in different contexts. Formal indicators call our attention to worldly things in ways so that others can experience them as well. The discourse is "formal" because it describes the phenomena with enough specificity that others can experience it, but only "indicates" or points at them, for these phenomena may not be experienced, or experienced confusedly, may need to be further interpreted and elaborated, and will definitely be experienced differently when our positioning (technological mediation) with respect to them changes. We recognize people and objects, Merleau-Ponty says, through their styles – but this recognition involves a more formalized process in science, one that is open-ended yet never leaves experience.

Formal indication involves anticipatory apprehension, and its formal aspect will surely be revised as we have closer apprehension. Theoretical terms, therefore, are not dead, decontextualized, distanced from the world. As indicators, they are instead references to what we encounter. "Might not scientists, in practice, hear the language of their discourse not as ground-plans of nature, not as "cognitive essences" that are operationalized, but as indications allowing them to pick out phenomena which become bodily present in instrumentally mediated ways with possibilities of appearing otherwise given other mediations? … What if, in short, the way scientists use conceptual language does not aim to grasp a decontextualized object, but rather [involves] indication and fulfillment?"[9]

Furthermore, one must beware of the dual semantics of theoretical terms, for the same term can name one thing in a theory (electron) and another in the laboratory (the worldly, measured electron). This is like the dual semantics of musical terms, where a 'C' can refer to a (theoretical) note in a score, as well as a (performed) note heard in a concert hall. In the scientific context, there is a back-and-forth between those two senses, for the electrons that appear in the laboratory may lead us to revise the electrons in the theory, which will lead to new experimental stagings and new appearances of electrons in the laboratory, and hence new electrons in the theory, and so forth. The point in a hermeneutical perspective is that the worldly appearances have priority; in fact, the theories (even the musical scores!) were formed to produce and formally indicate the worldly appearances.

How do these theories and theoretical terms, which help us to navigate our laboratory

[8] R. P. Crease, "Just a theory," *Physics World* June 2007, p. 16.

[9] R. P. Crease, Covariant Realism," *Human Affairs* 19, 223–232, 2009, p. 228.

experiences, arise? They arise out of our practices as ways to express our grip on the world. Let us take, again, Plato's example. The key moment – the moment when it looks as though Socrates is plucking something from beyond the slave's experience and pasting it on what they are talking about – occurs when Socrates adds the diagonal to the diagram that until then has consisted all of squares. But the diagonal is not entirely new! The slave has seen diagonals in floor mosaics and wall designs, and is merely being reminded of what one is. This diagonal casts the problem in a larger, richer context that allows the slave to reconstruct the problem. It is a new term, but one familiar to the slave from his own experiences. If he weren't, the term would be useless.

This invocation of a piece of familiar experience in an inquiry resembles the way theory develops by borrowings from familiar practices, an extension of the old Vichian principle that human beings understand the unfamiliar by the familiar. This is the spirit of Jeremy Bernstein's remark that "it is probably no exaggeration to say that all of theoretical physics proceeds by analogy."[10] It is also related to Einstein's observation that the relation of theory to data is "not analogous to that of soup to beef but rather of wardrobe number to overcoat."[11] There's no magic involved in the application of numbers produced in experimentation to phenomena; they are a function of our practices in how we've built and arranged the equipment.

Finally, the notion of formal indication does justice to the temporal character of the scientific process, to its relation to its own past – however much it might seem like "beautiful ruins" – and to its evolving future.

> The real is what we encounter in the present – what we can confidently and even unavoidably reach, what appears in our horizon inevitably, and what we cannot turn away from. Yet the present seems also a little unclear, somewhat discordant, not fully grasped, with hints of another, deeper order just over the horizon. This discordance is why we inquire, and what makes newly achieved discoveries seem, strangely, to be both discovered and invented. And when these discoveries arise, the greater unity thus achieved promises to turn our present into ruins.[12]

That is why I have argued that one requirement for an adequate philosophy of science is "covariant realism," or the constraint that the real cannot be the function of a single theory, or one historical moment, which is extended only charitably or metaphorically to other moments in science history. The real must not be the function of representation but of our experiences.[13]

In an existential/hermeneutic perspective, theory and theoretical terms do not so much answer the question "Is it so?" as point to where and how such a question is to be answered – in the density and dynamism of our experiences. Such a perspective reveals the stunning groundlessness of theories and theoretical terms, which we adhere to, or not, because of their ability to create a space for continued disclosure of the technologically mediated world we encounter.

References

Bernstein, J. (1968). *Elementary Particles and Their Currents*, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Crease, R. P. (1993). *The Play of Nature: Experimentation as Performance*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Crease, R.P. (ed.) (1997). *Hermeneutics and the Natural Sciences*, Kluwer.

Crease, R.P. (1998). "What is an Artifact?" *Philosophy Today*, SPEP Supplement 1998, 160–168.

Crease, R.P. (2003). "Inquiry and Performance: Analogies and Identities Between the Arts and the Sciences," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 28:4 , 266–272.

Crease, R. P. (2007). "Just a theory," *Physics World* June.

Crease, R. P. (2008). Crease, *The Great Equations*, New York: Norton, pp. 35–41.

[10] J. Bernstein, *Elementary Particles and Their Currents*, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1968, p. vii.

[11] A. Einstein, *Out of My Later Years*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 64.

[12] R. P. Crease, "Covariant Realism," Human Affairs 19, 223–232, 2009, p. 227.

[13] Ibid.

Crease, R. P. (2009). Covariant Realism," *Human Affairs*, 2009, 19, 223–232.

Ginev, Dimitri (2011). *The Tenets of Cognitive Existentialism*, Athens: Ohio University Press.

Einstein, A. (1950). *Out of My Later Years*. New York: Philosophical Library.

Vos, Arvin (2011). "On the Status of Theoretical Objects in Science according to Cognitive Existentialism," *Balkan Journal of Philosophy*, 2011, 2.

Book reviews

An Anthropological Perspective on Religion in Late Modernity

*Marțian Iovan**

[for *Stilul religiei în modernitatea târzie (The Style of Religion in Late Modernity)* by Anca Manolescu, Iaşi, Polirom Publishing House, 2011, 216 pages]

Key words: anthropology of religion, modernity, sacredness, secularity, Anca.

