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Invited paper

NORMATIVE LESSONS FOR THE DEBATE ON THE SCOPE OF RATIONAL

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Abstract:
A significant part of the debate concerning the nature of rational requirements centers on disambiguating ordinary articulations of conditional requirements of rationality. Particular focus has been put on the question of whether conditional requirements of rationality take a wide or a narrow logical scope. However, this paper shows that this focus is misguided and harmful to the debate. I argue that concentrating on syntactic scope renders us more likely to arrive at incorrect formulations of rational requirements and to overlook questions of greater philosophical importance.

Key words: rationality, rational requirements of rationality, conditional requirements of rationality.

I offer two viable approaches to avoiding this result. One is to supplement the *syntactic* disambiguation of ordinarily expressed rational requirements with a *semantic* disambiguation. Put roughly, the "if" in wide-scope requirements and the "if" in narrow-scope requirements must each be interpreted differently. I show how this might increase the significance of the syntactic wide-/narrow-scope distinction. A second solution is to pay less attention to the wide-/narrow-scope distinction and to focus instead on two more fundamental questions: (i) what are the precise conditions of a rational requirement applying to a particular subject?; (ii) do rational requirements give us options regarding how they might be satisfied? At the end of this paper, I argue that we should prefer the second solution.

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Much attention has been devoted to the wide- and narrow-scope distinction as applied to rational requirements (cf. Broome 1999, 2007a; Kolodny 2005, 2007; Lord 2010; Schroeder 2004; Reisner 2011; Shpall 2011; and Way 2010, 2011). This distinction is motivated by a syntactic ambiguity affecting ordinary language articulations of rational requirement. In this paper, however, I argue that a strict focus on syntactically disambiguating ordinary articulations of requirement is misguided to the extent that it renders us more likely both to arrive at incorrect formulations of rational requirements and to ignore questions of greater philosophical significance.

It is commonly accepted that some logical concepts, such as *negation*, *necessity*, and *possibility*, operate on propositions. However, when used in natural language, it is not always clear which proposition they operate on. Suppose I say "Necessarily you are not in Oxford if you are in London." Then (i) syntactically, "necessarily" can be read to govern the conditional proposition "If you are in London, you are not in Oxford." Or (ii) it can be read to govern the proposition that forms the consequent of this conditional, i.e. "You are not in Oxford." The resulting two interpretations differ significantly in regard to their truth conditions. Put roughly, (i) is correct if being in London excludes that you are in Oxford, while (ii) is correct if the fact that you are in London entails that there is no possible context in which you are in Oxford.

This type of scope ambiguity does not only occur in the context of logical concepts. Suppose I say

SCHEMA. Rationality requires of you that you *B* if you *A*,[1]

where 'You *A*' and 'You *B*' refer to "atomic attitudes," as I shall call them.[2] If "rationality requires of you" behaves like an operator on propositions—an assumption I will accept in this paper—then, similarly to conditional statements containing logical or modal operators, *SCHEMA* is syntactically ambiguous between a *wide* and a *narrow* logical form. On the one hand, "rationality requires of you" can be read to govern the conditional proposition "If you *A*, you *B*." The resulting formulation reads as follows:

WIDE FORM. Rationality requires of you that [if you *A*, you *B*].

On the other hand, "rationality requires of you" can be read as only governing the consequent of "If you *A*, you *B*"; "Rationality requires of you that you *B*" then states the consequent of a conditional whose antecedent is "you *A*." The resulting formulation reads as follows:

NARROW FORM. If you *A*, then rationality requires of you that you *B*.

Consequently, one way of disambiguating *SCHEMA* syntactically is to invoke the *wide*- and *narrow*-scope distinction. That is, for every replacement of "you *A*" and "you *B*" in *SCHEMA*, one can ask whether a correct interpretation of the resulting requirement follows *WIDE FORM* or *NARROW FORM*.[3]

This question has recently received a lot of attention. A good part of the discussion concerning the nature of *instrumental* and *enkratic* requirements of rationality[4] concentrates on whether *NARROW FORM* or *WIDE FORM* represents these requirements correctly (cf. Broome 2007; Kolodny 2005, 2007; Lord 2011; Rippon 2011; Schroeder 2004, 2005, 2009; Shpall 2011; and Way 2010, 2011). However, I argue that this focus is potentially misleading and harmful to the debate, to the extent that participants in this debate continue to ignore a *semantic* ambiguity that accompanies the conditionality of *SCHEMA*. In brief, this mistake consists in assuming that the conditional constituting *NARROW FORM* (i.e. If you *A*, then rationality requires of you that you *B*) and the conditional governed by "rationality requires of you" in *WIDE FORM* (i.e. If you *A*, then you *B*) are of the same type—in particular, that they are both *material* conditionals, or sufficiently similar.[5]

But why do participants in this debate assume this in the first place? To answer this, consider a property commonly ascribed to *wide*-form requirements. Suppose *WIDE FORM* represents a rational requirement correctly. That is, for some "you *A*" and some "you *B*," "rationality requires of you" governs the conditional "If you *A*, you *B*." Then—so it is assumed—one way to satisfy this requirement is not to *A* (cf. Broome 2007a, p. 366; Errol 2011, p. 393; Way 2010, p. 214, 2011, p. 229). Consequently, the

[1] Here are some roughly formulated examples that fit the ordinary language requirement schema: rationality requires of you that you believe *p* if you believe that you know *p*; rationality requires of you that you intend to attend this year's APA conference if you intend to give a paper at this year's APA conference, and you believe that a necessary means of giving a paper at this year's APA conference is to attend this year's APA conference; rationality requires of you that you intend to drive carefully if you believe you ought to drive carefully; etc.

[2] By "atomic attitude," I mean, for instance, an individual propositional attitude (such as a belief, intention, desire, or preference) that takes an atomic proposition as its content.

[3] In the scope debate, philosophers commonly suppose that *WIDE FORM* and *NARROW FORM* represent rational requirements. While this is true of *WIDE FORM*, it is not true of *NARROW FORM*. A representation of any requirement of rationality should have the following feature: by meaningfully replacing the schematic letters, we should gain a putative requirement of rationality. By "putative requirement of rationality," I mean a proposition that, if true, expresses a requirement of rationality that applies to a subject. Though this holds for *WIDE FORM*, it is not true for *NARROW FORM*.
For example, take *NARROW FORM* and replace "you *A*" with "You believe that the world is flat" and "you *B*" with "You believe that the world is not round." Also, let us read "if" in *NARROW FORM* as a material conditional. This results in: if you believe that the world is flat, then rationality requires of you that you believe that the world is not round. Suppose this were true. Would that guarantee that you are subject to a requirement of rationality? No. If you do *not* believe that the world is flat, then this conditional comes out as true, yet neither you, nor anyone else, is necessarily under any requirement of rationality. Thus *NARROW FORM* does not necessarily represent a rational requirement.

[4] Roughly formulated, instrumental rationality requires one to take the necessary means to our intended ends; *enkratic* rationality requires one to intend to do whatever one believes one ought to do.

[5] In this paper, I will assume that a conditional *C* is sufficiently similar to a material conditional if and only if the falsity of *C*'s antecedent guarantees the truth of *C*. In the remainder of this paper I will use the term "material conditional" to pick out any conditional with this feature.

conditional "If you *A*, you *B*" must be true if its antecedent ("You *A*") is false.

If this conditional is a *material* one, then it surely exerts this property. However, not all conditionals exert this property: causal, explanatory, and counterfactual conditionals are not true simply in virtue of the falsity of their antecedents. So, if your aim is to satisfy a wide-form requirement by not-*A*-ing, "If you *A*, you *B*" had better be a material conditional.

I find this suggestion attractive and useful. It is useful, in particular, if one thinks of rational requirements as demanding the *avoidance* of attitudinal incoherence (Kolodny, 2005, p. 511; Reisner, 2009, p. 257, n. 5; and Author's paper).

Suppose you believe that you ought to drive carefully, yet you have no intention of driving carefully. Hence, you are not entirely coherent. Suppose further that this entails that you violate a requirement of rationality, call it *R*. Obviously, you can avoid this incoherence in two ways: either you intend to drive carefully or you do not believe that you ought to drive carefully. Thus, if rationality requires that you avoid attitudinal incoherence, we should interpret *R* as a wide-form requirement: rationality requires of you that [if you believe you ought to drive carefully, then you intend to drive carefully]. Furthermore, we should assume that the content of *R* is a material (or a sufficiently similar) conditional. This would guarantee that you satisfy *R* whenever you avoid the incoherence of believing that you ought to drive carefully whilst not intending to do so. Hence, there seems to be a credible rationale for assuming that wide-form requirements have as their content the material conditional.

Yet there is a danger in this assumption. Suppose we fix this interpretation for both *WIDE FORM* and *NARROW FORM*. That is, both the conditional occurring in *WIDE FORM* and the conditional constituting *NARROW FORM* are material. This has two significant consequences.

First, it disregards a desideratum commonly attached to narrow-form requirements. Suppose that if you *A*, rationality requires of you that you *B*. It is often assumed, then, that if you not-*A*, you are not subject to a requirement to *B*; that is, you can *avoid* being subject to the requirement expressed by the consequent of a narrow-form interpretation by making sure that the narrow form's antecedent is false (cf. Broome 2007b, p. 38; Schroeder 2005, p. 362, Vranas 2008, pp. 8-10). In sum, being subject to the rational requirement that you *B* is conditional on the fact that you *A* (Broome 2013, p. 132).

However, if *NARROW FORM* expresses a material conditional, this is wishful thinking. This desideratum follows the fallacy of *denying the antecedent*. Suppose you believe that driving carefully is a necessary means of arriving at home, and you intend to arrive at home. This implies, let us assume, that rationality requires you to intend to drive carefully. If this is correct, then this holds independently of whether or not you believe that you ought to drive carefully. Thus, you do not necessarily avoid the requirement to intend to drive carefully simply by not believing that you ought to drive carefully. In sum, if narrow-form requirements should state requirements that are avoidable in the way described, they cannot be interpreted as material conditionals.

Moreover, if *NARROW FORM* represents a material conditional, it also undermines the philosophical significance of the wide- and narrow-form distinction to the degree that it trivializes the question of whether *NARROW FORM* represents some rational requirements correctly.

Let me explain this point. Suppose *NARROW FORM* expresses a material conditional. Then *any* narrow-form interpretation of *SCHEMA* turns out to be correct whenever (i) "you *A*" in *SCHEMA* refers to an attitude you do *not* have, or (ii) "you *B*" refers to an attitude you have. The question of whether *NARROW FORM* represents rational requirements correctly[6] becomes philosophically uninteresting. Narrow-form requirements exist (almost) trivially. An elaborated debate concerning their existence or plausibility seems unjustified.

Let me illustrate this with an example: suppose I assert that, at a possible world *w*, rationality requires of you that you intend to drive carefully if you believe you ought to drive carefully. Call this assertion *AS*. On a narrow-form interpretation, *AS* reads as "at *w*, if you believe you ought to drive carefully, rationality requires you to intend to drive carefully." Suppose, however, that, at *w*, you are a reckless driver. You have no intention of driving carefully. Consequently, if interpreted as a material conditional, the narrow-form interpretation of *AS* turns out to be true at *w*. It does so simply in virtue of the falsity of its antecedent.

Here is a generalisation of this point. Suppose we read *NARROW FORM* as a material conditional. Then *NARROW FORM* turns out to be true for every replacement of "you *A*" with an attitude you do not

[6] By "correct interpretation," I mean that by replacing the variables "you *A*" and "you *B*," one arrives at a true proposition.

have. Furthermore, even if *you A*, there is still a possible world at which *NARROW FORM* turns out to be true (as long, of course, as "you *A*" does not denote an attitude you have necessarily). It is in this sense that narrow-form formulations of rational requirement are correct almost trivially.

This brings me to the first normative lesson for the scope debate. Suppose (i) you think that the question of whether there are narrow-form requirements is philosophically significant, and (ii) you assume that wide-form requirements are satisfied if the antecedent of their conditional content is false. Then you should not apply a unique interpretation of "if" in *SCHEMA* over both *WIDE FORM* and *NARROW FORM*. You ought to broaden your analysis of the *syntactic* disambiguation of *SCHEMA* and combine it with a *semantic* analysis of how the meaning of "if" varies between wide and narrow interpretations of *SCHEMA*. The nut to crack is this: the conditional[7] governed by "rationality requires" in *WIDE FORM* needs to be true whenever its antecedent is false; the conditional representing *NARROW FORM*[8] need *not* to be true if its antecedent is false. In fact, if its antecedent is false, we may wish to end up in a situation where you *escape* the requirement expressed by the consequent of a narrow-form requirement.

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One may disagree with this conclusion, however. A semantic analysis may not be necessary. That is, disambiguating "if" in *SCHEMA* is superfluous if one simply interprets *SCHEMA* as a *strict* or *necessary* conditional. Expressed correctly, *SCHEMA* should read as follows: "*Necessarily*, rationality requires of you that you *B* if you *A*." Furthermore, independently of the scope of "rationality requires of you that," the scope of "necessarily" remains *wide*. The syntactic wide-/narrow-scope distinction therefore hinges on the difference between the following two formulations:

NECESSITATED WIDE FORM. Necessarily [rationality requires of you that you [if you *A*, you *B*]].

NECESSITATED NARROW FORM. Necessarily [if you *A*, then rationality requires of you that [you *B*]].

"Necessitation" is a common strategy (Broome 2007, 359; and Kolodny 2007). Indisputably, it solves the triviality problem of narrow-form requirement formulations, as described above. Unlike *NARROW FORM*, *NECESSITATED NARROW FORM* does not come out as true whenever you not-*A*. *NECESSITATED NARROW FORM* also does not come out as true in at least one possible world whenever "you *A*" represents a contingent attitude of yours. Moreover, *NECESSITATED WIDE FORM* preserves the possibility of satisfying a wide-form requirement by not-*A*-ing. This is so, that is, as long as we continue to read [if you *A*, then you *B*] as inside the scope of "necessarily" and "rationality requires" as a material conditional.

However, I argue that necessitation exposes further problems with the syntactic scope distinction. First, necessitation makes wide-form requirements indefensible. Second, it puts a hefty restriction on narrow-form requirements. As such, although it may indeed solve some problems, it opens up others.

Allow me to explain. Consider *NECESSITATED WIDE FORM*. It says that, unavoidably, you are rationally required to [have the atomic attitude "you *B*" if you have the atomic attitude "you *A*"]. That is, in order for *NECESSITATED WIDE FORM* to represent a rational requirement correctly, there must be requirements from which you cannot escape and to which you cannot avoid being subject—requirements which you can only satisfy or violate (see Broome, 2007b).

This is implausible, however. Suppose you are a normally developed human being. You are currently subject to requirements of rationality. That is to say, rationality imposes requirements on you. But this was not always so. As a newborn, you were not subject to requirements of rationality. As you lay outside the legislative sphere of moral and legal requirements (i.e. no behaviour of yours could have violated a moral or legal requirement), you also lay outside the legislative sphere of rationality and its requirements. This gives rise to the following important but much ignored question: in virtue of which properties are normally developed humans, as opposed to newborns, for instance, subject to rational requirements?

In a general sense, the answer is plain: normally developed humans possess a rational *capacity*, whereas newborns do not. By "rational capacity," I mean the entirety of a subject's cognitive and conceptual abilities, i.e. logical skills, understanding of concepts such as "truth" and "falsity," the ability to respond correctly to evidence, the ability to understand causal relations, the mental preparedness to

[7] "If you *A*, then you *B*."
[8] "If you *A*, then rationality requires of you that you *B*."

reason correctly, etc.[9] Since newborns, in contrast to normally developed humans, do not possess a rational capacity (or possess one only to a negligible degree), this explains why normally developed humans, as opposed to newborns, are subject to rational requirements.[10]

Consequently, by not having a certain degree of rational capacity, you avoid being subject to rational requirements. *NECESSITATED WIDE FORM* thus fails to represent any requirement of rationality correctly. The necessitating strategy therefore diminishes the relevance of the syntactic scope distinction by rendering wide-form requirements implausible.

Necessitation also puts a significant restriction on narrow-form requirements. Suppose, again, that you are a normally developed adult with some degree of rational capacity and logical ability. Suppose that, given your level of rational capacity, you violate a rational requirement if you have two beliefs with contradictory contents, i.e. you believe *p* and you believe not-*p*. Let's use *NECESSITATED NARROW FORM* to represent the corresponding violated requirement: "Necessarily, if you believe *p*, then rationality requires you not to believe not-*p*." This can only be correct if merely having a belief (that *p*) involves enough rational capacity to place you under a requirement of rationality. More generally: just being a subject with beliefs must strictly suffice to put you under a requirement not to believe a proposition that contradicts one of your believed propositions. Likewise, suppose that, given your capacity, believing that you ought to *A* and not intending to *A* would involve violating a rational requirement. Formulated as a necessitated narrow-form requirement, this would read as "Necessarily, if you believe you ought to *A*, then you intend to *A*." Again, genuinely believing that you ought to *A* would need to involve a capacity that comes along with believing that you ought to *A*.

However, I do not think that this is plausible: the ability to have particular propositional attitudes and the rational capacity that puts you under a rational requirement can be separated modally. Here is an illustration of this. Suppose you believe that *p* and you believe that not-*p*. Due to a stroke, you have lost the reliable cognitive capacity that would normally allow you to rid yourself of your belief that not-*p*. You now lack the mechanism by which normally developed persons avoid contradiction. In fact, you live in a hazy world of contradictions. I do not see how in this case believing that *p* can entail a rational requirement on you not to believe not-*p*. You simply lack the capacity to satisfy this requirement.

Compare a situation in which you have a genuine belief that you ought to *A*, yet, due to brain damage, you lack the motivational capacity to bring yourself to intend to *A*. Again, it seems implausible to suppose that your belief that you ought to *A* entails a rational requirement to intend to *A*.

In sum, by sticking to the syntactic scope distinction, the necessitation strategy may in fact provide us with novel arguments against *both NECESSITATED WIDE FORM and NECESSITATED NARROW FORM*. *NECESSITATED WIDE FORM* ignores, and *NECESSITATED NARROW FORM* is prone to ignore, the precise conditions under which a rational requirement applies to a subject. This implies that the necessitation is only acceptable if one also considers the application conditions of rational requirements. These conditions need to be inserted into the scope of 'necessarily' if these forms are to pick out correct requirement conditions. Again, this diminishes the philosophical significance of the syntactic scope distinction.

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So far, I have offered two strategies for defending the philosophical significance of the syntactic distinction as applied to natural language expressions of conditional requirements of rationality. One way to preserve the significance of the syntactic wide-/narrow-scope distinction is to interpret "if" as ambiguous between *WIDE FORM* and *NARROW FORM*. Only the conditional in *WIDE FORM* can be interpreted as material. The conditional representing *NARROW FORM* cannot be interpreted as a material conditional.

Another strategy is to "necessitate" both forms. This solves some of the problems discussed above—but it introduces others. This strategy can succeed only if we analyze and add the precise conditions under which a subject is under a particular requirement, applied to particular subjects. Such an analysis goes far beyond syntactic disambiguation. It thus

[9] In Fink (2014), I develop a more fine-grained account of "rational capacity." Roughly, I argue that rational capacity is grounded in a special disposition or ability to avoid having contemporaneous attitudes whose constitutive aims or success conditions (for beliefs this would be "truth," for intentions "implementation") cannot be fulfilled simultaneously.

[10] Fink (2014) elaborates on this point.

again diminishes the significance of the syntactic scope distinction.

Analyzing the application conditions should become an essential part of a general theory of rational requirements. However, I do not think that, from a methodological point of view, we should bother getting into the business of disambiguating “if” in *WIDE FORM* and *NARROW FORM*. Rather, we should de-prioritize the wide-/narrow-form distinction and instead tackle the philosophical problem that it hints at in a different manner.

Consider again the wide-/narrow-form distinction. By interpreting *SCHEMA* as *NARROW FORM*, what we get is a conditional that states a rational requirement as its consequent: if you *A*, then rationality requires of you that you *B*. Given that we interpret “you *A*” and “you *B*” as atomic attitudes, the narrow-form interpretation makes the following point: the fact that you have one atomic attitude (i.e. you *A*) suffices for you to be subject to a rational requirement to have some other atomic attitude (i.e. you *B*). *NARROW FORM* thus states a sufficient condition for when a rational requirement *applies* to you.

In contrast, the wide-form interpretation does not imply anything about the application of rational requirements. It says nothing about a sufficient condition for being subject to a rational requirement. Instead, it says that the *content* of a requirement comes as a (material) conditional. Wide-form requirements thus entail that we have *options* when it comes to satisfying rational requirements. One can fulfill them by either making true their consequent or by making false their antecedent.

In sum, the wide/narrow distinction seems to leave us with the following choice: either “you *A*” is a sufficient condition for being under a rational requirement that “you *B*,” or you can satisfy a requirement by *B*-ing and not-A-ing.

But why be compelled to choose between these two options? Conceptually, there is no need; the syntactic wide/narrow distinction is not an exclusive distinction. “You *A*” could be a sufficient condition for your being under a requirement that you can satisfy either by *B*-ing or by not-*A*-ing.

Here is an example that illustrates this point. Suppose that, at a possible world *w*, you believe that you ought to drive carefully, and assume that, at *w*, this suffices to put you under a rational requirement to [if you believe you ought to drive carefully, then you intend to drive carefully]. Call this requirement *R*. One way for you to satisfy *R*, at *w*, is to intend to drive carefully. Additionally, if your belief that you ought to drive carefully is, at *w*, the *only* present condition putting you under the requirement *R*, then intending to drive carefully is not just *one* way, but also the *only* way to satisfy *R*: to the extent that you do not believe that you ought to drive carefully, at *w*, you are not subject to *R*.[11] In contrast, if, at *w*, your belief that you ought to drive carefully is *not* the only present condition rendering you subject to *R*, you can also satisfy *R* by not believing that you ought to drive carefully. For then you will be subject to *R* independently of believing that you ought to drive carefully, and by not believing that you ought to drive carefully you ensure that *R*’s content turns out to be true, thereby satisfying *R*.

Consequently, I assume that wide/narrow hybrid requirements like *R* are theoretically possible. The fact that they do not mirror syntactic-scope ambiguity is no reason to exclude them.

Moreover, here is another misleading way in which the wide/narrow distinction limits our theoretical possibilities. Suppose you opt for a narrow-form interpretation of *SCHEMA*. It suggests that “you *A*” suffices to render you rationally required to *B*. This may only—as natural-language expressions often do—approximate what is true, however. I argued elsewhere (Fink 2014), for example, that believing that you ought to *X* cannot strictly suffice to render you subject to a rational requirement to *X*. By lacking certain rational capacities or abilities,[12] you may believe that you ought to *X* without being subject to *any* rational requirement. This shows again that the narrow-form syntax of *SCHEMA* may lead us astray when it comes to formulating sufficient conditions for the application of a rational requirement.

On top of this, the narrow-scope conditional does not allow us to infer anything about necessary or constitutive conditions for the application of rational requirements.[13] As pointed out above, it fails to express conditions for *avoiding* being subject to a requirement of rationality. This is certainly a significant issue, and one that we risk obscuring by opting for a narrow-interpretation of *SCHEMA*.

[11] I assume here that you can only satisfy requirements to which you are subject. For more on this, see Fink (2014).

[12] By this I mean your skills of correct reasoning and your logical capacities.

[13] I assume that stones or trees are not subject to the requirements of rationality, but normally developed humans are. So we should ask: in virtue of which features are humans—in contrast to stones, for example—subject to rational requirements? (Fink 2014).

I now turn to how the wide/narrow distinction risks misleading us about whether we have *options* when it comes to satisfying rational requirements. Suppose I assert that rationality requires of you that you intend to drive carefully if you believe you ought to drive carefully. By applying the syntactic-scope distinction, we arrive at the following two interpretations of this requirement:

Wide enkratic. Rationality requires of you that [if you believe you ought to drive carefully, then you intend to drive carefully].

Narrow enkratic. If you believe you ought to drive carefully, then rationality requires of you that you intend to drive carefully.

Suppose that *narrow enkratic* is correct and that you believe you ought to *A*. Then, you have no options concerning how to satisfy the resulting requirement. You can satisfy it only by intending to drive carefully. However, if *wide enkratic* is correct, you have options. You can satisfy the requirement either by not believing that you ought to drive carefully or by intending to drive carefully.

Consequently, the wide-/narrow distinction suggests that you satisfy the enkratic requirement either by only intending to drive carefully or by [either intending to drive carefully or by not believing that you ought to drive carefully]. There is, however, a third viable alternative, which the wide-/narrow distinction obscures.

Suppose you believe that you ought to drive carefully, but you do not intend to drive carefully. Both *wide enkratic* and *narrow enkratic* entail that you thereby violate a rational requirement. They also both entail that *one* way to satisfy this requirement is to intend to drive carefully. But why should we suppose that this is necessarily so? That is, why should we suppose that intending to drive carefully always constitutes one means of satisfying the relevant requirement of rationality whenever you believe you ought to drive carefully? Could there not be a situation in which the *only* way to satisfy the requirement is by not believing that you ought to drive carefully? In fact, I do not see how we can discount this option without argument, simply because the syntactic ambiguity of a requirement expression does not leave enough room for it.

Consider the following support for this claim. Suppose, for example, that a teleological account of "rationality requires" is correct, and that the requirements of rationality aim at *attitudinal coherence*. Suppose also that this account has a maximizing structure. That is, roughly, rationality requires you to *X* if and only if, by *X*-ing, you *maximize* your degree of attitudinal coherence. Call this "maximizing teleology roughly." Given the correctness of this account, there may be situations in which the *only* way to satisfy the rational requirements you are under is *not* to believe that you ought to drive carefully.

Consider again a situation where you believe you ought to drive carefully, but you do not intend to drive carefully. No doubt, if you were to intend to drive carefully, you would become *more* coherent, in the sense that you would resolve an incoherence among your attitudes. But what if the *most* coherent option were that of dropping your belief that you ought to drive carefully? It seems incredible, at least intuitively, to suppose that by intending to drive carefully you would thereby fulfil a rational requirement.

Here is some support for this intuition. Suppose that killers are chasing you. The only way to escape them is to drive *dangerously*. You know that this is the case and you even judge that you should not believe that you ought to drive carefully. Should we really think that in this situation you satisfy a requirement by intending to drive carefully? At least on the face of things, I do not think that we should. Instead, the *only* rational response in this situation seems to be to drop your belief that you ought to drive carefully.

However, both *narrow enkratic* and *wide enkratic* entail that, even in this situation, you satisfy a rational requirement by intending to drive carefully. Both formulations fail to represent the possibility that dropping your belief that you ought to drive carefully may be the *only* way to fulfill what rationality requires of you in this situation. The syntactic wide-/narrow-scope distinction therefore excludes the correctness of a teleological account of "rationality requires," in fact without argument. This is another reason why we should not focus on the syntactic-scope distinction when attempting to determine the correct formulation of rational requirements.

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I will conclude with a general remark. The syntactic wide-/narrow-scope distinction is interesting not because we can learn much from it, but because we cannot. I have shown that it is unwise to rely on this distinction as a guide when it comes to formulating rational requirements. Instead of letting syntactic disambiguation decide when rational requirements apply to us, and whether we have options with regards to their satisfaction, we should tackle these issues independently of the constraints presented by the syntactic scope of ordinary requirement expressions. Answering *these* questions will automatically determine the logical and syntactic form of rational requirements. Thus the syntactic disambiguation of rational requirements expressed in ordinary language should constitute not the starting point of our analysis, but rather one of its consequences.

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LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS: PLATO ON THE SELF

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Abstract:

Early traits of moral subjectivism can be gleaned from some of Plato's dialogues with the emphasis on the "self." The Socratic injunction "man know thyself" provided a stimulus for self-examination and self-awareness, which spring from human subjectivity. The Republic, Plato's greatest dialogue, a magisterial masterpiece, recognized truth, value, and reality as fluctuating as they relate to the physical world. However, he gave much credence to the forms or ideas as the real reality. Plato recognized the centrality of human subjectivity—the contemplative intellect which grasps the forms—as the basis of truth, value, and intelligibility in the physical world. His accommodation of objectivity and subjectivity is an eloquent testimony to the centrality of duality not only in the everyday reality of humanity, but also in the decision making process in world affairs. For Plato, subjectivity is grounded in "theory of justice," the recognition that communication, understanding, and co-operation are required for harmony and peaceful co-existence to subsist in the human community. Not adhering to Plato's theory of justice, which stipulates the need for specialization of functions—i.e., one man, one job—is injustice, and does not encourage peace and stability.

This paper recognizes the need to go beyond Plato's presentation of moral objectivism as an independent realm of reality to moral subjectivity. This is the task of a philosophy that recognizes the importance of the idea of human freedom and the attainment of a stable society.

Key words: objectivism, subjectivity, dialogue, self, Philosopher-king, justice and injustice.

Introduction

Plato's ethics of subjectivity is a reaction to the Sophists' teachings on moral questions concerning the individual and society. The Sophists, a group of itinerant teachers, introduced human subjectivity to human values. The teaching of this school is exemplified by Protagoras—regarded as the head of the Sophists—who said, "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not."[1] The implication of this thesis is that man remains the judge of reality, of truth, of untruth, of right and wrong, good and bad. The Sophist position is that when men disagree, there is no objective truth decreed either from heavens or the gods. The question on whether something is right or wrong is purely a human decision. The teachings of the Sophists also demonstrated a skeptical disposition toward reality. Protagoras was quoted to have said, "with regards to the gods, I cannot feel sure either that they are or that they are not, nor what they are like in figure; for there are many things that hinder sure knowledge, the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life."[2]

The Sophist Gorgias denied the existence of physical objects in his book *On Nature*. According to him, "nothing exists, if anything exists, we cannot know it, even if we know it, we cannot communicate it."[3] This position appears to make even human reality practically impossible. It amounts to the denial

[1] Russell, Bertrand. *History of Western Philosophy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1946) p.83.
[2] Russell, Bertrand. (1946) pp.83–84.
[3] Durant, Will. *The Life of Greece*, *The story of Civilization* 11, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966) p. 360.

of knowledge and its communicability, which constitutes the ground of human civilization. The Sophists grounded genuine knowledge on sensation, perception, understanding, and expression. No absolute truth can be found, but only such truths as hold for given men under given conditions; contradictory assertions can be equally true for different persons or at different times. All truth, goodness, and beauty are relative and subjective. Will Durant observes that the whole world begins to tremble when Protagoras announces this simple principle of humanism and relativity; all established truths and sacred principles crack; individualism has found a voice and a philosophy; and the supernatural bases of social order threaten to melt away.[4]

The Sophists also articulated a frightening dimension of one the elements of human happiness, the question of justice. Thrasymachus, a prominent member of this group, describes justice as "the interest of the stronger." He was of the view that some cities are ruled tyrannically, some democratically, and some aristocratically. Each ruling group sets down laws for its own advantage; a democracy sets down democratic laws; a tyrannical state sets down tyrannical laws; and the others do the same. In terms of enforcement, the rulers declare that the laws they have set down only apply to the ruled, and the man who departs from these laws is punished as a law breaker and a doer of unjust deeds.[5]

If taken to a logical conclusion, the views of the Sophists will negatively affect the moral fabric of society. There will not be any yardstick to measure goodness, right or wrong, beauty or truth, as these concepts are within the realm of human subjectivity. It is in defense of the idea that there can be a yardstick to decide on what is good or bad, truth or untruth, that Plato's discussion on subjectivity—an accretion from the philosophy of Socrates—becomes a dominant issue in moral philosophy.

