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ESSAYS ON VALUES

VOLUME 1

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João Constâncio (Eds.)

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Volume 1

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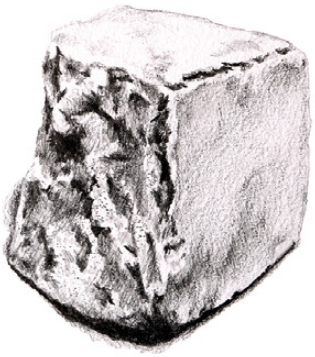

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Editorial Note

These three volumes, entitled *Essays On Values*, bring together forty-one recent articles by researchers at the Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA). They are a small sample of everything that, in the last four years, the Institute's researchers have published, in English, in indexed journals and collections of essays with peer review. As a whole, they reflect very well the research work that is done at IFILNOVA.

Section I. of ***Volume 1*** gathers six articles that deal directly with the question "what are values?", the question that guides all the work of the institute's different laboratories and research groups. The first article, by Susana Cadilha and Vítor Guerreiro, results from work developed in the Laboratory of Ethics and Political Philosophy (EPLab); the second, by João Constâncio, from the Lisbon Nietzsche Group; the third, by Alexandra Dias Fortes, from the Lisbon Wittgenstein Group; the third and fifth, by Nuno Fonseca, and Maria Filomena Molder, from the Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Group of the Laboratory of Culture and Value (CultureLab); the last, by Erich H. Rast, from the Philosophy of Language and Argumentation Theory Group and the Lisbon Mind, Cognition & Knowledge Group of the Laboratory of Argumentation, Cognition, and Language (ArgLab).

Section II. brings together three articles by members of the Lisbon Nietzsche Group. Since 2010, the Lisbon Nietzsche Group has completed several funded projects, and has established itself as a leading international research group on Nietzsche's thought. The three articles demonstrate the crucial importance of the question of values in Nietzsche's work, always thought from the perspective of the possibility of a "transvaluation of all values". Maria João Mayer Branco's article focuses on the value of introspection, and how Nietzsche anticipates Wittgenstein's "expressivist" view of the "the Peculiar Grammar of the Word 'I'" and the impossibility of private languages. Marta Faustino's article considers the theme of affirmation and the value of life through the interpretation of Nietzsche's reflection on truthfulness, intellectual honesty and courage in the light of Michel Foucault's work on *parrhesia*. Pietro Gori's article studies how Nietzsche creates a new anthropological

ideal based on his enquiry into the values of the "good European".

The area of Wittgenstein studies has had a strong influence on the institute since the time when it was a philosophy of language institute. The Wittgensteinian distinction between facts and values was decisive in defining the question of values as the central issue of IFILNOVA's research project, replacing the focus on philosophy of language. More recently, the focus of research at the Lisbon Wittgenstein Group has been on epistemic values, in particular in their connection with the question of religious belief. In **Section III.**, Nuno Venturinha's article examines, in the light of an epistemological standpoint, the way Wittgenstein thinks about the possibility of translation. Robert Vinten's article argues that Wittgenstein's thought contains elements for a critique of the concept of justice and of the liberal political visions of both Richard Rorty and Chantal Mouffe, despite the fact that both have drawn inspiration from Wittgenstein. Benedetta Zavatta's article questions the value of mythology by thinking of it as a disease of language – not only in Wittgenstein, but also in a whole philosophical tradition that preceded him.

The existence of a research group in ancient philosophy is a recent but very promising development in the life of IFILNOVA. **Section IV.** includes two articles by members of the group. Paulo Alexandre Lima's article considers the critique of misology and the value of discourse in Plato's *Phaedo*. Hélder Telo's article examines the pedagogical and protreptic value of imperfection in Plato's work.

Section I. of ***Volume 2*** includes seven articles by researchers working on questions of aesthetics at CultureLab. Three of these articles, by Ana Falcato, Bartholomew Ryan and Tatiana Salem Levy, show how important the study of the relationship between philosophy and literature is at the Institute. Several of the CultureLab researchers investigate the possibility that the philosophical concept of "value" implies a transformation of lived values into objects of knowledge and instrumental calculation, and that literature, especially in authors such as Joyce or Coetzee, has always known how to avoid this kind of objectification. Bartholomew Ryan's article is also linked to that of Nélio Conceição. Both resulted from the research work carried out in the funded project OBRA – Fragmentation and Reconfiguration: the experience of the city between art and philosophy, coordinated by Maria

Filomena Molder and Nélio Conceição. The articles by Maile Colbert and Ana Godinho deal with questions concerning aesthetic values from the point of view of sound and drawing, respectively. João Lemos' article is a perfect example of the work that is done on Kant at the Institute, in particular on the relationship between aesthetic values and moral values.

Because film studies is a research area that mobilises a very significant number of researchers at IFILNOVA, it has been separated from the other research areas in Aesthetics for over ten years now, and is explored in an autonomous laboratory, CineLab. The articles in **Section II.** showcase the work that has been done in this area. The articles by Stefanie Baumann, Patrícia Castello-Branco, Paulo Stellino, Susana Nascimento Duarte and Susana Viegas reveal the importance of film studies for the research on fundamental authors in the history of philosophy, such as Kant, Adorno, Wittgenstein, Deleuze, or Foucault, but also the autonomously philosophical character of the works of fundamental authors in the history of cinema, such as Herzog, Straub/Huillet, Faroki or Manoel de Oliveira. The article by Gabriele De Angelis is the result of work carried out in the Ethics and Politics Laboratory (EPLab) but has been included in this section because it is an example of the intersection between laboratories of the institute, as it uses three films to discuss a crucial political issue of our time, the migration and refugee crisis in Europe.

IFILNOVA began as an institute for the philosophy of language. The question of values became the institute's central theme at a time when the philosophy of language was still the dominant area of study of the majority of its researchers. It was also at that time – around 2011 – that the institute created the ArgLab and started to specialise in argumentation theory and mind and reasoning. ArgLab very quickly gained international recognition in this area. The articles in **Section I.** of ***Volume 3*** belong to this context. They all deal with Argumentation and Language. The article by Marcin Lewinski and Pedro Abreu and the article by Dima Mohammed and Maria Grazia Rossi mirror well the work developed by the institute in the area of argumentation and applied logic, in particular regarding the value issues raised by the COVID-19 crisis. The separate article by Maria Grazia Rossi is a case of the practical application of the theory of metaphor to the field of healthcare communication, a theme that has been

heavily funded in projects carried out at the Arglab. The article by Giulia Terzian and Maria Inês Corbalán is emblematic of the intersection between linguistics and philosophy in the conceptual research about language.

The four articles in **Section II.** deal with questions concerning ethical and political values. Although from very different perspectives, the articles by Erik Bordeleau and Giovanbattista Tusa have in common a critique of capitalism and a questioning of its values. The discussion of political correctness in Filipe Nobre Faria's article and that of the concept of a People in Regina Queiroz's are investigations into the values of liberal democracies and how best to defend them.

The emotions, embodiment and agency are three themes of great importance in the work of several researchers at the institute. The link between these themes and the question of values is evident when one considers values as something that, far from being a mere abstraction or mental construct, is constitutive of the individual and collective life of human beings. The three themes are present in all the articles in **Section III.** The articles by Dina Mendonça and Robert W. Clowes have in common that they deal with the question of the depth of the mind. But the former approaches it from the perspective of the philosophy of emotions, the latter from the perspective of the philosophy of cognition. The article by Fabrizio Macagno, Chrysi Rapanta, Elisabeth Mayweg-Paus and Mercè Garcia-Milà deals with the concept of empathy as both an emotion and a value. The articles by António de Castro Caeiro and Luís Aguiar de Sousa reflect on the nature of the emotions, embodiment and agency in the light of the study of key moments in the history of Western philosophy: in the first case, the phenomenology of boredom in the work of Martin Heidegger; in the second, the metaphysics of Arthur Schopenhauer. Alberto Oya's article reflects on the nature and value of the religious experience. This article is published here for the first time, and so is Benedetta Zavatta's in volume one. Most articles in this collection have been originally published in Open Access journals, but some are republished here with the permission of the editors, to whom we are thankful.