The content, essence and direction of the evolution of modern societies – with their spiritual – religious component systemically integrated, have been analyzed, throughout this last century, from several points of view, with diverse methods and working hypotheses. Among the issues that were subject to reflection were not only those raised by historians and philosophers of history, theologians and philosophers of religion, economists and ethicists, sociologists and political scientists, but also experts in the fields of science and culture, anthropologists and specialists in the comparative approach to religions, to the relations between spiritual culture and civilization in modernity. The discourses of some of the above-mentioned were focused on perennial inquiries: is modernity a new Era? What is the role of reason, volition and religious faith at this stage of historical evolution of society? Is the modern world built on science, secularization and a gradual renouncement of religion? What are the grounds of globalization and universalization: are they of a traditional – religious nature, of a scientific – rational nature, of a political and economic origin, or do they have a spiritual nature? What are the dimensions of human status with relation to other humans, to power and to the whole in the modern era? How should we best use our past experience, the great traditions of humankind, in order to end crises and anomic states in society? etc.

In this broad context, Anca Manolescu designs, elaborates and publishes *The Style of Religion in Late Modernity*, (Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 2011), 216 pages,[1] departing from specific questions pertaining to the philosophy of religion, targeting the advantages and spiritual losses of late modernity: Was modernity not built on the secularization of societies and institutions? Are modern societies not defined by the renouncement of religion as a framework of civilization and vector of human fate? What more could the spectacle of modernity offer before the hopeless closure of man within the fortress of perishabilty? What is the situation of humans living in a society dominated by the crisis of the modern world? What does the relation between the constitutive deficiencies of modernity, human freedoms and 20th century totalitarian regimes consist of? Would it not be better for our societies – devoid of a unifying spiritual pole, if a profound change would occur, resulting in the retrieval of unity between identity and alterity? If we have nearly estranged ourselves from the brilliance of transcendence, can we not combine the criticism of this estrangement with its capitalization, with its reversal and spiritual conversion?

The answers to such questions of modern man are elaborated by the author in a style that is specific to philosophical essays, attempting to prove that there are features of late modernity that can be used as premises for deciphering or even solving some of the great spiritual issues. Arguments are brought forth in favor of the idea that "The West of our days

* Reviewed by Professor Marțian Iovan, Ph.D., Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences,
Vice-rector of "Vasile Goldiş" Western University of Arad, Romania, e-mail: miovan@uvvg.ro
Telephone / fax: 0257 / 284899

[1] Anca Manolescu is a PhD in philosophy at the University of Bucharest, an advanced researcher in the fields of religious anthropology and the comparative study of religions. She has published, with the same publisher, the volume *Europa şi întâlnirea religiilor. Despre pluralismul religios contemporan* (*Europe and the Junction of Religions. On Contemproary Religios Pluralism*) (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005, *Foreword* by Andrei Pleşu).

is not a wasteland from which any vertical meaning has perished, it affords a symbolic spectacle that is, in many ways, precious, able to stimulate spiritual discernment … Late modernity may be a sign – a new sign, relieved of the burden of conformity – towards perennial matters”. [2]

In the argumentations and theoretizations she undertakes, Anca Manolescu references, in a personal manner, an ample literature in the field, authored by Plato, the fathers of the Christian Church, Nicolaus Cusanus, Nikolai Berdiaev, Simone Weil, René Guénon, André Scrima, Leo Strauss, L. Kolakovski, Adam Michnik, Andrei Pleşu etc. The comparative approach to the great traditions and religions of the world makes it possible to emphasize their identity, but also their common core, the general principles and perennial values contained in them. The ideas that are drawn are correlated with the socio – cultural condition of religion in today’s Europe, in “late modernity”. In order to find their way, the faithful must, first of all, face the constitutive vices of modernity, and somehow go against the mainstream.

Positioning herself within a broader philosophical orientation – religious existentialism (K. Jaspers, G. Marcel, M. Bouber), neo-Thomism (J. Maritain, E. Gilson, R. Garrigou – Lagrange, J. Bochenski), correlated with spiritualism (P. Teilhard de Chardin, J. Lachelier, E. Boutroux, H. Bergson) and French personalism, represented by Ch. Renouvier, and then by the group centered around “Esprit” magazine (E. Mounier, J. M. Domenach), Anca Manolescu characterizes late modern societies by the absence of or disregard for divinity in the frameworks of community life; the spiritual bases of society have paled in favor of secular humanism or have been counterfeited by murderous totalitarian ideologies. Modern societies are no longer built according to a celestial, transcendent archetype, and modern humans seem to be in a crisis of means for orienting themselves towards transcendence. Following the ideas of great thinkers, such as Nikolai Aleksandrovici Berdiaev, Simone Weil, André Scrima, the author seeks to justify and argue the advantages of spirituality in contemporary societies, by referencing perennial themes which exist in the great traditions of humanity, underlining the vectorial role of some conclusions that are specific to religious anthropology.

One of these perennial – founding themes for modernity is that of freedom. The modern European man, as a limited subject, appeared when he assumed his freedom, total and limited at the same time, when he defined himself as an autonomous being acting on the basis of his own law (Rousseau) and of his own sovereignty (Hobbes); the supernatural dimension of man was thus forsaken, and ecclesiastic institutions were separated from the state. Thus, a collective cultural and mental space was created for the emergence of totalitarian doctrines or the present religious fundamentalism, the author maintains. Democracies built on the philosophy of fundamental human rights, on the postulate of freedom and the primacy of the individual with respect to society protects the freedom of thought and religious freedom. But this situation, the author emphasizes, allows the fact that ultimate reality is not reducible to institutions and that religion is essential as a mediator between the individual and the ultimate Truth to shine through in daily life and collective mentality. Religious freedom and the freedom of thought pertain to the profound, inner and divine face of each person, to the ultimate meaning of the human being – liberation from conditioning through participation in the divine. If, for some Christian philosophers, such as Berdiaev, the theme of freedom is primordial, being equivalent to the abyss of divinity, then the religious meaning of freedom excludes, forestalls the sacralization of national or ideological religious groups, so that the spiritually engaged faithful would be oriented towards the divine perfection of the maker of this world – including themselves. *Homo maximus* or the *Universal man,* as an archetype constructed and promoted in different monotheistic religions, internalizes the image of Jesus Christ and “works” in the depths of each soul. As a free being, the individual that shares the Christic archetype must behave and respond through creativity.