The Nature of the Self in Plato

From a philosophical viewpoint, the self refers to the subject of one's own experience of phenomena: perceptions, emotions, and thoughts. The self is an immediate given, an intrinsic dimension of the fact of experiencing phenomena. On the other hand, the self is seen as requiring a reflexive perception of oneself or the individual person. This implies that the self is an object of consciousness. Philosophy of the self seeks to describe essential qualities that constitute a person's uniqueness or essential being. There have been various approaches to defining these qualities. The self can be considered to be that being which is the source of consciousness, the agent responsible for an individual's thoughts and actions, and the substantial nature of a person which endures and unifies consciousness over time.[6]

As the agent that grounds our actions, the self provides a window to the intelligible world, giving a sense of stability in human affairs. When I think that I perceive a physical object, it is conceivable that I might be dreaming, but I could not even dream that I existed without existing. Here by "I" refers to my mind, not my body. It might be a mere dream or illusion that I have a body, but it could not be an illusion that I thought, at least in the wide sense in which I am always thinking of something when I am awake at all. Similarly, it could not be an illusion that I experienced something. For to believe or even doubt that I am thinking or experiencing, I must already think and experience something. This is the famous argument used by Rene Descartes: I think, therefore I am (cogito, ergo sum).[7] With this argument, Descartes thought he had established a permanent self, while what he had actually established was the existence of a thought as experience. Descartes' cogito ergo sum goes back to the subjective tendency which has characterized subsequent philosophical development.

Plato's discourse on the self is an accretion of the teachings of his master Socrates. According to Plato, the essence of knowledge is self-knowledge. He repeatedly reiterates his teacher's call for self-knowledge in these words: "I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous." He continued, "I may be a simpleton, but in my opinion, only that knowledge which is of being and of the unseen, can make the soul look upwards."[8]

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[4] Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato*, second edition, trans. with notes and interpretative essay by Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1968) pp. 15–16

[5] Honderich, Ted. The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 687

[6] A.C. Ewing. *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy*, (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) p. 99

[7] Christopher Moore, "How to 'Know Thyself' in Plato's Phaedrus." Available at http://sites.psu.edu/moore/wp-content/uploads/sites/13881/2014/09/How-to-Know-Thyself-in-Phdr.pdf

[8] The Cratylus in *Plato's Complete Works* edited with an introduction and notes by John Cooper, (Indianapolis/

For Plato, self-knowledge may be inexpressible and indemonstrable, but at the same time necessary for one to understand others. Throwing more light on self-knowledge, Plato said, "I feared to see myself at last altogether nothing but words," for words, after all, are only labels that point to another reality. "Naked truth must therefore be wordless, and the philosopher in search of truth must watch lest he bury the treasure he seeks under the debris of words."[9] What Plato seems to be saying here is that a seeker after truth must be careful not to construct truth on words. Words are always fluctuating depending on the usage, context, and application.

The Self in some of Plato's Dialogues

The problem of the "self" was elaborated in Plato's *Cratylus* and *Phaedrus*—two of his prominent dialogues. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates was speaking about the soul and its nature. According to him, people think that the soul causes the body to live, and gives it the power to breathe the air and be revitalized, and that when this revitalization fails, the body dies. It is for this reason, I think, that they used the word "soul" (*psuche* or *psyche*).[10] The implication of the nature of the soul here is that it is superior to the body, since it animates the body by supplying it with energy. The soul becomes an animating force in terms of the intelligibility, consciousness, and organization of the body. In trying to demonstrate the nature of the soul, Socrates asked a question: when you consider the nature of the body, what besides the soul do you think sustains and supports it, so that it lives and moves about? In response to this question, Socrates maintains that there is a lot to say to avoid distortion on the nature of the soul and body. For him there is still a controversy concerning the functions of the mind and body as substances that make up the human person. For this reason some people say that the body (soma) is the tomb of the soul, on the grounds that it is entombed in its present life, while others say it is correctly called a "sign" (sema) because the soul signifies whatever it wants to show by means of the body.

Socrates thinks that the duties assigned to the soul and body may have originated from the teachings of Orphism, a religious cult which later evolved into a rational philosophical movement. Pythagoras articulated this movement and gave it its metaphysical character, maintaining the position that man is a mixture of soul and body. The soul is the most important aspect of man because of its divine character. The soul is imprisoned in the human body and is capable of liberation when the body dies through the process of transmigration.[11] One can deduce from these teachings of Pythagoras that the soul is superior to the body because it is characterized by immortality and divinity. There is no doubt that Plato's doctrine of the self is grounded on Pythagoreanism, which stipulates that the soul is immaterial or spiritual, and therefore immortal. It existed in the world of Forms before injection into the body. To this end in Plato's view—the union of the soul and body—is purely accidental. Plato re-emphasized the Orphic doctrine that the existence of the soul in the body is a punishment of the soul for something, and that the body is an enclosure or prison in which the soul is securely kept until the penalty is paid; the soul is immutable. It is on this ground that Anaxogoras, a Pre-Socratic philosopher, stipulated that the mind is self-ruling, mixes with nothing else, orders the things that are, and travels through everything.[12] This is a demonstration of the immaterial nature of the soul. As a spiritual substance, it cannot be located in space and time.

The *Phaedrus*, another dialogue of Plato, casts our minds to the inscription of the Delphic Oracle, "Know thyself." For Plato—speaking through the mouth of Socrates—knowing oneself is the basis of awareness, and this appears to be a very difficult task. According to Plato, " I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that." This is why I do not concern myself with them. I accept what is generally believed, and I look not at them but at myself. Plato asks a question, "Am I a beast more complicated and savage than Typhon, or am I a tamer, simpler animal with a share in a divine and gentle nature?"[13] What Plato is emphasizing here is the imperative of the inscription "know thyself." Knowing oneself is a conscious effort to realize who one is and to know one's limitation. It will also provide a

Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997) pp.118–119

[9] Chris Osegenwune, *The Cartesian Dualism: Problems and Solutions*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of (Lagos, Nigeria,1999) pp. 1–2

[10] The *Cratylus*, (1997) in Plato's Complete Works p.131

[11] The *Phaedrus* in Plato's Complete Works P.510

[12] The *Phaedrus* in Plato's Complete Works P.524

[13] Plato, *The Republic*. Trans and edited by Raymond Larson, (Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 1979) p.108

regulatory framework for behavior in order to guide conduct.

According to Plato, we must first understand the truth about the nature of the soul, divine or human, by examining what it does and what is done to it. Every soul is immortal. This is because whatever is always in motion is immortal, while what moves or is moved by something else stops living when it stops moving. So it is only what moves itself that never desists from motion, since it does not leave off being itself. Plato maintains that this self-mover is also the source and spring of motion in everything else that moves; and a source has no beginning. That is because anything that has a beginning comes from some source, but there is no source for this, since a source that got its start from something else would no longer be a source. And since it cannot have a beginning, then necessarily it cannot be destroyed.[14] What Plato is saying here is that if a source were to be destroyed, it could never get started again from anything else and nothing else could get started from it—that is, if everything gets started from a source. This is why a self-mover is a source of motion. A self-mover from this point of view is incapable of being destroyed. The self-motion of the soul and the fact that it is indestructible is enough ground to justify its immortality. What then constitutes the real nature and the structure of the soul?

The Structure of the Soul

Plato trifurcated the human soul into three parts: the appetitive, the spirited, and the rational. He gave primacy to the rational part because of its indestructibility and immortality, and because it acts as the control mechanism of man. The spirited part is the domain of emotion, while the appetitive part is the domain of man's sensual desires.[15] The three parts of the soul as Plato classified them correspond to three classes in society. The appetitive part corresponds to the artisan class, which is dominated by ordinary people, or the artisans whose duty is to provide the economic and material needs of society. The spirited part of the soul corresponds to the auxiliaries whose duty is to defend the city from external aggression. The rational part is dominated by the guardian or ruling class. The duty of this part of the soul is to coordinate the other parts in order to create a stable and harmonious society. Having the capacity to rule and to make other parts their subjects, they are referred to as philosopher-kings. They occupy this strategic role because they have been to the world of forms, internalized the forms, and applied the content to their daily activities. They have transcended the physical realm and risen to the contemplation of reality in the world of forms. The idea and the effects of the notion of the philosopher-king are espoused by Jim Unah,[16] who shows that many societies—such as Britain, the United States, Russia, and to some extent some Asian countries—have adopted this concept in the organization of their societies. The domestication of the philosopher-king remains a valuable contribution in leadership development from the legacies of the ancients. The concept of the philosopher-king has, however, been criticized by some scholars. For Plato, in the opinion of E.K. Ogundowole, there is a second world outside the world of visible things which consists of the forms themselves, each of which is perfectly, purely, and eternally what it is, visible only to the mind itself—that is to say, not visible but intelligible, grasped only by the pure intellect using bare words.[17] Going further, Ogundowole maintains that when discovered, these forms are the required starting point, both for good practice and for good theory. To believe in them and to pursue them is to be a philosopher; that is the deeper definition of what philosophy or the pursuit of wisdom is. This is the core of Plato's idealism. According to Ogundowole, the implication of Plato's position is that all opinion is defective. Those who know the forms will have better opinions about his world than those who do not. This is the key for good political conduct, since it implies that kings or those who aspire to rule should be philosophers. The conclusion one can draw is that the only good government is government by those who know, and this means government by those who know the forms. The ideal city where this system will flourish will be a philosophocracy.[18]

Philosophocracy, as the name implies, is government under the rule and direction of philosophers. One cannot imagine the reality of such a city being controlled by philosophers. Plato's presenta-

[14] Plato, The Republic. p. 138

[15] J. I. Omoregbe, Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study. (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 2005) p. 87

[16] J. I. Unah, Self-Discovery: who am I? "An Ontologized Ethics of Self-mastery" in Cultura: *International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology* 8(1) 2011: 143–158

[17] E.K. Ogundowole, Aspects of European Political Philosophy: An Introductory Handbook. (Lagos: Correct Counsels Limited, 2004) p. 27

[18] Durant, William, 1966. p. 371

tion of rulership by philosophers appears to overlook the human element, as such philosophers may have faults of their own. It also seems that in this style of government, the foundation of political and social praxis will be philosophically driven. Plato's position of the ideal state appears too utopian, and therefore difficult to implement. This is because there are no perfect human beings to pilot the absolute ideal. Stressing the importance of philosophers in the administration of the state, Plato instituted a very strong recommendation for leadership in this form:

> *Until either philosophers become kings or those now called kings and regents become genuine philosophers, so that political power and philosophy coincide and the many natures that now enter exclusively on one or the other are constrained from so doing, there will be no end to the evils, dear Glaucon, for cities nor, I think, for the human race, and this regime we have gone through in words will never grow into possibility and see the light of the sun.*[19]

Plato's proposal for rulership by philosophers is an argument that those seeking political power must be extremely capable and skilled in order to discharge their assigned roles creditably. Leadership demands rigor, tenacity, and vision, which are features of philosophical temperament. Plato pointed out that if we are sick, we consult a qualified physician; if we want to fly an airplane, we seek the services of a trained pilot. When it comes to leadership—a sensitive part of human organization—we throw it open to any Tom, Dick, or Harry. This is responsible for the collapse of many social, political, and economic institutions. We must pick competent leaders if we are to address the ills of contemporary society. This is not likely to be achieved until we revisit the nature of the soul, its structure, and the roles played by each part in promoting harmony, justice, and stability, both in the individual and in society. This is the next segment of our discourse.

The Self and Ethical Subjectivity

Every philosopher is a product of his cultural milieu in terms of his ideas and theoretical propositions. These propositions sometimes are driven by prejudices, biases, and assumptions. Plato is not isolated from these cultural proclivities. First and foremost, his postulations on the self (ego) or the soul arose from the teachings of his master Socrates, declared by the Delphic oracle as the wisest man of his day. Socrates insisted that the most he knew was that he knew nothing. This is humility par excellence. How did he go about this all important task of beaming a search light on himself? On the inscription of the Delphic Oracle is, "Man know thyself, nothing too much."[20] Knowing oneself is a critical self-examination portraying limitations, strengths, and weaknesses as they affect behavior. Plato sees this as the foundation of virtue for conduct which provides the yardstick for human interaction and harmony. Supporting this position, Charles Griswold observes that in the introduction to Plato's Phaedrus, Socrates declares in extremely strong terms that he cares only about knowing himself, every other pursuit being "laughable" to him so long as self-knowledge is lacking. A major thesis of this book is that when the Phaedrus is interpreted with the form-and-content maxim in mind, the dialogue comes to light as a whole unified by the theme of self-knowledge.[21] The Phaedrus' account of "self-knowledge" begins not with a technical interpretation of the notion, but with an ordinary one. Socrates' emphasis here is to know what he in particular as an individual person is. Charles Griswold observes that at the end of the Phaedrus, Socrates returns to this commonsensical level in his famous prayer to Pan; he prays that (among other things) he in particular might lead a harmonious life. In this connection, he observes, "self-knowledge" changes from "understanding myself as a whole person" to "understanding my soul" and then to "understanding the soul"—possibly even the "cosmic soul."

The importance of self-knowledge here cannot be over-emphasized, as it is central to ethical decisions. Put another way, self-knowledge is linked with living a sound, morally right life. It includes understanding one's character. Epistemologically, in Plato's view, understanding is remembering, recollection, awareness of human imperfection and the possibility of overcoming it. One of the problems that will likely arise from self-knowledge is the question of objectivity and subjectivity. Are moral problems objectively evaluated, or are they emotional outbursts of individuals? The Sophists—a power-

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[19] Charles L. Griswold, *Self Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996) p. 2

[20] Plato's Republic

[21] J. I. Omoregbe, The Human Predicament: Has Human Life on Earth any ultimate purpose, any ultimate meaning? An Existential Inquiry (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2001) pp. 3–5

ful group of thinkers—appear to set the stage with the position that moral values are not universally applicable, but rather are subjective. Plato's moral philosophy is aimed at dismantling this kind of thinking. For Plato, this dismantling is essential for restoring the moral sanity that had been lost amdist the affairs of society. A sound moral foundation was a necessary condition for harmony, social justice, and societal development. In the words of Ozumba,[22] Plato's moral theory is teleological in terms of having an end in view. This is because it is centered on the achievement of the highest good for many, especially on how man can elevate himself morally in order to achieve a good life. It appears that Plato's ascribes the preponderance of evil, ignorance, and deception in human affairs to lack of knowledge. Plato arrived at this position following the observation of Socrates that "knowledge is virtue, but ignorance the root of moral evil." For Ozumba, Plato thought that if man can be deceived by the senses in the physical realm, he can equally be hoodwinked into taking wrong ethical steps. Since deception can be abundant in the moral realm, there is a need for man to be vigilant against it, and to guard against the temptation of being seduced into wrong actions.[23] Proper knowledge is therefore essential for one to avoid making wrong moral decisions and judgments. It is necessary to equip ourselves with a very strong epistemological foundation as a defense against defective moral actions. This position may not always be sustained, considering that those who possess knowledge also commit wrong moral actions. What kind of knowledge do these kinds of people possess? Plato and Socrates were not talking of knowledge of skills and competences, such as mathematics, architecture, music, medicine, *et cetera*. Plato dismissed those as not constituting the sort of knowledge required to rule human society. He and his master were talking of knowledge of the good, knowledge of eternal verities, which comes from contemplating and remembering the forms of things.

It is on this ground that one can maintain that all wrongdoing is involuntary; that virtue is insight or knowledge and is in its essence one, and can in a sense be taught. Wrongdoing is involuntary, because all men will do the good or what they deem as the good. No man who knows the right will do the wrong if we take knowledge in the highest sense of the term.[24] The wise man knows his own limits, and will undertake only what he can perform. All knowledge is good and commendable, but the supreme knowledge that may be identified with "virtue" is plainly different from the specialties of the arts and sciences. The emphasis on virtue as knowledge is the fact that it is assumed to be a good, and the only certain good; the only sure guide to the proper use of what the world calls good is knowledge.

The supremacy of knowledge as proposed by Plato is significant in many ways. Knowledge is indispensable for us to take the right course of action, especially when we find ourselves at a moral cross-road. One with knowledge is better equipped to handle the moral problems that confront humans in their daily living. This accounts for why Plato respected knowledge more than opinion. Anybody can express opinion on any given issue, but that does not amount to knowledge. For Plato, knowledge is objective, not subjective, because knowledge goes beyond the whims and the caprices of an individual. Plato was able to establish that knowledge rather than opinion is certain, infallible, and absolute, domiciled as it is in the world of Forms. David Ross[25] pointed out that the *Cratylus* plays an important part in the development of Plato's metaphysics, for it is here that he opposes himself most explicitly to complete subjectivism. He insists that "things have a secure being of their own, not relative to us, nor dragged up and down by the force of our fancy, but in themselves related to their own being as they are by nature." By this, Ross is re-stating Plato's position that things have independent existence irrespective of our perception and judgment about them. For Plato, the physical reality that we experience on a daily basis is nothing but shadows, imitations, and photocopies of the real reality. Citing the *Republic*, Ross[26] argues that Plato maintained a complete opposition between the eternal, unchanging world of forms and the temporal, changing world of individual things. He still maintains that opposition, but rec-

[22] G. O. Ozumba, *A Course Text on Ethics*. (Lagos: Obaroh and Ogbinaka Publishers, 2001) p. 68.
[23] J. I. Unah, "The Obligatory Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility: A Discourse on Business Ethics" Proceedings on the XX11 World Congress of Philosophy, Volume 7, Korean Philosophical Association, Seoul, South Korea, 2010.
[24] Irwin Terrence, *Classical Philosophy, Collected Papers. Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 10.
[25] David Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p. 18.
[26] David Ross, 1971. p. 80.

ognizes degrees within each of these worlds. Within the world of individual things (particulars), he distinguishes between those that are direct copies of forms and those that are copies of these copies. Within the world of forms, he distinguishes between those which are, as it were, earth-bound—those that are studied with the aid of sensible examples—and those for whose study we need no such aid.

The point being made here is one of relevance between particulars and universals in Plato's analysis of the good. The good—a universal—is located in the world of ideas, ideas which are independent of our awareness of them. Knowledge of this reality is purely given to a contemplating intellect through dialectics. Particulars are participants in the universals as they come and go. Universals are perfect, unchanging, and eternal, making the reality constructed on their foundation trustworthy. It is from this that Plato concluded that the ethical relativism propagated by the Sophists was not only deceptive, but lacked the structures of real knowledge. Such faux knowledge was responsible for the collapse of the moral direction of the Athenian social and political environment.

Conclusion

Plato's philosophy of the "self" encompasses all aspects of his philosophical development—be it metaphysics, epistemology, or ethics. He re-emphasized the philosophy of his master Socrates, which stressed the importance of man knowing himself. Knowing oneself is the basis for self-examination, which grounds moral behavior. In an attempt to know the self, Plato described the human soul as consisting of three parts with different structures and functions. He insisted that each of these three parts is imbued with departmental excellence, which can be harnessed to encourage efficiency and high productivity. The ability for each of the parts to mind its duties is the basis for cooperation and harmony. This is Plato's famous theory of justice. The essence of Plato's theory of justice is to promote division of labor, and makes it possible for one to master an aspect of the productive process and enhance societal development. It is also an avenue for creating new social order that allows harmony and peace to reign.

Plato's discourse on the self as contained in his dialogues also demonstrated the need for self-knowledge, which is fundamental to the acquisition of virtue. Virtue makes it possible to carry out the right conduct in the face of confusion. It is from here that Plato insisted that the Sophists did not possess the right kind of knowledge, as no yardstick was identified for what is good or bad. Plato's ethics of subjectivity is therefore a rejection of the ethical relativism championed by the Sophists. As a rationalist, Plato accepted the existence of the forms known through contemplation. Through knowledge of the forms, Plato gave credence to philosophy as a vehicle for knowing the good, which is the apex of intellectual progress.

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ONTOLOGY AND ETHICS IN THOMAS AQUINAS

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Abstract:
This article explains how Aquinas understood: a) apprehension of the first intellectual concepts: *ens, verum et bonum simpliciter* (*Ens* is understood metaphysically as composed of human nature and the act of being, ordered according to the *bonum*); b) establishment of the first and the second practical commandments in a genuinely human or rational person; c) ethics and natural law as essentially derived from ontology. Therefore, natural law only makes sense from a metaphysical point of view, not merely a physical or material one.

Key words: Aquinas; ontology; ethics; practical reason; natural law.

Introduction

My aim in this paper is to demonstrate that ethics (specifically natural law) in Thomas Aquinas is a natural consequence of his ontology (specifically the concepts of human nature and the act of being). With this end in mind, I will consider:

1st) the intellectual apprehension of universal concepts and *simpliciter*: *ens*, *verum*, et *bonum* (*ens* in particular, which consists of human nature (or essence) and the act of being).

2nd) the establishment of first judgements of practical reason, and the difference between the first and second precepts of natural law. "Lex naturalis est aliquid per rationem constitutum."[1] In addition, a distinction will also be drawn between a) universal human tendencies or genuinely human *in quantum talis*, which are the subject of the precepts of natural law, and b) particular tendencies in each person, which cannot be the subject of natural law, because this is universal. Aquinas' concepts of human nature and natural law can only be conceived in a metaphysical sense, not confused with the inclinations of one person in particular.

3rd) that Thomas' ethics result from his ontology and the necessary relation between the elements *ens*, *bonum*, human nature, practical reason, and natural law. I.e., his ethics follow from his ontology.

1. *Ens, verum, et bonum simpliciter*

In Aquinas' work it is affirmed, although he does not specify dates, that only from a certain period[2] onwards—weeks or months of life[3]—does intellectual apprehension of the *ens in quantum talis* arise, apprehension of the universal truth and of ontological good in the true and singular *ens bonum*.[4] In his philosophy,[5] the first, universal, and *simpliciter* concepts *ens*, *verum*, and *bonum*—also known as the seeds of wisdom[6]—are only abstracted and formed after a certain stage of life, given that

[1] S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a.1, co.

[2] There is disagreement among evolutionary psychologists as to the age when humans begin to employ reason. Cfr. http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain.

[3] I use the example of a baby because it shows more clearly that there is a period of life in which he or she does not possess the faculty of reason, but shortly afterward develops this faculty, and can be objectively affirmed to be the same person.

[4] Cfr. De veritate, q. 2 a. 3 ad 19 "Whatever is in our intellect must have previously been in the senses."

[5] See especially the treatise of person in S. Th., I, qq. 75–89.

[6] Cfr. S. Th., I-II, q. 63, a. 1, co. "In man's reason are to be found instilled by nature certain naturally known principles of both knowledge and action, which are the *seminalia* of intellectual and moral virtues, and in so far as there is in the will a natural appetite for good in accordance with reason."

both a baby of few weeks of age (due to insufficient mental development[7]) and an adult that has suffered severe mental damage do not have functional internal sensory powers—common sense, imagination, memory, and cogitation—powers which produce the *species sensibilis*.

> *The use of reason depends in a certain manner on the use of the sensitive powers*; wherefore, while the senses are tired and the interior sensitive powers hampered, man has not the perfect use of reason, as we see in those who are asleep or delirious. Now the sensitive powers are situate in corporeal organs (brain, hands, legs, etc); and therefore, so long as the latter are hindered, the action of the former is of necessity hindered also; and likewise, consequently, the use of reason. Now children are hindered in the use of these powers on account of the humidity of the brain;[8] wherefore they have perfect use neither of these powers nor of reason.[9]

Internal sensory powers are organic and located in the brain. They are necessary for ty[10]—although intelligence and will are inorganic and immaterial powers—given that the active intellect needs the *species sensibilis* over which it acts, illuminating and producing the *species intelligibilis.* Finally, this *species intelligibilis* is received by the passive intellect, which produces the universal *conceptio* or *simpliciter* notion.

> *In (this) state (...) in which the soul is united to a passible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually, except by turning to the phantasms*. (…) because the intellect, being a power that does not make use of a corporeal organ, would in no way be hindered in its act through the lesion of a corporeal organ, if for its act there were not required the act of some power that does make use of a corporeal organ. Now sense, imagination and the other powers belonging to the sensitive part, make use of a corporeal organ (brain). *Wherefore it is clear that for the intellect to understand actually*, not only when it acquires fresh knowledge, but also when it applies knowledge already acquired, *there is need for the act of the imagination and of the other powers.* For when the act of the imagination is hindered by a lesion of the corporeal organ, for instance in a case of frenzy; or when the act of the memory is hindered, as in the case of lethargy, we see that a man is hindered from actually understanding things of which he had a previous knowledge.[11]

In this sense, he further adds that "human understanding, in the beginning, is [like a tablet, on which nothing is written],[12] but, later, acquires knowledge through the senses by virtue of the agent intellect."[13] Lack of cognitive development means that the active intellect in the first weeks of life is obscured and inoperative in act, although the external senses may be stimulated correctly by external sensations. E.g., a baby may move his (or her) head toward a sound that attracts him, or correctly follow with his eyes a golden ball used by a doctor to check his sight. Nevertheless, the internal senses, are not able to supply the *species sensibilis* to the active intellect due to poor functioning of its organ, and thus cannot present anything to the passive intellect, which consequently cannot express any universal or *simpliciter* concept.

> Hence, since it is necessary that moistness, especially in the brain, abound in children, and it is the brain in which imagination, natural judgment (cogitative), memory, and common sense have their organs, the acts of these powers must be particularly hindered, and, consequently, understanding, which receives something immediately from these powers, and turns to them whenever it is in act, must be hindered, too.[14]

It is clear, therefore, that for Aquinas, during the earliest period of a person's life, the brain is still not

[7] Cfr. Abbot, http://www.nature.com/news/neuroscience-the-brain-interrupted-1.16831. Lack of brain development.

[8] Having no knowledge of brain development, Aquinas instead had recourse to the medical knowledge of the 13th century in discussing an "excess of humidity." However silly his explanation may sound today, the observation is the same: one-month-old babies do not have the faculty of understanding.

[9] S. Th., I, q. 101, a. 2, co. My brackets and italics.

[10] Cfr. S. Th., I, q. 101, a.2, ad 1. "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, because it hinders the use of reason."

[11] S. Th., I, q. 84, a. 7, co. A fortiori, even more with respect to babies that have never had universal concepts. My brackets and italics.

[12] Aristotle, *De anima*, III 4; 429b, 31.

[13] De Veritate, q. 18, a. 7, co. This doctrine has to be understood in a genuinely Thomistic way. At birth, the human intellect is like a tablet on which there is nothing written. Nevertheless, at birth we also have the potentiality to understand universal ideas by the active intellect.

[14] De Veritate, q. 18, a. 8, co. My brackets.

sufficiently developed to present any *species sensibilis* to the active intellect. Continuing with the argument, the author clearly distinguishes between intellectual understanding of the first universal concepts: *ens, verum, bonum,* and the feeling of a person who, due to malfunctioning of brain—whether the person is a baby or a mentally disabled person—possesses internal senses but is still not able to offer any *species sensibilis* to the active agent.

> A child is potentially understanding, not as though he has not yet the nature enabling him to understand, but as having an obstacle to understanding, since he is prevented from understanding (….).(Therefore there was some time when he didn`t understand actively, but only in potency) he is not said to have the power of understanding because the possible intellect, which is the principle of understanding, can be joined to him, but because it is already in contact with him and is prevented from exercising its proper action; so that, *upon the removal of the obstacle, he immediately understands*.[15]

He does not understand in act because the passive intellect has not yet received any *species intelligibilis* from the active agent. Such persons are certainly capable of reactions, but it must be noted that they are purely sensory reactions. They are not intellectual apprehension, nor are they driven by the will.[16]

It must be pointed out that the object of the intellect or reason is the nature, essence, or *quidditas* of being (*ens*). The way people know the nature of *ens* is through their senses and through accidents, as if they were doorways. Reason it is called "reason" because it is discursive knowledge.[17] Furthermore, the operation of the intellect or reason is two-fold. First, it apprehends the nature or essence of beings. Seconnd, it produces first principles of practical or theoretical reason/intellect, composing (affirming) or dividing (denying) a sentence or precept.[18] In this sense, practical understanding as theoretical reason has truth as its object. So truth should rule and govern human actions, i.e., rational actions. Theoretical reason deals with truth itself, while practical reason deals with the truth ordered according to a practical purpose .[19]

Aquinas' concept of nature undoubtedly has Aristotelian roots, and he uses the concept of nature in his books on both *physics* and *metaphysics*, legitimately using the term "nature" in both an empirical and metaphysical sense. As such, it can be affirmed that the concept of nature is analogical, i.e., that in each case the term *nature* is applied differently. Humans possess *nature*, animals possess *nature,* plants possess *nature*, and stones possess *nature*, but these things are all very different. Therefore, it would be erroneous to categorise each of them in the same way, as simply possessing *nature.* Aquinas is always very clear on this point. Moreover, the natural doctrine means that all beings possess in themselves the principle of action, which implies autonomy. I.e., all substances possess intrinsic tendencies toward their own ends according to their respective natures. As such, nature adds to essence the aspect of movement and the principle of action. In this sense, the concept of *appetitus,* just as that of *nature,* is also necessarily an analogical concept. So, the nature of every substance tends to its end, and the *appetitus* will depend on the specific nature of each *ens.* Therefore, it would similarly be a grave error to gather all rational *ens* (those possessing intellectual appetite or will) and irrational ens (those without intellectual appetite or will) and label them all identically.[20]

2. Natural law precepts

In light of this doctrine, it can be asserted that natural law presupposes a knowledge of nature in general and of human nature in particular.[21] The practical precepts of natural law are derived from the first universal, ontological, and *simpliciter* concepts. Practical reason shall only produce them, naturally, as moral imperatives ordered to real actions—both universal "do good (general) and avoid evil (general)" and particular "do good (human) and avoid evil (human)"—when the intellects and wills (of every person) already universally know and desire (or do not desire and avoid) the concepts of *ens*-no *ens*, true-false, good-bad, and the concrete concepts of human good and evil. So practical reason knows

[15] Contra Gentiles, lib. 2 cap. 60. My brackets and italics.

[16] Cfr. De Veritate, q. 18, a. 8, ad 2. "Although the understanding does not use an organ, nevertheless, it receives something from faculties which use an organ. Therefore, its act can be restricted because of an impediment or defect of the bodily organs."

[17] Cfr. Super Sent., lib. 3 d. 35 q. 2 a. 2 qc. 1 co.

[18] Cfr. Expositio Peryermeneias, pr. 1. "There is a twofold operation of the intellect, as the Philosopher says in III *De anima*. One is the understanding of simple objects, that is, the operation by which the intellect apprehends just the essence of a thing alone; the other is the operation of composing and dividing."

[19] Cfr. Sellés 1991, p. 26.

[20] Cfr. Cottier 2010, pp. 12–16; Cfr. S. Th, I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co.

[21] Cfr. García 2001, pp. 424–427.

and desires human nature and human inclinations *in quantum talia*. This is to say that natural law is also the fruit of moral experience,[22] "the understanding of principles, for that is very imperfect, being most universal (but) com(e) to us from nature and not because of our search for truth."[23] Reason *uses* natural human tendencies *in quanto talia*—i.e., tendencies governed by intelligence and will[24]—as indicators, signalling to practical reason and will which *part* of human nature they should focus upon to produce the precepts of natural law[25]. This "is as natural as it is befitting to the principles of human nature."[26]

Using the analogy of the order of theoretical and practical truths, Aquinas determines the natural law as rational, as *ordo preceptorum*, because *ordo* necessarily implies rationality.[27] Natural law is the gathering of the first precepts desired by the will and understood by the practical reasoning of *all* people (with use of reason). The secondary precepts of natural law are the precepts necessarily, immediately, and naturally derived from the first precepts, understood and desired by most people.[28] Hereafter, it will be shown how Aquinas related the universal tendencies of each person with the first principles of natural law.