Maria João Mayer Branco
João Constâncio

I.
What Are Values?

Entanglement and Non-Ontology: How Putnam Clarifies the Link between Aesthetic and Ethical Value

Susana Cadilha and Vítor Guerreiro

Cadilha, S. & Guerreiro, V. (2022). Entanglement and non-ontology: How Putnam clarifies the link between aesthetic and ethical value. ***European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, 14*(1), 1-17.**
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1. Introduction

The *Vittorio Emanuele II Monument*, which stands between the Piazza Venezia and the Capitoline Hill in Rome, right on the ancient heart of the city, is interesting for the disparate reactions it arouses in natives and (some) tourists. While many of the latter may feel attracted by the massive heap of white marble with its profusion of statues, reliefs and columns, and probably see it as majestic, imponent, magnificent, imposing, grand, etc., some natives are actually prone to describe it with derogatory terms such as "the typewriter" and "the wedding cake," seeing it rather as pompous, ostentatious, out of place, grandiose, in sum, *distasteful* and, therefore, *ugly*. Another way of putting it is to say that the appropriately backgrounded observer cannot avoid seeing the wholething as *kitsch* of a certain kind; the kind associated with grandiloquence of power and vulgar appropriation of the past in the language of affectation. Describing it as "the typewriter" or "the wedding cake" captures the impression of its enduring effect on the urban landscape and its distinctive kitschy element: these words invite comparison between experience of the monument and the imagined experience of a gigantic replica of a typewriter or wedding cake, so as to bring out the true aesthetic aspect of jarringness, incongruousness, in sum, *inappropriateness*. They are more than just derogatory expressions voicing a negative attitude; they introduce a perspective, a *way of seeing*.[1]

These are not simply judgements made on the basis of sense perception and a *sui generis* reaction to the experience of certain shapes, masses, volumes, textures, lines and colors. They are riddled through and through with diverse contextual elements which are social, historical and cultural: the monument itself is a political statement made through architecture (in fact, a series of related political statements: from celebration of unified Italy under the Savoy dynasty to "Altar of the Fatherland" and its use during Italian fascism). The unsuspecting

1 The idea is that "ways of seeing" reveal aspects of what is seen, which we would otherwise miss. For a fine illustration of this in the case of painting and photography, see Berys Gaut (2010: 30-1). John Berger (1972) is an obvious earlier source of such examples.

tourist, through the perspective of an uninformed gaze, might just see continuity where the properly backgrounded subject sees disruption, the intrusion of a foreign body carving a perpetual scar on the flesh and surface of the cultural organism which is the city – a disruption that may perversely operate through the pretense of continuity, a mimicry of ancient grandeur that not only falls short of it but quickly betrays itself as mockery – unwilling parody being an important thread in the phenomenon of kitsch. But then again, the uninformed gaze might also see generosity instead of guile, or unconventional straightforwardness instead of political cunning, deviousness and deceit. To be able to see such things one requires training, no less than to recognize the shape of a chord progression in music or the intricate play of meanings in a well-crafted sentence. It takes time, a diverse combination of the virtues that Hume (1985) ascribed to the "ideal judge" (though always in a real life and therefore less than ideal state) and probably some more, all of which presupposes a further condition, which is personal growth, development, or, in one word, flourishing (which always comes in a variety of imperfect degrees, as is to be expected in real life experience). In other words, it is not the same as a machine built yesterday and running an algorithm in order to detect the presence of a "real" (mind- independent) property, or a barometer measuring air pressure.

It is now time to explain the point of this little slice of *Lebenswelt*, of actual experience in the lives of individuals, and, in fact, what it presents us with is a raw illustration of the complexities involved in apparently simple attributions of aesthetic value to things, as well as what is involved in real cases of aesthetic disagreement. It is a concrete example of how the question of value is pressing, unavoidable and ongoing for us, even if it is discarded by some philosophers, from the comfort of the armchair, as irredeemably obscure and mysterious. As Hilary Putnam phrased it, "the question of fact and value is a forced choice question. Any reflective person *has* to have a real opinion upon it" (Putnam 1981: 127).

And we could go further and say, as the example shows, that not only "reflective" persons are unavoidably confronted with the more speculative question of how fact and value are related. Also the common citizen of contemporary Rome and the more or less barbarian tourist one may find in its streets are unable to avoid value judgements and

disagreement about them – even the option of being indifferent to marble monstrosities and the like generates further disputes that are ultimately about value and is only intelligible as an option from the standpoint of creatures who, like us, are bound to make value judgements. Even if there is a question of scepticism about the objectivity of value being a theoretically consistent view, it cannot be *pragmatically* consistent, short of a radical change in "the texture of the human world" (*ibid*.: 141) akin to Putnam's thought experiment with the "Super-Benthamites." And if there is a role to be played here by philosophy it is to provide us with a measure of understanding of the phenomenon, even if not with knowledge of any new "facts of the matter."

Other features of the example are the following: 1) it suggests that, in our actual experience, concepts of aesthetic value are more often than not *entangled* with concepts of ethical value; 2) it provides at the same time a vivid case of what Putnam calls the entanglement of factual descriptions and value judgements; 3) it suggests, against the grain of traditional theorisation in aesthetics, how Putnam's idea of a "pragmatist enlightenment" in philosophy opens up a promising new approach to the understanding of value, from the standpoint of how it actually works in our lives; how aesthetics, as well as ethics, can be fruitfully seen as a "system of interrelated concerns, which are mutually supporting but also in partial tension" (Putnam 2004: 22), which is what cases of aesthetic disagreement like the one we describe above most notably exemplify.

Our aim here is a quite modest one. We want to look at Putnam's project of an "ethics without ontology," focusing on some crucial aspects of it, namely: a) the entanglement of fact and value; b) the idea that standards of correction in a certain domain are not exhausted by the *description* of either natural or non-natural facts (what he calls "objectivity without objects"); c) the idea of "[understanding and learning to] imaginatively identify" with a "particular evaluative outlook" (*ibid*.: 69) as the crucial mechanism by which we are able to apply *thick concepts*;[2] and, finally, d) the idea of a "pragmatist enlightenment," by which one abandons the illusion of an "absolute conception of the world,"

2 Concepts that combine descriptive and evaluative elements. Putnam's favorite examples are moral concepts such as "cruel," "brave," "temperate" and "just," but we shall return to this further ahead.

or the traditional project of grounding ethics on a metaphysics, be it an "inflationary" one (such as the Platonic variety, which posits "non-natural properties"), or a "deflationary" one, in its "reductionist" or "eliminationist" varieties (*ibid*.: 78). With our eyes set on these aspects, we attempt to draw important lessons for the project of a joint approach to aesthetic and ethical value, not as two isolated domains but taking seriously the pervading entanglement of both, as suggested in the example of "aesthetic disagreement" with which we started. This should provide us with an outline of a possible way of extending Putnam's project so as to include the aesthetic domain; or perhaps we should call it the outline of a contextualist approach to aesthetics that draws on Putnam's project for ethics. The plausibility of such a proposal will be shown by establishing connections between Putnam's remarks and recent developments in both aesthetics and ethics. We conclude by suggesting that a fruitful way of pursuing the connection between aesthetic and ethical value could be found in co-opting resources from virtue ethics. Here we take advantage of Putnam's appeal to the concept of *human flourishing* (Putnam 1981). The modesty of the aim lies in the fact that here we can only gesture towards a "research program," and not conclusively demonstrate that we need aesthetic value to understand ethical value and vice versa. But even this is very much in tune with Putnam's pragmatic approach.

2. Casting Light on the Problem

Value permeates the lives of people. We may lack a clear understanding of how this is so, but we do know that certain things matter to us more than others, that different things matter quite a lot to us in very different ways and for different reasons. The fact that each one of us is the unique *subject of a life* and not merely a belief-forming machine with a perceptual system (the sort of picture that might be evoked by expressions such as "cognitive agent") is inextricably bound with the concept of value. Plausibly, nothing matters more to us than our own lives and how they relate to the lives of others (following the Aristotelian idea that humans are fundamentally social and political animals). After all, why would any particular object or experience matter to us if not from the point of view

of how those things acquire a place, status and "directionality" within the context of our lives as structured wholes (Levinson 2004), unfolding in a way we could describe as "narrative-like" (Goldie 2012)?[3] Also plausibly, we cannot make sense of the idea of "living a life," by contrast with simply "being alive," if we do not think of ourselves as creatures for whom *valuing* is a crucial activity, the activity without which there simply are no *structured practices* that distinguish the living of a life from the mere state of being alive or a "mechanical" sequence of such states, to employ the Deweyan metaphor. A corollary of all this is that the connection between aesthetic and ethical value may seem mysterious and dubious from the standpoint of the armchair, but it is forced on us from the standpoint of *embodied experience*, such as, for instance, the experience of being confronted with a marble monstrosity that is not simply there to be an object of sight, but screams at us, telling us how we should go about in our valuations, by shaping our relationship with the environment, not just through conceptualization but through bodily interaction. So what we need from a philosophical approach is to make sense of this phenomenon, and this is what we believe Putnam's pragmatic approach may assist us in doing.