Other defining themes for late modernity are the diversity of religions and secularity. As regards religious diversity, resulting from the legitimization of religious freedom and the freedom of thought, the author underlines that this lay principle has started not only to be accepted by the Church, by also to gain theological transposition. The research benefits that interreligious dialogue might bring emphasizes the coexistence of the One divinity and Absolute with a diversity of “ways” of understanding the uniqueness of divine Wisdom, specific to each religion. “Thus understood”, the author believes, “the convergence of religions clearly opposes fundamentalism, as the latter elevates the particularity of one

[2] Manolescu, 205.

single way to the rank of absoluteness. Too often conflicting, religious diversity – which globalization makes inevitable, and which late modernity legitimizes – can be, on the contrary, a precious spectacle from a metaphysical point of view”. [3]

With regard to secularity, it has taken over, from the Church – without contradicting the spiritual substance of religion – the task of managing the whole, so that religion is no longer the organizing top in modern societies. Since transcendence was separated from the state, power, public administration and domination, it can be said that secularity has separated divinity from society. As in previous eras, the sacerdotal power has its specific prestige, resulting from the history and tradition of each religion, from its cultural and spiritual evolution. Thus, late modernity, although it denies God his sociomorfism, could not but accept the fact that tradition and religious values have played an important part in fashioning European civilization and that religion might have its role in solving ethical and humanitarian issues in the future, or even in the making of the identity of the European Union. Even in a secularized society, where God manifests himself very “discreetly”, the religious man may fulfill his religious sentiment, materialized in his communion with the divinity.

In a close connection to previous themes, another ideational and practical dominance of late modernity is pluralistic democracy, as a “model of non-totalizing society” [4] and as an experience of alterity. The man of modern democracies lives, works and acts within the scope of non-unifiable plurality, which precludes monopoly and rejects totalizing unity and uniformity. The legitimization of plurality, of the partiality of our conscience, calls for the transformation of tolerance – as an attitude to alterity –, of the principles of moderation and legality, into central values of democracy, as an instrument for harmonizing society. In this context, religion is no longer shared by everybody, and those who share it do not do it in the same manner. Faced with this reality and wanting to find and capitalize on the spiritual advantages of our modernity, the author asks herself, rhetorically: „we live in a type of society that lacks a unifying pole, where alterity is strongly felt everywhere. Could this situation not become the subject of an exercise for admitting, for thinking and for exploring the sphere of a radical Something Else, in which identity and alterity would find their paradoxical unity?”[5]

In chapters II – V of the volume, entitled “Freedoms and freedom”, “Democracy or the mobilizing distance”, “Pluralism and perspectival condition” and “Secularity and apophaticism”, the author drives the analysis deeper and outlines varied response formulas to questions pertaining to the thematic area defining modernity. The adopted style corresponds to the “hybrid essay”, to “text heterogeneity” – characteristics that are assumed by the author, to the background of which intuition, convictions and personal contributions are materialized in an expression of prevalently apophatic meanings and significations, sometimes with profuse recourse to epithets, similes, metaphors, hyperboles, analogies or rhetorical invocations in order to cognitively approach an as large a part of the unknown as it is possible.

At a broad glance, Anca Manolescu’s work attempts, and mostly succeeds, in showing that there are prevailing traits of late modernity, such as the de-objectivation of religious meaning and the value of a person, which can also be re-interpreted and utilized for re-evaluating / practicing spiritual themes. In the context where secularization has emptied the habitual manifestations in the lives of many people of their spiritual meaning, where day-to-day living has largely become estranged from the brilliance of transcendence, the author builds up a response to the question whether we could blend the criticism of this estrangement with its capitalization, in the sense that modern societies might shift the center of gravity in religious symbolism towards the convergence of man to the absolute. Religion might gradually become a precious part in the system of spiritual and ethical regulation in society. This sort of perspective might bring multiple benefits to changing the state of today’s society, as follows:

A first benefit, the author believes, would consist of the social objectivation of religious meanings, by relating them to the transcendent horizon where they lead. [6] These spiritual meanings may regain the height and utility they once had, radiating the unifying light on us and orienting us towards the Absolute from which they emerged.

Another benefit refers to the position of the person, to their spiritual consciousness before Divinity, Unity, and meaning. It is true that modernity has made the human individual into a being that is proud of its autonomy, of its natural rights, but this apti-

[3] Manolescu, 23.
[4] Manolescu, 26.
[5] Manolescu, 30.
[6] Manolescu, 201.

tude has only produced the fragility of its spiritual dimensions. The modern European man is no longer content solely on the truths of the Church, on dogmas and tradition taken for granted. Being subject to diverse sources of information, implicitly religious, the modern man tries to investigate, analyze, discover and actively assimilate the information provided so that, as Kolakovski wrote, a religion remains alive insofar as it engages in confrontations "with new intellectual situations" [7], and strives to integrate new criticism and ideas of religious knowledge. The modern man is a seeker; he problematizes and is active in finding solutions.

Third, a benefit might be that regarding the status of religious truth, starting from the Universality of revealed truth, of the divine One *versus* the different ways of expressing it, the multitude of religious doctrines sustaining it. The sometimes exclusivist confrontations between contemporary religions also contain another side, an option of convergent thinking; they have a common component which makes religions subsume to universal Truth and to human responsibility with respect to all-encompassing transcendence.

In conclusion, Anca Manolescu's work represents a remarkable contribution to the elaboration of answers to issues pertaining to religious anthropology. As a result of inter- and transdisciplinary approaches to the great religious traditions and the values promoted by it in the social context of late modernity, the content of this work stands out through logical coherence, textured analyses, the elegance of style, the alternation of inquiries with the author's attempt to build up plausible answers for them, and personal refinement in using words. These are some reasons why the work is addressed to specialist circles in the field of religious anthropology, theologians and hierarchs of the Christian Church, academics and students in the fields of philosophy, sociology, political sciences, scholars in general and, last but not least, to those dignitaries who are responsible for managing the good march of education, cultures and cults.

[7] Leszek Kolakovski, *Modernitatea sub un neobosit colimator* (*Modernity on Endless Trial*), *(*translation by Mihai Gafița, București: Curtea Veche, 2007), 60–61.

When Life Confirms Our Scientific Searches!

Maksim Mizov
Centre of Historical and Political Studies, Sofia, Bulgaria
e-mail: maksim_mizov@abv.bg

[for the book: Dragoljub Dzhordzhevich „*На коњу с лаптопом у бисагама*" („On Horseback with a Laptop in the Saddlebags"), published in 2010 by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, and Prometey Publishers]

In the "life" of science, as in the life of society, at times things happen that seem strange at first but ultimately prove quite logical. When Her Majesty History makes sharp turns, overturns strata, and changes her appearance and manners in a dramatic way, then come those starry moments for the creative minds in science who until then had worked long and patiently, devotedly and productively, without having the fruits of their efforts receive the attention and recognition they merit. Until that moment such scientific research was looked upon with an element of hauteur, and even with demonstrative disregard or belittling of the work and its results. But in crucial moments of history, social problems and dilemmas arise with such explosive force that their solution brooks no delay, so important are they for the present and future of a society. It is these problems that the far-seeing researchers we are referring to had focused their attention and efforts on, discerning their significance and eventual consequences and historical results, and proposing various courses of action for alleviating or resolving the issues, but without giving wide publicity to the value of their research and findings. And now, Life and History have decided that that these problems can no longer be concealed or overlooked or belittled. The impact of these problems has become too obvious, and the consequences, too disturbing or too menacing for society. Concerns about these problems and dilemmas grow, the dangers loom large, and there is no turning away from them, no way not to cry urgently for help from the people who are intimately acquainted with the matter. And so the value of these researchers quickly begins to grow in the public eye!