> Hence this is the first precept of law, that 1st) "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided." *All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this. (...) Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance*. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is (…) an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of 2nd) preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. (…) there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, [which nature has taught to all animals], such as 3rd) sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. (…), there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, 4th) to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.[29]

This *locus* deals exclusively with human beings *in quantum talis*, as rational beings with human inclinations *in quantum talia*, i.e., ruled and governed by reason. "As, in man, reason rules and commands the other powers, so all the natural inclinations belonging to the other powers must needs be directed according to reason. Wherefore it is universally right for all men, that *all their inclinations should be directed according to reason*."[30] This supposes that human inclination refers to man *in quantum talis*—that which is genuine and specifically human—and not the inclination that a serial killer might have toward the lives of other people, or the sexual inclination that a paedophile or rapist might have with their "reason (...) perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature."[31]

Aquinas claims that a completely free man―given that he who desires doing evil unto others, i.e., killing, raping, committing adultery, etc., is not entirely free[32]―is the man *in quanto talis*. This expression—man *in quanto talis*, or simply *person*—references what is distinct, genuine, and

[22] Cfr. Dewan 1986, pp. 89-90.
[23] Contra Gentiles, lib. 3 cap. 37. My brackets.
[24] Cfr. Brock 1988, pp. 158-159; Cfr. S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 4, co.
[25] Cfr. S. Th., I-II, q. 89, a 6, co. "The reason for this is because before a man comes to the age of discretion, the lack of years hinders the use of reason and excuses him from mortal sin, wherefore, much more does it excuse him from venial sin, if he does anything which is such generically. But when he begins to have the use of reason, he is not entirely excused from the guilt of venial or mortal sin."
26 S. Th., I, q. 99, a. 1. co.
[27] Cfr. Henle 1993, pp. 247-248.
[28] Cfr. Aquino 1989, pp. 732.

29 S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co. My italics and numbering.
30 S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3. My italics.
31 S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 4, co.
[32] He is not entirely free, but he is clouded, and in a certain sense he is a *slave* of his passions. Cfr. De veritate, q. 22, a. 6, co. "It is said that to will evil is not freedom or any part of it, though it is a (certain) sign of freedom." My brackets.

exclusive to the human species. I.e., humans act according to intelligence and will, and also do not kill, rape, steal, etc.

> God acts in everything in accordance with their nature; thus in natural things (such as animals like dolphins or dogs) he intervenes by giving them the power of acting according to their respective natures (…). Nevertheless (in human beings) *with free will he intervenes by giving them the power of acting freely* (right or wrong).[33]

In this sense, natural inclinations *in quantum talia* of a genuine individual *in quantum talis* are those that arise from his human nature. Inclinations of genuine human beings arise from their rational nature, which is the genuine form of humanity. I.e., the inclinations *in quantum talia* are naturally in accordance with human nature and spring from rational nature. It is in this way that people can properly be called human beings, and these genuine tendencies belong to natural law,[34] as is asserted in the following text: "natural law belongs to those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these *it is proper for man to be inclined to act according to reason*."[35]

However, there are some caveats to this. a) People who act voluntarily in an unethical way do not cease to be free persons or truly human: "the will stands undetermined in regard to many things, it is not under necessity in regard to everything *but only in regard to those things to which it is determined by a natural inclination* (first precepts of the natural law) (…). (Therefore) it can desire good or evil."[36] But it does mean that a particular person acting badly is not following what is natural and specifically human *in quantum talis*. In this sense is *self-enslaving*.[37] "Any created will can degenerate in its act because it comes from nothing and therefore can deteriorate."[38] b) Not every tendency of any person driven or governed by practical reason—as good as it may be, e.g. being attracted to cure the wounds of injured people—belongs to natural law, because there are free, rational, and good people who do not feel naturally inclined to engage in these acts. c) Murderers, robbers, and rapists do not seek evil. For Aquinas, everybody seeks good, but sometimes this good is evil disguised as good.[39] A murderer seeks his good on his own terms, to satisfy his anger. A robber seeks his good on his own terms, to satisfy his greed. A rapist seeks his good on his own terms, to satisfy his sexual appetite, etc. In summary, for a tendency to belong to natural law, it must fulfill these two requirements: 1) it must be governed by practical reason, and 2) every person must have a natural inclination toward that good.

In this sense, for our author, natural law is defined as "an ordinance of reason for the common good."[40] Consequently, the essential part of natural law is that it is the product of practical reason ordered toward good—ontological good, not the selfish and subjective good of any particular person, as we have seen before. This means that there is essentially no law which does not promate the good *simpliciter*, ontological good, or transcendental good.[41]

An erroneous definition of natural law would be define it simply as a natural instinct of any man. However, the true definition of natural law is that it is the product of human reasoning as a precept of the intelligence of any person toward his ends. Consequently, it would be wrong and unfair for Aquinas to confuse natural law with the inclination of any person. On the contrary, he maintains that natural law is the product of the practical reason of persons directing actions and inclinations teleologically toward human ends. Natural law must govern human inclinations, which are a very unstable things. This is the ethical essence of people,[42] given that "the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation in the eternal law."[43] Eternal law directs all creation to act and follow its own ends in accordance with the universal common good. Some beings do this rationally and freely (such as man), while others do it irrationally.[44]

With respect to secondary precepts, it must be said that the precepts of natural law—e.g., *do not steal*, *do not kill*, or *return that which has been lent to you*—are specific, and necessary, conclusions of practical reason[45] derived directly from the first precepts. These secondary precepts *are fair and good in most cases, but can fail on some occasions*.[46]

[33] Super Sent., lib. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1, ad 3. My translation, brackets, and italics.
[34] Cfr. Brock 1988, p. 159.
[35] S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 4, co. My italics.
[36] De veritate , q. 22, a.6, co. My brackets and italics.
[37] Cfr. Super Ioannem. cap. 8 l. 4; Cfr. John 8:34, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."
[38] Super Sent., d. 39, q. 1, a.1, co.
[39] Cfr. S. Th., I, q. 48, a. 3, co.
[40] S. Th., I-II q. 90, a. 4, co.
[41] Cfr. Aquino 1956, p. 123.
[42] Cfr. Aquino 1989, pp. 710–711.
[43] S. Th., I-II, q. 91, a.2, co.
[44] Cfr. Aquino 1956, pp. 80.
[45] Cfr. S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a.4, co.
[46] Cfr. S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a.4, ad.2.

> Consequently we must say that the natural law, as to general principles, is the same for all, both as to rectitude (will, wanting) and as to knowledge (intellect). But as to certain matters of detail, which are conclusions, as it were, of those general principles, it is the same for all in the majority of cases, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge; and yet in some few cases it may fail, both as to rectitude (will, wanting), by reason of certain obstacles (…), and as to knowledge (intellect), since in some the reason is perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature; thus formerly, theft, although it is expressly contrary to the natural law (i.e., toward a second precept of moral natural law, not toward a first one), was not considered wrong among the Germans (…).[47]

There is a natural moral limit that may not be transgressed. At most, errors in understanding and volition would be related to secondary precepts of the natural law, but not to the first precepts. With respect to these first precepts, not even the intellect could be deceived, nor will not desire them, irrespective of how much pressure is placed on them by lower appetites. However, with respect to secondary precepts, although the will is an immaterial and spiritual power, it can be influenced to accept what lower passions offer it. In this case, the will only focuses upon the positive aspects of the evil action.

> But in our own case that which causes motion as a *desirable good* differs from that which causes motion as an *intelligible good*, though each causes motion as an unmoved mover. This is particularly evident in the case of an incontinent person; for according to his reason he is moved by an intelligible good, but according to his concupiscible power he is moved by something pleasant to the senses, which, while it seems to be good, is not good absolutely but only with some qualification.— However, this kind of difference cannot be found in the first intelligible and the first desirable good. But the first intelligible and the first desirable good must be the same. *The reason is that a concupiscible good, which is not an intelligible good, is merely an apparent good; but the first good "must be an object of will," i.e., an object desired by intellectual appetite*. For will belongs to the intellectual order and not merely to that of concupiscible appetite. And this is so because what is desired by the concupiscible power seems to be good because it is desired; for concupiscence perverts the judgment of reason (sensitive appetite always follows the judgement of practical reason) insofar as something pleasant to sense seems to be good to reason. But what is desired by intellectual appetite is desired because it seems to be good in itself. For "understanding" as such, i.e., the act of intellection, which is moved in a way by an intelligible object, "is the principle of desire." *Therefore it is evident that the object of concupiscible appetite is good only when it is desired through a dictate of reason. Hence it cannot be the first good, but only that which, because it is good, moves desire and is at once both appetible and intelligible* (and so is the intelligible good).[48]

With respect to synderesis, it should be indicated that, for Aquinas, it is the natural habit *quasi innatus* that reminds reason of the precepts of natural law,[49] which are the principles of practical reason.[50]

a) Conscience is the act of practical reason, b) natural law is more precisely the *fructus* of practical reason, and c) the habit of first principles of natural law is the synderesis.[51] Synderesis universally asserts the precepts of natural law, whilst conscience establishes that which must be realized or omitted in each particular case. Therefore, synderesis cannot fail, because it cannot be confused by any passion,[52] but conscience can fail in applying the general rule to the particular case or conclusion.[53] The synderesis knows the first principles of natural law when the practical intellect produces them. The potency goes before its habit. Synderesis reminds the practical intellect of first principles when it *goes in search of them*. "Synderesis is said to be the law of our mind,

[47] S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 4. Co. My brackets and italics.

[48] Sententia Metaphysicae, lib. 12, l. 7. My brackets and italics.

[49] Cfr. De veritate, q. 16, a. 2, co. "(Synderesis) permanent principle which has unwavering integrity, in reference to which all human works are examined, so that that permanent principle will resist all evil and assent to all good. This is synderesis, whose task it is to warn against evil and incline to good. Therefore, we agree that there can be no error in it."

[50] Cfr. De veritate, q. 16, a. 1, co. "Synderesis (…) (is the) natural habit of first principles of action, which are the universal principles of the natural law."

[51] Cfr. Aquino 2005, p. 2271.

[52] Cfr. Super sent, lib. 2, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1..

[53] Cfr. Royo 2012, pp. 129-131.

because *it is a habit containing the precepts of the natural law*, which are the first principles of human actions."[54]

Natural law appears unclear and complicated, but at the same time attractive and desirable, since practical reason not only participates in the divine understanding, but also in the divine will. Because of this, natural law is difficult to understand, but easy to desire.[55]

If synderesis is the habit of the practical intellect, similarly, intelligence is the habit of the speculative intellect when we understand something.[56] E.g., an arithmetic or moral rule can be preserved despite only occasionally thinking about it.[57] However, "those in whom the imaginative, cogitative, and memorative powers are of better disposition, are better disposed to understand."[58]

3. Human ethics (natural law) naturally derived from personal ontology (ens, composed of act of being and human nature, ordered to bonum) in aquinas.

Bonum coincides with *ens*. However, the concept of *bonum* adds to *ens* a relationship with appetite. *Bonum* formally refers to good operations according to the nature of the real *ens* to which it is always connected. An *ens* which supposes a *bonum* (human perfection) is not simply human nature, nor is it only (an act of) being, nor a sole operation, but rather an *ens* that supposes a *bonum* is, above all, a requirement of practical reason, which by knowing itself and knowing other beings naturally produces natural law, which is a participation of the eternal law in rational creatures. Therefore, it is the practical human intellect which—by knowing its own rational human nature, knowing the nature of other creatures, knowing its own tendencies and aptitudes—produces naturally and necessarily a practical judgement or precept of natural law that implies self-perfection. This occurs because people intrinsically possess (an act of) being, a human nature, and some operations in search of their own good, perfection, and end. These operations seek to transmit and communicate their own perfection or actuality according to natural law.

It is important to highlight that the only beings who freely demand an end are rational beings; nevertheless this status naturally implies some freedoms and responsibilities. *Sui generis*, irrational beings like cats, worms, or apple trees also seek to realize their ends, not by freely choosing it, but because they are determined by their respective natures. Freedom and responsibility in the rational being are substantially joined because man is naturally, by his will, self-determining, and the arbiter of his own actions. As such, man is not only free and has rights, but is also responsible for his own actions.[59]

Moral good is radically initiated in the act of being of a person given that he is an immortal *ens*, although his essence or nature is composed of form and matter. His form is such that it is not simply the substantial form of a material body (*quod*), but is also spiritual. It can act separately from matter *(quo)*, and therefore it is universally open to the ontological good.

> It must necessarily be allowed that the *principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent*. For it is clear that by means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things. Now whatever knows certain things cannot have any of them in its own nature; because that which is in it naturally would impede the knowledge of anything else. Thus we observe that a sick man's tongue being vitiated by a feverish and bitter humour, is insensible to anything sweet, and everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if the intellectual principle contained the nature of a body it would be unable to know all bodies. Now everybody has its own determinate nature. Therefore it is impossible for the intellectual principle to be a body (…). We must conclude, therefore, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.[60]

In this sense, moral good formally refers to free human operations, performed according to the ultimate end for which they must necessarily search: "Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided."[61] It should be observed that physical good, which is the good for which physical agents search (physical or natural agents in the sense of irrational), is much lesser than the good for which free agents search. Even though *bonum* is initially in the (act of) being and (essence or) nature of these irrational beings, their operations are very limited,

54 S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2. My italics.
55 Cfr. Palacios 2013, pp. 384-385.
56 Cfr. García 2001, p. 425.
57 Cfr. Henle 1993, p. 236.
58 S. Th., I, q. 85. a. 7, co.

59 Cfr. García 2001, pp. 143-144.
60 S. Th., I, q. 75, a. 2, co. My italics.
61 S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co.

given that they are not able to apprehend intellectually the concept of an ultimate end.[62]

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that Aquinas' human ethics is a natural consequence of his ontology, particularly the concepts of being (*ens*) and the good (*bonum*) in man. The only legitimate sense of the concept of human nature—i.e., when he writes about natural moral law—is a metaphysical, teleological, and free one. Thus, the natural moral law is essentially metaphysical, just as the concept of human nature is.

Further, if nature is conceived only in a material sense, as merely biological or physical in nature, then it must be affirmed that man does not possess such nature. Man has a genuinely rational nature. He is, above all, a rational and free being who can be all things (*quodammodo omnia*) through his intellect.[63]

Nevertheless, if nature is conceived in a metaphysical sense as a principle of operations, then every being possesses a nature or essence which specifies its genuine way of being and acting. In this sense, man does possess a human nature, that is, a free and rational nature.[64] Furthermore, a person who has never reached the age of reason, should not because of this be considered inferior. People naturally possess an intelligence and a will open to infinite.[65]

The inclinations of human nature are ordered hierarchically, with the most important ones being those that distinguish man from other species.[66] He is the most perfect being on earth because of his rational nature.[67] There are in him some inclinations toward the good (*bonum*), corresponding to his rational nature, e.g., his natural inclination to seek the truth and to live in society.[68] Therefore, man can move himself to seek his own good, moral perfection, and rational ends. "Do and pursue good (universal and particularly-human), and avoid evil (universal and particularly-human)."[69]

[62] Cfr. García 2001, pp. 141-142.

[63] Cfr. S. Th., I, q. 16, a. 3 co.

[64] Véase, Lucas Lucas, 1994, *Veritatis Splendor,* p. 278; Cfr. Contra Gentiles, lib. 3 cap. 112.

[65] Cfr, Lucas Lucas, 2007, *L'uomo. Spiritu incarnato*, pp. 277-278. Cfr. S. Th., I, q. 61 a. 3 ad 3.

[66] Cfr. Cottier, 2010, p. 16.

[67] Cfr. S. Th., I, q. 29, a. 1, co.

[68] Cfr, S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a.2, co.

[69] S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a.2, co.

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MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND JAN PATOČKA: TWO CONFLICTING PARADIGMS ON A PHENOMENOLOGICAL GENEALOGY OF EUROPE

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Abstract:

This paper explores two different, even opposite, genealogies of Europe in contemporary phenomenology by Martin Heidegger and Jan Patočka. On the one hand, the paper focuses upon Heidegger's 1936 lecture on "Europe and German Philosophy", which is one of his lesser-known texts. In light of this reading, the paper examines a series of key commentaries by Éliane Escoubas, Franco Volpi, Franco Chiereghin, and Reiner Schürmann. On the other hand, the later Jan Patočka's discourse on Europe lies upon utterly different hermeneutic premisses, construing a new humanism and renewing the metaphysical tradition in the form of negative Platonism. It concludes by arguing that the major differences between Heidegger's and Patočka's phenomenological genealogies of Europe are, first, their different stances toward Western metaphysics and humanism, and, second, their divergent understandings of historical lifeworlds.

Key words: Martin Heidegger, Jan Patočka, Europe, Greece, Rome, metaphysics, humanism, care for the soul, modern technology, negative Platonism, historical lifeworlds.

(I)

To cope with Heidegger's "Euroanalysis" represents a major hermeneutic task which cannot be isolated as such from its onto-historical premisses. A first thing to note is that the questioning of Europe occurs rather late in Heidegger's phenomenological discourse, in the mid-thirties, and is simultaneous with a newly discovered sense of actuality, which nevertheless—contrary to what is the case for Husserl—does not explicate itself in terms of a diagnosis of a crisis.[1] A second thing to note is an issue related to a triad of operating concepts within Heidegger's lecture courses and writings in the 1930s and 1940s which have a different hermeneutic status, i.e., Europe, the West, and the Occident. As the conceptual clarification of these terms and their respective use has already been discussed at length,[2] I will restrict myself to highlighting one instance where this differentiation becomes acute. In the 1941-42 lecture course entitled *Das Ereignis* (GA 71, 2009; *The Event*, 2013), the questioning of Europe occurs at a particular moment of the course, where a question is raised about the "old" and the "new" with regard to modernity. What is "modernity," after all? Heidegger replies that it is "the age which is eager for the new and which reckons on the new for the human being's own self-reckoning. Modernity [*die Neuzeit*] is not simply the 'new time' [die 'neue Zeit'] following in the wake of an obsolete one, whereby the series is discerned and divided up by some indefinite observer and appraiser. It is a consummated start: the new order" (Heidegger 2013: 79).[3] The "new" for modernity—which is another term for Europe—does not pertain to the innovative

[1] See in this respect the subtle suggestion made by Jacques Derrida that Heidegger's mentioning of "Weltverdüsterung" in *Introduction to Metaphysics* does not turn the 1935 lecture course into a discourse on Europe's crisis: Derrida 1987: 74-76.
[2] See for instance: Gasché 2008: 95-101.
[3] German original: Das Ereignis, Gesamtausgabe, vol. 71.

or to the creative, but to an arrangement—more specifically, to the "arrangement of all arrangements" made possible by "machination," i.e. by modern technology (*Machenschaft*). In this light, Heidegger distinguishes between Europe or the Occident and the West by identifying Europe's "newest modernity" with the "errancy of machination"—that is, with the technology-driven new or innovative—and the West with the old, which is nevertheless not forever gone, but still related to its inception: "What is European and planetary is the ending and completion. The West is the beginning" (Heidegger 2013: 80).[4] Within this sharp distinction between the Western as the "old" becoming inceptual and "the European" becoming planetary—that is, "consummated" (vollendete) metaphysics in the form of modern technology—is the intermingling of four fundamental Greek words—ιδέα, φύσις, τέχνη, δόξα. In Rodolphe Gasché's words: "In terms of the history of Being, Europe as the place that dominates the planet by technology is the culmination of the forgetting of what announced itself in Greece—the commencement of the Occident" (Gasché 2008:103). In what follows, we will take as our starting point a lecture given by Heidegger in 1936 in Rome, one year after Husserl's well-known 1935 Vienna lecture (Husserl 1970), entitled "Europe and German Philosophy" (Heidegger 1993). Strangely enough, this is one of the lesser-known of the texts in which Hiedegger explicitly thematizes Europe as a philosophical theme, even though it belongs to a critical period of his work that marked a turning point in his thought. The 1936 lecture on Europe is contemporaneous with a series of lecture courses and writings, such as the lecture course on *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine"* (1934/35); the lecture on *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935); the first lecture course on Nietzsche (*The Will to Power as Art*, 1936-37); the essay on *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935/36); and, last but not least, the 1936 lecture on *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetizing*.

Needless to say, the two prominent figures with whom Heidegger was most deeply engaged at the time were Nietzsche and Hölderlin. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe has argued that Hölderlin's influence upon Heidegger accounts for his Hellenocentrism, which should, nevertheless, not be identified with the Romantic imitation of the Ancients. Heidegger's rejection of Romanticism on the grounds of its being a manifestation of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity had both philosophical and political consequences, not just for Germany, but also (and foremost) for Europe's past and present, as it implies a critique of National-Socialism as an exacerbated form of aestheticism (Lacoue-Labarthe 1990: 58-59). In his *Typographies II*, Lacoue-Labarthe elaborates further on Heidegger's alignment of Hölderlin's poetics with Nietzsche's reception of Greek tragedy, to the extent that both the poet and the philosopher try to recuperate the Greek inception. In this respect, Heidegger radicalizes a typically German intellectual tradition, which points out the "German distress" and the need for a cultural redetermination through Greek *polis*, and even more through Greek tragedy (Lacoue-Labarthe 1986: 116). Lacoue-Labarthe points out that Germany's striving for self-determination is also a striving to disengage itself from the predominant Latin artistic forms—French classicism, especially in painting, and also Italian opera—by participating in the authentic Greek form of tragedy as an expression of "the Dionysian" that has not gone through Latin intermediaries. The outcome of this has been a dilemma constitutive of mature modern German culture due to the paradoxical—Lacoue-Labarthe qualifies it as psychotic—coexistence of imitation in order to gain authenticity with the need for "the proper." Lacoue-Labarthe insists, nevertheless, that Heidegger's critique of *latinitas* is far too subtle to justify the overall rejection of the Latin imitation of Greek Antiquity typical of most of Germany's intellectual trends in the 19th century. Heidegger's 1936 lecture on Europe is in fact the very first instance in a series of instances which bear witness to his intense reflection on the issue of Europe—its origins, its fate, and its future. This reflection culminates in his 1942-43 lecture courses on the Presocratics, and reaches its end in the 1946 *Letter on Humanism*, where in a much commented-upon paragraph Heidegger explicitly denounces the *romanitas* and its offspring, the *humanitas*, bequeathed to modern

[4] Here Heidegger engages in a critical exchange with Spengler and with his idea of the West, which, for him, "settles its demise as its highest progress" (Heidegger 2013: 81). In this respect, he identifies calculative objectification as the essence of modern machination, its main accompanying features being actuality, objectivity, steadfastness, securedness, goallessness and decisionlessness, effectiveness, and last but not least, unlimited order (ibid, 69).

Europe through the Renaissance (Heidegger 1998: 244).

(II)

The opening remarks of Heidegger's 1936 lecture can be summarized as follows: could "the duty of our historical existence" lead us to a transmutation capable of overcoming "the mere either-or of Europe's salvation or its destruction"? (Heidegger 1993: 31).[5] However, it would be hasty to identify Heidegger's discourse of Europe in the mid-thirties with the *Zeitgeist* which dominated the European intellectual scene.[6] The leading thread of Heidegger's critique of today's Europe is the complete denial of culture—in particular, European culture—as a "realization of values" and a "cultural functioning" (*Kulturbetrieb*).[7] Against the discourses on Europe's cultural system (*Kultursystem*) which insist on playing on the old culture-barbarism dichotomy, Europe should seek for an "essentiality" to be linked inextricably with its Greek (more specifically, pre-Platonic) inception. But what kind of link does modern Europe have or should have to its Greek inception? Heidegger argues that this link is of a hermeneutic kind. Φύσις, δόξα, αλήθεια, ιδέα are some of the fundamental Greek words that should be heard anew, thus identifying Europe's spirit and history as the transmutation of the inception (*Wandlung des Anfangs*) (Heidegger 1993: 38). In this respect, it is clear that diagnosing Europe's present state—and perhaps also its future state—implies the acknowledgment of its history as the history of Western metaphysics.

Heidegger's critique of modern "*Kulturbetrieb*" stems from the very essence of European culture, which is both metaphysical and technological, inextricably intertwining culture and "machination."[8] On the contrary, for Heidegger, an originary discourse on Europe should be of an intrinsically ontological nature.[9] It is at this point that a double stake arises: first, the stake of the "inception"—its appropriation or misappropriation—and, second, the stake of authenticity—that is, the appropriation or misappropriation—through language. Modern Europe is born out of the Romanization of the ancient world, and is the product of failing to grasp the Greek inception: "we today still see the Greek world with Roman eyes—[…] also, and this is the only decisive thing, within the historical metaphysical dialogue of the modern world with that of the ancients" (Heidegger 1998b: 43). This last claim is explicitly treated in Heidegger's courses on *Parmenides* (1942/43) and *Heraclitus: The Inception of Occidental Thought* (1943). It is most certainly not fortuitous that it is in this context that the Athens/Rome dichotomy becomes dramatically apparent precisely on ontological-hermeneutic grounds, that is, through the originary/translation, authentic/inauthentic dichotomies. It would, nevertheless, be impossible to fully evaluate this assertion without following the thread of the course itself: it starts with posing the Aristotelian themes of man as ζώον λόγον έχον, and of predication as λέγειν τι κατά τινος, having as its purpose to go back to what precedes the Aristotelian λόγος and toward the λόγος of the inceptuous thinkers.

What is at stake here is the interpretion of the λόγος prior to, but also in spite of, the *Aussage-Urteil-Be*griff triad. This leap back to the Greek inception is made possible through the hermeneutic approach to αλήθεια, and it is in the context of the transcription of the inceptuous αλήθεια and λόγος that the question of *trans*lating (*Über*setzung) and trans*posing* (Über*setzen*) is raised (Heidegger 1998b: 11).[10] A set of other themes in the *Parmeni-*

[5] The need to cope with a tragic dilemma to which a responsible answer must be given is also present in other key writings and courses of the same period, such as the notorious *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. Both the historico-cultural and political implications of this have repeatedly been pointed out by the *Heidegger-Forschung*. See in particular: Schürmann 1992; Dallmayr 1993: 96-105; Sluga 1993: 53-74; Schmidt 1999.

[6] See Manfred Riedel's account of the reasons why we should not identify Heidegger's European discourse with the "Geist in Gefahr" debates of the thirties: Riedel 1993.

[7] The critique of "cultural functioning" is omnipresent in Heidegger's lecture courses of the same period. See for instance: Heidegger 2012: 78.

[8] Heidegger 2012: 110. "Culture" is here closely related to lived experience (*Erlebnis*), which Heidegger criticizes—along with "machination"—as a manifestation of the abandonment of Being. Here "culture" and lived experience are treated as offspring of anthropology and Cartesianism which deny the crucial question, namely, the question of whether modernity is grasped as an end and/or another inception (*anderer Anfang*).

[9] See for instance: Scott 2001: 7.

[10] See in this respect Éliane Éscoubas' treatment of Heidegger's questioning on translation in the *Parmenides* course: Éscoubas 2010: 122-125. Éscoubas identifies two themes within the topic of the "Übersetzen" treated in the introductory chapters of the course: the theme of the

des course helps us orient ourselves to what is translated and into what, such as the distinction between inception (*Anfang*) and beginning (*Beginn*),[11] which necessarily raises the question of translation as something more than a simple transition or transposition (*Übertragung*).[12] This theory of translation occurs within the context of the treatment of the status of áëÞèåéá in Parmenides, and not (for instance) in Heraclitus; it also seems relevant to note that it is in the *Parmenides* course that we witness an exacerbation of the Athens/Rome dichotomy. Heidegger distinguishes between three forms of translation—transposition, reformulation, reinterpretation—which are non-originary and derived forms of translation. What is the form of translation that qualifies the passage from the Greek—pre-Platonic *and* Platonic—to the Latin? This translation has the form of an *Umdeutung* which introduces a major breach in the metaphysical history of truth due to the transition from the Greek αληθές to the Latin *verum*. The historical—or, better, historial (*geschichtlich*)—significance of this shift in the understanding of truth makes Heidegger speak of it as the originary event: "What is decisive is that the Latinization [of the Greek world by the Romans] occurs as a transformation of the essence of truth and Being within the essence of the Greco-Roman domain of history […] That is why the historical state of the world we call the modern age, following historiographical chronology, is also founded on the event of the Romanizing of Greece" (Heidegger 1998b: 42-43).

In fact, it is in light of the major event of the Romanization of Greece that αλήθεια becomes *veritas* and λόγος becomes *ratio*. What is, nevertheless, proper to the *Parmenides* course is the situating of the breach between the originary *Grundwörter* and their *Umdeutung*, which is no longer the Platonic beginning, but rather the Greek world taken as a whole and set against "the Roman."[13] But what makes the latter independent and even in conflict with its Greek antecedent? It is here that Heidegger's interpretive tour-de-force shows its strength, in the sense that it implicates prospectively the completion of metaphysics in Nietzsche and its realization in modern technology. But if the Roman experience is that of the "domain of the *imperium romanum*," the latter is to be viewed within a primarily legal and political perspective, i.e., in light of the *imperium* as the essential ground of law (*iustum*). The point of transmutation between "the Greek" and "the Roman" is posited at the convergence between the *imperium* and domination understood as command.[14] From there a direct line is to be drawn from the Roman imperium to the commanding essence of Nietzsche's "non-Greek" ("*ungriechisch*") will to power, realized as the "will to will" in today's contemporary planetary technology: "If we experience and come to know these nexuses historically, as our history, i.e., as modern European 'world'-history, will it then surprise us that in Nietzsche's thought, where the metaphysics of the Occident reaches its peak, the essence of truth is founded in certitude and 'justice'?"[15]

Nothing manifests more clearly Heidegger's transcription of the Greek/Roman dichotomy into the authenticity/inauthenticity one than his persistence in posing the Latin transcription of the Greek ψεύδος as the counter-essence of αληθές, of which the roots are to be sought in the archaic Greek world—in Parmenides, but also in Homer and in Hesiod—as *falsum* and, in correlation to it, αλήθεια as *veritas*.[16] The translation of ψεύδος into falsum, which has the character of an "*Umdeutung*," opens up a new hermeneutic domain, that of *fallere* (σφάλλω), i.e., overthrow or bring to a downfall. This is how Heidegger explicates the conceptual net of *ius-imperium-veritas/falsum*: "By way of Roman civilization, both the imperial/civil and the imperial/ecclesiastical, the Greek ψεύδος became for us in the Occident the 'false.' Correspondingly, the true assumed the character of the non-false. The essential

proper (*le propre*) and the theme of secondarity (*secondarité*).

[11] On the distinction between inception and beginning in the middle Heidegger: Zarader 2008.

[12] "Sprechen und Sagen sind in sich ein Übersetzen" (Heidegger 1992: 12). Cf. Éscoubas 2010: 127-132.

[13] See the explication of αλήθεια as ομοίωσις against its Roman, and also its Scholastic, interpretation as *rectitudo* (Heidegger 1992: 49-50).

[14] "Wir denken das "Politische" römisch, d.h. imperial" (Heidegger 1992: 63).

[15] Heidegger 1998b: 139. The development of the course culminates in the historial triad of *veritas, rectitude, Gerechtigkeit*. See in this respect: Fóti 1992.

[16] Éliane Éscoubas remarks that the abrupt transition from the Greek to the Latin conceptuality would lead us from an intra-idiomatic (within the same language, the Greek) to an interlinguistic (from the Greek to the Latin) translation. For Heidegger, this transmutation as such seems to inaugurate "une temporalité successive, une temporalité de la mésentente ou de la catastrophe" (Éscoubas 2010: 136).

realm of the imperial *fallere* determines the not-false as well as the *falsum*. The not-false, said in Roman fashion, is the *verum*" (Heidegger 1998b: 46).