3. Putnam's Project

Putnam famously contended that there is no absolute conception of reality to be found behind the diversity of our language games. According to an absolute conception of reality, what is *real* would be identified with what is accessible from any point of view (Putnam 2004; McNaughton 1988; McDowell 1985). The problem with this idea, according to Putnam, is that we cannot make sense of such a point of view, a God's eye point of view, for that would, among other things, incur the "illusion that there could be just one sort of language game which could be sufficient for the

3 We believe this sheds a new light on statements such as "it is better to have a life that begins poorly and ends well than a life that begins well and ends poorly," which is as close as one can get to an aesthetic-moral judgement, since it attributes aesthetic value to the "moral shape" of a life, in much the same way one could appraise the formal properties of a story, a painting or a musical work. On this topic, see Paris 2018.

description of the whole of reality!" (Putnam 2004: 22). He further argued that both metaphysical realism and anti-realism presuppose such a point of view, and that this is the main reason why both ethical and aesthetic values have been regarded as suspicious, not *real* "entities": they have no place within the absolute conception of reality, the true description of "what there is," sought by those committed to "Ontology."

The challenges posed by such putative entities as values were identified long ago. For instance, Hume stated that "Vice and virtue […] may be compared to sounds, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind" (Hume 1972, Book 111, 51: 203). Evaluative properties are thus not real properties of objects, but rather a manifestation of the mind's "propensity to spread itself on external objects." Two centuries later, Mackie argued along the same lines: moral values and moral facts are not the sort of thing that can be part of the "fabric" of the world. Suppose, for instance, that we describe a homicide. There will be certain aspects of that action that are factual, that belong to the constitution of the world: "X pierces Y with a knife," "blood gushes out," etc. And it may also be a fact about the world that someone, or the society as a whole, *considers* that action to be wrong. However, there is in the world no fact that consists in the action itself being wrong; evaluative properties are not real, they are merely the "projection or objectification of moral attitudes" (Mackie 1977: 42). A related view in aesthetics is that of the "aesthetic attitude theorists," in the line of Bullough (1912), and Stolnitz (1960), who provide psychological explanations of aesthetic experience, a line that goes back to Kant (2000) and ultimately to Hume's "projectionism."[4]

It is also to Hume that Putnam traces back what he calls the dichotomy between *facts* and *values*, which, through the influence of logical positivism has become an entrenched cultural institution in the 20th century, holding its sway up to our time well after the philosophical ideas underpinning it have been long demolished, according to Putnam, by moves in philosophy that he sees as having been propelled by the influence of American pragmatism, e.g. Quine's (1951) criticisms of the

4 Putnam doesn't discuss these issues in connection with aesthetics, so what we do here is to fill in at least some of the gaps, in order to establish the relevant parallels and connections.

analytical-synthetic distinction or the thesis of conceptual relativity. And it is precisely this absolute contrast between facts and values that Putnam diagnoses as the cause of the current deadlock between realist and anti-realist approaches to ethical (and aesthetic) value, and thus the persistence of the "ontological program," in its inflationary and deflationary varieties. So the current deadlock is between positing mysterious non-natural properties (the Plato-Moore line) to buttress our evaluative discourse; to reduce value properties to some other thing (explain them away); or to eliminate them from our "ontology" altogether. In aesthetics, the deadlock is between varieties of aesthetic realism that posit equally mysterious (though not non-natural) aesthetic properties,[5] resorting to the metaphysical notion of supervenience, via the work of Sibley (1959; 1965) in order to make them palatable (Zangwill 2001; Zemach 1997);[6] and varieties of anti-realism, mostly of Kantian inspiration (Scruton 1996), with the eliminationist strand represented by authors like Dickie (1964) and Cohen (1973). To break this theoretical impasse generated by the "ontological program," Putnam proposes his "pragmatic pluralism," which, in his words, "does not require us to find mysterious and supersensible objects behind our language games" so that "the truth can be told in language games that we actually play when language is working" (Putnam 2004: 22).

These are, in broad outline, the terms of the discussion. A realist about value (in the pragmatic sense of "realist"), who holds that the evaluative properties of things are real and (at least some) value attributions objective, must answer this challenge. Putnam, however, will

5 That they indeed *are* somehow mysterious is even explicitly recognized by the aesthetic realist (e.g. Zangwill) who endorses the "aesthetic metaphor thesis": the idea that there are properties we cannot describe literally, only metaphorically. So, in this view, we employ the same word "sad" to people and music, but we express different concepts in each case. Musical sadness, for instance, is not literal sadness. What musical sadness *is* so that it is a real property, is shrouded in mystery. The anti-realist (e.g. Scruton) may say that we merely *imagine* music to be sad, without attributing any properties, and he will dissolve the mystery, but, so the aesthetic realist argues, only by sacrificing aesthetic normativity.

6 A non-naturalist "intuitionist" realism of the Moorean line, as we find it in Bell (with whom "significant form" takes the place of Moore's "good") having become unfashionable (Bell 1914).

argue that the true problem lies in the terms of the discussion themselves, namely, with the concept of a "real property." So a pragmatist leap out of the deadlock must contemplate a reform of the conceptual vocabulary with which we approach these issues.[7]

And what is a *real* property? Under some interpretations, a real property is one that can be characterized without reference to the experiences or responses of the observer – real properties would then be physical properties of objects, such as mass and position, which exist in the world itself, independently of us. In other words, real properties are "mind-independent" properties. These would be the primary qualities of objects, as they are described by our best scientific theories. In contrast, secondary properties are dependent on the sensibility of the observer, and while they can still be said to be a part of the causal structure of the world, in the sense that our perceptions are *caused* by "real properties," value properties seem to be further removed from it.[8] Normally, the model for thinking about evaluative properties is that of secondary qualities, and thus they would not be real in a proper sense.[9]

Of course, this understanding of what a real property consists in, is subsidiary of the absolute conception of reality to which Putnam objects; and he objects to it for at least two different yet related reasons. First, he denies that the scientific viewpoint gives us a factual, neutral and objective description of the fabric of the world as it is in itself, independently of any particular perspective. Second, he also denies that those properties

7 We should set a caveat here. The idea of developing a pragmatist aesthetics is obviously not something new. For one, Richard Shusterman's project of a "somaesthetics," developed in a series of books (2008; 2012), comes obviously to mind. But here we are concerned specifically with how Putnam's insights may help us in a joint approach to aesthetics and ethics.

8 "A secondary quality is a property the ascription of which to an object is not adequately understood except as true, if it is true, in virtue of the object's disposition to present a certain sort of perceptual appearance." (McDowell 1998: 133).

9 However, Zemach (1997: 95-114), who is a realist about aesthetic properties, conceives of them as "tertiary properties," which he defines as "phenomenal properties" further modulated by "desire," and so this also counts as an approach modelled on secondary properties, with a peculiar twist. But it is not completely clear how Zemach is able to distinguish his approach from an anti-realist one, however plausible his explanation of aesthetic properties seems *from the point of view of our experience*.

or qualities that cannot be characterized without reference to observers' responses and sensibilities should be considered any less real. Since we are in no position to tell which properties are accessible from any point of view, it is preposterous to contend that only those properties accessible from that point of view are real. And given that Putnam rejects the absolute conception of reality, then the idea that values are nothing more than "projections" of human attitudes or beliefs, to be contrasted with the world "as it is," ceases to make sense.

How does then Putnam understand evaluative properties, exactly? Let us first consider a simpler case: the example of colour. Secondary qualities, in general, are understood in terms of dispositions of an object to present a certain kind of perceptual appearance. An object's property of "being red" is to be understood in virtue of that object being such that, under the appropriate circumstances, it looks red to a suitable class of observers. In other words, it has a power to elicit experiences of red in normal observers, under standard conditions of observation. It is a quality of the object that is dependent on how humans (or other relevantly similar beings with colour vision), with a sufficient degree of visual acuity and under appropriate lighting conditions, visually experience the object. Is it then a subjective or an objective property? The property of "being red" is subjective in the sense that it is only conceivable in terms of certain subjective states it originates – something "being red" means that something "looks red" to someone. However, this is not to mean that this property does not genuinely belong to the object, in the sense that an object being such that it looks red to someone is not dependent on the particular experience of looking red to someone on a particular occasion, and also in the sense that the application of colour predicates is not an arbitrary practice with no standards of correction.