The above mentioned holds equally true for the researchers and writers who are involved in revealing and interpreting the secret corners of Romany life, of Romany mentality and existence in general or in a specific society. That is why, in times like the present, it is important and useful to turn our attention to scholars who have devoted their lives to penetrating and explaining these mysterious corners. Undoubtedly, in coming to know the work and achievements of such researchers, we will find similarities in the tensions that occur in neighbouring countries and societies. Especially when it comes to neighbouring Slavic countries and the role and importance of the "Roma problem" for their national biographies!

We have before us a very interesting and unquestionably useful scholarly work: the monograph by Professor Dr. Dragoljub Dzhordzhevich „*На коњу с лаптопом у бисагама*" („On Horseback with a Laptop in the Saddlebags"), published in 2010 by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, and Prometey Publishers.[1] This is a pioneering work for the school known to Romology experts as the "Niš Romology" school. The monograph has seven chapters and a foreword by Prof. Dr. Rajko Dzhurich. Being devoted to the discipline of Romology, the work bears the sub-title of "Introduction to Romology Studies". The author's ethical and self-demanding attitude to his work as a scholar shows through even in the sub-title: even though he proposes original views and gives a solid demonstration that he is outlining a new scientific discipline, Prof. Dzhordzhevich modestly estimates his achievements as simply an introduction. This characterization only enhances the interest in the thematic sphere of his research, but it is also a sort of investment in the reader's attention to all that Romology has to offer. And what it can offer is considerable indeed!

---

[1] Dragoljub Djordjevic
Full Professor, PhD
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
University of Nis, Serbia

Prof. Dzhordzhevich frankly and captivatingly reveals the world of this new discipline. He leads us to its roots, unveils the secrets and subject of Romology, confronts us with the dilemma as to whether this is a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary field, shows us the place and role of the combining of sociology and Romology, acquaints us with the subtle differences between Roma studies and Romology, clarifies the delicate aspects of the paradigms and tools used by this new discipline. Dzhordzhevic presents (with panoramic scope and systematically) the most important theoretical and methodological characteristics and social-historical connections of Romology with the vicissitudes of history and science. In order to adequately present the new discipline to the scientific community, the author should present the essential references to the mentality and life of the Roma. That is why it is important to focus the theoretical analysis on the place and role of interculturalism in Roma mentality and existence, the recognition and legitimization of Roma culture, which has long been rejected and underestimated in scientific discourse, the imperative (especially in our time) of political correctness towards this culture, and last, the integration of the Roma into society. These are all very significant problems, present to some degree and in some form in our own, Bulgarian society and scientific studies. In our country, as in Serbia, great hopes are set on Roma integration, hopes that should enable a change in the lifeworld and quality of life of the Roma themselves and of those who are in social contact with them. Dzhordzhevich believes integration should be based on an intercultural foundations and paradigms, as the means for the eagerly desired changes and prosperity of the Roma, but also as a defense against possible ethnic or other assimilation. Such integration must make a breach, and achieve success, in the field of social-economic life, where the Roma have always been marginalized, but also in the legal and political sphere, with regard to which, at least so far, the Roma have shown themselves lacking in solidarity, political culture and the kind of organization that might accelerate and ensure the changes in mentality and life of their community. With respect to these shortcomings, there is an evident dramatic problem with the Roma political parties and NGOs, which have proven incapable of winning the trust and recognition of the Roma community, of achieving substantial, valuable goals. But integration must also penetrate into the cultural sphere, for the preservation and transmission of customs and traditions guarantee that the unique identity of the Roma will continue in time. And since life must go on even after the death of individuals and generations, it is important what the culture of death will be like, whereby the transfers of identity over time are ensured.

While discussing the place and role of multiculturalism and ethno-cultural neutrality, Prof. Dzhordzhevich aims his analysis beyond the Serbian boundaries and includes comparative analyses of trends in Bulgaria and Macedonia as well. Leaning on Kimlick’s idea of ethno-cultural justice, the author proposes his own logic and mechanism for Roma integration, of a kind that might avoid possible concerns about assimilation.

The author ties his analysis of the social-economic troubles of the Roma to the paradigm that regards this community as a specific ethno-class in society, a class having its specific, in some places very particular, position on the labour market. The author uses empirical sociological findings to argue his views and generalizations regarding the motivation and behaviour stereotypes of the Roma on the labour market, their connection with legal and illegal work, the dramatic reversals and shifts from traditional to modern economic activity, the quickly diminishing profile of Roma crafts and professions, the growing reliance of the Roma on the family and their specific projects for the future as a people that has not escaped the vicious circle of its centuries-long plight.

The portrayal of the dramatic Roma destiny would not be complete without reference to the tragic events of the Second World War. The third chapter of the work is devoted to the Roma Holocaust. This topic is not just a memory, nor an object of purely sociological and Romological analysis. It can at times be a terrible reality, such as in the case of the two-year old Roma child Goran Matakovich, who was denied burial by the residents of his village. A contemporary case has thus become an object of analysis that lends comprehensiveness to the study of the sufferings and stigmatization of the Roma in the past and at present.

The next chapter is devoted to the sociology of Roma religiosity. The author reveals the specifics of confessional pluralism and religious discrimination against the Roma, as well as the paths of increasing Protestantization of certain Roma groups. Protestantism is treated as a typical illustration of the present-day de-territorialization and de-symbolization of previous religious trends and practices that were of enduring historical validity for certain Roma groups. The changing realities and mores in present times determine and catalyze a proselytism that is capable of changing certain traits of the picture of Roma everyday life. We come across similar problems in our country as well!