(III)

But how are we to view this "tripling of the mirrors" (Zarader 2008) which makes "the Roman" a repetition of "the Greek," and the non-originary an "*Umdeutung*" of its inception?[17] Eliane Escoubas,[18] on the one hand, raises the question of a possible proximity between this interpretation of "the Roman" and Europe in the interwar period. Would the Roman exacerbation of the Greek experience through its "imperial" *Wandlung* be the forerunner of nationalist-socialist Europe?: "is it not with this notion of desolation/desertification that the encounter of imperial Rome and National Socialism takes place? Is this how imperial Rome becomes the very figure of National Socialism? If so, must we not recognize that Heidegger's 'explanation' of National Socialism finds its accomplished theoretical form in the *Parmenides*…?" (Éscoubas 1992: 156). On the other hand, Franco Volpi and Franco Chiereghin undertake a hermeneutic approach to Heidegger's writings from within the scope of "the Roman" as such. For Volpi, Heidegger's radical uniterality, which reduces philosophical *romanitas* to a derivative and decadent form of conceptuality, loses sight of one basic fact—which is philosophical and, in a broader sense, cultural—i.e., the originality of the Roman experience for the making of European consciousness. Volpi situates Heidegger's interpretive bias in favor of the Greeks within the continuity of the idealistic and Romantic Graecomania, while he claims at its radicalization (Volpi 2001: 289). Nevertheless, the Latin transposition of the originary Greek conceptuality—which is closely linked to Heidegger's critique of metaphysical subjectivism and humanism—is only one side of the coin, the other being a set of new concepts that contributed to the emergence of a new cultural paradigm, mostly the concepts of *religio* and *pietas* (Volpi 2001b). But if Roman *religio* has been a major topic of investigation for phenomenologists such as Hannah Arendt, the most stimulating point in Volpi's analysis is his critique of Heidegger's silence as to the affective status of Roman *pietas*: nowhere in Heidegger's writings and lecture courses of the late 30s is there a place for this historial *Grundstimmung* proper to the Roman world (Volpi 2001: 299).

In similar terms, Chiereghin argues that Heidegger's depreciation of "the Roman" leads to the loss of what it could contribute to the determination of Europe's future in the productive intertwining of the initial and the subsequent inceptions of thought. Chiereghin denies Heidegger's focus on the Roman experience as an experience of translation joined with domination, and also his conviction that it was with the Romans that the extreme groundlessness of European metaphysics began to appear.[19] He shows the inadequacies of Heidegger's critique with regard, for instance, to the translation of the Aristotelian óôÝñçóéò into *privatio*, which loses thereby all its hermeneutic wealth. In this light, the focus of his reconstruction of the Roman experience and its significance for the birth of Europe is the reactivation of other key terms which are proper to it as such, even if they do not receive a treatment by Heidegger: *religio*, *fides*, and *pietas*. Heidegger's conjunction of the Roman *ius* with the *imperium* is negligent of these three foundational elements, and therefore does injustice to what an originary Roman experiential domain would be (Chiereghin 1993: 199-200).

(IV)

While I recognize the importance of these interpretive viewpoints, I must insist upon a major hermeneutic contribution to research on the middle Heidegger which, to a certain extent, deepens Escoubas' claim about the significance (hermeneutic, but also cultural and political) of the Greek/Roman dichotomy in texts such as the *Parmenides* lecture course, *Plato's Theory of Truth*, and the *Letter on*

[17] "The Roman" in Heidegger is, nevertheless, never treated independently. On this issue: Gadamer 1987.

[18] Éscoubas 1992 (French original: Éscoubas 1988. Heidegger, la question romaine, la question impériale. Autour du "Tournant". In : Richir M-Éscoubas É (eds), Heidegger. Questions ouvertes. Collège International de Philosophie/Ed. Osiris, Paris, 173-189).

[19] That this negative stance towards Latin conceptuality is only related to its being the forerunner of modern European metaphysics is shown by the fact that *not all* Latin concepts are treated negatively, and not in all periods of Heidegger's philosophy. See for instance the early Heidegger's interpretation of *cura*: Caputo 1994. It is, therefore, the historial-epochal transmutations of *latinitas* and *romanitas* that seem to be the targets of the middle Heidegger's critique.

Humanism. I refer to Reiner Schürmann's explication of "the Greek" and "the Roman" in Heidegger in his monumental *Broken Hegemonies.*[20] At the heart of Schürmann's idiosyncratic reading of the middle Heidegger is the critical question of the latter's epochal restructuring of Western metaphysics in relation to the Law's "double bind" structure (Schürmann 1992: 49-50). Schürmann transfers the conflictual structure of the law to the middle Heidegger's phenomenological-heuristic understanding of temporality and, more specifically, of epochality within Western metaphysics. But apart from this, given that in Heidegger's perspective *ius* along with *imperium* are the two key themes of Latin conceptuality—taken to be a genuinely juridical-political moment—the question to ask is how this event shapes the self-understanding of modern Europe. It is obvious that I cannot reconstruct Schürmann's complex interpretive strategy here. Suffice it to say that his interpretation offers an insightful account of the cleavage between the Greek and the Roman epochs or "hegemonic phantasms," the latter being situated at the decline of the *Anfang*.[21] This is, hermeneutically speaking, the most generous and—at the same time—the most demanding reading of Heidegger's understanding of the ontological difference as being of an intrinsically epochal nature.

Schürmann begins by distinguishing between metaphysical and phenomenological difference. The former relies upon the anchoring of beings upon an *archē*, whereas the latter is not fixed forever in the Greek beginning of metaphysics, but "is always located epochally; […] [the] ultimate foundation has its age, during which its function of grounding goes unquestioned, but […] with the epochal reversals in history what is held to be ultimate in first philosophy appears to be so only for a while." (Schürmann 1978: 359)[22] Consequently, the phenomenological "destruction" of the epochal *archē* for each metaphysical age—Greek, Roman, modern, planetary—lies in the revelation of its double bind structure, as Heidegger sets upon to explicate repetitively in his lecture courses of the late '30s and early '40s. Nothing shows in a more eloquent manner Heidegger's thinking about phenomenological difference as utterly epochal than the clear opposition of the principle (*archē*) to the origin (Schürmann 1979: 167). Schürmann distinguishes between the translating or transposing strategies between the metaphysical epochs that Heidegger thematizes in the *Parmenides* course and what would be the transference proper to the "anarchic" origin of the ontological difference. Schürmann gives us an original reading of this transferring strategy as a sym-bolic (*sym-ballein*) strategy (Schürmann 1979).

Schürmann's phenomenological genealogy of the epochal turns of metaphysics is fully developed in his *Broken Hegemonies*. Taking as a starting point the shattering of the doctrine of principles in Europe from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to Heidegger, Schürmann, largely inspired by the middle Heidegger's history of Western metaphysics, sets out to investigate the latter's epochal constitution, where "epochal" is to be understood in a phenomenological sense.[23] Three epochs of metaphysics—the Greek, the Latin, the Modern—that coincide with the three epochs of Europe are treated by Schürmann, each of them governed by a hegemonic phantasm (*fantasme hégémonique*): the One (Åí), Nature (*Natura*), and Conscience. For each of the three there is one key figure who inaugurates the epochal turn of discontinuity: Parmenides for the Greek "epoch," Cicero for the Latin, and Luther for the Modern.

But how does Schürmann's *récit* contribute to our question about the Greek/Latin origins of metaphysics (and Europe)? For him, the Greek epoch starts with Parmenides and closes with Plotinus. The henological doctrine in Parmenides—as in the Greek tragic poets, such as Aeschylus—still preserves traits of a "henological differend" that will disappear from the sphere of metaphysical questioning later on with Aristotle. Schürmann applies the two "anarchic" principles to explain the epochal shift from Greek φύσις to Roman *natura*. Through Cicero's transcription of the middle Stoics *natura*, a new "hegemonic phantasm" is instituted, and with it the φύσις-νόμος dichotomy becomes decisively disengaged from its Greek antecedent: kinetic φύσις designates one of the two realms, therefore it cannot be a law by itself and cannot be raised to a single "hegemonic phantasm," which is true of the Latin *natura*. The shift in the understanding of nature is also not without con-

[20] French original: Schürmann R (1996) Des hégémonies brisées. T.E.R., Mauzevin.

[21] On the issue of decline or fall from the Presocratic inception: Naas 1998: 80-84.

[22] See also: Schürmann 1982.

[23] Schürmann 2003: 19-20. On Heidegger's hermeneutic priority: 47. For a concise account of Schürmann's argumentation in *Broken Hegemonies*, see Maggini 2006.

sequences for the self-understanding of the Romans on practical grounds, as the Latin institution is primarily of a political nature.[24] But what renders this epochal difference most apparent is the shift in the understanding of the relation between nature and law, e.g. Cicero's characterization of law as "the force of nature" (Schürmann 2003: 227).

From Cicero and Augustine to medieval Scholasticism, the "hegemonic phantasm" of natural law remained intact, to be shaken down only by late medieval Scholasticism and the mystic Meister Eckhart. But in order to differentiate between the Greek and the Latin "epoch," Schürmann elaborates on the opposition between tragic νόμος in Aeschylus and Roman *lex* by introducing another key concept, that of *imperium*. By elaborating on Heidegger's critical affirmation of the primacy of the Roman *imperium*, Schürmann argues that the "imperial experience" is the *archē* of the Latin epoch, the principle which constitutes the phenomenality of the phenomena from Roman Stoicism up to medieval Europe. Schürmann echoes Heidegger once more when he observes, against all hermeneutic preconceptions, that the radical discontinuity within European metaphysics and history is not the one between medieval and modern Europe, but the one between the Greek and the Latin "epoch."[25] But the nature-law-force triad comes with a second radical displacement of the Greek institution: the priority of will over reason. Greek teleology, e.g. in Aristotle, is epistemic through and through, whereas the governing factor of the Latin era is the conjunction of teleology and will, the latter being designated by Schürmann as "integrative will" (Schürmann 2003: 245).

Schürmann's overwhelming *récit* of the origins and principles of European metaphysics, and also of European history as such, retains much of—and yet distances itself considerably from—Heidegger's understanding of the epochality of Western metaphysics and its historical actualization. He stresses, first, the cleavage between "the Greek" and "the Roman" in comparison to the relative continuity between "the Roman" and "the Modern" (till Nietzsche), and, second, the fundamental transposition of the φύσις-νόμος dichotomy as the basis of a new understanding of the political as such.

[24] Schürmann 2003: 223. For Schürmann, this stands for Cicero's Rome as well as St. Augustine's Jerusalem.

[25] For Schürmann, the Christian "hegemonic phantasm" is no different in its premisses from its Roman antecedent: Schürmann 2003: 238, 261.

(V)

If Heidegger's account of Europe is inextricably linked to his critique of metaphysics and modern technology, Jan Patočka's account of it is undoubtedly more focused upon an integral phenomenological project of European history and culture, with a background in the philosophy of history.[26] Patočka repeatedly denied the modern constructions of the philosophy of history—Hegelian, Marxian, or Comtian—while admitting that it is only Europe that possesses history as an intrinsic possibility (Patočka 1996: 33-35). Patočka's phenomenological philosophy has been the topic of numerous analyses, either autonomously or in light of Jacques Derrida's reading of his *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* in the 1990s. I choose to adopt a hermeneutic *topos* he himself introduced in the phenomenological discourse on the "heritage of Europe" before treating the question of Europe's Greek and Roman origins. Before doing so, allow me one or two introductory remarks on Patočka as a phenomenologist of Europe *par excellence*. On the one hand, his phenomenology of history is undoubtedly determined by his Central European identity.[27] On the other hand, Patočka's experience of the turmoils of the war and of the post-WWII period is beautifully condensed in a short phrase from one of his last interviews.[28] But what is Patocka's idea of the heritage of Europe?

There is a distinct moment in Patočka's discourse on Europe in his book *Plato and Europe* in which he undertakes the task both as a phenomenologist and a humanist. Contrary to Heidegger, his use of "crisis" brings him close to its Husserlian antecedent. In the introductory part to the 1977 lectures,

[26] Patočka's engagement with history is made possible methodologically by his often repeated differentiation between phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy: "Phenomenological philosophy differs from phenomenology in that it not only wants to analyze phenomena as such, but also wants to derive results from this; it wants to derive *results*, as is said, that are *metaphysical*." (Patočka 2002: 32-33; his emphasis).

[27] Patočka has been marked by the personality of the politician and philosopher Thomas Masaryk, first President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, to whom Patočka has dedicated a series of essays. See: Patočka 1986. For an overall account of Patocka's positions on Europe from a historical, philosophical, and political viewpoint: Laignel-Lavastine 1970: 127-237. See also : Havel 1999.

[28] "Pour être pertinente, une pensée philosophique, quelle qu'elle soit, doit prendre position sur la ligne du front" (Patočka 1993: 31).

Patočka reflects on what we really mean when we talk of Europe's situation as a situation of crisis, or—even more—as an end: "Europe, that two-thousand-year-old construction, which managed to lift up mankind to an altogether new degree of self-reflection and consciousness, and strength and power as well, […] is definitely at an end." (Patočka 2002: 9).[29] Referencing Husserl, Masaryk, Arendt, and Scheler, Patočka talks of two "creative waves"—the Greek wave and the Roman wave—which gave birth to Europe not as a geographical entity, but as a spiritual reality or, in his own terms, as a "plan for life" which worked in the form of a "creative destroying." It is here that the phenomenological theme of the life-world comes to elucidate his reflection under the form of alienation from the life-world. Hence, the key factor in the birth of medieval—but also modern—Europe seems to be none other than the spirit of Greece epitomized in the Platonic "care of the soul" (*ths psychis epimeleisthai*). By dedicating a lengthy analysis to his understanding of phenomenology, Patočka makes clear that, if Europe's life plan is to be understood and preserved for the future, this is possible only within the limits of phenomenology, since investigation into the phenomena—into appearing and manifesting, and also into their relation to human existence—is the proper task of phenomenology.

Reactivating Plato's legacy in the form of a revised metaphysical position designated as negative Platonism,[30] Patočka is led to a unique phenomenological reflection on European culture based on his account of myth (μύθος) as the genuine framework for the genesis of Greek spirituality. What is then clear is that if Rome is "something more general, something more encompassing" than Greece, and modern Europe is, in its turn, "something more general, something more encompassing," then Europe does not have two foundations—Greek and Roman—but only one, which is Greek: "On my understanding, as I have tried to depict it, Europe stands on *one* pillar—and that is because *Europe is a looking-in*, Europe is life founded upon seeing what is." (Patočka 2002: 89-90; his emphasis). Contrary, then, to Arendt's claim about the proximity of Christian philosophy and political thought to its Roman antecedent, Patočka evokes Nietzsche's condemnation of Christianity as mere "Platonism for the people" in order to assert the Greek, specifically Platonic, background of Christianity. He also rephrases as the act of founding a city, i.e., Rome, "on the changeability of human affairs" played against the Greek ideal of truth and justice exemplified by Plato's *Republic*. Even if he accepts, as is already the case in the *Heretical Essays for the Philosophy of History*, Arendt's account of the Athenian *bios politikos* in *The Human Condition*, he nevertheless stresses the striving character of life in the *polis* for which Heraclitus more than Aristotle could be an inspiration: the life of the Greek *polis* is *polemos*, it is unity in conflict, which he generalizes to the history of the West and beyond (Patočka 1996: 43).

It is in Plato—and in Plato's Socrates—that a first inquiry into *bios politikos* founded upon the care for the soul becomes possible, and this is the formative moment for Europe up to today: "The surviving of the heritage is obviously also its change, but this metaphysical foundation still endures. And surprisingly, upon it the domain of European life is spread out, is generalized" (Patočka 1996: 129).[31] The exchange between Greece and Rome—or with other historical realities to come—has always been the confrontation of philosophy with non-philosophy, with brute reality which is essentially unphilosophical.[32] One element that nevertheless could be rightly ascribed to the Roman beginning is the experiencing of the possibility of generalization. Europe would not be possible without the process of generalization and universalization, which is nevertheless not recognized as a

[29] Patočka's pessimism as to the fate of Europe is closely related to his reflection on what he designates as the "post-European era": Crépon 2007: 282-283.

[30] The basis of such a reappropriation of Platonic metaphysics is the experience of finite freedom as the core of metaphysical experience: "While metaphysics discovers a new universe, taking it as its starting point and transcending it, the interpretation of experience discovers, uncovers, sheds light on this, our given life-world, uncovering what had been hidden in it […] It is, however, also possible to find support for such an interpretation even in the work of metaphysics and in the tradition, since traditional metaphysics, in its constructive approach, undoubtedly also based itself on the experience of transcendence and on the inner drama of freedom" (Patočka 1989: 197).

[31] For an incisive account of the intertwining between Platonism viewed as a civilizational phenomenon which embraces European culture as a whole and as a "trans-metaphysical" phenomenon: Arnason 2011: 217-218.

[32] A definite outcome of this "unphilosophical" evolution of modern Europe is the prevailing of "overcivilization," first in its moderate and then in its radical version. See: Karfík 1999: 19-22.

founding principle (Patočka 1996: 221). Thus, generality, abstraction, and universality were not born in Greece, though the content of Europe's successive generalization up to today's global era has been Greek in its essence. The historical process responsible for Europe's double face is none other than the "care of the soul" which gives birth to the problematicity of meaning[33] and, thus, to history and politics, and the cleavage between the ideal and the real, the philosophical and the non-philosophical. This second aspect of European history and culture came to light in Rome to determine largely what we could designate, following Patočka, as "hegemonic" Europe.[34]

We should, nevertheless, admit that it is not possible to follow Patočka's reflection on Europe without placing it in the wider context of his phenomenological project.[35] The latter is structured upon an ontology of life-movement, the core of which lies in his analysis of the three movements of human existence.[36] It is with regard to this phenomenological ontology of movement that Patočka differentiates himself both from Husserl and Heidegger, writing that his "philosophical conception offers greater possibilities than the absolute which Husserl finds. Heidegger's inquiry is more profound, it is an inquiry into the ground of existence" (Patočka 1999: 176). Patočka's critique of the early Heidegger focuses on his treatment of being-in-the-world, as he explicitly accuses him of introducing a concept of the world that is too abstract, focusing on the question of understanding. Patočka opts, on the contrary, for a much more nuanced phenomenological treatment of worldliness, where both local worlds—the world of the child or the animal—and historical worlds can emerge before the eyes of the phenomenologist.[37] This differentiation of what someone could expect from a phenomenology of the world shapes Patočka's philosophy of history and culture to its very core. In the *Heretical Essays*, he proceeds to an analysis of what he designates as a natural or primitive—that is pre-historical—lifeworld, referring back to Heidegger's analysis of the tool, and to the Arendtian labor-work-action triad. He concludes by asserting the ahistorical nature of labor and work, and thus of Heidegger's conception of the worldliness of the world, which is primarily practical, against Arendt's analysis.[38]

What are the most significant differences between Heidegger's and Patočka's account of Europe's heritage—and also of its future? First, there is undoubtedly a big difference in their understandings of metaphysics and humanism.[39] If for Heidegger humanism has to be overcome, Patočka is, on the

[33] Patočka closely links problematicity to historicity: Patočka 1996: 12-13.

[34] On Patočka's clear opposition between "philosophical" and "hegemonic" Europe: Merlier 2009: 192-194; Maggini 2014.

[35] This hermeneutic perspective turns out to be crucial for determining the weaknesses of Husserl's understanding of the crisis of European sciences: "The objectification which Husserl traced as the essential happening in man, as a component of essential human history, must therefore be linked to a fundamental movement of human existence. Husserl himself does not do that, since his philosophical analyses do not include the problem of the overall movement which is human life in the world." (Patočka 1989: 270).

[36] For James Mensch, Patočka's phenomenological ontology of movement has explicit political implications, as it interferes with his conception of major components of the European cultural and political heritage, such as the concept of universal human rights, which needs to be critically redefined: Mensch 2011.

[37] "If by world we mean a certain region, for instance all *reality*, everything real *in objective time*, we do not mean by it only the complex of realities but primarily the mode of being of the real […] What, though, do we mean when we speak of the world of ancient Romans, a child's world, the world of primitives, the animal 'world' […]? That is again an ontic conception of the world, though not of a world of being that is simply given but rather of the world of a living being" (Patočka 1999: 114; his emphasis). The same goes for Patočka's critique of the world in Husserl: "Unfortunately, we are forced to admit that the so-called phenomenological metaphysics which Husserl puts forth as the result and the basis of his analytic description of the 'natural' world is in the end disappointing […] It is, in truth, a complete inversion of the physicalist view, more than Copernican reversal" (Patočka 1989: 233). Husserl's failure to produce an adequate concept of both the natural world and historical life-worlds is reflected in his diagnosis of the crisis of European humanity.

[38] Patočka 1996: 16. Here lies the core of Patočka's confrontation with Heidegger, but also with Marxism. Let us note, however, that while Arendt's analyses of the labor-work-action triad are omnipresent in Patočka's discourse, her Aristotelianism does not form the leading thread in Patočka's search for radical historicity through finitude; it is Nietzsche more than Aristote that impregnates his polemical discourse.

[39] It is not fortuitous that in *Plato and Europe* Patocka makes an explicit reference to Heidegger, as the latter had decisively identified metaphysics and Platonism (Patočka 2002: 127). On the contrary, by evoking Plato's teaching of the soul, he inserts a specific, dedogmatised version of Platonic metaphysics within the "future of European life" (ibid).

contrary, a humanist *par excellence*, though in an entirely new sense which distances itself decisively from metaphysical anthropologism.[40] Patočka's reading of humanism as the European heritage par excellence is intrinsically linked to his critique of Heidegger's hermeneutics of modernity in relation to his formulation of the *Seinsfrage*.[41] Second, it is important to note the divergences in the way the two phenomenologists perceive historical worlds. In Heidegger, historical worlds are clearly "epochs" in the history of being, whereas Patočka criticizes Heidegger's reluctance to question the historical character of the world as such: "in all human uncovering of being, originating in history, there emerge ever new historical worlds which themselves, qua syntheses, must be something original—that means that they do not possess a common part or component that remains unchanged when it becomes part of the whole. We do not even perceive in the same way as ancient Greeks even though, physiologically speaking, our sense organs are the same […] Human worlds do perhaps approximate each other, but that level is in no sense autonomous" (Patočka 1996: 11).

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[40] "Though the adjective that best characterizes Patočka's phenomenology of appearing is doubtless 'antihumanistic,' it still implies the idea of responsibility […] The task of thinking consists first of all in uncovering the illusions of anthropologism […] Nonetheless, freedom, distancing from things, is what constitutes my own personal perspective of experiencing appearance and performing acts in the world" (Rodrigo 2011: 85).

[41] See Arnason 1992.

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THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY AND THE REVERSE TRANSITION FROM KNOWLEDGE TO INFORMATION

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Abstract:

The knowledge-based society developed technologies of information in order to make better use all the data it had acquired and to manage it efficiently. Computers have replaced human memory and improved other human capacities. However, these changes have had some hidden effects. Some information is processed by computers, and the epistemic subject is replaced by them. From an epistemological point of view, we cannot speak about the bits of knowledge that are stored, but only the semantic information or data which is attached. Secondly, in the case of an epistemic subject, the so-called tacit knowledge which is incorporated into skills and practical capacities becomes more important, and is externalized in new forms. Therefore, my claim is that we can speak of a paradoxical reverse transition from knowledge to information in the knowledge-based society.

Key words: information, knowledge, knowledge based society, the new mode of knowledge production, tacit knowledge, organizational knowledge.

Some preliminary remarks

In a paper published at the inception of a new mathematical approach to language and immediately following Claude Shannon's paper "A Mathematical Theory of Communication," Warren Weaver made a distinction between three levels of analysis which has since become classical.

The first level is the technical level, which refers to "the accuracy of transference of information from sender to receiver," the second is the semantical level, which describes "the interpretation of meaning by the receiver, as compared with the intended meaning of the sender," and the third is the "influential" level, which concerns "the success with which the meaning conveyed to the receiver leads to the desired conduct on his part."[1]

Although the first level implies only technical problems that can be increasingly alleviated by the further development of technology, the other two levels contain in themselves premises for a philosophical approach. I consider first and foremost the concept of meaning. But here I will follow an epistemological path which is focused on the dynamics of knowledge and information in a knowledge-based society. Some preliminary remarks are necessary in order to clarify some concepts.

I will use in the following considerations the so-called general definitions of data, information, and knowledge based on an erotetic approach.[2]

An item is a piece of information if it has semantic content. This means that it is a piece of information if and only if:

1. It consists of one or more pieces of data;
2. These data are well-formed;
3. These well-formed data are meaningful.

[1] Weaver, 1949, p. 11.
[2] Floridi, 1999, pp. 106–107.

Sentence 1 says that without any data, we do not have any information. So, what is data? I think that the most elementary definition is also philosophically acceptable. If the world was characterized by absolute uniformity, then we would not have any data. Therefore, a datum is the effect of a difference in the world. A homogenous world, with identical parts, would not be able to produce data, or at least would only be able to produce a single datum—the fact that it exists (recall Parmenides' theory of being!). Fortunately, the world is full of difference and change.

Sentence 2 says that the data have to be ordered according to some rules and are structured in a syntax.

Sentence 3 says that the data are related to meanings, and that they become semantical items which should be understood and interpreted correctly, and even imply "truth."

For example,[3] "12" is a sign that makes a difference, but is not yet informative, because we have to attach a meaning to it in order to transform it from an empty sign to an informative one. "12" can become an astrological sign, a number of chairs, or a bus route. Therefore, a datum becomes information if and only if it becomes meaningful.

In conclusion, according to the general theory of information, information is described as data plus meaning. I will use this idea of semantic informational content in an epistemological context as an acceptable *definiens* for the concept of knowledge.

If we want to offer an approach regarding the cognitive process by which knowledge is created, transmitted, and stored as semantic informational content, then we must focus our attention on an epistemic subject which is able to have some beliefs.[4] Moreover, I agree with the thesis that knowledge involves understanding, an insight, and an intentional process or structure. I agree also that semantic content is not necessarily packed in a linguistic shell if the condition of semantic functioning is fulfilled differently. For example, we can use a picture in order to offer information about something.

Next I will follow the causal analysis of information, beliefs, and knowledge proposed by Dretske.[5] Therefore, I will define beliefs as semantic structures with an executive function, namely the shaping of the system's output. If this condition is fulfilled, then the semantic structures work as cognitive structures in that system. This means that a belief will be stored in memory—which is a part of the cognitive system—in an accessible way, and it will be used when it is necessary for a cognitive process. Therefore, the semantic structure is a cause of the output in the system. This means that a semantic structure is qualified as a cognitive structure and as a belief if and only if its semantic content causally determines the output in the system in which it appears. As a result of these assumptions, we have to differentiate between semantic structures and cognitive structures. The concept of information helps us to understand this difference.

Dretske's definition for information as a causal process is this:

"Information (in signal or structure *S*) causes *E* insofar as the properties of *S* that carry this information are those the possession of which (by *S*) makes it the cause of *E*."[6]

Let us consider a perceptual belief. All the information about angles, lines, and gradients will be used causally as ingredients, but they will not all be immediately structured as cognitive content even if they are related to semantic content. The cognitive status as belief is given, but the capacity to exercise control over the final output is acquired.

Therefore, following Dretske, "information is that commodity capable of yielding knowledge, and what information a signal carries is what we can learn from it... Knowledge is identified with information-produced (or sustained) belief."[7] This being said, if we preserve a definition of knowledge as justified true belief, we could claim that knowledge as a "dynamic human process of justifying personal beliefs toward the truth" is similar to and different from information: "First, knowledge, unlike information, is about *beliefs* and *commitment*. Knowledge

[3] See Floridi, 1999, p. 108.

[4] I mean only that in the new framework of informational society, we must take account of the old philosophical dilemma regarding the process of an epistemic subject acquiring knowledge, and how knowledge grows if the epistemic subject does not have any knowledge at the beginning, and he or she does not know what he or she is looking for (See Floridi, 1999, the paragraph "The paradox of the growth of knowledge: from the chicken and the egg to the needle in a haystack," pp. 88–96).

[5] Dretske, 1981, part III.

[6] Dretske, 1981, p. 198.

[7] Dretske, 1981, p. 44, 86.

is a function of a particular stance, perspective, or intention. Second, knowledge, unlike information, is about action. It is always knowledge 'to some end.' And third, knowledge, like information, is about meaning. It is context-specific and relational."[8]

Finally, these considerations may also help us in our aim of understanding the differences between the human mind and the epistemic subject on the one hand, and artificial intelligence and computers on the other hand. Computers handle data and may store or process it, and in this sense they can "understand" it in their own way, without any subjective commitment. But I think that it is highly controversial to say that computers "understand" information, and absurd to say that they have beliefs and knowledge.

I will return to these topics below.

The knowledge-based society and the new mode of knowledge production

The concept of the knowledge-based society became a common one in the public sphere.[9] I will use it in this paper in a broad, neutral philosophical sense that remains opened to different approaches.

Generally speaking, human action is based on knowledge, and a society in which knowledge is used as a resource will be more efficient than other socities that make a minimal use of knowledge. On the other hand, power within the society may be based on knowledge. For example, in ancient Egypt knowledge was the primary organizational principle and the basis of authority, because social processes depended upon knowledge of religious doctrines on the one hand, and on astronomical and agrarian knowledge on the other. The modern industrial and scientific revolution generated changes which led gradually to the knowledge-based society.

In the industrial society, the constitutive mechanisms and forces are labor and the property. Social relations and the membership of individuals in social groups revolve around property and labor.

In the knowledge-based society, a new factor was added to labor and property, namely knowledge. Scientific knowledge provided new principles for social hierarchies and stratification, for the distribution of social status and the quality of personal life. Moreover, knowledge became a normative principle of social cohesion and integration.

As a result of these social changes, science itself changed, especially in the way in which it is produced. Some philosophers proposed a distinction between two modes of knowledge production.[10]

Mode 1 of knowledge production is "characterized by the hegemony of theoretical or, at any rate, experimental science; by an internally driven taxonomy of disciplines; and by the autonomy of scientists and their host institutions, the universities."[11] This mode of knowledge production is traditional, initiated by the researchers and based on the academic framework of scientific disciplines.

As opposed to Mode 1, Mode 2 is context-driven, problem-focused, and interdisciplinary. First, research is generated and carried out in its own context of application based on the interests expressed by different parts of society, and as a result of a negotiation process which is based on communication between interested social actors. In this mode, organizational structures and hierarchies are opened to social and economic context and to social needs. Therefore, research begins only after social agreement about problem is achieved, and defined with a critical eye toward its applications.

Second, if in Mode 1 research is initiated by an autonomous investigator, a scientist searching for truth, devoted to the values of universalism and objectivity, and free from any social, ideological, or economic constraints, in Mode 2 the research is centered on the problem selected, so that the problem is more important than the scientist who works to solve it. In Mode 2, science becomes an interactive process in which the actors and their interests and capacity for reflexivity are brought together.

Third, if in Mode 1 the sources of theoretical and experimental scientific challenges are located into the scientific disciplines, in Mode 2 science is conceived as a process based on exchanges and imports between disciplines and between science and society—researchers are able to cross disciplines and use their knowledge anywhere.

Other differences between the two modes are related to the differences between societies based on the modern scientific revolution and those based on

[8] Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995, p. 142.

[9] For a detailed analysis, see Stoenescu, 2012.

[10] Nowotny, Scott, Gibbons, 2001a, 2001b.

[11] Nowotny, Scott, Gibbons, 2001b, p. 179.

knowledge. If in Mode 1 the interaction between researchers was limited by physical and technical constraints, in Mode 2 the researchers use new information technologies that assure instantaneous communication. At the level of social institutions, there is a convergence between their development and knowledge production. Modernity built institutions separately, and science was conceived as an independent social institution. In Mode 2, decisions are made through an interactive institutional network characterized by the actions of many stakeholders and the operations of many levels of connection between interested actors.

The relation between science and society is patterned according to some new trends.

The first trend consists of an increasing desire to settle priorities. These are established at three levels: the supranational level, the national level, and the system level. The European Community is the best example for a supranational level in which research priorities are established according to social and economic needs. At the national level, governmental institutions develop research programmes in agreement with the political agenda and their research capacities. At the system level, we have a mixture between top-down policies that promote systemic priorities and down-up attempts to promote the individual interests of scientists for other research topics.

The second trend is the commercialization of research. The two sides of this problem are public funds and intellectual property. On the one hand, researchers attempt to find financial backing for their research, or to sell the fruits of their labors. On the other hand, research organizations and individual researchers try to increase the value of their intellectual property rights. As a result, the idea of science as a public good and the principle of open access are revised.