Evaluative properties – even if we apply to them something like the model of dispositional properties – are of course much more complex than colour properties. But the whole point is that they are to be understood as similar to *real* dispositional perceptual properties of objects, which will appear as such-and-such to ideal observers under ideal conditions, and not merely projections of the human mind. According to Putnam, evaluative properties cannot be characterized

without reference to the responses of observers,[10] but they are not unreal or arbitrary; in fact, they are precisely the kind of properties about which the judgments of rational inquirers can be expected to converge. For sure, convergence about value is widespread, but if lack of convergence was *overwhelmingly* more widespread than convergence, social life would hardly be possible at all. But even though the life of a society may reach dramatic or even desperate levels of conflict, unrest, and disintegration, it always falls short of a Hobbesian "state of nature." For obvious reasons, lack of convergence in matters of value is far more conspicuous to us than the unbroken chain of convergences that sustain everyday life, even throughout periods of terrible disruption. Obviously, it is hardly ever the case that everyone converges on some specific question of value; but then again, that is hardly ever the case on any kind of question. Furthermore, if we follow Putnam's reasoning, we will find evaluative aspects in practically all sorts of factual questions. To give just one example in the case of art, what makes it possible that certain artworks appear to us as "unconventional," highly original or revolutionary is precisely the background of convergence (e.g. the fact that our experience of artworks is organized by "artistic categories" (Walton 1970), for instance in being grouped into *styles*) allowing variations and departures from the "pattern" to be visible at all. The general lesson here is that in matters of value, lower level discontinuities presuppose a background of higher level continuities, on the basis of which the discontinuities will either be resolved or transformed into something else. This may be somewhat confusing, but it is exactly what Putnam means when he suggests that we need "a complex vision of human nature" if we are to grasp the common ground between aesthetics and ethics (Putnam 2004: 8).

Obviously, the notion of "ideal observer," in the case of colour, differs from the notion of "ideal observer" when applied to the case of values; or better yet, what counts as an ideal observer differs from one case to the other. In the case of colour, what we have in mind is just statistical normality. In the case of values, we will not derive a standard

10 "If something is a good solution to a problematical human situation, then part of the very notion of its being a good solution is that human beings can recognize that it is. We need not entertain the idea that something could be a good solution although human beings are in principle unable to recognize that it is." (Putnam 2002: 108).

of correction from a statistical norm; rather, the notion of merit will be involved (McDowell 1998). When a certain situation is perceived as cruel, this *merits* some response (e.g. disgust, moral reprobation, etc.), in the same way as when some situation is perceived as funny (e.g. when the telling of a joke is perceived as funny, laughter is not merely a causal effect but a *merited response* to that kind of situation, and this specific type of merited response is what constitutes the point of telling a joke and makes evaluation of jokes possible).

This is the point where the concepts of *context* and *evaluative outlook* enter the picture (Putnam 2004: 69). An evaluative outlook is what enables us to see an action as *cruel*, a situation as *funny* or a passage as *fustian*, or, indeed, a brobdingnagian marble monument as jarring, ostentatious and kitsch. The discernment of value properties can be clarified by the idea of trained visual perception: to "perceive" moral and aesthetic properties one must become the right kind of person, with a repertoire of appropriately developed skills. The right kind of person is one with a trained sensibility – in developing perceptual and conceptual powers, tools and skills, the agent is *ipso facto* developing her ability to discern these properties. This also requires an understanding of both ethical and aesthetic ascriptions of value in contextualist terms: judgements are relative to groups of people (not isolated individuals) in concrete historical situations and, ultimately, to forms of (social) life. We shall return to this line of thought later on.

A promising line of argument for a contextualist approach of this kind must involve an analysis of the so-called *thick evaluative concepts*, just as Putnam does (Putnam 2002: 34). In contrast with *thin* evaluative concepts, such as *good/bad* and *right/wrong*, thick concepts involve both descriptive and evaluative elements. Examples of thick ethical concepts, as we mentioned before, are *cruel*, *brave*, *temperate*, and *just*; examples of thick aesthetic concepts are *garish*, *graceful*, *dumpy*, and, of course, *kitsch*. A further interesting point to notice here, so as to bring the notion of ethical-aesthetic entanglement into the picture, is how thick *ethical* concepts are often used to make *aesthetic* valuations and, conversely, many thick aesthetic concepts are used to make attributions of moral value. McGinn (1997: 92-3) suggests a further category of thick concepts, which he dubs "terms of moral appraisal with a strong *aesthetic* flavour,"

to which we would also like to add the notion of an aesthetic term with a strong *moral* flavour, *kitsch* being perhaps the best example.[11] We cannot come to see something as kitsch if we are not also able to see it as the *aesthetic manifestation of certain traits of character* in people who produce and consume or use it.[12]

All of this suggests just how aesthetic and ethical values are no less entangled than description and valuation are.

To characterize an action as cruel is both to describe and to appraise it. Thick concepts illustrate the idea that there are no discursive situations or practices (e.g. scientific discourse) in which we are simply describing reality as it is, reporting pure or brute facts, on the one hand, and discursive situations and practices in which we are simply evaluating reality (e.g. everyday moral discourse and art criticism), by projecting our attitudes onto it, on the other hand. As Putnam argues, both our factual descriptions of reality and our evaluative assessments of it are a constant entanglement of facts and values, such that it is not possible to pull the evaluative and descriptive components apart. He plausibly contends that it is not possible to disentangle the descriptive component of concepts such as *cruel* from its evaluative component (as, for instance, Blackburn (1981; 2006) intends) precisely because knowing how to apply concepts such as *cruel* is only possible once a certain evaluative outlook is formed and made available – and an evaluative outlook has a conceptual, an affective and also an imaginative dimension, all of which are deeply interconnected. As Putnam sees it (Putnam 2002: 38), the descriptive and evaluative components of thick concepts are impossible to disentangle because the descriptive content of the concept is in part determined by the evaluative content – only someone who can understand the evaluative point of defining an action as cruel or a monument as absurdly kitsch is able to apply those concepts in new cases. In other words, one learns how to play that particular language game.

11 Another possible example would be the Japanese aesthetic term *wabi-sabi*. See: plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics/.

12 Just like, ironically, for Zangwill (2015: 7) part of what makes the music of Bryan Adams so "cringe-making" is the fact that he "clearly intends his music to have aesthetic value" (an anti-formalist aesthetic judgement if there ever was one), so similar traits of people who relish in kitsch are part of what gives the notion of kitsch its substance.

Stressing the role of thick evaluative concepts and the importance of the formation of an evaluative outlook is also to stress the contextualist dimension of value ascriptions without abandoning the idea of realism and objectivity about values. Value properties such as cruelty and kitschiness are real properties, and judgements of value are susceptible of being true or false: we can misjudge or make mistakes about ascriptions of value, and we can get things right. However, values cannot be characterized without reference to the responses, skills and the historically informed, socially embedded experience of observers. Putnam's lesson is that we need not to give up the idea of realism and objectivity about values, but we do need to cast aside the idea of an absolute conception of reality. In particular, we need to relinquish that conception not for the sake of reclaiming the reality of values, but basically because we are unable to make sense of it. The attempt to ground evaluative discourses and practices outside the normative terrain is a modern *idée fixe* that became attached to a notion of scientific objectivity brought about by the development of modern science; but the very idea that it is possible to take such a step back and define what the world is in *itself*, the perpetual temptation of thought to go outside of itself, is the source of many philosophical (pseudo?) problems, and no doubt of many philosophical misunderstandings.

Still in line with his internal realism, which basically denies "that there are any [experiential] inputs which are not themselves to some extent shaped by our concepts, by the vocabulary we use to report and describe them, or any inputs which admit of only one description, independent of all conceptual choices" (Putnam 1981: 54), Putnam's project of an ethics without ontology shows us a way of resisting that temptation, while not giving up on the notions of correctness and objectivity. Putnam had no intention to blur the difference between true and false judgements, objective and subjective knowledge, right and wrong inferences. But he held that what actually makes the difference is not what we usually think it does: more specifically, what makes the difference are not metaphysically objective facts independent of our discursive practices.

One objection with which a contextualist approach of this kind is inevitably faced is that of the threat of cultural relativism and particularism. As we have seen, judgments of value so conceived are relative to groups of people (not to isolated individuals) and, ultimately,

to socially shared forms of life. If judgements of value are culturally local, and the intelligibility of value concepts relies on particular practices of particular cultures, then how can we aim at a universal or cross-cultural evaluative language, since we cannot just assume here a possibility of convergence (Williams 1985)? Putnam (2002) countered this move by arguing that a realism of thick concepts does not inevitably lead us into relativism. First, there is no reason to assume that thick evaluative concepts cannot be universally or cross-culturally shared (think, for instance, of the concepts we use to articulate our experiences of beauty). Second, critical reflection on our own practices is always possible, even if from an internal standpoint. Nor is there a reason to believe that this critical, reflective step back would only be possible if our evaluative practices and discourses were underpinned by metaphysically objective facts. In Putnam's words, "There are many sorts of statements – *bona fide* statements, ones amenable to such terms as 'correct,' 'incorrect,' 'true,' 'false,' 'warranted,' and 'unwarranted' – that are not descriptions, but that are under rational control, governed by standards appropriate to their particular functions and contexts" (Putnam 2002: 33).