The fifth chapter of the work is devoted to the typology of cult locations. The author particularly stresses the insufficiency of sociological studies and analyses of Roma cult places and the ritual practices corresponding to these. Referring to several examples, the author provides a theoretical analysis of the transfer of memory over the centuries (through the preservation and maintenance of sacred cult places), and on the mixture of colourful rituals that are preserved, or else modified, over time. Without using Pierre Nora's concept of "places of memory", Prof. Dzhordzhevich is essentially presenting us precisely such places, which have possessed symbolic importance for many Roma in the past and present.

The author has also included in the scope of his analysis the culture of death, the phenomenology of death among the Roma, how it is marked and paid respect to through rites, rituals, and cult places. The attitude of people to Roma burials is, in fact, a measure of the tolerance or intolerance towards this ethnic group on the part of the "other" ethnic groups.

Roma cemeteries, their specific features and maintenance, prove to be places of contiguity and communication between the different ethnic, ethno-cultural, and ethno-religious identities. These places are very indicative as regards the status and role, importance and recognition, of the Roma by society. The positioning of cemeteries, their degree of maintenance or of abandonment, aggression against the traits of identity memory they contain and represent, are important cultural accretions that tell and preserve the stories of links and distances between ethnic, religious, and ethno-cultural communities. This topic provides a golden opportunity for sociological and Romological analysis.

In the last chapter the author devotes attention to the Niš Romology school, to the factors of its emergence, to its paradigmatic background, which combines the ideas of interculturalism and the stratification formulas of Max Weber, to its interesting history, ranging over more than a quarter of a century, and to its research efforts and achievements. The cadres and creative profile of the Niš Romology school are not purely sociological, for the team of researchers involved in it also includes philosophers, ethnographers, linguists, political scientists, and other specialists. The team has to its credit 165 scholarly publications, including 16 books and 14 collections, some of which have been translated into six foreign languages.

Prof. Dzhordzhevich sees nothing surprising in the fact that the city of Niš should have been the birthplace of this school. This is a pioneering city as regards Roma emancipation: a city in which more than 30 thousand Roma live today. It is quite natural that the University of Niš should have become the leading centre in Romology studies, providing impulses and setting the tone for other research teams in this important field.

The book has other merits as well. It is not a purely abstract, theoretical presentation of the topic. In it the reader will find empirical sociological material as well as interesting interviews/dialogues by the author with people expertly knowledgeable on the secrets of the Roma soul and Roma life. It is written clearly, very readably and enthrallingly, which makes it accessible and useful for a wide audience beyond that of specialists in the field.

Of course, narrow specialists might not agree with some of Prof. Dzhordzhevich's theses, such as the view of the Roma as a particular ethno-class, etc. Yet the work remains highly interesting in its approaches and original solutions; it is certainly of high practical-applied importance and well worth the reading by a wide audience. In fact, even those points in which readers might differ from the author seem to have a positive side, for in some cases a scholarly work might prove more useful by the provocations it offers than by its definitive and imposed conclusions and the simple formulas supplied.

It is well known in the world of science that the raising of questions may be more difficult and more valuable than the answers given to those questions. The formulation of questions requires positive creative thinking! For when we disagree with the views and answers, we seek additional knowledge and more sources on the given topic. And this leads us deeper and deeper into the field. A provocation may thus prove to be to the benefit of a given scientific discipline. Precisely such is the provocation supplied by Prof. Dzhordzhevich's book as concerns the field of Romology!

Cognition and Perception

Monica Jitareanu
CEU, Budapest
e-mail: JitareanuM@ceu.hu

[Book Review for Athanassios Raftopoulos (2009). ***Cognition and Perception. How Do Psychology and Neural Science Inform Philosophy?*** **MA: MIT Press]**

Athanassios Raftopuolos' book lives up to its title: it is a highly informative, well argued, and interesting exercise in how to use empirical information for solving philosophical problems. The aim of the book is philosophical: a defense of realism. If the way we perceive the world is influenced by our concepts in a top-down manner, that is, if all content of perceptual states is conceptual, then perception is theory-laden, therefore our access to it is only through our concepts. "If one holds the above position, then there are two options: either one has to abandon any form of realism, or to salvage realism one has to argue that despite the conceptual character of our experiential content the world is the content of our perceptual states and thus we access it directly. I think the second choice is untenable and deeply problematic: perceptual states are representational states, and thus their content cannot be worldly states of affairs themselves but must consist of representations or presentations of the way worldly states of affairs are." (p. xvii)

Thus, Raftopoulos enters the cognitive-penetrability debate by taking side with the defenders of non-conceptual content and argues that a part of visual experience which extracts information from the visual scenes is cognitively impenetrable and thus yields non-conceptual representations. The claim is defended in the first part of the book, which is scientific and takes stock of the latest findings from cognitive science; the second part is philosophical. The former comprises 3 chapters which constitute an excellent review of cognitive science state of the art theories of attention and visual processing and lay the ground for the argument for non-conceptual content.

First, Raftopulos argues (Chapter 1) that visual processing has a pre-attentional early visual phase, in which information is extracted from the visual scene without any conceptual modulation and forms "proto-objects", which are structural descriptions of the objects in the scene and eventually become the contents of the visual experience. Attention, which is conceptually driven, does not occur here (the process at this stage is only phenomenally conscious), so the output of this stage is a content which is purely non-conceptual.

The second step in the argument analyzes two kids of attention – object-based attention and spatial attention. Whereas object-based attention does not pose any threat to the argument, as it is shown to intervene only after the proto-objects have been extracted from the visual scene, spatial attention does intervene at the early stages of visual processing, so it makes a rather strong case for cognitive penetrability. Raftopoulos argues that, although the top-bottom processing determines where to direct attention, they don't interfere with the information coming from the scene, which remains cognitively "untouched".

Finally, the last step in the argument, which is developed in the third chapter, focuses on two kinds of visual processes responsible for object detection – object individuation (and indexing) and object identification – and argues that, while concepts are necessary for the latter, object individuation precedes it and is cognitively impenetrable. Important for the philosophical discussion in the second part of the book is a tripartite distinction between *sensation*, *perception*, and *observation*. *Sensation* comprises retinal information and parts of early vision such as those that codify changes in light intensity; nothing at this stage reaches awareness. The output of sensation is gradually transformed into a representation that can be processed by cognition; for Raftopoulos this is *perception*. Its output is the cognitively impenetrable content that is extracted from a visual scene in a bottom-up way; this is what constitutes the non-conceptual content of perceptual experience. Finally, *observation* is the result of both bottom-up and top-down processing.