The third trend is the accountability of science, "the growing emphasis placed upon the management of research—and, in particular, upon efforts to evaluate its effectiveness and assess its quality."[12]

Knowledge—which was traditionally conceived as a public good—become an intellectual property that is produced, deposited, accumulated, transported, managed, protected, and traded like any other good or service. Gibbons wrote that the old unwritten contract between science and society assured only the diffusion of scientific discoveries into society, while the "new contract must now ensure that scientific knowledge is 'socially robust,' and that its production is seen by society to be both transparent and participative." [13]

The modern social contract between science and society was built on trust, and has included some reciprocal expectations and sanctions. The new contract reflects the disappearance of traditional boundaries and the reciprocal "invasion" of science and society. The relations between universities and science, between fundamental research and applied research, and between science and technology have been reconfigured. In the terms of the previous contract, science was engaged in making discoveries and offering them to society, but in the new contract, knowledge is produced jointly by science and society.

Technology was traditionally conceived as a set of empirical applications of the universal laws of nature discovered by "pure science." In the knowledge-based society, science was industrialized and technology was "scientized". Therefore, science and technology are designed as cognitive systems which are different in their goals, but which share a common theoretical core. This new relation between science and technology cased other changes in the relationship between science and society, technology and society, and the trilateral interaction between science, industry, and education.

Another feature of the knowledge-based society is the amplification of the social dimensions connected with different stages of knowledge in the so-called context of discovery. Therefore, in the knowledge-based society, the condition of reliable knowledge is not sufficient for a society which is really based on knowledge. Knowledge itself becomes a pure public good, different from labor and property. This means that knowledge is open for use by anyone, provided that some rules are respected. This is also a strong reason to impose another condition which has a social character. Following Gibbons, I will use the expression "socially robust knowledge" for the systems of beliefs which are not

[12] Nowotny, Scott, Gibbons, 2001b, p. 183.

[13] Gibbons, 1999, C, p. 81.

only reliable, but also socially used as a public good according to some rules. This public space is like an "agora" where science and the public talk to each other, one that is more comprehensive than any other public space. Universities, industry, and government are parts of this public space "where today's societal and scientific problems are framed and defined, and their solutions are negotiated" (Gibbons, 1999, p. 84). Socially robust science is tested not only methodologically, but also socially in different contexts. While reliable knowledge is open to negotiation and theoretically closed in its principles, socially robust knowledge is open to negotiation as a social product.

The tacit dimension of knowledge and organizational knowledge

My thesis is that in the knowledge-based society, the development of new technologies also changes communication practices and the way in which knowledge is transferred and conveyed. As a result of these practical changes, the concept of knowledge itself must be reconsidered, especially with regard to its objectivity. The idea of objective knowledge that is free of context and values has changed. Michael Polanyi[14] criticized the idea of objective knowledge that is free from any subjective influence, and argued that—at least in the context of discovery—the subjective dimension of knowledge is very important. It is obvious that scientific discoveries are related to feelings and beliefs. In Polanyi's view there is a tension between reason and explicit critical interrogation on the one hand, and the tacit dimension of knowledge on the other. Polanyi argues that personal choices and imagination are inherent parts of the research process which are always significantly motivated by passions. Therefore, discovery of truth is not independent from personal elements. Moreover, scientific research requires the passions of its researchers.

In order to grasp this difference and conceptualize it, Polanyi proposed a distinction between personal knowledge and propositional knowledge, understood in terms of the difference between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. This means that we are able to know more than we can say with the help of our language. We can convert tacit knowledge into propositional knowledge, for example, and we can transform some tacit procedures associated with a practice into explicit rules, but something will always remain implicit and unstated. The dynamic of these two forms of knowledge is based on the possibility of reciprocal transformations between tacit and explicit knowledge, but if we take into account the historical process of knowledge development, then we have to accept in principle, following Polanyi, that all knowledge is ultimately either tacit knowledge or rooted in tacit knowledge.

Another crucial feature of the knowledge-based society—a feature which is also related to the tacit dimension of knowledge—is the new role of various organizations in the production of knowledge. If we think in the light of the traditional Cartesian distinction between subject and object—or between the knower/subject and the object which is known—and try to rethink it, then we can see an organization as a mechanism which has not only the capacity to process information received from outside in order to adapt to the environment, but also the capacity to create knowledge and new information with the help of its own inner mechanisms, to send them out into the environment, and to modify this environment.

Nonaka and Takeuchi[15] proposed a theory of organizational knowledge (or knowledge-creating organization) which is based both on the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge and on the supposition that knowledge is socially created and transformed through the interactions between individuals who work in an organization. Their paradigm can be better understood with the help of a case study. The two Japanese philosophers discuss the case of a bread-making machine. They describe the way in which the tacit knowledge of the breadmaker can be extracted and worded in such a manner that it becomes possible to incorporate it into a bread-making machine.[16] Nonaka and Takeuchi make a distinction between four modes in which knowledge is transformed in an organization:

[14] See Polanyi, 1956, 1964, 1967.

[15] Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995.

[16] In terms of Collins' distinctions between kinds of tacit knowledge, it is obvious that this approach starts from one case of relational tacit knowledge, but the case can be redefined if desired, something that Collins himself did. See Collins, 2010, Appendix 1.

- from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge, a conversion which is called “socialization,”
- from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, a conversion which is called “externalization,”
- from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge, a conversion which is called “combination,” and
- from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge, a conversion which is called “internalization.”[17]

Socialization is an interactive process in which an individual learns and acquires knowledge, mental models, and skills from others without using language, but only by observation, imitation, and practice, with all of these understood as forms of sharing experience. The information is extracted from a mixture composed sensations, feelings, thoughts embedded in a context.

Externalization is a process of converting tacit knowledge into explicit concepts and judgments with the help of language. Tacit knowledge may become explicit not only if the informational content is constrained in order to take the shape of an assertion, a theory, or a hypothesis, but also if it takes the shape of a metaphor, an analogy, or a model. Through externalization, new explicit concepts are created from tacit knowledge.

Combination is a process of fitting and incorporating concepts into systems. In this process, the epistemic subject uses different technical equipment, facilities, and networks. The previous information and knowledge is reconfigured, sorted, and combined with new information. In the knowledge-based society, new technical means have been developed for storing information in databases process it according to previously established cognitive aims.

Internalization is a process of learning by doing, transforming explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge in the form of mental models, or so-called “know-how.” Explicit knowledge is expressed linguistically in theories, documents, books, manuals, databases, and is spread by universities, or with the help of mass media or other means. In this way, knowledge is re-experienced and interiorized by epistemic subjects, individuals, and organizations.

[17] See Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995, pp. 146-156.

Nonaka and Takeuchi’s theory, following Polanyi, gives a definition of tacit knowledge based on the presupposition that it can be made explicit in some conditions. Therefore, in their view tacit knowledge is the same as implicit knowledge, and is opposed to explicit knowledge. This means that tacit knowledge is reduced to being a relational property. Harry Collins developed this analysis of tacit knowledge, and has made a distinction between three types of tacit knowledge: [18]

- somatic tacit knowledge, which is embodied in the human body and brain;
- relational tacit knowledge, which may or may not be able to be made explicit in some circumstances;
- collective tacit knowledge, which is embedded in society.

The approach proposed by Collins enlarges the traditional meaning of tacit knowledge, and provides a new perspective on its role in the knowledge-based society.

I think that in light of this distinction proposed by Collins, we can identify two other components of organizational knowledge which have a tacit dimension:

1. Knowledge embedded in organizational technologies, rules, and procedures. Any organization tends to regulate itself with the aim to efficiently use its own knowledge. A person outside the organization will not have any knowledge of these rules.

2. Knowledge culturally embedded as an aggregate of perceptions, values, beliefs, faiths, and visions. This kind of knowledge contains a diversity of elements, from neural software that has a cognitive interface, to the so-called anonymous collective thinking in which an individual is kept. Some philosophers mentioned the importance of a biological knowledge or a historical *a priori* knowledge that grounds and establishes the conditions for the possibility of knowledge.[19]

Conclusion: the reverse transition from knowledge to information

It is time to put together all the pieces of the theoretical puzzle developed above. My thesis is that

[18] See Collins, 2010.

[19] See, for example, Konrad Lorenz, 1978, or Michel Foucault, 1989.

in the knowledge-based society, knowledge itself becomes more important than it was in other types of societies, but even as the role of knowledge grows, we must also recognize the growing role of information. Moreover, information becomes a decisive factor in society, and it tends to work solely as an independent variable. I will explain how and why.

The development of information technologies in the knowledge-based society—especially the use of computers in all human activities—transformed society's inner structure and gave it new properties. The knowledge-based society is also an informational society. Therefore, the tacit knowledge which is embedded in society has changed in structure, volume, and properties. On the other hand, at the level of individuals, the users of computers have acquired new skills, and a new kind of tacit knowledge has been internalized. I think that we can even speak of changes at the level of somatic tacit knowledge in the human body and brain. Moreover, the interaction between humans and artificial intelligence has become a factor in new changes and developments.

The ways in which information is stored and processed by computers or with the help of artificial intelligence has become a key factor in human development and the social integration of individuals, and also in the cohesion of society at large, in its communication and decision-making process. And all these activities depend on the information which is stored and processed by machines without any human intervention, because the human mind is unable to work with such large quantities of information. This Humans are the only epistemic subjects who are able to gain knowledge, and yet the knowledge-based society has commissioned much of its activity to computers, which are not epistemic subjects and which process information automatically.

The use of computers changes the entire discussion of tacit knowledge, from somatic to relational to collective. The individuals have to learn and to acquire new skills, and these generate new uses of the mind and body, and, as a result, new elements of somatic tacit knowledge are internalized. New rules are produced and new irreducible tacit items are located at the relational and collective level.

Therefore, to the reciprocal epistemological conversions from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, I add the reverse transition from knowledge to information which occurs at a somatic and collective level. The conditions in which an epistemic subject might gain and produce knowledge are materially and formally modified and restructured at all levels of tacit knowledge, but also through the conversion of knowledge into information with the support of new information technologies. I will discuss the details of these changes in a future paper.

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THE ONTOLOGY OF THE JUDICATIVE
AN OUTLINE OF A PRE-JUDICATIVE ONTOLOGY

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Abstract:
In this paper, I will attempt to formulate some observations about the limits of a traditional ontology that is in its essence a judicative one. The main goal is to explore the possibility of constructing a pre-judicative ontology; in other words, to describe the cognitive and affective elements that are "under" the main ontological judgments, related naturally to being. The arguments in favor of a pre-judicative ontology offer a new perspective on judicative ontology itself. This pre-judicative ontology is nevertheless a kind of judicative ontology that covers a nonspecific realm of values. The paper has three parts: 1) a description of the main characteristics of traditional ontology from a judicative perspective; 2) the formulation of some logical conditions of possibility for a pre-judicative ontology; and 3) the outline of a pre-judicative ontology as an ontology of values.

Key words: judicative ontology, pre-judicative ontology, negative judgment, negative predication, value judgments, Kant.

1. Traditional judicative ontology and the idea of negativity

The term "ontology" refers firstly, we know, to a philosophical discipline whose main theme the study of being, and the difference between being itself and beings. Nowadays, ontology is not considered an autonomous philosophical discipline, but rather a thematic domain related to some models of philosophizing, such as phenomenology, analytic philosophy, philosophical hermeneutics, etc.[1] Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" is perhaps the last ontology created as an autonomous discipline. Since Heidegger, ontology has only been connected to different "new" philosophies and reduced to a thematic domain of philosophizing.

If problems, questions, topics, and concepts are historically determined in ontology, and in this way there is an identity between tradition and actuality, its methods are related to models of philosophizing in which it appears as a thematic domain; and just this fact connects it to the mentioned models, from which it takes over certain methods, procedures, tools, and techniques that are used by philosophers in order to approach its own topics.

Ontology is constructed—as are all traditional philosophical disciplines—in a judicative way, i.e., on the basis of an *a priori* judgment. For instance: "Any thing has its own being." The *a priori* judgment is claimed unconditionally by philosophical thought. All ontological enunciations come from this original judgment and realize together, in this way, a "system," a set of coherent judgments. Along with this *a priori* judgment, each system of ontology has a judgment about the "quality" or the "nature" of being: this latter is physical or spiritual, it is in the world together with all things and shares its "nature" with them; or it is in another world, transcendent; or

[1] For relation between the ontology and phenomenology, see: John J. Drummond, *Phenomenology and ontology*, http://faculty.fordham.edu/drummond/Phenomenology%20and%20Ontology.pdf. „Phenomenology reinscribes ontology as the science of the objects of experience, and the ontological categories applicable to objects of experience are clarified phenomenologically". – *Op. cit.*, p. 12. Also, on this theme, idea about the phenomenological ontology as a "phenomeno-theology of touch". – Arthur Bradley, *The Deconstruction of Christianity: On Touching the Frontiers of Theory*, in Louis Armand and Pavel Černovský, *Language System. After Prague Structuralism*, Prague, Litteraria Pragensia, 2007.

it is a simple given. There are, of course, other qualitative determinations of being that constitute the basis of an ontological system. The categories in Aristotelian philosophy, and also in Kant's philosophy, express these determinations. In this respect, is important to note that Kant arranges his system of categories on the basis of the different kinds of judgments.

Ontological discourse emphasizes the idea of a difference between two levels of reality: one of them is the world of Being (the world of that-which-exists-as-such)—i.e., the intelligible world—as the foundation of all things, and the other is the world of common things, of determined beings. Ideas about these two topologies—including ideas about their physical and metaphysical properties—were formulated at very inception of philosophy itself. The main ideas, concepts, and problems of ontology were ordered into judgments in which being is the primary focus—as the ground of all affirmations or negations—and further into theories, conceptions, and *Weltanschauung*(s). Being is an element in the structure of judgments, and this is why judgments are formally more important than being in classical ontology.

Nowadays, the mutual influence of ontology and the mentioned models of philosophizing (phenomenology, analytic philosophy, philosophical hermeneutics, etc.) has a double meaning. On the one hand, ontology becomes a thematic domain of certain philosophies, and, on the other hand, their methods become ontological.

Ontology stresses, in these conditions, its negative tint. Moreover, this tint becomes, for ontological discourse, the most important aspect in the contemporary philosophy. In other words, in the relation between ontology and certain models of philosophizing, negativity has a constitutive function. There is a special relationship between ontology as a thematic discourse and negativity as a discursive technique in the history of philosophy, but especially at its beginning, with some Presocratics: Anaximander, Parmenides, and others. Historians of philosophy claim that this latter (Parmenides) is the founder of a discipline named "meontology," whose object is non-being (or nothingness); and this discipline is present, they say, in many other places in the history of philosophy. We can say that now, unlike in many other moments, ontology works with negativities—or, more precisely, with negative judgments. This fact appears as a specific aspect of the thinking experience in contemporary philosophy.

Kant's *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*, a paper published in his pre-critique period (1763), represents the first significant moment in modern philosophical history of the relationship between the philosophical discourse and negativity.[2] At the same time, in this paper the limits of cognitive judgment are explained. But the limit of the judicative must take negativity into account; this latter, as an idea connected to judgments as a logical form, is as actual as any other aspect of judgments in which we express our knowledge and assessments. In any case, Kant's discourse has all the characteristics of an ontology. The judgments of his theory about "negative magnitudes" focus on the problem of being and its relation to existence, the problem of knowledge and its limits, and other problems that he would approach again in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. In his "Transcendental Analytic," Kant creates a distinction between negative judgments with positive predicates, and affirmative judgments with negative predicates; he was claiming that despite their logical formal identity, the second judgment has an *a priori* function in transcendental logic.[3] This difference is very important for my discussion of pre-judicative ontology.

We can find a philosophical construction with the idea of negativity at its center in Heidegger's phenomenology, namely in the context of his paper: *What is metaphysics?* / *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929). The author states that metaphysics refers to an experience in which beings withdraw, bringing nothingness comes into focus. Anxiety (or dread) as an affective situation (along with fear) makes possible a metaphysics whose object is the being of beings.[4]

[2] See Kant, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* / *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*, translated by David Walford, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

[3] "General logic abstracts all content of the predicate (though it be negative), and only considers whether the said predicate be affirmed or denied of the subject. But transcendental logic considers also the worth or content of this logical affirmation—an affirmation by means of a merely negative predicate, and inquires how much the sum total of our cognition gains by this affirmation." – Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by J. M. D. Meyklejohn, The Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classic Series, 2010, p 77.

[4] Cf. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929) / *What is Metaphysics?*, translated by Thomas Sheehan, in *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, I – 2001, Noesis Press, Ltd. Seattle, pp. 184–199.

In a recent book—*Negative certitudes / Certitudes négatives* (2010)—French philosopher J. L. Marion philosophizes in such a way that negativities are highlighted.[5] He claims to introduce "negative certitudes" in philosophy, and shows how Kant introduced "negative magnitudes." The object of this kind of certitude is not something that can be tested in a subjective way—by perception, for example—but must be accepted as meaningful due to its capacity to be conceived. Negation is related to the limit of our constitutive capacity and is applied to certain judgments. There are questions without answer, but they must still be asked. For instance: questions that focus on the individual self, on the Alter Ego, on God, and so on. In this way, Marion again extends phenomenology, both thematically and methodologically, after he has introduced the idea of donation and the concept of the saturated phenomenon.

The two latter examples point to contemporary interest in the problem of negativities and their relationship to acts of philosophizing.

2. Pre-judicative ontology: formal elements of its constitution

I will attempt to describe a way to reach beyond the judicative commitments in the space of the non-judicative, wherein lie the roots of certain human experiences related to art, ethics, religion, etc.—experiences which pass, after their performance, into the judicative horizon. I think this path can be opened by de-constituting certain judgments/prejudgments, i.e., by returning to the elements of an ontological judgment—returning, in fact, to the meanings of its own terms.

As I said, any ontological judgment has Being in its structure. This is a requirement, and if it is not present, then the judgment remains unfulfilled. As a rule, being does not stay in the position of the predicate or subject; it is the relation between them. For example: "A is B." Being is the relation between A and B, in the sense that A has B property. Both terms refer to things that can only be in this relation of being. The judgment seems to be the true place of the actuality of this state of affairs. In fact, the judgment only expresses the state of affairs, and it, with its power to impose certain rules on things, does not give them the power to be something. In his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein talks about the judgment as a logical fact that expresses a state of affairs.[6] There are three facts here: the state of affairs, its correspondent judgment, and the language used in order to bring in accord the first two facts. The judgment (proposition, sentence) is a picture of a state of affairs, and a theory (from natural science) is an image of the world. Therefore, the judgment must not be confused with the "reality": it represents the logical space, and this is why the judgment is also different from the language.

The true power of judgments appears when the negativities come into play. In this case, the things themselves are nothing (or are nothingness). For all that, the judgment shows itself as the main support of the states of affairs. In this perspective, the things themselves appear in our world only by judicative mediation. We know, starting from this situation, that a number of contemporary philosophers attempt to catch the "things themselves."

Negativity appears in two hypostases in the structure of judgment:

(1) as a negation applied to the verb (A *is not* B);

(2) as a negation applied to the predicate (A is *non-B*).

Logically, these two situations are essentially different, although Kant—as we saw—affirms that the difference only appears in a transcendental logic. The first is a negative judgment, whereas the second is affirmative (the negativity appearing in the predicate position). For the first, I want to maintain the term "negative judgment," and for the second, I will use the term "negative predication." There is a logical difference between judgment and predication, both negative. But is there also an ontological difference between these two logical forms? These terms do not seem to be logically or philosophically justified. In fact, they refer to the same logical form, structured by two notions. But the judgment negates (or affirms) a positive predicate about a subject, whereas the predication only affirms a negative predicate about a subject. The first is deduced from a general ontological judgment, ultimately from the principle: *Every thing has its own being*; but the second can only appear through a negation applied to the predicate term. Above all, this negation is not logical, but ontological, because here nothingness—as something in opposition to being—is implied. To say "A is non-B" means to say A is, in a way, noth-

[5] See J.-L. Marion, *Certitudes negatives* (2010) / *Certitudini negative*, tran. Maria-Cornelia Ică jr., Sibiu, Editura Deisis, 2013.

[6] "The proposition is a picture of reality, for I know the state of affairs presented by it, if I understand the proposition." Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by C. K. Ogden, Project Gutenberg, 2010, p. 40, 4.021.

ingness. Being is present in both judgments; it even ties the subject and the predicate. Of course, the criterion of negation is very important, for A is nothing only on the basis of a determined fact (the criterion), and it would be able to be something from another perspective. Nevertheless, this latter fact is valid only for the negative judgment, not for the negative predication.

In this respect, we have to accept other conventional judgments that enter into play, all of them based on our knowledge, on our accredited "theories," conceptions, ideas, and so on. For instance, the judgment that "The rain that is falling is caused by the clouds" is senseless from a mythological perspective, because there "The rain that is falling is caused by the gods." And reciprocally!

In the case of negative predication, it is necessary to negate not only a certain judgment, as in the case of negative judgment, but the main judgments of a theory, its principles of knowledge. The negative predication is not a cognitive, but is, in its essence, a *value judgment*. Nevertheless, negative predication, as a logical form, is not reduced to a value judgment if it is negative.

In general, when we say, "This object is a hammer," implicitly we also say, "This hammer is very hard," or, "This hammer is easy to use" etc. The value judgments that accompany a cognitive judgment are not directly obvious, but implicit. They can be understood if we create a way to reveal them. This fact requires a hermeneutics with a special status: a "hermeneutics of the pre-judicative," which is very close to a "hermeneutics of facticity" in the phenomenological version of ontology.[7] I am not only talking about negative judgments and predications. In any version of ontology, cognitive judgments are accompanied by value judgments, and in order to understand and interpret them, these latter must be analyzed apart from their "subjective" unity, where they are tied up with many cognitive elements.

Negativity is not found in value judgments directly in a logical way, but in an ontological one. It is a negation of a state of affairs because it imposes a subjective "impression" ("assessment") that can be recognized inter-subjectively, and in this way the impression is able to become "objective." The inter-subjective recognition of a subjective "impression" is a condition for a philosophical experience, and further, a "theory" recognizable in any time or cultural space.

What does "pre-judicative" mean? It is a layer of the constituted object created by specific subjective acts that deliver the material for judgments, i.e., a logical form with two terms, a subject and a predicate, that is the basis for all propositions (sentences, statements, etc.).[8] On the other hand, the pre-judicative supports the nothingness that must be considered when we accept that, along with our cognitive judgments, there are value judgments.

The elements of the cognitive judgment structure, thoughts about nothingness, the assessments that accompany the terms of this structure, the experience through which all of these receive an important subjective and inter-subjective foundation—all of this together constitutes the object of pre-judicative ontology.

3. The second judicative ontology as an ontology of values

At the beginning of the paper, I talked about the second judicative ontology as a "theory" that becomes possible only through an experience of nothingness. In fact, the constitution of negative predications—through which nothingness comes into being—opens our consciousness to a space for the nonjudicative, in which the rules of judgment are inoperative, but only until consciousness intervenes in order to judge all nonjudicative material. In this way, a trace of the nonjudicative is preserved in new judicative arrangements, but of course the logical form of judgment is the true "rule of method." We must not let value judgments escape from our attention, for they both accompany all knowledge and bring the experience of nothingness into being. It is these judgments that preserve a trace of the nonjudicative in a new way: the *ontology of values* as the second judicative ontology. The word "second" here is not qualitative, but temporal; it does not refer to the quality of the ontology, but to the time at which its "objects" are constituted. This becomes possible after an experience of negative value predication, by

[7] See Ed. Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*, Second Book: „Studies in the phenomenology of constitution", translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, Dordrecht/Boston/London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000.
For a comparison, see also J. D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutical Project*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1987.

[8] For this meaning, see Dorothée Legrand, "Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness: On Being Bodily in the World", in *Janus head*, vol. 9, No.1 / 2007, pp. 493–519; http://www.janushead.org/9-2/Legrand.pdf.

transforming its nonjudicative object into elements of judicative intentionality, with which our consciousness necessarily works.

The domain of second ontology therefore requires for its constitution the experiences of the nonjudicative and their judicative transformation. In this way, nonjudicative elements receive pre-judicative meanings.[9] The experience of nothingness in a (new) judicative horizon opens the way to a true ontology of values. And this fact is proved especially by the presence of nothingness in the structure of value judgments in any of their hypostases. In order to illustrate this idea, let us start with the following judgments:

(1) This work of art *is* beautiful. / This work of art *is not* beautiful.

(2) This work of art is *non-beautiful*.

(3) Beauty is the most important artistic value.

At a first sight, the negative judgment with a positive predicate of (1) is identical with the affirmative judgment with a negative predicate of (2). This logical identity can be proved by a simple obversion, if these two judgments are interpreted as universal judgments: S e P → (by obversion) S a ~P. On the other hand, these two judgments are not identical, because even logically there is a difference between a negation with a positive predicate and an affirmation with a negative predicate, which I illustrated with Kant's point of view. In fact, all these observations were mentioned above, except for the judgment in general. It is clear that, in the first case, the identity is supported by the truth value, whereas in the second, the difference is based on the logical structure and the status of its components. Moreover, in the second case the negative predicate provides the subject with its sense of nothingness: first, this work of art is nothingness concerning its beauty-value (therefore, in an ontological sense); then, it is insignificant in its relation with beauty (consequently, in an axiological sense). Which of these two senses is the truly primary one is not a problem that needs to be addressed at this moment. Instead, the quality of nothingness (ontologically) and the insignificance (axiologically) of the subject are what is important.

The judgment of (3)—"Beauty is the most important artistic value"—orders an entire domain of human facts: art. It justifies and provides a foundation for all esthetic judgments. Therefore, it has an esthetic meaning, i.e., an axiological one. The three judgments of (1) and (2) can be interpreted as their own logical consequences. Nevertheless, the judgment of (2) has a special function due to its relationship with nothingness. We know that the subject—because it cannot be something determined as a value—is, in fact, nothing. In this way, this judgment breaks all relations with the universal value judgment of (3).

Even if we start from a universal value judgment, the result of the logical process is also the nothingness: a thing is universal only in its absolute condition. But the absolute is not an experienced thing, and from this perspective, it is nothing. Just starting with this idea brings to mind some valid applications. A value is universal—as a criterion of evaluation, as a rule for ordering facts, as a principle of acceptance or rejection, and so on—but its universality is limited to a determined space of validity; consequently, it is a non-absolute. The value is determined by such operations: it becomes "good," "truth," "beauty," etc. At the same time, the value receives an ontological meaning: any fact that is ordered—founded, justified, and so on—is something determined as a being. Of course, the value itself is, from this moment, something determined as a being.

In this process, both the value and the valuable thing are negated, resulting in nothingness. But only a thing that can be negated exists. We must now pay attention to a difference that has resulted from the evaluation of two situations in which negation operates. In the first situation, there are two judgments, and one of them is affirmative: "This work of art *is* beautiful," while the second is negative: "This work of art *is not* beautiful." Let us suppose that these two judgments are made by me and a colleague. Each of us has his own criteria of evaluation. At the same time, we both accept that beauty is the most important value in the domain of art (the judgment of (3)). Here the difference in judgments reflects a confrontation of our criteria concerning the status of the given work of art, depending on our education and experience in artistic domains, our knowledge of the history of art, and so on. In the second judgment, there is only an affirmative judgment with a negative predicate—and, of course, the thought about nothingness as a determination of the subject ("work of art"). Just this fact, namely the thought of nothingness connected to the subject of judgment, leads us toward a new horizon of analysis that is essentially nonjudicative. Our problem, in this moment, is how we can preserve the negativity of the nonjudicative,

[9] The nonjudicative and the pre-judicative can be compared, in order to stress their difference but also their closeness, with the couple „visible-invisible" from M. Merleau-Ponty's homonymous paper.

since all its elements are interpreted and raised up to the level of the judicative.

I talked about a second ontology that is not a judicative one. Of course, it is subjected to a process by which it is brought to a judicative condition, but we have a chance to preserve its connection with the nothingness or negativity. If this characteristic is preserved, the result is not a new judicative ontology that works with cognitive judgments—although this is entirely possible—but a pre-judicative ontology. It cannot be a nonjudicative one, because it cannot preserve negativity exactly, but it can maintain a trace of it. The fulfilled hypostasis of pre-judicative ontology is the ontology of values.

4. Conclusions

Ontology is an important topic for new models of philosophizing—its problems, questions, ideas, and concepts can be found in their discursive structure. Among the deep problems proposed by these contemporary philosophical models are the ontological functions of the idea of negativity. My paper has argued that an ontology of values becomes possible through negative value predications. There are at least two results of this that lead to a reconstruction of ontology in general, but especially of the ontology of values:

(1) nonjudicative experiences are fructified, and become significant in any philosophical performance, because they imply an interpretation of nothingness along with an understanding of the being;

(2) the interpretation of values becomes an ontology of values as a second judicative ontology which takes into account simply the being of the value—i.e., its own essential and definitive aspect.

The steps—in fact, the results of some operations—by which the pre-judicative ontology can be achieved are the following:

(1) the recognition of a distinction between a *negative judgment* (which is suitable for an act of cognition) and a *negative predication* (which is suitable for an act of evaluation);

(2) the *experiencing of the nothingness* at the level of subjectivity, by which we perform value judgments as negative predications; nothingness is connected to the subject of a value judgment due to its negative predicate, and consequently it is, firstly, a nonjudicative experience, and then a subjective thought;

(3) the transformation of this *nonjudicative experience* and subjective thought in an *objective meaning*, valid for other subjectivities, by expressing it in new value judgments; the new value judgment is different than the classical value judgment because it preserves the thought of nothingness;

(4) the constitution of *pre-judicative ontology as an ontology of values*, by putting new value judgments together in a system; and

(5) the retrieval of the *cognitive aspect of value judgments* by applying them to our new evaluative experiences.

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CHRISTIAN VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF SECULARIZATION AND POST-SECULARIZATION

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Abstract:

This paper is focused, firstly, on the status of Christianity (as a whole) after a long period of secularization—examining in particular its "protective mechanisms"—and, secondly, on the modern tendencies that are transforming the present into an age of desecularization. The central interest here is the interaction between the *civil* and *Christian* values in the context of the two historical periods. The article provides a comparison between the aggressive use of reason during the Enlightenment and postmodern religious indifferentism in an attempt to illuminate the present status of Christianity.

Key words: Christian and secular values, secularization, post-secularization, revival of religion, post-Christian situation, postmodern age.

This article is occasioned by a question posed by Josef Ratzinger in a dialogue between him and Habermas (2004) on issues of reason and religion: "Should the gradual dismantling of religion, its surmounting, be conceived of as an advance of mankind, a necessary step in order for mankind to be able to embark on the road to freedom and universal tolerance?"[1] The article is focused, first, on the situation of Christianity (most generally) during the long period of secularization and the "defense mechanisms" it used during that time, and, second, on the trend of descularization in the present age. The central interest here is the relation between *secular/civic* values and *Christian* values as found in the abovementioned two historical periods. This paper attempts to answer and reformulate Ratzinger's question thusly: "Can the unexpected revitalization of religion be conceived as an advance of mankind in light of the state of Christianity in the present world?"

The trend of secularization lies at the very foundations of Christianity, posited by the division of life into two spheres—the sacred and the secular, the two Cities. The split that this dualism inevitably causes in the souls of those who are members of this "Christian" society is facilitated to a considerable degree by the obligatory nature of the Christian worldview, by the normative position of that worldview. The guiding principle of the Christian perspective minimizes the conflict between man and society, even though the medieval theocracies—papal and imperial—were never in fact an enlightened combination of the secularism and of the Kingdom of God.