Standards of correction are internal to practical reasoning, which is true of any kind of conceptual or cognitive activity, not just ethical reasoning or art criticism. We draw here another lesson from Putnam's pragmatic approach. The objection of circularity that some have voiced is, according to Putnam, simply misguided, for, he argued, it is not possible "to provide *reasons which are not part of ethics for the truth of ethical statements*" (Putnam 2004: 3). And this should not be a problem since it is exactly similar to what happens in science, which is our paradigm of objective discourse. "Normative judgements are essential to the practice of science itself. […] [J]udgements of 'coherence,' 'plausibility,' 'reasonableness,' 'simplicity' and of what Dirac famously called the beauty of an hypothesis, are all normative judgements in Charles Peirce's sense, judgements of 'what ought to be' in the case of reasoning." (Putnam 2002: 30-1). These normative values of coherence, simplicity, etc., are what Putnam calls epistemic values, which can also be cast as *aesthetic* values for theories (Zemach 1997). When a scientific theory is evaluated as simple and coherent (which also counts as a reason for believing it to be true), "[…] it is not that we have some way of telling

that we have arrived at the truth *apart from* our epistemic values and can, so to speak, run a test to see how often choosing the more coherent, simpler, and so on, theory turns out to be true *without presupposing these very standards of justified empirical belief*. […] [I]f these epistemic values do enable us to correctly describe the world […] that is something we see through the lenses of those very values. It does not mean that those values admit an 'external' justification." (Putnam 2002: 32-3).

4. Bridging the Aesthetic and the Ethical

It is now time that we focus on the entanglement of aesthetic and ethical value. We described a series of important features in Putnam's project of an "ethics without ontology," a project which flows from his well-known thesis about the profound entanglement of factual descriptions and value judgements, so that any description will inevitably contain evaluative elements, countering the deep-seated dichotomy between an objective realm of facts and a subjective realm of values:

> Knowledge of facts presupposes knowledge of values. This is the position I defend. It might be broken into two separate claims: (i) that the activity of justifying actual claims presupposes value judgments, and (ii) that we must regard those value judgments as capable of being right (as "objective" in philosophical jargon), if we are not to fall into subjectivism with respect to the factual claims themselves. (Putnam 2002: 137)

If Putnam is right, then objectivity in human discourse is not possible without a repertoire of value concepts. An objective conception of the world is not a neutral description of the facts from a God's eye point of view, for no such point of view is available nor can it be made sense of. Subjects of knowledge are also subjects who at the most basic level of their existence must perform acts of valuation. This is why we started by connecting the exercise and honing of our perceptual and conceptual skills and abilities in an actual case of aesthetic valuation with the idea

of being a *subject of a life*, given our account of valuation as the feature distinguishing between the living of a life and the mere state of being alive. Knowing the world, acting on it and organizing it so that we may *recognize ourselves in it* are all actions carried out not by disembodied "cognitive agents" who happen to have this purely external relationship with a body and embodied experience, like belief-forming machines with a "perceptual interface"; these are all aspects (epistemic, ethical and aesthetic) of *one single thing* which is the living of a life, by a true subject of a life. This already establishes a framework for the disagreement between someone appalled before the sight of a marble monument and someone relishing the very same sight as a magnificent one. For it is only from the standpoint of a concrete "form of life," a life "being a certain way" (Levinson 2004), that the same monument can seem so vividly to exhibit such contrasting qualities. Mere perception, "aesthetic attitude" or any combination of psychological features in a single experience will not suffice. The whole "evaluative outlook" an individual develops in the course of her life, and which she gradually learns to "imaginatively identify" with, widening the boundaries of her experience, must be involved. And here lies a very important element: it is not implausible to assert that our dismayed native Roman will be able to put himself in the shoes of the beguiled tourist, for this will be part of the imaginative skills he must hone in order to be capable of making the aesthetic assessment he makes (as if he switches between seeing a duck-rabbit picture as a duck or as a rabbit); but it seems to be part of what enables the tourist to have *his* aesthetic assessment that he *can't* put himself in the shoes of our native, just as someone relishing in the "all too sickly smooth and bland" music of Bryan Adams cannot get into Zangwill's shoes and perceive in it a quality "like very sweet artificial- tasting fizzy drinks" (Zangwill 2015: 7). If he could, he would not be able to switch back from the rabbit to the duck. Obviously, we cannot provide a fully satisfactory demonstration of this point here; so for now we shall be content with plausibility.

We conclude this section with a lengthy quote from an author who, in his reflections about the continuity of aesthetic and ethical sentiment, strikes one as rather "Putnamian," here and there, especially when he characterizes moral attitudes as "part of a continuum of normative opinions which mutually sustain one another" (Scruton 1996: 247).

> Now there certainly seems to be an internal relation between aesthetic and moral judgement. In moral judgement it is usual to praise a man for certain qualities, and these qualities may be such that the question "Why is that a reason for admiring him?" normally requires no answer. Similarly, the analogous question asked of the aesthetic features of a work of art may also require no answer. And it is interesting to discover that the features of men and the features of works of art which are in this sense intrinsically admirable tend to coincide. We admire works of art, as we admire men, for their intelligence, wisdom, sincerity, depth of feeling, compassion and realism. It would be odd to acknowledge this, and yet to deny that there is a relation between moral and aesthetic judgement. […] Even in the realm of abstract art, there is no way in which moral and aesthetic judgement can be neatly separated. If music were as abstract and unfathomable as is sometimes thought, then it would be impossible for there to be irony in music, or the deliberate exploitation of character. (*Ibid*.: 245-8)

Philosophers who object to the idea of grounding aesthetic normativity in ethical normativity often appeal to the phenomenon of "aesthetically discriminating moral brutes and aesthetically blind moral saints" (Zangwill 2015: 165), which suggests a radical discontinuity between the aesthetic and the ethical. Perhaps this picture is itself a consequence of thinking about ethics in terms of rules and principles, so that a connection between aesthetics and ethics would be demonstrated only if someone who acquired a set of moral rules would thereby be enabled to make appropriate aesthetic judgements. But maybe there is an alternative picture that can make better sense of the continuity between both domains.

5. A Virtue Theory Framework

One obvious place to draw inspiration for a contextualist approach to aesthetic-ethical value is Aristotelian virtue ethics. Within such a framework, ethical and aesthetic valuations may be contextually specific, but they are brought about by certain features of our reality, the elements of common human lived, embodied experience. That is why we can learn how to apply aesthetic terms from other cultures, importing new conceptual tools into the language game, so to speak: we grasp the "metaphors we live by" through the commonalities of embodied experience. We learn how to combine and recombine them in new, unexpected cases. This sort of approach connects the realist idea that there are value properties to be discerned with a measure of resistance to universal principles: the language of virtue cannot be translated into a set of universal rules and principles.

Putnam does not particularly stress the connection between his own pragmatist approach and virtue ethics (as, for instance, B. Williams and A. MacIntyre do apropos their own views), but he did most clearly state that "in ethics we need both Aristotelian and Kantian insights," and the core of Aristotelian virtue theory, i.e. the concern with human flourishing, is precisely what gives shape to "our imperfect but indefinitely perfectible ability to recognize the demands made upon us by various values" (Putnam 2002: 134). He can also be seen as almost suggesting that the concept of virtue is the perfect counterpoint to "a form of *monism*" that "reduces […] all ethical phenomena, all ethical problems, all ethical questions, indeed all value problems, to just *one* issue, the presence or absence of this single super-thing *Good*" (Putnam 2004: 18-9). It was Aristotle who first objected to this form of monism by making explicit that ethics involves too many diverse questions and concerns to be captured by any rarefied abstract idea: "Not surprisingly, ethicists, starting with Aristotle, responded by pointing out that there are many questions concerning ethics, not only questions about good but questions about virtue, which cannot be usefully answered by talking about 'the Form of the Good'" (*ibid*.: 19).