In the philosophical chapters (4–6), the author uses the argument from the findings of cognitive science to give his own accounts of non-conceptual content (Chapter 4), of phenomenal content (Chapter 5), of causal theory of reference (Chapter 6), to take sides with Fodor against Churchland's arguments that perception is theory-laden (Chapter 7), and to defend a minimal form of realism, which consists of the claim that objects, their spatiotemporal properties, and some of their features are directly accessible in perception, that is, unmediated by concepts (Chapter 8). Since I cannot discuss all of these here, I'll concentrate on non-conceptual content, introspection (discussed in Chapter 4) and the defense of realism.

Besides defining the author's own notion of non-conceptual content, Chapter 4 also contains a thorough review of theories of non-conceptual content and reasons for the endorsement of such a theory: it can solve "the symbol-grounding problem" and the problem of reference stability, and it can also account for finesse of grain of phenomenal content. It has to be said, according to Raftopoulos, that "phenomenal content" is not synonymous with "non-conceptual content", as it is sometimes used in the literature. According to the way he uses it, it is that part of non-conceptual content that the subject can be aware of; in other words, it belongs to *perception*, by contrast to the non-conceptual content that belongs to *sensation*, i.e. it occurs at the subpersonal level.

Non-conceptual content is defined as the content of the states that are the output of *perception*; it is cognitively encapsulated because it extracts information from the environment in a bottom-up way. It consists of representations of shape, spatial properties, position, motion, size, surface-properties, and color. Raftopoulos' notion of non-conceptual content diverges from that which is common in the literature in one crucial respect: it is the notion of a content that is different in *kind* from conceptual content. The common view, or at least that of many defenders of non-conceptual content, is that the difference between the two contents is just a matter of whether the person who possesses the relevant states also possesses the relevant concept, but otherwise there need be no distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual content (conceptual content is just non-conceptual content + concepts). Raftopoulos argues that there is a difference in kind between the two: non-conceptual content represents *types* of objects, whereas conceptual content represents *tokens* of objects. The reason is, simply put, that *object individuation* (responsible for type-object) occurs in the early vision processes that are cognitively encapsulated, while *object recognition* (responsible for token-object) requires top-down cognitive intervention.

The author also challenges the notion of introspection as it is used in the philosophy of perception: "The phenomenal content of the philosophers is accessible to introspection; thus, phenomenal content is accessible to consciousness. But which consciousness?" (p. 156) The empirical findings show there are two kinds of awareness: phenomenal awareness and access awareness. They are defined in terms of two kids of processes: local recurrent processes, which are cognitively encapsulated in the case of phenomenal awareness, and global recurrent processes, which involve memory and cognition in the case of access awareness. So, phenomenal awareness concerns non-conceptual content, whereas access awareness is applied to conceptual content. "One can be made aware of both conceptual and phenomenal content. However, the two kinds of content are subject to different kinds of awareness. As a result, the two kinds of awareness have phenomenological differences. Things of which we are phenomenally aware have a shaky existence (in the sense that they have limited spatial and temporal coherence) that differs from the stable percept of which one has access awareness or report awareness. We have a fleeting 'experience' of things of which we are phenomenally aware, since nonconceptual content, being about types and not about tokens, lacks the coherence and specificity of conceptual content." (p. 157)

In the last chapter, Raftopoulos takes charge against one of realism's most serious opponents: Constructivism. This is the thesis that material objects are constructions out of representations. As a result, the mind-independent entities that caused the representations become epistemically inaccessible. The author acknowledges that the arguments for non-conceptual content presented in the book are not sufficient for defending realism against Constructivism: "The claim that there is a cognitively impenetrable theory-neutral stage of vision, namely perception, although a good, and I think the only proper, place to start to form a rejoinder to epistemological constructivism, does not suffice by itself to put the doubts that constructivism has raised to rest or to answer the question regarding what we can know, as realists, about the world. The reason it cannot put all doubts to rest is that a theory-neutral perception may not be enough to bar the incommensurability between competing research programs. After all, scientific debates occur at the level of observational reports not at the level of perceptions. Since, as we saw in chapter 7, observation unlike perception is theory-laden, constructivism's threat remains unscathed. Only if a way were to be found to ensure communication of observational reports on the basis of the theoretically neutral perception would the existence of a theory-neutral perception matter for rebutting the claim as to the incommensurability of competing scientific theories." (pp. 311–12) Nonetheless, they constitute a crucial first step.

The argument for constructivism is that different conceptual backgrounds yield differences in the way the world is experienced, so two people can agree on what they see only if they have the same conceptual framework. Otherwise, there is no theory-neutral basis on which to settle their debates about theory testing, confirmation and theory choice.

A successful attack against constructivism has to show, first, that there is a theory-neutral basis on which debates about theory testing and confirmation can be resolved, and, second, indicate how observational concepts are grounded in a theory-neutral basis provided by experience and also how abstract concepts arise from them. Raftopoulos touches only upon the first and his strategy consists of defending 3 claims:

- *Perception* (the early part of vision) is only indirectly penetrated by cognition, through the effects of spatial attention and information is retrieved in a purely bottom-up manner.
- Because of that, perception can provide a theory-neutral basis.
- Therefore, persons with different conceptual framework *can* perceive the world the same way, and so, debates about theory testing, confirmation, and theory choice can be resolved empirically, at least in principle.

Now, of course, someone can say that this is barely enough to refute constructivism. Raftopoulos does not claim that he can provide a full-blown argument; he just shows the way to go about arguing for realism. As such, his arguments, minimal as they are, are sound.

All in all, *Cognition and Perception* is a must read for both cognitive scientists and philosophers. The scientific part is thorough, accurate, and up-to-date; the philosophical one is rich in arguments, interesting, and not afraid to challenge mainstream philosophical ideas about consciousness, awareness, introspection, conceptual and non-conceptual content.

A New edition of Reichenbach's book

Anita Kasabova
New Bulgarian University
email: anita.kasabova@gmail.com

[review for the book Hans Reichenbach. *Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie* (new edition by Nikolay Milkov, Philosophische Bibliothek, vol. 621, Meiner: Hamburg, 2011), pp. xilv +160]

Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953), a founder of logical empiricism, member of the *Vienna Circle* and founder of the *Berlin Group* of logical empiricism, was a leading figure in modern philosophy of science. Yet Reichenbach's contributions to the philosophy of physics, logic and the foundation of probability, though well-known in the US and the English-speaking world, have remained relatively unknown in his native Germany. Nikolay Milkov's new German edition of five papers by Reichenbach, published by Felix Meiner, the prestigious publisher of philosophical works in their traditional series *Philosophische Bibliothek*, therefore marks a refreshing turn in German philosophical policy from idealism and its continental outgrowth, to a thematic focus on the sciences and their methodological rigor. Milkov's edition is the first German publication of Reichenbach's work in 40 years and it encourages contemporary German-speaking readers to become acquainted with the latter's theory of science.