Protestant theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg points out that this balance between the religious and the secular was violated after the Reformation—or, more precisely, after the wars of religion. Inasmuch as no religious party was able to impose itself on the whole society, the social order had to be established upon *non-religious grounds*: "In the second half of the seventeenth century, therefore, thoughtful people decided that, if social peace was to be restored, religion and the controversies associated with religion

[1] Josef Ratzinger (2006) Onova, koeto udyrzha sveta v edno (Holding the World Together). In: Habermas, J., Ratzinger, J. *Dialektika na sekularizaciata. Za razuma i religiata* (The Dialects of Secularization: On Reason and Religion). Sofia: Iztok – Zapad, p. 51.

would have to be bracketed. In that decision was the birth of modern secular culture. It would in time lead to secular*ism* and a culture that is properly described as secularist."[2]

There is a prevailing opinion that secularization signals decline of the traditional society and the rise of Modernity, that it is a phenomenon immanently proper to Modernity, and that it has substituted theonomy with the autonomy of human reason. The pushing of religion to the margin of society is one of the problems upon which Habermas focuses particular attention; he writes: "Since the days of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, the thesis that there is a close link between the advancing modernization of society and a secularization of consciousness that reaches ever further has long remained undisputed"[3] (Habermas 2009: 38). This thesis has rested upon three considerations: first, scientific-technical progress has nourished an *anthropocentric* understanding of the world which is incompatible with the *cosmocentric* or *theocentric* one; second, in the course of the growingly functional public nature of the subsystems of society, religion has tended to lose its public importance and become a private matter; third, *existential security*, which grows as a result of modern scientific-technical progress, decreases man's need for protection coming from beyond.[4]

In his reflections on the influence that religion exerts on society, the historian René Rémond identifies the concrete historical steps that brought about the creation of a secular society. He comments on the political history of France, and specifically the year 1790, when the Constituent Assembly passed a law called the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. The very title, Rémond points out, defines a certain conception of the relations between religion and society.[5] He also traces the history of the French Revolution, which opened a crack in the system of the traditional society, in which religion played an intimate part. The first secularization, according to Rémond, consisted in the choice made by France, "the decision regarding a single and neutral civil state. Society begins to lead a life separate from the church community and religious differences."[6]

As a crisis of trust in religion (in the most general sense), secularization is expressed in the "disenchantment" and desacralization of the world, the rejection of divine legitimization of political power, the separation of public institutions from religious traditions, and the relegation of religion to a "private matter." Religion becomes a "personal business"; but is not Christianity in fact a "personal business," a "personal religion"? Charles Taylor defines the striving for a personal religion as part of the impulse towards secularization.[7] Being an important, essential social change, secularization concerns the public importance of religion and marks a different organization and functioning of modern society. Brian Wilson defines it as a process in which religious institutions, actions, and views lose their social importance.[8] Habermas, in his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize (2001), defined the phenomenon thus: "First of all, the word 'secularization' has a juridical meaning that refers to the forcible appropriation of church property by the secular state. This meaning has since been extended to the emergence of cultural and societal modernism in general. Since then, the word 'secularization' has been associated with both of these opposed judgments, whether it is the successful taming of ecclesiastical authority by worldly power that is being emphasized or rather the act of unlawful appropriation."[9] In the mentioned discussion with Josef Ratzinger, Habermas proposed an understanding of secularization as a process that makes Enlightenment traditions and religious doctrines reflect on their own boundaries.[10]

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[2] Wolfhart Panenberg (1996) "How to Think about Secularism." Available at http://www.firstthings.com/article/1996/06/002-how-to-think-about-secularism

[3] Jürgen Habermas (2009) Revitaliziraneto na svetovnite religii – predizvikatelstvo za sekularnoto seberazbirane na modernostta? (The Revitalization of the World Religions. A Challenge to the Secular Self-Understanding of Modernity?). In: *Hristianstvo i kultura*, № 42, p. 38.

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 38-39.

[5] René Rémond (2006) *Religia i obshtestvo v Evropa. Ese za sekularizaciata na evropejskite obshtestva prez XIX i XX vek (1789 – 1998)*. **(**Religion and Society in Modern Europe. Essay about the Secularization of the European Societies in the 19th and 20th Century), Sofia, LIK, p. 21.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 73.

[7] See Charles Taylor (2006) *Raznovidnosti na religiata dnes* (Varieties of Religion Today), Sofia, Kritika i humanizym, p. 22.

[8] Brian Wilson (2001) *Religiata v sociologicheska perspektiva* (Religion in a Sociological Perspective), Sofia, Praxis, p. 160.

[9] Jürgen Habermas (2001) Faith and Knowledge. Available at: http://www.ucc.ie/archive/hdsp/Habermas_Faith_and_knowledge_ev07-4_en.htm

[10] Jürgen Habermas (2006) Dopoliticheski osnovania na demokratichnata pravova dyrzhava (Pre-Political Foundations of the Democratic Constitutional State), in: Habermas, J., Ratzinger, J. *Dialektika na sekularizaciata. Za*

The secularized society has begun to assert its new values—rationalism, individualism, liberalism, universal human rights, democracy, etc. They have been established enduringly, and define the life of the citizen today. On the other hand, Christianity becomes *Privatsache*, and continues to support its unchanging values: love, salvation, cooperation with God (synergy), θέωσις as the supreme vocation of man. A very serious division occurs in the person as a member of both the secular society and the Church. Since "even the most radical disenchantment does not affect faith, which is paradoxical in essence,"[11] the encounter of the two types of upheld and confessed values causes mental disharmony. Of course, the problem concerns only people who are religious, for whom the two spheres, the two Cities, are truly separate worlds: the secular society has revoked all transcendence and seeks happiness within the limits of this world, but the community of the religious yearns for the Kingdom of God beyond. The division cannot be resolved, the two aspects of the world cannot be harmonized again; one must pay each of them their due independently. As Berdyaev wrote: "In the world has occurred tremendous creative development in science, in philosophy, in art, in state and social life, in the advances of the technical, in the moral attitudes of people, even in religious thought, in mystical frames of mind. All of us, not only non-believers, but also believing Christians, we all participate in this developement of the world, this developement of culture, and we devote to it a significant part of our time and effort. On Sunday we come into Church. Six days in the week we devote to our creative, constructive work. And our creative attitude towards life remains non-justified, non-sanctified, not co-dependent upon the religious principle of life."[12]

The present text cannot exhaust the diversity of responses coming from Christianity while it was compelled to exist under the conditions of Modernity, which, in imposing civic values, produced imitations of religion (Marxism, Communism, liberalism, nationalism, anarchism). As *secular religions of salvation*,[13] these enter into intense competition with Christianity.

The anthropological turnabout in 20th century theology is one of the "axial" moments in the history of the relations between Christian and secular values. Karl Rahner—eminent Catholic theologian and philosopher, and one of the authors of the documents of the Second Vatican Council (devoted to the dialogue between the Church and the world)—formulated the concept of so-called "anonymous Christianity," and also "everyday Christianity," the experiencing of the Holy Ghost in the things of daily life. The aim is for Christianity to be immediately equated with the human, which holds deep within itself (though in a hidden way) the religious. Rahner declares that Salvation can be achieved not only within the Church, but also in the world of everyday life, in the sphere of the profane. Thus, religion cannot be a private matter, a local section of human life, but is once again the primeval foundation of life. In declaring itself opposed to the "privatization" of religion, Rahner's "anonymous Christianity" is charged with anti-secularizing energy.

The tendency to anthropize theology has become common to the two main Western Christian confessions, and has, to a great degree, decreased the differences between them. The high point of this trend was in the 1960s, when Christian thinkers developed a theology of the "death of God."[14] Among the currents that have gained popularity are the *new Christology* of Hans Küng, the *theology of hope* of Jürgen Moltmann,[15] *the political theology* of Johann Metz, the *radical theology* of Harvey Cox, the Latin Amerian *liberation theology, feminist theology, "black" theology,* etc.

So far, this discussion has referred to the two Western confessions, Catholicism and Protestantism; Eastern Orthodox Christianity has understandably not been part of these trends. Its historical destiny

razuma i religiata (The Dialects of Secularization: On Reason and Religion), Sofia, Iztok – Zapad, p. 18-19.

[11] Vladimir Gradev (2015) *Izlizania* (Transcendings), Sofia, Fondacia Komunitas, p. 189.

[12] Nikolay Berdyaev (1999) Spasenie i tvorchestvo (Salvation and Creativity). In: *Put'*, No. 2. (by translator Fr. Stephen Janos), p. 28.

[13] Gottfried Küenzlen (1987) Secular Religion and Its Futuristic-Eschatological Conceptions. In: *Studies in Soviet Thought*, vol. 33/2, p. 211.

[14] In 1961, the American theologian Gabriel Vahanian published his book *The Death of God. The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era*. (See Gabriel Vahanian (1961) *The Death of God. The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era*, New York, George Braziller).

[15] *Secularization*, in his view, is not a retreat from the traditions and mysteries of Christianity but foremost signfies that Christian expectations are expected to be realized in the sphere of world history and are replaced by millenarism (Jürgen Moltmann (1967) *Theology of Hope. On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, New York and Evanston, p. 294).

was different, and it faces different challenges of its own. As the Serbian theologian Radovan Bigović points out, "...chiefly due to historical reasons, the Orthodox world has not participated organically in the phenomenon called *modernity*. It has not had a taste of the Renaissance, the Reformation, or the Counter Reformation, the religious wars and the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the industrial revolution, the triumph of the subject, of human rights and of the neutral nation state. What modernity recognizes as its basic contribution seems to have remained apart from Orthodoxy, which has subsequently remained suspicious of modernity. This fact certainly helps us to understand the difficulties that Orthodoxy has in its communication with the contemporary (post)modern world."[16]

In his reflections on the future of religion, the American political scientist Daniel Bell points out: "At the end of the eighteenth and to the middle of the nineteenth century, almost every Enlightened thinker expected religion to disappear in the twentieth century. The belief was based on the power of Reason. Religion was associated with superstition, fetishism, unprovable beliefs, a form of fear which was used as protection against other fears … From the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, almost every sociological thinker … expected religion to disappear by the onset of the twenty-first century."[17] After the middle of the twentieth century, however, the situation changed radically, surprising social researchers, including Bell himself. *Desecularization* became a key concept of postmodernity. Peter Berger admits: "My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions …, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more than ever."[18]

There has long been a tradition of discussions on the post-Christian situation, but overall this situation is marked by the reversal of the process of secularization and a comeback of religion to the public stage. As Gianni Vattimo says in his talk with Santiago Zabala, "God is still around."[19] Postmodernity is tolerant towards religion in general, and this liberalism towards religion marks the beginning of the post-secular age of European cultural history: "While secularism chased religion into a religious ghetto, post-secularism 'lets it in' and 'dissolves' it within itself. Religion may be present everywhere together with, and alongside, the secular, but not in its old forms."[20]

Coming back to Ratzinger's question—whether the public dethronement of religion is thought to represent an advance of modernization—the answer given today is very different from the one given some decades ago. Insofar as progress has become a discredited concept (or at least is strongly limited in its sphere of validity), the revival of religion is no longer viewed through the lens of the *progress vs. decline*. Social progress is no longer equal to ousting religion from the public sphere and the decrease of its importance.

This text being interested not in religion generally but in Christianity, we should say that the most important fact that has made Christian values once again of topical importance is the postmodern critique, in multiple aspects, of instrumental reason—a critique undertaken by the leading theorists of our time. The allaying of the absolutist claims of reason (the most extreme trends of which have been fully discredited) has again made it possible to uphold and spread the conviction that there is another truth, that reason and religion can be mutually useful. Mutual concessions are not a pragmatic compromise, but a necessity, the realization of which has had a considerable cost. As Habermas says (and his opinion is particularly interesting insofar as his views have undergone an evolution), "Secularized citizens, insofar as they enter their role of citizens in the state, have no right to, nor can they, in principle, deny that the religious pictures of the world have the potential to possess truth, nor can they question the right of their religious co-citizens to make their contribution to the public debates through the means of religious

16 Radovan Bigović (2013) *Cyrkvata v syvremennia sviat* (The Church in the Modern World), Sofia, Pokrov Bogorodichen, p. 214.

17 Daniel Bell (1978) The Return of the Sacred: The Argument about the Future of the Religion. In: *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 31, No. 6, p. 29, 30.

18 Peter Berger (2004) *Desekularizaciata na sveta: globalen pregled* (The Desecularization of the World. A Global Overview), in: Desekularizaciata na sveta. Ed. by Peter Berger, Sofia, Kritika i humanizym, p. 10.

19 See Richard Rorty, Gianni Vattimo (2005) *Bydeshteto na religiata* (The Future of Religion). Ed. by Santiago Zabala, Sofia, Kritika i humanizym, 118.

20 Alexandr Kyrlezhev (2004) Postsekuliarnaia epoha. Zametki o religiozno-kul'turnoj situacii (The Postsecular Age. Notes on the Religious-Cultural Situation). In: *Kontinent*, № 120, p. 258.

language."[21] He proposes that religion be recognized as an alternative rationality.

The presence of a Christian stance in the current social debate is a fact; one of the most important spheres in which this stance is upheld is that of bioethics ("With the use of the gene technology, humankind has descended into the deepest wellspring of its existence").[22] Bioethical discourse now seems impossible to conduct without including in it the viewpoints both of the scientific expert and of the Christian thinker. The participation of Christianity has become a permanent component of the effort to solve the global problems of mankind.

There has been a change in the modern relations between secular and Christian values, a change that has resulted from the return of religion to the social stage—unexpectedly for sociologists and political scientists. Desecularization seems irreversible, at least inasmuch as there is a renewed respect for Christian values, and an acceptance of their inclusion in the total treasury of values. In the post-secular world, however, Christianity meets with competition from various alternative forms of spirituality that assert seemingly identical values—e.g., easily achieved love and salvation, and a beyond that is attained through meditation and psychotropic substances. As Radovan Bigović points out: "Postmodernism has its own special values which are supposed to be accompained by the inner feeling of leisureliness, excitement, and contentment. These values are: comfort, humor, youth, cosmopolitanism, and mobility. Man no longer feels that glory, dignity, and exaltation are of any importance to him…"[23]

The religious tolerance of the postmodern age has proven to be no less of a challenge than the aggressive reason of the Enlightenment.

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ON THE PERSISTENCE OF THE CATEGORY OF SPACE IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD *

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Abstract:
This paper aims to explain why we experience any virtual world as a space, even though we cannot speak about virtual words as having spatiality in the common sense of the word. Following Kant's analysis of space and Merleau-Ponty's view on the same, I will try to account, at least in part, for the mentioned phenomenon by explaining why cyberspace is experienced with an expectation of space, as is any other exterior object. Also, I will argue that this space should always be understood in the sense of a horizon. I am operating here under the assumption that any experience of the virtual world cannot be separated from the real world, because they are part of the same lived experience.

Key words: virtual world, space, experience, expectance, horizon of interest.

The inspiration for this paper was a conversation I had with a friend of mine who happens to work in an advertising agency. For one of his projects, he had to build a new image for a car manufacturer's website. He devised for this project three concepts: the first presented an image of a car on a highway, the second presented the same car in an interactive interface that allowed you to change the color of the car and the accessories, and the third allowed you to see the car in all 360 degrees, inside and outside. The manufacturer tested these concepts for a month, randomly cycling the three different layouts for the website's home page. At the end of the month they had very interesting data about which was the preferred design. They counted the number of forms filled in relation to the homepage's image, and one of the versions had 110 percent more forms filled. My friend asked me which one I thought was the top performer.

It seemed logical to me to think that the third version was the best one, but I was immediately sure I gave the wrong answer. "It was the one on the highway," he said. And the reason he gave was fantastic: *people want to see products in the environment in which they are going to be used.*

So, I wondered why we have this desire to recapture our natural environment, especially in a medium like the web that is not at all spatial in the common sense of the word. This paper will not give a definite answer to this question, but will merely seek to outline some of the aspects that surround an accompany it.

The first question we must address when discussing this issue is: *why do we experience the web as a space?* But before we immerse ourselves in the theoretical approaches that can accommodate this problem, I must underline, and I cannot stress the importance of this fact enough, that when we experience cyberspace, we in fact experience two worlds at the same time: the real world (the one in which we are born) and the virtual world. The experience of cyberspace cannot be separated from that of the real world because you do not interrupt your life while

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surfing the net—you are still breathing, you are still living your life. We shall see along the way why this fact is important, and also uncover some interesting consequences for how we can give an ontological account for these two worlds.

I have chosen two theoretical approaches to space that I thought could help us in our endeavor. The first is the Kantian view on space as the basis of our ability to perceive (the pure intuition of space), and the second is a phenomenological approach that regards space as a horizon of interest. Both of these approaches can account in part for the phenomenon that we are researching.

In his *Transcendental Aesthetics,* Kant claims that we cannot discuss space only from the standpoint of the humans (see B62).[1] Space is not a property of things in themselves, but a property of intuited objects, or of the phenomena. Space as pure intuition is the reason why these phenomena are given to me as exterior objects, because space is the sensible condition of the exterior. It must be understood and underlined here that space belongs to the subject, because it belongs to sensibility as a faculty of knowledge. Formulating more trivially, I am the one who puts the world in a space, and even if space is a property of things in themselves, I cannot account for that. I am here misusing the word "put," because sensibility is a receptive faculty, and thus passive. This is why, for Kant, we speak about the intuition of space, and not the category of space (I will return to this point later on, and explain why I think that in our context space is a category, and not an intuition). What is also interesting here is that this intuition is *a priori*. I cannot deduce the idea of space from the spatiality of things, because I will always consider space as being contained in another space and so on. Also, I cannot represent the absence of space.

But how do these observations apply to our problem?

The virtual world's spatiality does not exist in effect, but we can speak about it as filled with objects that are exterior to me. This is, of course, a consequence of space acting as an intuition, inherited *a priori* and constitutive for any perception of the outside world. Reformulating, I cannot think of myself as outside of a space, nor can I think of the objects that are exterior to me as not being in a space. Thus, *when I experience cyberspace, I experience it with the expectance of a space (observation 1).* I use the terms "cyberspace," "virtual world," "matrix," and "web" interchangeably, but it is important to mention that whenever I use one of these terms, I am not using it to refer to a specific technology, but rather to the world that is produced with the aid of that particular technology. It is also important here that the term "virtual" not be misunderstood as indicating that this world lacks effectiveness, or is a mere possibility of existence, because although cyberspace lacks some features of the real world—such as materiality—it has very similar structures for organizing reality. For example, the real world is organized in social groups (communities, organizations, nations, etc.), and similarly the virtual world exhibits structures that allow interaction between individuals and/or communities, such as forums, social networks, etc.

For now, let us keep observation 1 in mind, and move on to the second theoretical approach on space, the phenomenological one, and see what else it can reveal to us.

To understand the idea of space as a horizon of interest, we must first shed light on some fundamental ideas that originate in Heidegger's view of space. Unlike Kant, Heidegger believes that space is not in the subject. He believes that it is in my nature to have interests, and thus the spatiality that I experience is generated by these interests. Space is the horizon for these interests, a proximity that is filled with equipment (tools) for achieving these goals. Interests can be furthered with the use of equipment. Once the interest is fulfilled, the equipment has performed its function.

An example that can help us better understand this idea is the equipment of common reading glasses. They bring me closer to the letters on the page, thus helping me access a piece of knowledge. It is very important here to underline that this "bringing closer" has nothing to do with the actual distance. In one of the notes of *Being and Time*, Heidegger gives a very eloquent example: if my life depends on grabbing a rope and I do not grab it, the distance that I did not cover is not quantified in the centimeters that were not covered, but by the tragedy of not covering them. As Heidegger accurately observes: "the nightmare of this distance is not quantifiable, and it is bared only in me," see (Heidegger 2000, §§ 22-24).

The covering of the distance means here achieving the interest. This fits rather nicely in our context. For example, when I am chatting online with some-

[1] All references to Kant refer to the English translations in The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant.

one, my interest is to speak with that someone, and the chat window, seen as equipment, is bringing me closer to that person—not in the sense that the physical distance between is covered, but in the sense that I achieve my purpose. Even more, to comply with Heidegger's definition of equipment, if the chat window has performed its function accurately, it will remain invisible to me in its use (as reading glasses do). If the tool does not perform its function well, then it becomes visible, and thus an interest.

We can regard the web as a space, in Heidegger's sense of the world, because it is not a space of physical distances, but a space filled with tools for achieving my interests, no matter how diverse. Of course, in this view, cyberspace is primarily a space of my lived experience, which leads us to our second observation*: the web is not a space of physical distances, but a horizon for my interests (observation 2).*

How can we combine our two observations thus far: 1. When I experience cyberspace, I experience it with the expectance of a space, and 2. The web is not a space of physical distances, but a horizon for my interests. I believe Merleau-Ponty can help us do exactly this.

For Merleau-Ponty, space is indeed a horizon of interests, but I could not speak about such a thing as space if I did not first possess a body that perceived. Like Kant, Merleau-Ponty believes that at the basis of our perception stands the intuition of space, but also that I am the one who is generating this space—not in the sense that I am generating its perception, but in the sense that I am the one who attaches content to what is perceived.

Quickly summarizing Merleau-Ponty's analysis, we must acknowledge the containment of a body in a medium, because "an initial perception independent of any background is inconceivable" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 281). Thus we must assume a medium, and a medium cannot be conceived as being otherwise than in a space. This is a primordial space—a space that must not be understood in a geometrical sense, but as the necessary background that makes perception possible. As Merleau-Ponty says: "when the world of the clear and articulated objects is abolished, our perceptual being, cut off from its world, evolves a spatiality without things" (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

The primordial space should not be understood as a locus in which the height, width, and depth are mechanisms of ensuring the right perception. These dimensions do not come along with their content. I am the one who attaches this content on the basis of my previous experiences. Here we are talking about a game between perception and the content attached to that perception, a dynamic that cannot be analyzed unless these two are considered to be together—and it is only natural to consider them as being together, because they are experienced as being together.

We find ourselves in an ambiguous situation because I cannot separate the subject from its world. The subject is always referring to the world through perception, and every perception is interpreted with the aid of content that is already known about the world. However, I can never be sure of the validity of certain content, in the sense that it is an "absolute reality," because the content is always relative to my history in the world, my feelings and desires, the meanings that I have acquired culturally, and so on.

For the French philosopher, the subject's ability to perceive is determined by the fact that the structures of space and time are rooted in his being. At the same time, it is equally important that the subject interprets what he perceives, and thus understands the world. In other words, space is an interior matter, but is always understood in the light of the world, of the outside. The subject and the world are *co-originary* for Merleau-Ponty, because the subject and the world are in fact unified. To clarify, let us take one of Merleau-Ponty's examples:

Consider the situation of a subject who has bad eyesight, possibly one who suffers from acute myopia, but up to a certain age is not wearing glasses. The experience of "the world with glasses" will be a strange one in the beginning, because now he sees objects clearly. For the subject, the perception of these "new objects" seems to be bizarre and surreal, because previously the perception of these objects was always vague and hazy. So "the world with glasses" is a surreal world for the subject. After a period of adaptation, however, "the world with glasses" becomes the "real world" experience, and "the world without glasses" becomes the surreal one. This happens because the perception of the world with the help of glasses is better suited for optimizing the relation between the subject and the objects surrounding him, i.e., exterior space.

What happened here is that a new meaning was attached to a perception, which in turn led to the fulfillment of a horizon of interest. Of course, the mechanism can also operate the other way around, in the sense that the subject can again accommodate himself to the world without glasses. But now this world is less real than the one in which the subject's perception has been "corrected," because the distance between itself and its horizon of interest has been substantially increased.

What I wanted to show with this example is that the world does indeed become known to the subject through perception, but the content of this perception is always signified on the basis of the proximity of the interest that I have in mind. We are talking here about a dual mechanism of perception and signifying—two mechanisms which cannot be analyzed separately because they are intertwined and are constantly adjusting to one another.

So how does all this apply to our problem?

It should be obvious why we perceive the virtual world as a space: I cannot perceive it as being anything else, because my inner structures are preventing me from seeing it otherwise. What is really interesting here is extreme ease of passage between the two worlds (the real and the virtual), with no adjustment period needed. I believe this happens because the experiences of the two worlds can be intertwined; they do not contradict each other, but rather complete each other in the sense that each of them brings me closer to my interests. In fact, they are two parts of the same lived experience. Therefore, any analysis that I do of the virtual world cannot be separated from an analysis of real life. Of course the two experiences are different, but these differences must always be regarded from the perspective of the cognitive and perceptual structures that are remain the same. This issue is also approached from the perspective of the policy maker in Julie Cohen's article *Cyberspace as/and space*, in which she discusses some really interesting implications that different understandings of the relation between cyberspace and "real space" have on policy making (Cohen, 2007, p. 212).

Let us summarize and tie up a few loose ends:

The notion of space is fundamental in making possible our experience and our understanding of the world around us. Because I am wired this way, I will experience any exterior object, here or in the virtual world, as being in a space. As I have tried to show, there is no way around this, since space—along with time—is at the base of my perception. However, regarding space as simply a container or a distance is insufficient. Again, we are wired to have interests, to attach meanings to our perceptions. This is why space must be understood in the phenomenological sense of a horizon of interests. Also, this is why the picture of the car on the highway was so successful. It appealed to the viewer because it presented an image of a fulfilled intent, which for a car is (of course) to drive it.

Regarding category vs. intuition, the reason that I chose the former rather than the latter to address our probem is that I believe the intuition of space has much to do with the notion of boundaries, even with those that posses no dimensions. And as I said before, I do believe that virtual worlds are experienced as spaces. But I do not believe that this kind of space is experienced in the sense of containment. I believe it is experienced in the sense of overcoming the distance between me and my interest, whatever that interest is—from seeing my friend who lives on the other side of the world, to researching this topic, etc.

An analysis of the virtual world cannot be separated from that of the real world; the two worlds are experienced as together, and must be considered as such. Of course, the real world is the primordial one; when I live, I live in the sense of this world, not in the virtual one—I am breathing, standing, feeling. I would say that the experience of the virtual world layers over the one of the real world. So when I am researching the virtual world, I must also take into account this fact. This has consequences, like the one I tried to show here—that space persists as a category even in a world that has nothing to do with physical space. Also, because we are talking about perception, we must consider what happens to my body scheme (for example, I believe that the pointer of the mouse is an extension of my hand in this world), and what consequences these changes have.

Obviously there are many other issues to be discussed in this context. This paper is only a beginning, one possible outline of an issue that is very present in our lives.

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THE PLAY OF THE POSSIBLE AND THE REAL IN AESTHETIC HETEROTOPIA

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Abstract:

This paper is focused on clarifying the concept and the phenomenon of aesthetic heterotopia. The paper takes as its starting point the cultural phenomenon of heterotopia itself and then reveals its aesthetical component in order to find the "topos" of aesthetic heterotopia in contemporary culture.

Thus, the main task of the paper will be exploring the boundaries and the relations between possibility and reality in aesthetic heterotopia through W. T. Anderson's central figure of the postmodern ironist as the only type of worldview with future. In this context, some important issues of contemporary philosophical aesthetics will be discussed, such as: what is the mechanism of creating new aesthetic heterotopias, and what is it based on? Why can the field of classical aesthetics not cover such a cultural phenomenon? Why can non-classical aesthetics also be called process aesthetics, and what do aesthetic heterotopias and the field of process philosophy have in common?

And last but not least: what moral attitudes do plenty of aesthetic heterotopias encourage?

Key words: heterotopia, aesthetic heterotopia, possibility and reality, process aesthetics, constructivism.

"The space is a prison and an entrance, a play of interior and exterior: 'a prisoner in the midst of the ultimate freedom, on the most open road of all, chained solidly to the infinite crossroads.'" (Johnson 2012:11, Foucault 2006:11)

Contemporary postmodern culture is in a state of a flux in the sense that it is constituted by the periphery, by the relations between everything, by becoming and loss, beginnings and endings, by the life hidden in the spaces between situations and the relations of people, words, and things.

1. Marcuse's double-function of utopia: Utopia as a constructivist tool

In this context, the current paper will begin with an ending—*The End of Utopia*. This is the title of a lecture delivered by Herbert Marcuse at the Free University of West Berlin in July 1967 on the topics of his book *Eros and Civilization*:

"Today any form of the concrete world, of human life, any transformation of the technical and natural environment is a possibility, and the locus of this possibility is historical. *Today we have the capacity to turn the world into hell, and we are well on the way to doing so. We also have the capacity to turn it into the opposite of hell.* This would mean the *end of utopia*, that is, the refutation of those ideas and theories that use the concept of utopia to denounce certain socio-historical possibilities. It can also be understood as the 'end of history' in the very precise sense that the new possibilities for a human society and its environment can no longer be thought of as continuations of the old, nor even as existing in the same historical continuum with them" (Marcuse 2005; all emphases added).

It is important here that Marcuse distinguishes between two different types of utopia. The first one reveals itself "when a project for social change contradicts real laws of nature," when its intentions are aimed "beyond history" and biology (Marcuse 2005). The second one—which is also a central subject of Marcuse's book—is based on the fact that "*all the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand* [emphasis added]. That they are not used for that purpose is to be attributed to the total mobilization of existing society against its own potential for liberation. But this situation in no way makes the idea of radical transformation itself a utopia" in the first sense (Marcuse 2005).

The very possibility of employing all these mentioned forces in the task social liberation lies, according to Marcuse, in the aesthetic-erotic dimension.

"Here the notion 'aesthetic' is taken in its original sense, namely as *the form of sensitivity of the senses and as the form of the concrete world of human life*. Taken in this way, the notion projects the *convergence of technology and art* and the *convergence of work and play*. It is no accident that the work of Fourier is becoming topical … speaking of a possible society in which work becomes play, a society in which even socially necessary labor can be organized in harmony with the liberated, genuine needs of men" (Marcuse 2005; all emphases added).

Marcuse (2005) emphasizes that "the so-called utopian possibilities are not at all utopian but rather the determinate socio-historical negation of what exists," and they have real potential to restart the socio-political system in a new, non-restrictive way. Marcuse's idea of *the aesthetic dimension as disruptive of the existing social and cultural order* is very important for the further conceptualization of the cultural phenomenon of aesthetic heterotopias.

2. Heterotopia as a cultural phenomenon

The concept of heterotopia itself comes from Michel Foucault, appearing for the first time in his book *The Order of Things* (1970) in a reflection upon Jorge Luis Borges' *Book of Imaginary Beings* (2005). Aware that all the impossible classifications and juxtapositions of different imaginary animals could exist only in the space of language, Foucault compares that space with the function of utopias, and gives Borges' invention the name of "heterotopia"—a different, alternative, or other place. (It is worth noting that heterotopia is also a medical term referring to a particular tissue that develops at an unusual location, i.e., a dislocation—see Johnson 2012: 1.) In Foucault's study of *The Order of Things*, heterotopias are disquieting and undermine language, "they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences" (Foucault 1970: xviii). In short, *this loosening of words and things is what raises questions for Foucault about the establishment of culture and the basic codes that govern perception, language, and practice* (see Johnson 2012: 2). Therefore, there is a place for heterotopias in every place and every time that something appears as a question or gap in the thinkable universe.

Another important text of Foucault on heterotopias is *Of Other Spaces*—a lecture delivered in Paris in March 1967, and first published in 1984. When a real existing site—or a *social system*, because sites in the human world as a rule represent social and cultural compositions—gets exhausted of its potential for creating new possibilities, alternative spaces appear to compensate for its imperfection or lack in order to "mend" it in one way or another. Foucault is the first to realize the double function of heterotopias as both representing and at the same time inverting real spaces, but unlike utopias that aim to invert the real world/system as a totality, heterotopias are local parts of the real world. This is why they can also be called "utopias in practice," because they usually cover the margins of social and cultural space (both literally and figuratively), allowing them to be excellent experimental fields for imposing new orderings and possibilities. A good example of such alternative space given by Foucault is the space reflected in a mirror: it may seem locked and restricted behind the mirror's surface, but at the same time—as if it is just waiting for a new Alice to step through the looking glass—it could be full of surprises.