Also according to Putnam, the objectivity of value judgments is dependent on certain parochial capacities, and on an appropriately

formed sensibility – here the idea of "understanding and imaginatively identification with an evaluative outlook" proves to be the decisive link – and is not reducible to universalizable norms or standards of correction. As he puts it, "the function of ethics is not, in the first instance, to arrive at 'universal principles'" and "few real problems can be solved by treating them as mere instances of a universal generalization" (*ibid*.: 4). Applying evaluative standards correctly will thus depend on the circumstance of "seeing" correctly – it will be a matter of fine-tuning our perceptual and conceptual abilities, which are naturally influenced by our intellectual and practical formation/training (here McDowell employs the much more apt German word *Bildung*). Thus, the difference between someone with a trained sensibility and one who lacks such a trained sensibility does not rest at the level of the correct application of principles (of universalizability and consistency) or of a rational decision-making procedure, as is the case with deontologist and consequentialist ethical theories, respectively. A substantial part of the story to be told will depend on the idea of "perception," as it is specifically applied to the ethical domain by Aristotelian theorists such as McDowell (1998), which is akin to the ability of *seeing*, and not merely *inferring* from non-evaluative cues, when an awkward piece of architectural display is or is not absurdly kitsch. In his turn, Putnam states quite clearly what he means by "moral perception":

> By "moral perception," [...] I mean the ability to see that someone is, for example, "suffering unnecessarily" as opposed to "learning to take it," that someone is "being refreshingly spontaneous" as opposed to "being impertinent," that someone is "compassionate" as opposed to being "a weepy liberal," and so on and on. There is no science that can teach one to make these distinctions. They require a skill that, in Iris Murdoch's words, is "endlessly perfectible," and that as she also says, is interwoven with our (also endlessly perfectible) mastery of moral vocabulary itself. (Putnam 2002: 128)

We believe that Putnam's appeal to the concept of *human flourishing* provides us with a reasonable basis to vindicate a connection between

aesthetic and ethical value, and we contend that when one thinks of morality in terms of virtues, the connections between aesthetics and ethics come out much more vividly than with other forms of ethical theory, and thus an approach to the intersection of both domains within the framework of a virtue theory not only seems like a promising avenue to expand Putnam's project in order to include the aesthetic domain, but it also has precedents in similar developments attempted in epistemology (Zagzebski 1996) and the aesthetics of morality (Paris 2018; forthcoming). Trained visual perception of objects provides the appropriate model for the discernment of value properties, in both cases. Ultimately, a virtue theoretical framework covering epistemic, ethical and aesthetic values would perhaps mean not only the fulfilment of Putnam's project, but also a clear sign that the cultural institution of the fact/value dichotomy – another white marble monstrosity – is indeed collapsing, however slowly, before our eyes.

6. Conclusion

We attempted to sketch the outlines of a refreshing approach to the connections between aesthetic and ethical value by making use of Putnam's project of an "ethics without ontology," suggesting ways in which this project can help us to cast a new light on the way we think about aesthetics. Particularly, we argued that Putnam's idea of how we are enabled to discriminate certain aspects of reality only by "imaginatively identifying with an evaluative outlook" is the true locus of the continuity between aesthetics and ethics, allowing us to see more clearly through the complexity of real life experiences of the entanglement of aesthetic and ethical value. To this we added the suggestion that a virtue theory framework is plausibly a fruitful way of complementing such a contextualist and pragmatist approach.

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Nietzsche and Normativity

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I.

In recent years, "normativity" has become one of the most discussed issues of contemporary philosophy, and it is not surprising that it has already become an important theme in the Nietzsche research as well, particularly among Anglo-American scholars.[1] This article focuses on two main questions: first, whether the tradition that started with Wilfrid Sellars' conception of the normativity of the "space of reasons," and continued with the development of this conception in the works of such authors as John McDowell and Robert Brandom, as well as Robert Pippin, Terry Pinkard, and many others, is relevant for the interpretation of Nietzsche's thought; second, whether Nietzsche's seemingly hostile view of reason and rationality involves, as is often claimed, reducing reasons to blind causal processes and, therefore, the endorsement of what John McDowell has termed "bald naturalism."[2] The basic idea of the normativity of the space of reasons is that human beings are the thinking beings that they are not because they have "representations" of the world, but rather because they occupy social spaces where they judge and act according to norms that give them reasons to judge and act in certain

1 See, for example, Robert B. Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*, Chicago and London 2010 (in particular, pp. 3-4, 25-32, 45, 68, 81, 114); Christopher Janaway / Simon Robertson (eds.), *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity*, Oxford 2012; Maudemarie Clark / David Dudrick, *The Soul of Nietzsche's* Beyond Good and Evil, Cambridge 2012; Paul Katsafanas, *Agency and the Foundations of Ethics. Nietzschean Constitutivism*, Oxford 2013; Christian J. Emden, *Nietzsche's Naturalism: Philosophy and the Life of the Sciences in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 2014; Christian J. Emden, "Nietzsche's Will to Power: Biology, Naturalism, and Normativity, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 47(2016), 30-60; Christian J. Emden, "Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity: A Reply to Brian Leiter and Peter Kail, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 48 (2017), 95-118. See also the dossier on the "creation of values" in *Nietzsche-Studien* 44 (2015), especially the contributions of Maudemarie Clark, Christian J. Emden, and Martin Saar. See also the dossier on normativity included in issue 3 of volume 47 of the *Journal Nietzsche Studies*. This issue is, however, focused on Paul Katsafanas' "Nietzschean Constitutivism," not on the normativity of the "space of reasons" and the other themes under discussion in this article.

2 John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London, England 1996, 67, 73, 76-77, 88-89, 108.

ways. Human beings think of themselves as committed to norms, they subject their values to rational scrutiny and give and demand reasons for their judgments and actions in the social spaces they inhabit – or, in other words, human beings occupy a normative space of justification –, because thought is discursive, i.e. conceptual, and, as Kant and Hegel were the first to make clear, concepts are rules, and rules are norms. According to this view, to be human is to occupy the space of reasons, and this is the same as the "space of concepts,"[3] understood as rules for judgment and action. Thus, the notion of the space of reasons will be relevant for the interpretation of Nietzsche's writings if the latter involve the claim that human beings are (if not by nature, at least historically) rule-followers who take their values to be open to scrutiny, and whose judgments and actions are susceptible to reasons.

The article is divided in three main parts. The first part (corresponding to section II below) tries to show that the first three chapters of *The Genealogy of Morals* give a genealogical account of the emergence of reason in human history that involves the claim that the latter is a development of human engagement with social *rules*. Therefore, Nietzsche does see the emergence of reason as the emergence of a normative space of reasons. The second part (sections III-V) interrogates Nietzsche's conception of value, purpose, and meaning in order to show that he does not endorse any version of "bald naturalism." He does not conceive of the space of reasons as a structure that our subjectivity adds to, or imposes upon, the "space of subsumption under natural laws," such that only the latter, i.e. only a natural world devoid of value, purpose, and meaning, should be considered *really* real. According to McDowell, the belief that what is really real is a space of causation devoid of value, purpose, and meaning (a very common belief since the development of modern science) is what leads to a disenchanted view of the world, or what is usually called "nihilism." If, however, we realised that "our nature is largely second nature, and our second nature is the way it is not just because of the potentialities we were born with, but also because of our upbringing, our *Bildung,*" then, according to McDowell, we could say that "the way our lives are shaped by reason is natural"

3 See Robert B. Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England 2009, 10 ("The space of reasons is the space of concepts".)

(McDowell, *Mind and World,* 88). Thus, a "naturalism of second nature" is McDowell's alternative to "bald naturalism"(McDowell, *Mind and World,* 85-86, 91-92, 94-95, 109-110, 178.) We shall see that Nietzsche is much closer to endorsing this conception of a "second nature" (an expression he himself uses) than "bald naturalism", or what he himself calls "the mechanistic interpretation of the world."[4]

Note that, while McDowell never mentions Nietzsche, Robert B. Brandom often refers to Nietzsche as the proponent of one type of genealogy which aims to unmask all our rational justifications as "irrelevant mystification" by reducing them to blind causal processes, that is, by presenting explanation in terms of reasons as illusory and reducing all legitimate explanation to explanation in terms of causes. Nietzsche's conception of genealogy is, thus, supposed to share the assumptions of "bald naturalism" about reasons, value, purpose, and meaning.[5]

The third and final part of the article (sections VI-VII) tries to show that, although Nietzsche's genealogical project restricts the epistemic pretensions of rational normativity – and is very far from assigning to the space of reasons the status of a purely autonomous realm of justification

4 On Nietzsche's rejection of the mechanistic interpretation of the world, see, for example, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Über Freiheit und Chaos, Nietzsche-Interpretationen II*, Berlin 1999, *passim*; Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, London and New York 1983,169-186. On the claim that Nietzsche endorses some sort of "naturalism," but rejects the mechanistic interpretation of the world (or any version of "bald naturalism"), see, for example, Rogério Lopes, "Methodologischer Naturalismus, epistemische Tugenden und Normativität bei Nietzsche", in: Helmut Heit / Günter Abel / Marco Brusotti (eds.), *Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie: Hintergründe, Wirkungen und Aktualität*, Berlin 2012, 113–124; Emden, *Nietzsche's Naturalism*; Helmut Heit, "Naturalizing Perspectives. On the Epistemology of Nietzsche's Experimental Naturalizations", *Nietzsche-Studien* 45 (2016), 56-80.. See also the dossier on naturalism included in issue 1 of volume 47 of the *Journal Nietzsche Studies*, especially the following articles: Keith Ansell-Pearson / Christian J. Emden, "Introduction: Nietzsche and the Ethics of Naturalism", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 47 (2016), 1-8; Emden, "Nietzsche's Will to Power: Biology, Naturalism, and Normativity"; Peter R. Sedgwick, "Hyperbolic Naturalism: Nietzsche, Ethics, and Sovereign Power", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 47 (2016), 141-166.