This new edition contains the following papers by Reichenbach, divided into two parts. Part I, *Die neue Naturphilosophie* (*The new philosophy of science*) includes the complete version of "*Neue Wege der Wissenschaft*" ("*New approaches in science*"), i. *Physikalische Forschung* (*Physical research*), ii. *Philosophische Forschung* (*Philosophical research*), iii. *Mathematische Forschung* (*Mathematical research*), (1929); "*Die philosophische Bedeutung der modernen Physik*" ("*The philosophical significance of modern physics*") (1930) and "*Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie*" (*Aims and Methods of Modern Philosophy of Nature*) (1931) which is the main focus of this edition. These papers were originally written in German.

Part II, *Radikaler Empirismus*, presents German translations of two important papers by Reichenbach on empiricist philosophy: i. "*Der logistische Empirismus in Deutschland und der gegenwärtige Stand seiner Probleme*" ("*Logistic empiricism in Germany and the present state of its problems*") (1936) and ii. "*Rationalismus und Empirismus: eine Untersuchung der Wurzeln philosophischen Irrtums*" ("*Rationalism and empiricism: an inquiry into the roots of philosophical error*") (1948).[1] While the first three papers present Reichenbach's early ideas during the time that the *Berlin Group* was established (1929-1932), the last two papers show his take on empiricism (1933-1953).

Nikolay Milkov (*A hundred years of English philosophy*, Springer, 2003; *Kaleidoscopic mind: an essay in post-Wittgensteinian philosophy*, Rodopi, 1992) is a philosopher of science whose recent research is focused on late 19th and early 20th century philosophy of science in Austria and Germany. In particular, he examines the similarities and differences between two important German-speaking schools of exact philosophy in the 1930's: the *Vienna Circle* and the *Berlin Group* and their influence on 20th century philosophy of science in the US. As he points out in his introduction to *Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie* (vii-iii), none of Reichenbach's students were affiliated to German universities, which is one of the reasons why his philosophy of science was not propagated in Germany. In the US, by contrast, Reichenbach's students were leading figures in theory of science, such as Carl Hempel, Hilary Putnam and Wesley Salmon and they in turn taught a number of today's influential philosophers of science, namely John Earman, Bas van Fraassen, Larry Laudan and Philip Kitcher. An obvious reason why Reichenbach's views found little resonance in Germany was that country's po-

[1] There appears to be a lack of consensus on whether to translate '*Naturphilosophie*' as *philosophy of science* or *philosophy of nature*. While the latter is the literal translation, the former seems more appropriate in rendering the modern or non-idealist philosophical sense of *Naturphilosophie*.

litical climate in the 1930's, causing his dismissal from the university of Berlin and his relocation to Istanbul in 1933 and to Los Angeles in 1938.

In addition, the philosophical climate in Germany was no less hostile to Reichenbach's views, as Milkov's introduction to the new German edition shows. Thus Reichenbach's little book *Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie* (1931), published by Felix Meiner, received absolutely no reviews in Germany. Only Reichenbach's lecture on this topic at the Berlin *Society for Scientific Philosophy* (*Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*) in Nov. 1930 was discussed in a disapproving review by Richard Wolf for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (Berliner Rundschau)*, 7.11.1930. Milkov (*Introduction*, xxxvi) cites Wolf's reprimand as emblematic of the German philosophical consensus in the 1930's:

> Any philosophy other than this theory of knowledge (*diese Erkenntnistheorie*) of philosophy of science and mathematics seems superfluous to the lecturer, and he attempts to label thinkers with other views, who attribute a wider scope of tasks to this discipline, as well as providing different ways of explanation, as literati. […] For us, who are consciously living in a time overcast by horror and in which politics has become our fate, such a philosophy is a bloodless being (*blutarmes Wesen*). It appears bloodless and a little lacking in depth, even in the limited domain in which it is legitimate and in which its exponent resides as specialist, despite all the fine clarity of its exposition. (my translation).

Nearly a century would pass before Reichenbach's booklet was to obtain its rightful place amongst important contributions to German philosophy, together with four papers expounding his views on the relations between science and philosophy. *Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie* was rehabilitated by the same publisher who, eighty years ago, considered his theory worthy of publication and first published *Erkenntnis*, the journal of scientific philosophy founded by Reichenbach and Carnap in 1930. Despite hard times and political horrors, Meiner's publishing policy has consistently adhered to its pluralistic standard of values.

Milkov reconstructs Reichenbach's scientific theory and analytic method, and examines his complex relationship with German-speaking philosophy, his anti-Kantian epistemology, his discussions and disputes with fellow-scientists Schlick, Einstein, Lewin and Carnap, as well as providing insight into Reichenbach's connection to the two main German-speaking schools of his time, the *Vienna Circle* and the *Berlin Group*. Milkov begins his introduction with a short review of Reichenbach's scientific method, showing how the latter considered his program as a correction of Kantian epistemology, in particular a correction of Kant's notion of *a priori* from which Reichenbach removes the 'apodeictic necessity' whilst retaining the 'constitution of objects' by means of his principles of coordination (*Zuordnungsprincipien*). These latter constitute the elements of conceptual systems in science, as, for example, the spatio-temporal relations in the doctrine of space and time. Hence principles of coordination relate (or coordinate) elements of conceptual systems to elements of experience. Reichenbach thus refines and restricts Kant's generalization that all knowledge of objects is grounded on necessary *a priori* truths to the claim that there are only particular presuppositions of respective theories for particular sciences and that it is precisely these particular presuppositions which have to be worked out. In addition, Reichenbach supplements Kant's principle of causality with a principle of probability in his doctoral dissertation *The Concept of Probability in the Mathematical Representation of Reality* (1915).

As Milkov explains (*Introduction*, xi-ii), Reichenbach's anti-Kantian approach to philosophy was reinforced by his encounter with Moritz Schlick in 1920, who became one of the founders of the *Vienna Circle* in 1922. Schlick persuaded Reichenbach to replace the notion that principles constitute objects by the notion that principles constitute definitions or conventions and Reichenbach substituted coordinative definitions for coordinative principles. Hence he could show with Schlick that modern science, especially Einstein's physics and Hilbert's axiomatic mathematics, had no need of Kantian *a priori* principles for knowledge of objects.