Nowadays, as the researcher of cultural heterotopias Peter Johnson notes, the focus is not on textual sites, but *rather cultural and social sites*. In a 1970 radio talk in *France Culture* on utopia and literature, Foucault pays attention to the way that *children's inventive play produces a different space that at the same time mirrors what is around them*; just in the same manner, *heterotopias reflect and contest simultaneously* (Johnson 2012: 2) what is around. These "counter-spaces" that can be found in every culture and civilization cover a significant part of Foucault's further studies,[1] as he observes that

[1] Foucault's "heterotopology" explores the cultural spaces of sanctuaries, rites of passage, cemeteries, brothels, prisons, asylums, holiday villages, fairs, museums, libraries, hospitals, rest homes, old people's homes, military schools, honeymoon trips, cinemas, theatres, gardens, Persian carpets, and so on, as well as their different func-

modern heterotopias function as deviations rather than as active stages in life. For example, Hetherington calls heterotopias the "badlands of modernity," marked as totally "Other" spaces (Hetherington 1997: viii), while Foucault had only emphasized their difference, not radical Otherness. Jorge Zuzulich notes that a heterotopia is actually "a utopia having a place … governed by different rules" and giving "different experience" (Zuzulich 2014).

The French world "espace" indeed has a wider meaning than "space," referring to many areas designated for specific purposes or activities. Augé (1995) argues that "space" is more abstract than "place," because it includes not only an *area or a distance, but also a temporal period—any form of location, whether it is real or not*. (Besides, "emplacement" is preferred by Foucault since it combines the meanings of "space" and "place"). Since contemporary culture is preoccupied with space and horizontal structure in opposition to the dominant 19th century cultural concepts of time, explicit hierarchy, and progressive history, and since the center of the culture of late modernity could be considered to be almost any given peripheral aspect, *the rethinking of the cultural world as a constellation of heterotopias, social roles, and "language games," and as the convergence of the internal and the external, virtual and material, possible and real, is more than necessary.*

As far as holidays, honeymoon trips, festivals, and fairs are considered to be alternative, different cultural phenomena that interrupt conventional daily life and provide it with both beginnings and endings, they have to be classified as "heterochronias" that embrace "temporal discontinuities" (Foucault 1984). (E.g., museums collect all time into one space, and the space of the cemetery presents an absolute rupture of familiar time. In literature, the American writer Phillip K. Dick has written heterochronias into his novels.)

Bachelard uses a broader meaning of space that includes the special metaphors of the imagination: the space of the inside. On the contrary, Foucault

> "wishes … to turn Bachelard inside out … *this space in which we live is a set of relations cut through with time. It is the space through which 'we are drawn outside ourselves' and 'the erosion of our life' takes place.* … The space that 'eats and scrapes away at us' includes everyday emplacements such as houses, specific rooms, trains, streets, cafés, beaches and so on, but Foucault distinguished some that have '…*the curious property of being connected to all other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralise, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected or represented [reflechis] by them*…' (Foucault, 1998: 178)" (Johnson 2012; all emphases added)

—namely, utopias and heterotopias.

Thus, the *cultural phenomenon of heterotopia, but also of heterochronia, marks a rupture, a break, inversion, discontinuity, suspension, or sublimation of its environment, either spatial or temporal.* Peter Johnson gives a useful definition of the relationship between utopia and heterotopia (Johnson 2012a): if utopian models are holistic, imaginary, normative, prescriptive, and present/future-orientated, then heterotopias reflect the results of utopian models and are analyzed in terms that are fragmentary, concrete, value-free, descriptive, and present/past-orientated. *It is symptomatic of contemporary culture that in the last fifty years—the time of the so called "postmodern shift"—the concept of "heterotopia" has begun to be used more often than the concept of "utopia."* The collapse of the totality gives rise to the particular, moral values are replaced by aesthetic ones, the disproved moral charge of words liberates the words-as-metaphors, principles have been transformed through an openness to the new, the will to knowledge leads to infinite experimentation; there is no more Progress, there is no more Truth—there is either a variety of truths or no such thing as truth; there is no Being, but only Becoming; the destruction of normativity, authority, centralization, and governance from the outside allows for decentralization, marginality, and the actualization of people's internal directions. And finally, since there is no ultimate Utopia, people have begun living in a variety of heterotopias. Peter Zima discusses this exact trend in his book *Moderne—Postmoderne* when he says that "heterotopia is an aesthetic diversity: a radical plurality amongst a society which acknowledges not one but countless beauties, a society composed by numerous aesthetic communities competing with each other" (Zima 1997: 207-208).

3. Aesthetic heterotopia in contemporary philosophy and aesthetics

While Zima examines the cultural phenomenon of heterotopia strictly in an aesthetic context,

tions and resemblances, and the rules of entering and leaving them.

Jacques Rancière has explicitly conceptualized aesthetic heterotopia in a paper with the same title. According to Rancière, it is "a specific form of relation between sense and sense" (Rancière 2010: 15), i.e. between sensible data and making sense of them. More exactly, aesthetic heterotopia has the potential to produce "the distribution of the sensory" (Rancière 2010), that is, "to open a new possibility so that bodies can construct a different experience which can be sensed, at the point when that 'other space' bursts into the real world" (Zuzulich 2014). T*he overlap of aesthetic heterotopia and process philosophy here is:* the "topos" of aesthetic heterotopia in contemporary culture is *the will* for utopia, for creating different rules in real cultural and social spaces. Two excellent examples are presented by Michel Serres' *Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (2009) and Richard Shusterman's aesthetics in action or *somaesthetics* (Shusterman 2012), in which he defends the idea that reality is constituted solely by the body, with no stereotypes, prejudices, or names; in such a reality every single sensation reveals a new sensible heterotopia to us.

The very possibility of thinking about (aesthetic) heterotopias lies in non-classical philosophy and aesthetics, especially in the philosophy and aesthetics of the particular, which is a marginal concept in classical philosophical-aesthetic thought (appearing in Goethe, Hegel, and Lukach). If the beautiful as a total harmony of the internal and the external and of value and expression is the central concept in classical aesthetics, then the central subjects of non-classical and also negative aesthetics are the places and moments of the occurrence and loss of the beautiful, the points of dissonance of the internal and the external, of value and expression. Still, all these crisis moments (shifts, boundary situations, etc.) are what make the streams of possibility enter the real world. The development of culture (whether progress or regress) always happens due to the merger of people's imaginations—the world of possibilities—with the existing state of affairs. What is distinctive of heterotopias is their relation with the particular; in Kant's scheme of the free play of imagination and understanding, the given particular subsumes the universal and in turn establishes a totality, whether or not it is a subjective one. Just in the same manner, (aesthetic) heterotopia as an other, different, particular space is what reflects and subsumes the usual surrounding cultural and social space and sets its own rules, whether or not they are subjective ones.

4. The 'topos' of aesthetic heterotopias in contemporary culture: between constructivism and its moral bearings

In his essay *Four Different Ways to Be Absolutely Right*, the American philosopher and writer W. T. Anderson maps postmodern Western society and mind onto four distinguishable worldviews which form distinct cultures within society, each with its own language of public discourse and its own epistemology (Anderson 1995). Anderson argues that only the postmodern-ironist worldview[2]—which sees truth as socially constructed—is future-oriented, because it does not rely on the values and truths of either the modern or premodern age. More exactly, the essay distinguishes three types of postmodern ironists: constructivists, players, and nihilists, as all of them "share a readiness to see reality as a social construction" (Anderson 1995: 112). *Constructivists* resemble Abraham Maslow's "self-actualizing" subjects—outwardly conventional, but curious to expand the limits of the so-called common truth and world. *Postmodern players* compose a much larger group; they are the people

> "who manage to surf along fairly satisfactorily on the currents of cultural change without taking much interest in abstract ideas or any self-conscious 'postmodernism' … their irony is more an attitude or sensibility than an intellectual position. They browse among cultural forms, play mix-and-match with all the pieces of our various heritage. They invent new religious rituals, combine folk music with hard rock, dabble in nostalgia for the 1950s or 1960s. They explore virtual reality, regard clothing as costume, and feel right at home in theme parks." (Anderson 1995: 112)

In general, for the postmodern ironist there is no "true self," as this concept makes no sense apart from its context, whether it is a social role (constructivists) or a more dynamic "lifestyle" (players); moreover, social roles are created by people, and sometimes need to be re-created or discarded. It is

[2] The other three types are: *the scientific-rational* worldview, in which truth is "found" through methodical, disciplined inquiry; *the social-traditional* worldview, in which truth is found in the heritage of Western civilization (these first two both draw their values from the modern age); *the neo-romantic* worldview, in which truth is found either through attaining harmony with nature or through spiritual exploration of the inner self, a worldview which draws its values from the premodern age.

good to remind ourselves that irony is one of the bounding aesthetic categories, presenting a gap between internal and external: internal value exceeds any external expression of it, while at the same time the internal opposes the external—it is just the same potentiality hidden in heterotopias.

Anderson notes that each of us living in postmodern society is more or less multilingual and must have some access to each of the four worldviews; still, for him "the inner voice of the postmodern ironist is becoming a part of everybody's psychological makeup … . If we learn to hear that voice in a constructive (and constructivist) way, it becomes a guide to living in today's multi-world view" (Anderson 1995: 116). What must be emphasized here is Anderson's central figure of the postmodern ironist, who is *the living heterotopian of today* in his manner of mixing and matching the rules and the specific characters of different spaces and ages. Moreover, in the perspective of heterotopias or alternative spaces and modes, Anderson's idea of the postmodern ironist as a constructivist and a player is just the reverse of Baudrillard's conception of simulacra—as far as the former demonstrates the constructivist way of using and playing with reflections and echoes of the preceding culture in order to develop ourselves, while the latter emphasizes our exhaustion in the well of reflection, literally—the "other" side of infinite cultural regress.

What has created this gap between the postmodern ironist's social roles and lifestyles on the one hand, and the regime of simulacra on the other? Most likely, it has been created through the way in which individuals use the surrounding time and space.

Ernst Bloch's critical theory of utopia *sees utopia as a process rather than a destination* (see Howells 2014). As the British researcher Richard Howells notes in his article "Aesthetics of Utopia," Bloch argues that we need to go beyond creation theory to *a critical theory of creativity*. "Utopia is not something that we can delegate either to nature or to the supernatural because, as Bloch declares in *The Spirit of Utopia*, *'Life has been put into our hands'* [emphasis added]" (Howells 2014). This primary rule agrees with Marcuse's observation that we are exploiting and playing with our possible worlds every single day.

Emile Michel Cioran explains the will utopia firstly by the process of secularization (people living only to find their place in the Christian paradise beyond actually *have had* their utopia; see Cioran 1987), and secondly by the nostalgia caused by the loss of Christian existence itself. If nostalgia in its metaphysical sense is based on the very impossibility of it coinciding with any moment of time, and if this metaphysical nostalgia finds its solace in the most distant past, where its loss can be dissolved, then the other type of nostalgia that has emerged after the secularization is future-oriented, totally distorted by the initial paradise. This orientation of modern utopias towards the future makes heterochronias of them as well, since their pawn is "a *totally other* time inside time" (Cioran 1987).

There is another important detail of modern utopias; as Cioran observes,

> "their characters are automatons, fictions or symbols: none is real, none exceeds its puppet status, an idea lost in a universe without reference points. Even the children become unrecognizable … they are so pure that they are utterly unaware of the temptation to steal, to 'pick an apple off a tree'…" (Cioran 2015).

In this context, heterotopias take another step after the end of utopia, since they are real alternative spaces and modes of real individuals who have already stolen an apple from Eden; contemporary aesthetic heterotopias put the utopian fragments of an order into action and steal forbidden parts from the unthinkable (Ranciere, Beckette) in an attempt to expand our thinkable selves. Cioran asks: is it easier to construct a utopia than an apocalypse? The persistent multiplication of aesthetic heterotopias nowadays shows that we are at least trying to make it easier.

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A PROCESS IDENTITY: THE AESTHETICS OF THE TECHNOSELF. GOVERNING NETWORKING SOCIETIES

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Abstract:

The main aim of this article is to analyse the relationship between two innovative concepts—the *technoself* and *process identity*—from a perspective inspired by process ontology. The working hypothesis is that industrialized and mass societies entered into a post-industrial or informational sphere of capitalism, becoming networking societies—also known as *knowledge-based societies*—which closely followed their role in approaching the plural identity of the digital Subject and the surveillance practices exercised in its governance as correspondent models for the changes of the current reality. The first section of the article is devoted to research on the *technoself*, a concept recently introduced by Luppicini in 2013. Criticizing the *technoself* in terms of process ontology and as a result of digitalization, subjectivity, and technical rationality, I will argue that the constitution of digital subjects, as well as their interactions, should be defined in terms of *processes*. Therefore, I introduce the concept of *process identity*—which includes the technoself—and explain how this approach contributes to the development of different research fields (such as speculative realism and object-oriented ontology) and how it affects Floridi's distinction between digital ontology and informational ontology. The second section focuses on the effects of the digital environment on self-constitution practices and techniques, virtual worlds experiencing what Foucault recognizes as *the aesthetics of existence*. In the final part, I confront Bentham's and Foucault's panopticism, arguing that based on what is accomplished by process identities, networking societies represent societies of control, not disciplinary ones, and consequently this distinction should be applied in governing virtual communities. In the end, I will explain why notions such as *digital personae* or *databased selves* are insufficient, and should be replaced by the concepts of *process identity* and *technoself*, respectively, in order to improve the models of governing networking societies.

Key words: technoself, process identity, networking societies, knowledge-based societies, aesthetics of existence, panopticism, digital personae, databased selves, process ontology.

1. Introduction. Arguments for understanding knowledge-based societies through process ontology

When the main epochal challenges of *knowledge-based societies* are discussed, the traditional split between modern and postmodern transitions is usually highlighted, questioning the evolution of the material world and the certainty of knowledge from the self or the constitution of the Subject, understood as the figure of the human being in a society. I would rather criticize this popular perspective as the consequence of a hermeneutic prejudgment, devoted to the classical distinction between modernity and postmodernity and to its effects on a specific manner of understanding societal transitions. It is not only Descartes' early appetite for certain knowledge, or Kant's Illuminist exhortation to distinguish public and private *uses of reason,* that should be considered fundamental sequences of the constitution of *knowledge-based societies*, but also the ideological strength of their identity that obliges one, nowadays, to recognize postmodern societies as possessors of a certain *capital* of knowledge. Therefore, it is legitimate to talk about different paradigms of the knowledge-based society, with the current digitalized era and informational age creating the proper frame for so-called *networking societies*. I shall argue that it is important to analyze not only the effects that this new social background had on the reception of the classical notion of *the Subject*, but also the manner in which the models of what Foucault would recognize as *self-constitution* and *self-government practices* can be applied to *constituting* and *governing* networking societies. I consider this correspondence to be legitimate, since the traditional concept of "self" will be substituted, in the terms of digital societies, by the concept of "technoself" (which will be explained later in this article), in order to approach new senses and directions of human identity.

Hence, my article consists of interdisciplinary research into the contemporary movement through which industrialized and mass societies entered into a post-industrial or informational sphere of capitalism and became networking societies, closely following their role in approaching the plural identity of the digital Subject and the surveillance practices exercised in its governance as correspondent models for the changes of the current reality. The importance of this theme is conceived in terms of the following perspectives, which will be developed in the subsequent sections:

(a) *the scientific and technological perspective*, assuming that the model of the digital Subject provokes certain reforms and paradigmatic changes in approaching the traditional problem of the ontology of the Subject (currently addressed in terms of *process ontology*), as well as a new sense for human identity, sustained and developed through virtual environments and instruments, defined here as *process identity*;

(b) *the socio-economic perspective*, which enforces the plurality of virtual identities and representations of the Subject as consuming identities;

(c) *the political perspective*, which stresses governance models for the virtual dimensions as correspondent patterns for the immediate reality.

This incursion will allow me to introduce a recent and highly criticized notion: *the technoself*, defined as the nuclear structure of the Subject that is born in particular historical and social practices—as well as narrative and aesthetical contexts—of digital societies, through technological interventions. For all intents and purposes, this investigation will examine the relationship between these two innovative concepts—the *technoself* and *process identity*—from a perspective inspired by process ontology and in terms of the knowledge-based society.

2. Why is *process-identity* based on the concept of *technoself*? A process ontological perspective

Since the virtual environment created various digital cultures, alternative definitions of human identity became popular. Overwhelmed, the simple division between *real* and *virtual* identity, or between *true* and *fictional* identity, evolved according to the influences that technology had on shaping human experience, identity, and self-constitution. Confronted with heavy criticism, technology opened new paths to relating to oneself, with digitalization sustaining both the amplification of *numerical identity*—i.e., the continuity of the existence of an individual as the same object over time—and the virtual strength of *narrative identity*—i.e., an identity that changes as the result of shifting self-perception process and constitution over time. Therefore, applied process ontologies can offer all the necessary instruments for investigating the representations, descriptions, and patterns that are apparent in the development of a virtual identity, regarded as a process of self-constitution. The most common question raised when the issue of the relationship between identity and technology comes up is: "How is advancing technology reshaping private and public identity within society?" (Luppicini 2013, 2). However, there is a more challenging issue that turns all of this into an ontological debate: "How is advancing technology reshaping real and virtual identity (or true and fictional identity) within knowledge-based societies?"

Nevertheless, my critique, developed on the three previously mentioned levels, is based on the assumption that the modern identity of the Subject has recently been shaped by the influence of virtually-mediated environments, and that a capitalist critique of the plurality of digital identities understood as identities of consumption is mandatory in order to provoke an accurate approach to network societies as correspondent models of real societies. This plural dimension of the *info spheres* (Floridi 2014) proposed new paradigms for questions of ontology that emerge as reaction to current concerns about the manner in which virtual identities appeared, not only as a consequence of transposing the aesthetics of the self with technological terms, but also as an effect of the tendency to produce, through identities of consumption, alternative ways of life.

On the one hand, recent researchers have tended to think that contemporary digitalization returns the Subject to the fundamental manners of existence, recovering traditional senses of the acceptance of being-in-the-world, in its entire authenticity, following Hubert Dreyfus' critics. Criteria such as disclosure, performativity, or authenticity sustain the entanglements of the self, considered as the nuclear expression of a personal identity. Any projection of the self can be incorporated into a virtual identity that apparently allows the being to become whatever he wants, despite any social prejudgments or constraints. The main critiques of this conception in the last half of the current decade argued that "any considerations regarding the ontology of the subject in the digital age need to take serious non-modern stances on existence in the search for new imaginaries of the world and the subject's becoming" (Croon-Fors 2013, 45). Hence, a potential radical critique of the digital subject brings into question not only the genuine tensions between modernity and post-modernity—following the symptoms of the Subject's existence—but also the possibility of criticizing it as the rise of anti-modernism. On the other hand, imaginaries as metaphysical reconstructions of the immediate reality in a virtual space equally include the *technoself* (Luppicini 2013, 14) as a structure of the Subject that is born in particular historical and social practices (as well as particular narrative and aesthetic contexts), and digitalization as a destruction of the classical notion of subjectivity through technological interventions.

First of all, we should investigate to what extent this construction improves the ontological, socio-political, and aesthetic understanding of networking societies as knowledge-based societies.

> "The notion of *technoself* is a recent concept advanced to address the changing state of human identity in society resulting from the adoption of new technologies. Specifically, the term *technoself* was coined to describe the evolving configurations of human-technological relationships that continually shape the human condition and what it means to be a human being. A variety of conceptual definitions related to the treatment of *technoself* have advanced *societal* views of what constitutes humans as beings in a technological nature. These include, but are not limited, to the following: *cyborg, beman (bio-electric human), posthuman, transhuman, technohuman, technosapien, digital identity, avatars* and *homotechnicus*." (Luppicini 2013, 2–3)

My intention is to analyze the close interactions and dependencies between *digital identity* and *technoself* based on the consequences of the correspondences developed by the traditional notion of the *self* and the virtual raising of the *technoself*, in order to test if they could together shape the proposed paradigm of "process identity."

Ontological considerations of technoselves begin with the evaluation of digitalization as a way of constituting the Subject and its otherness, a perspective that sets aside "traditional inside-outside distinctions such as those between subjects and objects" (Anna Croon-Fors 2013, 47). Virtual environments provide, despite classical boundaries, an extended framework for investigating the ontology of the digital Subject, by advancing the idea that:

> "What is attained by approaching technoselves as particular kinds of experiences is neither the subjective, nor the objective, but rather resembles a third alternative—*the lived*." (47)

Therefore, the constitution of the Subject, the constitution of the digital world, and their relationships should be regarded as *processes* with autonomous and changing dynamics, but also with high capacities of *disclosure*. Following Dreyfus, with his Heideggerian influences, Croon-Fors reminds us that the senses of digital subjects and worlds are developed in a disclosed space, where "to disclose is to open up and reveal the conditions of possibility that make particular technologies show up as meaningful and necessary" (53). In her opinion, *disclosure*, *performativity*, and *the real* might be considered to be three necessary principles in constituting the ontology of the digital subject. Because this critique indulges an ontological treatment, all three of these principles should express and possess characteristics of a *process ontological* constitution. If *disclosure* sustains the plurality and the possibility of coexistent identities and virtual worlds, *performativity* ensures the representational practice required to create these constructions. The representation functions here as an actualization by bringing into consciousness something that exists in order to reinforce and expose something previously presented to it. This perspective assures, in process ontological terms, the understanding of the role attributed to the relationship between representationalism and digitalisation in "fixing the world as an object and resource for human subjects" (54). On the one hand, this provides a potential explanation for the hypothesis that the *technoself* is, in a digital world, a *re-presentation* (in the senses already discussed) of the self. On the other hand, it is a way of approaching digitalization as a technique of reducing reality[1] "to a scheme or mode where everything is reduced to the status of an object for a subject" (54). That is why *the real* becomes an operational principle not only for the immediate world, but also for the digital environment: a technological reality or the reality of technoselves is the result of digitalization, subjectivity, and technical rationality. As a consequence, these three principles define and explain certain relationships and constitutions between digital subjects and objects in virtual worlds in terms of *processes*. But we also agreed that there are ways of creating, managing, and improving virtual identities for digital subjects and worlds. Therefore, identity itself should be criticized and understood as a process, and it should be recognized as what I call a *process identity* because of the continuous and autonomous dynamics of its disclosure, performativity, and reality. Neither Croon-Fors nor Luppicini advanced their research to this ultimate objective of thinking about and analyzing the possibility of arguing for a specific identity for the digital Subject, starting from accepting the technoself as its nucleus and pursuing the consequences of criticizing the technoself in terms of process ontology. The main question remains: how does the notion of process identity contribute to the critique of network societies as knowledge-based societies and societies of consumption, and how does it enlarge the field of research dedicated to applied ontologies—and specifically process ontology—by improving the current state of this domain?

First, recent projects were dedicated to rethinking the classical relationship between subject and object, as well as rethinking the relational dimensions between correlative concepts such as *real-ideal* or *being-event*, which had great influence in the HCI (Human Computer Interaction) paradigm, as Anna Croon-Fors observed in a paper from 2012. It appears that acknowledging technoselves had a great impact on "suggesting sense-making and meaning construction (in the HCI area) a central focus for future research" (Croon-Fors 2013, 57). This was only a modest premise of research programs of subjective dimensions of human interaction that obliged reevaluating traditional concepts such as *identity*, *experience*, or the *aesthetics of the self* as main concerns for the study of contemporary digitalization. But this theme also led to a vibrant ontological debate, creating new ground for the theories of *Speculative Realism* (Bryant 2010) and *Object-Oriented Ontology* (Harman 2010), which argued for the primacy of the object on the subject, as well as the rejection of the critical categorization of forms of existence as real and fictional, or—in this case—virtual. It appears that digitalization addressed to the modern ontology of subjects "is in search for ontologies and notions of the real behind the anthropocentric world-views," creating a radical critique of the subjectivist and anthropocentric foundations in continental philosophy (2013, 58). In consequence, despite the enthusiasm of the contemporary debates on this theme, researchers from different domains of the humanities were barely able to define an interdisciplinary topic that presents the consequences of rethinking the ontology of the subject through digital instruments as a reaction to the contemporary society of consumption on ethical, aesthetic, and political grounds, not only metaphysical ones. What I strongly believe has not been sufficient explored is the impact of the ontology of the digital subject on suggesting—through the notion of plural virtual identities—post-representational views of the Subject, grounded by the relationships between identity, self, and technology.

Secondly, the introduction of my proposed concept, *process identity*, could contribute to Floridi's distinction between *digital ontology* and *informational ontology*, but integrated into the background of network societies as knowledge-based societies. According to Floridi,

> "Digital ontology (the ultimate nature of reality is digital, and the universe is a computational system equivalent to a Turing Machine) should be carefully distinguished from infor-

[1] Croon-Fors reinforces Heidegger's arguments from "The Age and the World Picture," an essay published in 1950, in which the German philosopher argues that "When we think of the word 'picture,' we tend to think first of all of a copy of something—perhaps a painting, drawing, photograph, written description or more commonly a mental image. We tend to assume that a picture has the quality of being like something in the world... Understood in an essential way, 'world picture' does not mean 'picture' of the world, but rather the world grasped as a picture," an argument that convinces Croon-Fors to accept that representation in itself is not as important as its dominance on our way of thinking. This prevalence is easily identifiable in any digital action of creating a virtual identity, representing and improving an avatar, or mapping a lifeworld.

> mational ontology (the ultimate nature of reality is structural, in order to abandon the former and retain only the latter as a promising line of research).” (Floridi 2009, 151)

As will become clear in due course, because of the main objectives my research, I will avoid schematizing here all the technical details of Floridi’s argument, but I will mention in this regard a few conceptual connections that reveal a potential contribution of process identity to the domain of process ontology in these terms. Floridi prefers to reiterate Kant’s “modes of presentation of Being” in technological approaches, considered as “ways in which reality is experienced and/or conceptualized by an epistemic agent at a given level of abstraction.” Therefore, attaching process identity to the discourse of the distinction between the two types of ontology will ensure a better approach to the informational perspective on structural realism, “according to which knowledge of the world is knowledge of the structures,” and, we should add, to their processual interactions. I should also mention the fact that this perspective is consistent with Floridi’s previous intention to explain the individualization of the self and the identification of such an entity, in informational terms, in order to argue that the self is kept together as a coherent and integrated unity, either because of a synchronic reason—which focuses on the self as a continuously existing at any moment of time—or because of a diachronic reason—through which we can understand why the self remains itself no matter the chosen moment from a series of changes.[2] Floridi offers “an informational individualization of the self, based on a tripartite model, illustrated in terms of a three-membrane description: the corporeal, the cognitive and the conscious,” a theory that is applied, in the end, to argue that “selves are the final stage in the development of informational structures, for they are semantically structuring structures conscious of themselves.” This perspective, loyal to Aristotle’s *anagnorisis* (“realization”) theory, inspires Floridi’s arguments, stating that the ICT model “may be interpreted as technologies of the self,” a phrase that places him in a Foucauldian discourse. What matters here is the acceptance of a succession of organized structures that reiterate the processual perspective.

Thirdly, the technoself reinforces the digital Subject as a *compositum* of organizational information. Nowadays, real subjects have rights and responsibilities for their virtual identities: manipulated appearances, virtual designs, and falsified realities configure and represent avatars; the security of private information and virtual behaviours are integrated in the theory of informational privacy; virtual identity is more and more often understood as a fluid, discontinuous, fictional, and fragmented construct. Hence, the *technoself*, as a nuclear structure of the digital subject, can be explained as a virtual correspondent of the *real self*, based on the conscious character of actions, behaviours, judgments, and preferences, developed into a coherent unity and continuity, while the concept of *process identity* could perform a strategic role in explaining the narrative constitution of the Subject by a plurality of practices. In the end, these two notions—the *technoself* and *process-identity*—contribute to addressing networking societies and virtual worlds in an applied process ontological discourse.

These considerations provide us with a different perspective on self-constitution as a process, as well as on the idea of plurality in everything that concerns digital worlds and numeric and narrative virtual identities. In this paper, the ontological level of investigation was developed not only because of the exigencies assumed by the objectives of the present research, but also because it improves our understanding of the effects of the digital environment on self-constitution practices and techniques, on virtual worlds experiencing a certain aesthetics of existence, following a Foucauldian argument. As a consequence, I will return to the last two levels of my research, the socio-political and the aesthetic ones, with the intention of explaining how the notion of *technoself* and its related concept of *process identity* contribute to the governing of network societies.

3. From the aesthetics of the (techno)self to the technologies of the self: Governing networking societies

The main impact of governing networking societies on real individuals lies in adapting policies of control and so-called “social” liberties, by taking into account the current challenges of the virtual representa-

2 Floridi also employs the following distinction: “Diachronic egology, understood as an ontology of personal identity, concentrates on the problems arising from the identification of a self through time or possible worlds, progressively moving towards metaphysics. Synchronic egology, understood as an ontology of personal identity, deals with the individualization of a self in time or in a possible world, thus placing itself at the heart of philosophy of mind.”

tions of the Subject, developed as the principal reaction to the ideology of consumption dominating the postmodern era. The working hypothesis is that the digital age—or in Habermas' terms, "the colonisation of the lifeworld" (1984)—develops, first of all, by creating consumer identities for the virtual Subject, alternatives ways of life that might be understood in the Foucauldian sense of the Self-constitution process. Hyper-connectivity offers new instruments for understanding the nature of the human being by determining the conditions of possibility of *autopoiesis*, in the Ancient Greek sense of self-producing. Secondly, it creates a particular pattern of governance in virtual space as a correspondent model for the current reality's changes, underlined in contexts such as: normalizing digital interactions and behaviours, applying panoptic mechanisms in virtual surveillance, creating the notion of technoself, conceiving new disciplinary techniques of self-constitution for the online self, producing instruments to combat constraints of authenticity, pursuing individuality in the virtual construction of the subject, and creating emergent self-expressions and social or political engagements through certain virtual conducts. With all this is mind, the third section of my paper will focus on the influence of digital environments in generating normalizing power on individuals, assuming that "freedom practices are not invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group" (Foucault 1997, 291). Consequently, the practices of surveillance and freedom applied in the immediate reality will be studied as elements taken from the digital culture.

Digitalization raises questions about accommodating of the differences between the real and the performed virtual world. How is political and cultural identity defined and navigated within a technological society? Is there a paradox between the illusion of the freedom exercised in creating multiple identities of the Subject as a practice of subjectivation, and the authenticity's suspension, doubled by the conscious and permanent visibility that the lifeworld assures as an automatic functioning of power? Is the Information Panopticon an inherited context for voluntary surrender of privacy and for the Subject's alienation through surveillance practices? How are the Foucauldian technologies-of-the-self accommodating to the new media culture? To what extent are the technologies-of-the-self—under the influence of the virtual environment—affecting the history of a truth that, in the digital age, depends on "the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault 1980, 93)? Is the online narrative of the self a principal cause for changing the constitution of the Self through "a field of representations performed to emerge as our own ontological self?" (Bauman 2004, 48). Has identity become a fluid concept instrumentalized only to satisfy the Subject's "desire for security" that paradoxically seems to be regarded as a resistance to the Information Panopticon? As Wired (2013) noted, intersubjective relations create an intensified social plurality and a disproportional trust in authority through hyper-connectivity, allowing human beings to play the roles of both "the customers and the commodities" (Bauman 2004, 96) in a society of virtual consumption. These open questions constitute the selected limits of the current discussion as recent studies and top debates from the last five years have represented them, barriers that the present paper will try to overcome through an original and innovative philosophical approach.

In digital cultures, technologies of the self are understood as exercises and practices of self-constitution, as well as instruments of domination. By composing different *truth games* in order to provoke the self-constitution and discipline of the Subject, the practical reason which organizes existence inspires the next taxonomy of technologies:

> "(1) *technologies of production*, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) *technologies of sign systems*, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) *technologies of power*, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) *technologies of the self*, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. These four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each one of them is associated." (Foucault 1988, 18)

Therefore, the technologies of the self are simultaneously instruments of constitution, education, development, and control. According to Foucault, the first two technologies are currently used in linguistics and the sciences. The last two were privileged in his studies, in which the French philosopher "attempted a history of organization of knowledge with respect to both domination and the self" (19), a goal that, in my opinion, is also essential in defining the structure of so-called *knowledge-based societies*. The manner in which this concept focused on organizing objective knowledge about humanity and different sciences while neglecting the Self is remarkable. And yet, in digital cultures performed by networking societies, we encounter the exchange and organization of information on different levels, based on a process of high *subjectivation*, developed by digital subjects who are confronted with the following paradox: the higher the liberty of self-constitution, the aestheticization of real and virtual life, and the independence of creating and manipulating our process identity, the lower our level of intimacy becomes.