5 See Robert B. Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's* Phenomenology, Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London, England 2020, 555, 565-566, 656-657. See also Robert B. Brandom, "Reason, Genealogy, and the Hermeneutics of Magnanimity", unpublished paper 2012 (http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/currentwork.html)

–, on the other hand it does not dismiss rational normativity, or the space of reasons, as merely illusory (an "irrelevant mystification".) The focus of these final sections will be Nietzsche's perspectivism and the claim that there are no facts, only interpretations. Taken together with Nietzsche's views on value, purpose, and meaning, this perspectivism is shown to involve a conception of genealogy that, far from reducing reasons to causes, is a reflective questioning of our values that investigates the *reasons* behind our deeper normative commitments. Such a reflective questioning does not have the aim of reaching the rational justification of universal moral norms, but it is also not a mere "deconstruction" of our values. Its status may be compared, instead, to Kant's reflective judgments about art and life.

II.

The main claim of the three first chapters of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy* is that what human beings are now resulted from the particular way in which nature gradually responded to a "task" that she set herself: the task of "breeding an animal *with the right to make promises*" (GM II 1.) This highly teleological language is, of course, metaphorical. Nietzsche does not believe that nature as a whole is a thinking subject with the capacity to set itself tasks. The history that Nietzsche wants to describe is an evolutionary process that no entity (be it Nature or God or the collective Spirit of mankind) has devised or planned. In less metaphorical language he calls it "the history of how *responsibility* originated" (GM II 2.) But one of the aims of the use of highly metaphorical language here is, perhaps, to underscore one of the main points of the three chapters (and of the whole Second Essay), namely that nature qua life, far from being a fixed mechanism of "pushing and shoving" (e.g. NL 1885, 34[247]), of mechanic cause and effect and reciprocal action in an absolute, homogeneous space and time, is rather a "creative" reality that tends to be constantly expanding and acquiring new, increasingly more complex forms of organisation, *as if* it were constantly assigning new "tasks" to itself and finding solutions to the problems it faced in accomplishing these tasks. (I write "tends to" because it is also important for Nietzsche

that certain forms of life can become "decadent" and self-destructive, so that it is not to be excluded that life as whole can also take this path.)[6]

The reason why life had to be creative in order to breed an animal with the right to make promises – that is, an animal that is *responsible* for its own actions – is because animal life would not be possible if forgetfulness were not an active force in all animal organisms, and the right to make promises presupposes, by contrast, a "memory of the will" (GM II 1,) This particular kind of memory had to be bred, cultivated, and slowly disciplined in order to come to being in some forms of animal life and become strong enough to be active as an organic force opposed to the force of forgetfulness. One aspect of this idea which is not always mentioned is that Nietzsche is not referring to an animal that *can* make promises – as most English translations suggest –, but rather to an animal that *has the right to* make promises, or is *rightfully allowed to* make promises (the German verb that Nietzsche uses is *dürfen*, not *können*.) And another point which is often forgotten is that, in the third chapter, Nietzsche makes it very explicit that the *right* to make promises involves *reason*. The "history of how *responsibility* originated" (GM II 2) is the history of how reason originated, that is, of how, after the development of more elementary forms of the memory of the will, "one at last came 'to reason'!" (GM II 3.) It is this equation of the right to make promises with responsibility and reason – and, in fact, not only reason, but also everything else that comes with it: "seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of the human being" (GM II 3) – that one needs to understand in order to understand Nietzsche's view of normativity.

Nietzsche thinks that the emergence of responsibility and reason was prepared by two main events in the course of evolution. First, human beings had to learn to interpret the world in terms of certain categories that not only provided them with orientation in their environments, but also with orientation in time and a sense of purposiveness. These categories were, basically, the categories of cause and effect, essence and

6 Nietzsche's view of life as a "creative" force that sets itself "tasks" is very well capture by Frederick Neuhouser, "Autonomy, Spiritual Illness, and Theodicy in Kant and Nietzsche", in João Constâncio / Tom Bailey (eds.), *Nietzsche's Engagements with Kant and the Kantian Legacy, volume II: Nietzsche and Kantian Ethics*, London/New York 2017, 159-191.

accident, and end and means. Nietzsche writes: "first, the human being must have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general to be able to calculate and compute" (GM II 1.) For Nietzsche, this is not yet "reason," or not yet reason in the proper, full sense of the word, because what he has in view here is an instinctive, pre-reflective use of those categories, as well as, so to speak, a merely half-self-conscious recourse to calculation and computation in accordance with them. He is trying to conceive of a pre-social phase of human evolution in which the "memory of the will" is just beginning to emerge. For the first time, and still in a very elementary way, human beings are beginning to be able to "ordain the future in advance," to pledge their word and develop an active "desire for the continuance of something desired once," so that "between the original 'I will,' 'I shall do this' and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be interposed without breaking the long chain of will" (GM II 1.)

The second main event in the history of responsibility and reason is the "pre-historic labor" of the "morality of mores" or "morality of custom" (*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*, GM II 2.) This second "preparatory task" (GM II 2) is tantamount to the emergence of society, social life, the development of the "State." It may not be clear at first sight why Nietzsche thinks this was necessary for the emergence of responsibility and reason. But this becomes clear once one realises that customs are *norms* – that is, customs are *rules* that a community imposes upon themselves, customs establish what the members of a community *ought to do* in order to live as members of that community. Only with the emergence of society did the human being begin to develop and incorporate the habit of following rules and being responsible for the social enactment and employment of rules. A first form of specifically human normativity appeared on the scene. We can call it social normativity, in order to distinguish it from normativity in the emphatic sense, that is, from rational normativity.

It is not too difficult to understand why Nietzsche thinks that social normativity did not yet involve reason and responsibility in the proper sense of these words, but only prepared their emergence. Firstly, customs

were originally devised just for the purpose of holding a society together, and not at all for the sake of their intrinsic rationality. As Nietzsche puts it in *Daybreak*, the original purpose of custom was "custom in general:" social norms begun as "fundamentally superfluous stipulations" devised to inculcate "the perpetual compulsion to practise customs: so as to strengthen the mighty proposition with which civilisation begins: any custom is better than no custom" (D 16.) Nietzsche gives as an example the Kamshadales, who punished with death "the scraping of snow from the shoes with a knife," as well as other harmless uses of a knife (D 16.) Secondly, and most importantly, customs are norms that are *imposed* on the members of a society. The formula "morality of custom" describes the development of society (or civilisation, culture) as a process of *Zucht und Züchtung*: the discipline and cultivation of customs, the "breeding" (*Züchtung*) of human beings behaving in a certain way, namely in accordance with the customs imposed upon them within a given community.[7] In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche expresses this idea by emphasising that behaving in accordance with customs depends on the "memory of the will," and in the "prehistory of the human being" the slow development of such a memory was achieved, and could only have been achieved, by means of "mnemotechnics" involving much blood and pain. Civilisation was built upon the principle that "only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in memory"; civilisation "has its origin in the instinct that realised that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics" (GM II 3.) Thus, "dreadful sacrifices and pledges (sacrifices of the first-born among them), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest rites of all religious cults," as well as "asceticism," and above all "punishment" (GM II 3) – all of this was used in pre-historical and historical times in order to impose customs and make civilisation possible.

These two main events combined – firstly the development of basic categories for orientation in space and time, secondly the morality of custom – made the human being "calculable" (GM II 1, II 2.) They allowed human beings to "remember five or six 'I will not's', in regard to which one had given one's *promise* so as to participate in the advantages

7 On *Zucht und Züchtung*, See Patrick Wotling, *La philosophie de l'esprit libre, Introduction à Nietzsche*, Paris 2008, 218-242, and John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, Oxford 2004, 38, 146, 190-200, 209, 259-260, 268.

of society" (GM II 3.) So human beings begun to possess elementary forms of memory of the will and to make promises. But they did *not* yet have the *right* to make promises, as what they were now capable of was not yet tantamount to what we should call responsibility and reason. These emerged for the first time in the history of the human being when the "ripe fruit" (GM II 2) of the whole process finally blossomed – a "ripe fruit, but also a *late* fruit" (GM II 3), as Nietzsche emphasises. This fruit is what he terms "the sovereign individual" (GM II 2), a very controversial figure in recent expert discussions of Nietzsche's thought.