However, the collaboration between the two philosophers was short-lived. While Schlick remained a logical positivist and became increasingly influenced by Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Reichenbach turned to 'natural philosophy' and logical empiricism. Resuming his earlier work on causality, he considered the latter as a probability relation and sustained the realist view that science deals with reality rather than sense impressions or linguistic symbols. This 'empiricist turn' brought Reichenbach closer to the psychologist and philosopher Kurt

Lewin. In 1923, the two philosophers founded a journal for exact philosophy, published by Springer. They collaborated on reformulating certain scientific notions, such as causality, in order to bring to light alternative scientific structures. Thus Lewin introduced the notion of *genidentity* for explaining the temporal persistence of objects of physics and biology – a notion which is still in use today. Reichenbach and Lewin also collaborated with Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Köhler, as well as the philosopher and chemist Paul Oppenheim.

In 1929 he founded what was to become the *Berlin Group for scientific philosophy*, first named *The Berlin Society for empirical philosophy*, together with Walter Dubislav, Kurt Grelling and Gerhard Herzberg. The *Berlin Group* and *Vienna Circle* began their dispute at a colloquium on probability in 1930. While Carnap and other *Vienna Circle* members insisted on justifying scientific knowledge by means of the principle of verification, Reichenbach and Grelling of the *Berlin Group* argued that actual science always rests on a principle of induction which grounds scientific prognosis (Milkov, *Introduction*, xvii). Milkov supplements his account of Reichenbach's development of the problem of induction by a citation from the latter's work *The rise of scientific philosophy* (1951): "Every inductive prediction is similar to a net thrown into the sea of physical events" (277)." After 1931 Reichenbach considered his epistemology as radically empiricist, whilst Carnap criticized Reichenbach's naturalism. This dispute between the logical positivists of the *Vienna Circle* and Reichenbach continued until the early 1940's.

Despite this polemic, he is often considered as a member of the *Vienna Circle*, although, as Milkov (*Introduction*, xxii) points out, the lecture program of the *Berlin Group* was more closely related to current scientific interests such as quantum mechanics, the foundations of space and time, the direction of time and the logical foundations of probability. In the US, it was this program which attracted and influenced Reichenbach's students such as Adolf Grünbaum, Hilary Putnam and Bas van Fraassen, who were interested in Reichenbach's philosophy of physics rather than in his radical empiricism.

In any case, as Milkov remarks towards the end of his introduction (xxxix), Reichenbach was inappropriately considered as a radical empiricist, since his thought retained traces of Kantian *a priori*sm. Since on Reichenbach's view, scientific investigation is accompanied by a construction of scientific concepts, Milkov argues that his program is constructivist rather than empiricist in a Machian sense. Moreover, it seems that Reichenbach's anti-Kantianism in the *theory of relativity and a priori knowledge* (*Relativitätstheorie und Erkenntnis a priori*) (1920), is suffused by neo-Kantianism, as Michael Friedman (2001) has shown by examining Reichenbach's notion of the "relativized *a priori*".[2] Kant's influence on Reichenbach seems to have been more pervasive than either Reichenbach or Milkov acknowledge – he even uses the Kantian adjective 'transcendental' for characterizing his principle of probability, which was supposed to replace Kant's 'transcendental principle of causality' (1915). Nonetheless, after 1933, Reichenbach held that mathematics and physics are radically empirical sciences and that their laws are derived from experience and hence are not logical necessities. Milkov adds this point to his list of disparities between Reichenbach and the *Vienna Circle*, where he also mentions the former's inclusion of thought experiments in epistemological analyses. (*Introduction*, xxix-xxx).

Milkov aptly situates the main difference between the linguistic turn advocated by the *Vienna Circle* and the empiricism supported by the *Berlin Group* in their respective relations with Wittgenstein and Einstein. Schlick and Carnap were influenced by Wittgenstein's analytic philosophy of language, as Reichenbach was influenced by Einstein's theory of relativity, which he examined in 1920-1928 and considered as a refutation of Kantian *a priorism*. Likewise, both respective relations ended in conflicts – between Reichenbach and Einstein on one hand and Carnap and Wittgenstein, on the other. Milkov outlines the other main disparity between the *Vienna Circle* and Reichenbach as a difference in perspective: the latter opting for a panoramic overview of philosophical issues rather than analyzing a particular problem (*Introduction*, xxviii-ix).

The penultimate section of Milkov's introduction to *Ziele und Wege der heutigen Naturphilosophie* deals with Reichenbach's endeavors to make scientific discoveries accessible to the general public, not only at university but also in lectures diffused by two German radio stations (1924-1932). Milkov explains Reichenbach's role in popularizing science by the fact that the latter had first-hand knowledge of major discoveries in nuclear physics

[2] Friedman, M. (2001), *Dynamics of Reason*, Stanford: CSLI publications.

and astrophysics which, during the 1920's, took place in Berlin. In addition, Milkov cites several of Reichenbach's students and colleagues who praise his talent for clear and concise presentations of the problem of space and time and Einstein's relativity theory. Yet not all scientists approved of Reichenbach's project to axiomatize scientific theories. Thus Einstein did not accept Reichenbach's axiomatization of relativity theory and the mathematician Hermann Weyl criticized his *Axiomatik der relativistischen Raum-Zeit Theorie* (1924), as did Ernest Nagel and John von Neumann in the US.

The latters' criticism is omitted by Milkov, who takes a charitable view of Reichenbach's failure to address the challenges by Nagel and von Neumann and his omission of Andrei Kolmogorov's measure theoretic axioms for probability. In the last section of his *Introduction*, Milkov argues that Reichenbach's disregard of his contemporaries' work was due to the latter's belief that once a problem was solved, it was no longer of interest (*Introduction*, xxxii). Clark Glymour and Frederick Eberhardt (2008, 55), however, sustain a less favorable view than Milkov of Reichenbach's neglecting "contemporaneous or prior efforts of others that address the issues that concerned him, efforts that are in one or another way as good as, or importantly better, than his own", in regard to A. Robb, A. N. Kolmogorov, G. Birkhoff and J. von Neumann.[3] Then again, their publication is not an introduction to a new edition of Reichenbach's work.

The significant contribution of this new edition to the contemporary discussion in philosophy of science and its history, however, lies in Milkov's choice of Reichenbach's papers, concerned with bridging the gap between philosophy and science, as well as the gulf between scientific thought and everyday thought – which did much to establish his philosophy of science in the US as a mainstream trend. Hopefully, the new German edition of Reichenbach's work will help to achieve this in Reichenbach's native land – as a history of philosophy of science which is part of that country's philosophical heritage.

[3]Glymour, C. and Eberhardt, F. (2008). "*Hans Reichenbach*", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reichenbach/, accessed Nov. 7. 2011.