As a pragmatic social concern, popular for the masses, this theme exploits the valences of authenticity, individuality, and the moral boundaries between the public and private lives of the subjects. In October 2012, the highest rated and most viewed Dutch documentary of this year, *Panopticon*, was released on the internet—a documentary about the rise of the surveillance state. The existence of different states of privacy in different countries according to a certain national mentality shapes the identity of the digital subject, as well as the construction of the postmodern Subject in terms of cultural and political practices. Reinforcing the Foucauldian theory that "visibility is a trap," and that radical transparency becomes the principle of digital social technologies and the informational panopticon, these kind of social contemporary critiques are arguing that the narrative construction of any identity is performed under the influence of the culture of confession, which significantly contributes to reshaping the borders of the negotiating individual and institutional spaces, as well as the policies of control and surveillance. Power relations and structures are exercised in terms of global, massive, or diffused power as entity, in Foucault's terms, while the problem of governing network societies is now researched by taking into account representations of digital subject as consumer identities.

Adopting Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault claims in his theories regarding responsibility for social—and, in this case, we should add, *virtual*—behaviour are assumed to be more accurate if disciplinary and control mechanisms are applied.

> "The major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 201).

The Foucauldian Panopticism does not necessarily fail, but it must adapt to the current social changes of networking societies. Deleuze argued that in digital cultures, networking societies are mainly controlled through the administration of information rather than discipline. This is why I believe that before undertaking any argument about governing networking societies, it is necessarily to clarify whether they are treated as *disciplinary societies* or as *societies of control*, assuming that these two conceptions are quite different and that their model of government and supervision depends on the effects of the mentioned distinction.

The concept of *process identity* involves fluidity. Being unstable, this nuclear concept—apparently not a primary influence in inspiring normalizing mechanisms for networking societies—suggests a difference between *discipline* and *control* as applied to the governance of virtual communities.

> "Discipline as a mode of power relies primarily on enclosures, be they material, cultural or psychical. Control however encourages mobility in an attempt to manage the wider territory and not just the social space of enclosures (…) While discipline stabilizes and objectifies bodies, control modulates them. One way to understand this difference is that control does not act on the body so much as the environment through which the body moves." (Simon 2005, 15)

In this argument, a significant role should be attributed not only to the notion of *process identity*—which reflects relativity and subjectivity in the narrative constitution of the digital subject—but also to the previously discussed concept of *technoself*. Even for control, one needs a nuclear element that pulls together the plurality of virtual representations and behaviours of a subject, since, as Simons says, "in societies of control the surveillance apparatus does not act on bodies or minds, but on information about bodies and minds" (15). Hence, the technoself could also be regarded as a coherent unity of this required information.

On the one hand, we confront Deleuze's argument:

> "In societies of control, what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a password. The numerical language of control is made of codes that

> mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become '*dividuals*,' and masses, samples, data, markets or '*banks*.'" (Deleuze 1992, 6)

Despite the fact that Deleuze's perspective on regarding digital subjects as "numbers" is part of a panoptic custom, it is true that it implies a more objective opinion on what becomes—not control, nor discipline, but *tracking process identities*, interpreted as "digital citizens." Therefore, the distinction is very simple, and if we accept the thesis according to which networking societies are societies of control, then we must agree with Simon's opinion that

> "the object of traditional disciplinary surveillance is the body but in dataveillance the object of control is simply the digital representation of the body." (Simons 2005, 15)

On the other hand, Simon's research embraces Bruno Latour's construction of "immutable mobiles" that represent the final result of the transformations that information technologies developed on "identities." Simon explains, starting from Foucault's panopticism and the distinction between control and discipline, that in considering networking societies we need a stable identity for the digital subject that can be controlled, administrated, and interpreted as follows:

> "Simpler to arrange and control than actual bodies, digital identities are stable, transferable, transportable and combinable entities. These are kinds of data images or data shadows. Roger Clarke (1993) calls these entities 'digital personae,' I have taken to calling them 'databased selves.' More than an identity, the databased self possesses a limited agency. What makes databased selves different from our actual selves is that databased selves are more easily accessible, observable, manageable and predictable than we are. Databased selves actually meet the Benthamite ideal better than the disciplined bodies of the Panopticon." (16)

I partially agree with Simon: it is true that his "databased selves" are more suitable to Bentham's panopticism, but what matters is the fact that they are considered "more predictable" than we are, i.e., more predictable than our real selves. Digital subjects are performed by real ones; thus, predictability and accessibility depends on real decisions applied in virtual environments, but also on the interaction between different digital subjects and their contact with their virtual world, as happens, for example, in games, or in other platforms for socializing, such as Facebook.

In sum, governing network societies means mainly refers to controlling virtual conducts, behaviours, and interactions adopted by digital Subjects that realize their self-constitution, self-declaration, and self-cultivation in a virtual environment in which self-awareness is understood both as vital attitude and as social responsibility. Simon's "databased selves" should nowadays be interpreted through the distinction between *technoselves* and *process identities*, these last being defined as mutable, continuously developing, fluid constructions, like the previous "digital personae." I believe that arguing for network societies as knowledge-based societies requires, first of all, a construct that assures the integrity and unity of the "digital citizen," no matter his fluctuating virtual identities or manipulated appearances; it must also guarantee the unity of information that a digital subject represents in a virtual environment, and this is why the technoself should be recognized as such. Moreover, it is a fitting concept for representing both the correspondences of the real self of a human being who performs a digital identity and the nuclear structure of this virtual process identity, and I strongly believe that this connection should not be neglected if legal responsibilities and rights—including privacy—are to be preserved when networking societies and their digital citizens arise.

4. Instead of conclusions...

Considered consumption identities—the virtual constructions of the digital Subject—confront us, in the context of network societies as knowledge-based societies, with a new paradigm of knowledge as the capital of information. This interpretation reshapes the entire philosophical approach to the classical concept of *Subject*, questioning to what extent the Cartesian ideal of the certainty of knowledge from the self is possible in terms of *databased selves, digital personae*, or *process identities*. Reinforcing the role of the self in the constitution of the digital Subject, the proposed concept of "technoself" creates all the needed correspondences between true and fictional—or real and virtual—alternative models of existence. In clarifying the co-dependence and interpretative interaction between the notion of *technoself* and the proposed concept of *process identity*—developed in the terms of process ontology—one of the main tasks of this article was accomplished, i.e., explaining to what extent these two constructions influence and contribute to the governance of network societies. In this formulation, the problem of governing networking societies relies on the acceptance of the conclusions derived from previous analysis regarding informational privacy, digital surveillance and control, virtual behaviours, and techniques of power and self-constitution applied by subjects in shaping their identities and performing different representations. Accepting the fact that governance models for virtual spaces have correspondent patterns for our immediate reality involves at least two necessary assumptions. The first one is that the *technoself* is a digital equivalent of the *self*. The second one is that the digital Subject—born into particular historical and social practices, as well as narrative and aesthetical contexts—is subjected to a series of technological interventions responsible for the destruction of the classical notion of subjectivity, while also creating a new aesthetics of existence in the Foucauldian sense of self-fashioning, production of vital and moral attitudes, creative life performed as a work of art. One might fall into the trap of thinking that digital cultures are embracing the "liberal utopia" proposed by Rorty, which is creating "poeticized cultures" (2007). Reduced to this, they would have no role in providing a new significance to "the historical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault 1990, 45). As they intervene in "examining the limits of the events that have led us to constitute ourselves today,"[3] it is clear that digital cultures—and also network societies—represent "a world where human subjects have become reconnected to power in a more positive and fulfilling fashion" (Thacker 1993, 19).

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[3] Thacker, paraphrases Foucault, arguing:"That is the conceptual limits of our present arrangement of cognitive, moral and aesthetic realms". (Thacker 1993, 19).

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PROCESS ONTOLOGY IN AN EASTERN PERSPECTIVE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO ZHUANGZI

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Abstract:

The transience of being in the Chinese context—and specifically within Daoist texts—has been the subject of scholarly attention both as a philosophical theme and as a social phenomenon. Dao is the mystery that makes nature "the way it is." It can mean process, pattern, or existence. Eastern thinkers tend to find truth in every perspective, pursuing the middle way, and they stress mutual dependence—Zhuangzi's "equality of things," the "axis of Dao," etc. The Chinese sages tend to harbor an optimistic outlook that, however opposed divergent views may appear, in the end they are bound to harmonize and complement one another. Humans can unite themselves with the way they live. There are three threads at work in Zhuangzi's thought:

(1) The principle of equality: all things are equal or have relative parity. Each has its own merit, even that which seems deformed or useless to humans.

(2) The principle of difference: each thing is unique and exists in itself in accordance with the Dao.

(3) The principle of transformation. The only constant is that myriad beings are always transforming and becoming.

Key words: process ontology, Dao, Zhuangzi, being in Chinese context .

Introduction

The hermeneutic approach to the philosophical background of ancient Chinese thought reveals an aspiration to combine the traditional values of the East with the achievements of existential analytics. Daoist cultural heritage attracts Europeans not only through its mirror *otherness*, but primarily through the harmonious relationship of man and nature, as oneness with the Way (道—*Dao*). Many authors—including poets, writers, philosophers, cultural anthropologists, scientists, etc.—have adopted the fundamental difference between the East and the West as a method of dichotomous thinking based on ontological and epistemological distinctions. Such presuppositions have become the starting point for elaborate theories, comparative studies, and political theories relating to the "far-eastern spirit," and its peoples and traditions.

We might ask ourselves whether constructing an overview of Daoist ontology as an imaginary whole is justified, and to what extent. As it despises technocratic rationality and the artificiality of modern technological culture, Daoism and the cultural orientations broadly associated with it provide an ideal source of alternative creativity (Parkes 2003). It discloses the impermanence of the hidden meaning in life, and the assumption that the universe or some fundamental issues in society necessarily cannot be shown through philosophical theories, but can only be embodied in the performance of poetry, allegory, or image thinking. It carries out a kind of philosophical criticism—the idea that with the transition from epistemological to ontological implications, so-called "common sense" may exist in other branches of knowledge and modes of speech.

Ancient Chinese philosophy deals not so much with epistemological issues, but with the question of the true, genuine man responding by wisdom to the call of the Way. The philosophy of the Dao assumes a being in process, a universal oneness containing everything in itself, called 道 (the word '*dao*' has two primary meanings, namely "pathway" and "method"). While Confucian Classics explore the historical authenticity of the Way, it is Daoist philosophy—with its predominant spontaneity (自然—*zhiran*) [1]—that rejects any conventional distinctions. Daoists focus on non-standard, non-competitive attitude, challenging even the legitimacy of their own conceptual schemes.

Process ontology implies the unconditional, irreducible presence of the Way preceding all artificially fixed meanings. So-called "image thinking" encompasses the Boundless and is opposed to the distortion of any natural discourses. As a kind of incarnation of the *Great Ultimate*, speech is born in the empty mind just as the sound occurs in silence, so "forgetting the words" (Zhuangzi) is a precondition of any cognition. Zhuangzi (Zhuang Zhou) was the first Chinese philosopher who investigated the limits of language, and examined the inexhaustible potential of *Dao*-talk as a spontaneous liberating flow.

The ancient Chinese philosophical classic *Zhuangzi* was written in part by Zhuang Zhou in the late fourth century B.C.[2] Amazing stories in the book reveal the mundane situation of so-called narrow-minded men, in contrast to the sage, who wanders "in the clouds" above ordinary affairs of life. Zhuangzi illustrates how playing with imagination means, first and foremost, being able to think in new and original ways, "with a simple flip of the mind."[3] With humor and relentless logic, Zhuangzi attacks peremptory assertions about the world, especially evaluative knowledge of what is good and bad, or right and wrong. Zhuangzi's skeptical attitude, his unusually imaginative use of language, and his idea of spontaneity reject the focus on mere instrumental rationality.[4]

Despite the slightly skeptical tone,[5] Zhuangzi himself does not think that our situation is utterly hopeless, since at the very least we are better off by being aware of our ignorance. As a constructive act, his fictional mode creates discursive strategies following the respective ideals of vital endurance and "spiritual anticipation." Soaring in the infinite—beyond any involvement with daily routines—implies a kind of imaginary reality where everything is provisional and timeless. The yearning for authentic life beyond conventions and restrictions leads to a "festive living" that lacks any temporal horizon. The wayfarer immerses himself in the latent images on the border between waking and sleeping, which pushes him to extreme gestures beyond any motivation and purpose (the so called *non-action*).

Let's start the analysis from the latter to the former of the abovementioned three principles.

[1] *Ziran* is a compound of two different terms: *zi*, meaning "self," and *ran*, meaning "to be so," and can be translated as "naturalness," "the self-so," or "things as they are."

[2] The style of *Zhuangzi* has been analyzed by critics who evaluate the proficiency with which the author employs sophisticated rhetorical devices, satire, fantasy, metaphor, jokes, dreams, and parody. Such a collection of tales, fables, and parables challenges the individual to achieve intellectual and spiritual freedom by embracing and ultimately internalizing a series of Daoist tenets. To begin on this path to spiritual enlightenment, the individual must first become aware of his own relation to "the ten thousand things" and of the existence of the universal Way. Zhuangzi offered an alternative to the philosophies of his era, emphasizing individual freedom above the goal of a peaceful community ruled by the Sage king.

[3] One day the logician Huizi was complaining that a huge gourd was too big to be useful for anything. It was useless because it could not serve either as a regular water container, or as water dippers after splitting it in half. Zhuangzi asked him to make canoes from it, enjoying the wonderful experience of floating freely along the river. "When Zhuangzi hears Huizi complaining of an enormous five-hundred-year-old tree as being too old and too big to use for anything, Zhuangzi advises his frustrated friend not to give up on it, but to sit under the tree and see what perfect shade and shadows he can enjoy. For Zhuangzi there is nothing wrong with the gourd or the tree. The error is in his friend's mind, which is too narrowly focused and needs a simple flip." (Shudong 2015)

[4] As long as you are yearning for utilitarian benefits, such an orientation can be described as disturbing the intimate clarity and spontaneity of the pure mind. The satirical approach is extensively used in the Zhuangzi, often in order to imagine a way of life that is depicted in the parables and anecdotes. The symbolism of the edifying stories and dialogues can be summed up in the mentorship of the great and venerable master as an ideal personal relationship.

[5] Some analyzers of the treatise address the question of how he manages to sustain a positive moral vision in the face of this seemingly indiscriminate skepticism. In order to pinpoint more exactly what he doubts and why, Zhuangzi is compared to the Greek philosophers Plato and Sextus Empiricus. His views on language and the role that it plays in shaping the reality we perceive are also examined at length. Other authors test the application of Zhuangzi's ideas to contemporary debates in critical theory. They also explore the religious and spiritual dimensions of the text and clarify the relation between Daoism and Buddhism. (Kuang-ming 1982)

Process ontology as a spiritual journey (the principle of transformation)

The Dao-process ontology with its aspiration to virtue, wisdom, and transcendence of the corporeal condition is a full-scale allegory of the spiritual transformation through wandering. Chinese narratives often associate the free journey of the mind with the earlier, ideal stage of the development of Heaven and Earth and human society. In this conception, our transient existence is nothing more than a voyage, a pathway, or an itinerancy. Wandering is conceived as a breaking out of the routine scheme, a departure into an imaginary realm for the sake of achieving a higher state of consciousness and final liberation. Among those who leave the mundane world, the wayfarer is continually on the road, has multiple and open-ended destinations, and often improvises his itinerary along the way. Ultimately, his only destination is being itself, its illumination and transcendence.

The Far East god-like sage[6] wanders above the ordinary situation of the activities of daily life, even if he still lives among other humans. The Man of Dao—the wayfarer—is a wanderer between two worlds: he achieves the symbolic potential of a divine being on the one side, and the virtue of a god-like human, such as the Daoist sage, on the other.[7] The attribution of wandering both to the immortals and the sages takes us to the core of the ambivalence attached to this condition—to wander means to know everything, and at the same time nothing. At every turn the wayfarer may be praised as an authority, or rejected as a tramp, an outcast, or even a vagabond. This leads us to the crucial question: is wandering a deviation from the truth, or a means toward it? The ground for wandering is a kind of a-logical, pure freedom.

The Wayfarer may also become a sublime existential figure, a man who finds his real meaning in a message coming from the "other side" through the metaphor of constant movement—the soaring into the boundless. Zhuangzi's wandering (*xiao yao—free roaming*) discloses the impermanence of the hidden meaning of life, not in a metaphysical sense, but as a kind of existential analytic, or so-called "concrete philosophy."[8] The identification of wandering with human life represents the transience of human existence, with its difficulties and sudden turns. The movement may be centrifugal—transgressing the boundaries of the familiar in a search for the remote and quasi-legendary, exchanging the single locus of a stable identity for the far-distant, unknown world. Or it can be centripetal—longing for what is perceived to be the ancient center, involving a "return" to a mythic place of cultural origin.

Let us examine some of the consequences arising from the tendency of Daoist philosophers to interpret the ideal sage as a wanderer. The intent to remove wayfarers from the known world has further implications, for a movement that allegedly happens in unknown territory may as well not have happened at all. Those remote places may not exist, and no one can see them. In its extreme form, the nowhere of wandering is conveyed by a tautology—the wayfarer comes from the *Village of Wandering*, the *Plain at the edges of the earth*, etc. Beyond the struggle for a prestigious position, boundless soaring is the absolute counterpoint to the conformist manner of officialdom. The true sage knows, but he himself remains unknown; he comes from where "no one can see," and embraces everything without judging the deeds of men.

When the flow of thoughts is interrupted, and the mind rides away to the unconscious, the sage achieves a state in the concentration of the moment and the transcendence of action in which he cannot figure out what is happening in this "disorderly" situation. The virtue of the Way (Dao)[9] is specific and real, but thinking about it through parables and fiction mythologizes the reality, and the fantasy builds an imaginary realm. The condition of the wayfarer who follows the Dao is somehow like a dream, or even ignorance, because he cannot talk about it; he has "forgotten words," his tongue is tied

[6] The god-like sage can be compared with the restless traveler insofar as both are inclined to move, whether inside the mind or out in the world—the latter by a lack of self-possession, the former by equanimity, especially when embarking on a journey with no return.

[7] The Daoist wayfarer is considered to be both a knowledgeable man who deserves respect, and a god-like stranger who breeds fear.

[8] This term is an invention of Gabriel Marcel, the author of *Homo Viator*

[9] In order to demonstrate Zhuangzi's creative imagination, it is necessary to turn to the concept of Dao and its manifestation in Daoist philosophy. *Daodejing* had already expounded Dao as a formless, nameless, all-embracing first principle. To describe nonbeing as a creative potential, Laozi uses such epithets as "elusive," "rarefied," and "infinitesimal." The inscrutable mystery of the Way—the shapeless shape, the formless form—lies in metaphysical emptiness: such is the scope of the "all-pervading power of Dao."

into a knot. Inside the wise man reigns emptiness in which no thoughts attach him to reality, and he gains a direct perception of the Way. Following this direction, the Daoist point of enlightenment might be called a criticism of reality *sui generis*. Zhuangzi is developing the metaphor of the dream of life: the imaginary perspective, the new experience of life and death, which can correct the misunderstanding of the true meaning of being.

Nature is seen in terms of spontaneity and change, rather than as an indifferent substrate for humans to work on and transform. Running through the difference and parity of beings is the principle of transformation. This self-transformation of the Way involves the mutuality of opposites—e.g., a man is connected to a butterfly, life is tied to death. Those who soar above the clouds merely transcend the sky and the earth within which they roam—their state of mind remains untouched by all the movement, beyond time and space. This forges a new personal, poetic, and cultural identity, expressed through the allegory of “flying without wings”—breaking the chains of ignorance. The spiritual journey is represented by a visual, non-textual, symbolic language, and so-called “image thinking”—the very pictures and images of things as a kind of dream metaphor (e.g. the butterfly dream in Zhuangzi, which illustrates the transience and duality of life).[10]

The butterfly dream and the transience of life (the principle of difference)

As mentioned above, Zhuangzi is one of the most significant and paradoxical thinkers of China—in his mystical philosophy, reality is presented as an illusion created by infinitely shifting appearances. He sets out his ideas in a collection of short fables and allegories, of which the best known is the “Butterfly Dream.” In this narrative Zhuang Zhou dreams of being a butterfly, and then awakens from the dream unsure of whether he really slept and dreamt of being a butterfly, or whether he really was a sleeping butterfly that was imagining that it was Zhou. According to the philosopher, nothing in this world is absolute, and it is a mistake to think of “being” as a state that is totally different from “non-being.” Instead, Zhuangzi argues, non-action is a kind of action, and the things that humans believe they know are not really known.

Dream content is not experience in reality, it is false; but one can dream, do all sorts of bizarre trips in one’s dreaming, as if it is true. The power of imagination reveals itself in the form of pseudo-profound and enthralling ideas. For Zhuang Zhou, it is not actually possible to become *Hu Die* (the butterfly), but the dream experience was true—inside the critical non-reflexive moment it is not a dream, but a perception. This perception leads to the overwhelming question, “What is life: only a dream, or does a dream metaphorically possess its own life?” It is as weird as Escher’s black and white prints: two kinds of implicit and explicit images mutually intertwine to exist. Memory and imagination can include simple or complex images, but the goal is to point memory toward the image of the occurring object—the experience of re-arranging reality, and also fictional things that do not exist.

In turn, the parodies of Zhuangzi reveal something more than just satiric talent—it is through irony that he discovered the infinite, restlessly experiencing the borders of knowledge. Humor comes about through the meeting of incompatible worldviews—laughter erupts suddenly like a “blow,” a breakthrough in the usual attitude, welcoming the unacceptable. Dream itself indicates the “dark counterpart of reality”—the unstructured, chaotic, constantly moving totality of Dao (Heim 1984). The concept of self-modifying (*duhua*) synthesizes the three cognitive-existential aspects of Daoist philosophy: axiology, epistemology, and psychotechnique, indicating the lifestyle of the righteous and enlightened sage—a man who is in tune with the cycle of universal transformations (Wei-Hsin 1978).

To be able to escape from the image means hitting the intractable road—an incessant experience of the immediate non-differentiation of all differences—or the redirection of all forms of expression in the absolute closeness to Dao. Zhuangzi talks about the *Great awakening* (大觉—*da jue*), which overcomes the opposition between the dreaming and waking state, of *Heavenly music* (天籁—*tian lai*) as a transition between speech and silence, of *Real forgetfulness* (诚 忘—*chen wang*), which precedes knowledge and ignorance. As Zhuangzi posits in Chapter XXVI, “With words that are no-words, you may speak all your life long and you’ll never have said anything. Or you may go through your whole life without speaking, but it will be as if you have never stopped talking” (Guying 1988).

Dao-masters engage themselves in an endless talk about the Way—by the allegory they renew

[10] One of the most noted Daoist stories is one in which Zhuangzi dreams that he is a butterfly not knowing that he is Zhuangzi, and when he awakes, he is not sure if he was a butterfly dreaming of being Zhuangzi, or vice versa.

their day-to-day enlightenment and at the same time keep complete silence. To claim no-name means spontaneous forgetfulness in accordance with the "unspeakable Dao," following what is natural. "Where can I find a man who has forgotten words, so I can have a word with him" (Guying 1988), Zhuangzi paradoxically asks in the abovementioned chapter of his work. In the Dao-as-process grow the potencies of occurrence rather than the output of production, so any verbal violence (为—*wei*) appears to be excessive and unfruitful in its expression. Chinese thinking explores in depth this causal indeterminacy and ineffability without reciprocally opposing the levels of reality.

The universal equality of things and beings (the principle of parity)

The "Equality of Things" is a doctrine of philosophical criticism focused on non-competition: equality (*qi*) requires changes in people's view of the world—giving up any self-centered attitude, looking evenly at the *ten thousand* things as natural phenomena with self-sufficiency.[11] The transition from the epistemological to the ontological level challenges the legitimacy of one's own ideas. The role of philosophy embodied in the way of life is depicted with the story of wise men—not the daily behavior of ordinary people, but the philosopher's lifestyle.[12] We have already seen that Zhuangzi's playfulness and freedom—the wandering in the world of imagination—are expressed in the phrase "wandering without destination."

As a way of thinking, imagination has its own premise, structure, and strength, and it is profoundly embodied in Zhuangzi's text. With a large number of natural phenomena, such as *Piaofeng*, *Jianghai*, sound, color, baby, *Chu* dogs, etc., Zhuangzi is trying to convey the "anti-movement of the Dao," the imitation of nature which is fictional, allegorical. On an empirical level, the cosmological oppositions do not occur within the mind and behavior of the wanderer. The competing narratives coexist in the text, without clear indication of what is fictitious or imaginary. Imagination in the broad sense is a recollection of the ideas forming mage thinking—the use of some elements of the experience to retell tales, in order to create a more targeted contrast with empirical reality. In the narrow sense, it means simply that the idea is not really the image of an object—we can imagine non-existent begins, such as the fish *Kun* and the bird *Peng* from "Happy Tour" (Chapter one of "Zhuangzi"), as an example of a mythical voyage.

In a certain sense, the Daoist worldview, with its non-Cartesian logic, praises the virtue of living in harmony with nature—this is not a new fad, as it seems to be in the West, but rather a return to ancestral attitudes *vis-a-vis* natural life. The genuine, authentic state of mind that results from the process of inner transformation is the so-called "self-so" (*ziran*). Many Daoist thinkers distinguish *ziran* from the mundane social world in which we live—when we follow our natures, the result is peace and prosperity; when we oppose them, the result is chaos. Naturalness is the expression of a spontaneously peaceful and harmonious system, available to all who can recognize their place on the Path. The doctrine of "equality of things" requires changes in people's view of the world: when looking at *myriad beings*, you give up any self-centered attitude and get rid of the stifling formality of imperatives.

Daoism not only honed to perfection the general principle of equivalence, but also encourages self-realization and the completeness of personal expression. The refusal of maintaining privileged privacy does not mean a negation of the phenomenon of personality, as some researchers suggest, but describes the basic inter-subjective correlation in the mode of mutual existence (Owens 1990). Wisdom does not overlap with transcending withdrawal: the man of the Dao is dragging his bag in the dust of worldliness, because his vocation is to remain true to his destined time. The concept of human nature (*ren xing*) describes an inner predisposition to respond to the call of the Way, to rediscover the one-in-the-other (the ontological union) as a fulfillment of the inherent Dao-potency.

No change is possible outside the Dao despite its perennial emptiness; the person who is familiar with the laws of constant change lives in harmony with the *Great Ultimate* (*taiji*). The wise man is calm, exempt, and broad-minded, unlike the untrained man, who is incapable of existential predisposition-to-the-Path. The one, who has a clear vision

[11] Meishi Tsai compares Zhuangzi's philosophy to the English Romantic poets' aesthetic of the unity of imagination and reality—reconciling the opposites underlying the interdependency of objective and subjective, and the equality in being of all things (Tsai 1981).

[12] A kind of consciousness possessing the ability of awareness in its overall sense of freedom is achieved through imagination. So, while every moment brings up specific possibilities, even non-real things stay in the realm of consciousness. Sages have been able to engage with the imaginary realm because it implies the transcendent nature of freedom.

(*ming*) as the openness and anticipation of productive operation, perceives the invisible processes behind the visible transformations, and the hidden eventful world behind the ostensible perseverance. The Dao-sage has a complete understanding that heaven, earth, *myriads of beings*, and he himself are one—everything finally stands in its place, and the restored integrity may be seen through the purity of original nature. The man of true wisdom is far beyond the chain alternation of events, and the knowledge that he has no control over nature brings him closer to spontaneous creativity—productive cooperation with the Way.

In the process of getting rid of any sort of fixation, substantive language should be forsaken—the true Master knows how to explore all the humanly possible points of view. He inquires into all the perspectives regarding the truth of the Way, equalizing and transcending them at the same time. When uttering Dao, he makes use of the various functional forms of poetic expression, such as the so called "goblet words" of Zhuangzi, coming forth totally unlimited in the light of what he calls the *Heavenly Equality* (天倪—*Tian'ni*). "There is beginning, there is no beginning. There is no no-beginning. There is being, there is nonbeing. There is no nonbeing. There is no no-nonbeing. Suddenly there is a distinction of being and nonbeing. Still, between being and nonbeing, I do not know which is really being and which is really nonbeing" (Yu-Lan 1989).[13]

In lieu of conclusion

Prof. Wohlfart's analysis covers almost all modern studies of Chinese philosophy to date, far beyond the above brief overview of the masterful art of Dao-language in the early Daoist parables (Wohlfart 2003). The debate on the etymology of "*wu*" (nonbeing) as a contrasting juxtaposition with "*you*" (being) can be summarized as follows: fullness and emptiness in the *Daodejing* do not indicate sheer existence and nonexistence—"*wu*" and "*you*" as stages of the phenomenological structure of occurrence, contained in each other, lay beyond pure ontological determination. The ideographical reading of the character "*wu*" (无—which is considered to be one of the first artificial, abstract concepts in Chinese proto-logic) schematically depicts two interrelated issues. (1) Clearing of impenetrable thicket by fire—the forest is absent after the cutting of the trees, but its potential to grow anew is preserved. Its transformation is a transition from nonexistence to existence and requires the reversal of the hidden potency (the substrate for germination of stored seeds and stems). (2) A ritual shamanic dance whose pantomimic simulative movements evoke the desired state of being. The sage turns to the symbolic dimension available before the apparent onset, which is a precondition for other miraculous transformation of something-into-another-thing, or of a *becoming*.

"*Wu*" and "*you*" are fundamental modes of being in the empirical world, as well as reversed forms ("*wu*" as not-"*you*"), coinciding by returning to the original Dao. Being "*you*" in its turn originates in non-being "*wu*" (nothingness)—obviously we can speak more accurately of mutual interdependence than of mere opposition between them. What is openly manifested in Daoist ontology is universal *becoming* in the context of occurrence—"emerging from" and "passing away." According to G. Parkes (2003), one "dao" as a process is formed by the integrity of both emptiness and fullness—the wheel, the pot, and the room attain their usefulness through the empty place within them. Their use rests upon the completion of Dao as the unity of *yin* and *yang*,[14]

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[13] "There is a beginning. There is a not yet (*wei*) beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. Suddenly there is nonbeing. But I do not know, when it comes to nonbeing, which is really being and which is nonbeing" (Watson 1964). Because of the polysemy of the determinative article "*wei*," "not yet beginning" may be translated as "no no-beginning" (as in the case of Fung Yu-Lan), "before that beginning" (Stambaugh 1984), or even "ever begun" with another contextual reading (S. Katurova). Except here and when the following after the cited author's translation is necessary, all quotations from ancient Chinese texts were translated by PhD Sofia Katurova, with reference to the editions of Cheng Guying (Guying, 1985, 1988).

[14] The *yin-yang* correlation is the concept of correlation forming a unity: two halves that together complete wholeness. *Yin* comes out to mean "shady side," night, female; and *yang* "sunny side," day, and male. Many tangible dualities—such as light and dark, fire and water, expanding and contracting—are thought of as physical manifestations of the dichotomy symbolized by *yin* and *yang*. These opposites are also a starting point for change: when something is whole, by definition it is unchanging and complete. But when you split it into two halves—*yin/yang*—it upsets the equilibrium of wholeness, and both halves start to rotate after each other as they seek a new balance in Dao. This process describes how contrary forces are actually complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another.

and they are not to be described as mere objects, but rather as functional processes. In Daoist philosophy, the *Void* as a primary source of meaning has ontological priority over any kind of motion in the mode of availability: wise men return to the constancy of the absent.

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