But it is not the aim of this article to enter into this controversy.[8] For our purposes here, it suffices to claim that Nietzsche's aim in the chapter about the "the sovereign individual" is to establish an opposition between the human being as a "herd animal" and the human being as a true "individual" ("like only to itself", GM II 2.) He establishes this opposition in absolute terms, as an opposition between human beings who have been completely disciplined into renouncing their individual wills and obeying customs that are imposed upon them and another kind of human beings, very rare human beings "liberated from the morality of custom" (GM II 2) and self-disciplined into following their own wills and acting in accordance with their own rules. It is important to note that, as Werner Stegmaier has shown, "*Typisierung*" is part of Nietzsche's usual rhetoric. He sketches out certain "types," and he establishes absolute oppositions on that basis, but he himself teaches us to think, not in terms of absolute oppositions, but rather in terms of degrees, grades, and shades, so that in his "types" we should actually read human *possibilities*.[9] And it is in this sense that one should understand the way in which Nietzsche distinguishes between two human possibilities in chapter 2 of the Second Essay: on the one hand, social passivity, self-complacent conformism, the mere obedience to social norms; on the other, the activity of actually *taking responsibility* for one's own actions. The idea that only the sovereign individual "has its own independent, protracted will and the

8 I have stated my views on this controversy in João Constâncio, "'A Sort of Schema of Ourselves': On Nietzsche's 'Ideal' and 'Concept' of Freedom", *Nietzsche-Studien* 41 (2012), 127-162.

9 See Werner Stegmaier, *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie, Kontextuelle Interpretation des V. Buchs der* Fröhlichen Wissenschaft, Berlin 2012, 222-223.

right to make promises" (GM II 2) means that only a person who takes responsibility for an action by promising to act and actually acting in accordance with a principle she freely endorses deserves to be praised for accomplishing that action. If, by contrast, a person gives her promise to act in accordance with a certain custom or just lives by the implicit promise of acting in accordance with that custom, such that she is moved by fear or any other affect caused by the "will not's" that have been burned into her memory by the mere morality of custom, then there is nothing praiseworthy in her action as such.

Nietzsche formulates this in many ways. He writes that only the sovereign person "says yes" to herself, that is, affirms her actions, and only she has the right to do so (GM II 3.) He writes that the "dominating instinct" of the sovereign person is to exert "the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, this consciousness of this rare freedom, the power over oneself and over fate;" he writes as well that the sovereign person calls this dominating instinct her "conscience" (*Gewissen*, GM II 2, 3), and he even resorts to the vocabulary of "free will," writing that the sovereign person is "sovereign" insofar as her "genuine consciousness of power and freedom" has "become flesh" in her, so that she is "a master of [her] free will" (GM II 2). It is hard to believe that (as some claim) Nietzsche writes all of this merely ironically and does not see a genuine human possibility here. While it is true that Nietzsche has a lot to say against the idea of "free will," that is, of absolutely self-determining rational agents, it should also be clear that everything in the first three chapters of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy* suggests that he sees something very significant in the fact that, at some point in history, some human beings started *to take themselves to be capable of* rising above the mere obedience to social norms and acting according to what *they* thought was right. That was precisely the moment when at least a few, rare individuals begun to acquire the "*right* to make promises" because they "at last came 'to reason'!" (GM II 3). As John Richardson has recently shown in a very persuasive way, Nietzsche sees this moment as the moment when *morality* (*Moralität, Moral*) emerges from custom (*die Sittlichkeit der Sitte*): people now understand themselves as fully-fledged subjects and agents, so that "the voice in them that remembers the rules, their conscience, is no longer understood as a group-self but as a 'voice of

reason,' *their own voice*."[10] That is to say that, even if "free will" in the strict metaphysical sense of the term is impossible, taking oneself to be capable of acting according to *one's own* reason gives rise to *a new way of valuing*. Or, in other words, there is a fundamental change in human history when people begin to understand themselves as knowers and agents that inhabit a *space of reasons*.

But how fundamental is this change, and what exactly is its nature? Nietzsche seems to hold the view that, although a sovereign individual goes beyond passive obedience to custom, and this justifies, at least to some extent, that he takes himself to be "autonomous" (GM II 2), his autonomy will always remain limited as long as it remains moral, that is, as long as it consists only in the scrutiny or self-assessment of social norms. Again, Richardson's recent analysis of this point is very illuminating: "morality is different from custom," he writes, "in the *way* it values, but is largely the same in *what* it values"; the function of morality is the same as custom, namely "to secure adherence to norms and thereby to sustain a successful society", so that the difference between the two is just that

10 John Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, Oxford 2020, 256. Richardson (*Nietzsche's Values*, 227 n.39) remarks that "very unfortunately most English translations obscure or conceal Nietzsche's treatment of custom by translating *Sittlichkeit* as 'morality': they make it impossible to recognize the distinction we'll see he has in mind," that is, the distinction between an "*ethic* of custom" and "morality" (see also *Nietzsche's Values*, 255 n.30). Thus, the sovereign individual is "super-ethical" (*übersittlich*, GM II 2, KSA 5.293), but not super-moral: on the contrary, he represents the emergence of morality, as now a training by mnemonics is replaced with a training by bad conscience (see Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism,* 88-101, 169-171, 194.) In my view, the sovereign individual does indeed represent this emergence of morality as something fundamentally different from (the ethic of) custom, but he (or it) represents more than that, namely the more general emergence of reason and responsibility and, with this, the emergence of an *ideal* of autonomy which cannot be realised in morality (especially insofar as the later involves training by bad conscience.) The evidence for this reading lies in the fact that the characterisation of the sovereign individual lists the essential traits of Nietzsche's "higher types" and "free spirits." Thus the ideal of true autonomy or freedom that emerges with the emergence of reason and responsibility is better realised in the great artist or in the genuine philosopher than in the moral agent. Their *creative* achievements go very much beyond the moral use of reason and sense of responsibility, but they also presuppose the possibility of reason and responsibility. See, for example, BGE 188, 213, as well as the philosopher as "the human being with the most comprehensive responsibility" in BGE 61.

morality induces "secure adherence to social norms by inducing members to *self-police*" (Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, 256-257). The reason why this transition from obedience to "self-policing" is fundamental is that now social norms are treated as *conceptual meanings*: they are scrutinised in the light of their implications and compatibility with other conceptual commitments. That is why Nietzsche is justified in equating this moment of the history of mankind with the emergence of "reason."

Moreover, his description of this emergence can indeed be interpreted as a description of the emergence of the "space of reasons" because he portrays the rational scrutiny of social norms as an activity which is simultaneously individuating and social. By stepping back and scrutinising the norms that ought to rule his judgments and actions, an individual becomes, as it were, truly individual, "like only to himself" (GM II 2.) It is precisely in this sense that the history being told here is "the history of how *responsibility* originated" (GM II 2.) But this self-scrutiny that makes one responsible for one's actions is also a social activity, and for two reasons: first, on Nietzsche's account, it is only possible insofar as an individual becomes truly individual by distinguishing himself from a "herd," i.e. from a previously existing social space in which people live by the passive, conformist attitude of obeying custom without questioning it; and, second, Nietzsche emphasises that being a sovereign individual necessarily involves having "reverence" or "respect" (*Ehrfurcht*) for one's "equals" in autonomy (GM II 2, 3) — that is, if not respect for all others, at least for those who are equally "strong" in being able to establish their "own *measure of value*" (GM II 2) by not allowing their thought and action to be ruled by unscrutinised norms.

But all of this now allows us to unpack the main point that Nietzsche makes in the first three chapters of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy* about rational normativity and the space of reasons: concepts are indeed rules — the rules that make rational thought possible —, but concepts are one kind of rules that *originated in another kind of rules*, namely customs, *and they remain situated in and contentfully attached to the space of these other rules*. Nietzsche places the normativity of concepts within the normativity of customs or, put differently, conceives of rational normativity as a development of social normativity along a *continuum*.

This is the meaning of his *genealogy* of rationality, and we may now begin to realize that this genealogy is not reductive (i.e. not an instance of "bald naturalism"), as it does not imply that concepts and reasoning are anything like epiphenomenal occurrences contingently caused by the irrational activity of biological drives hidden from our self-consciousness. On the contrary, Nietzsche emphasises, as we just saw, that the emergence of reason in human history is an event of great impact, which transfigures everything: just recall the image of the "ripe fruit," (G II 2, 3), and especially the claim that what is at stake is how nature responded to the self-imposed "task" of "breeding an animal *with the right to make promises*" (GM II 1) or, which is the same, "how *responsibility* originated" (GM II 2.)

Thus, Nietzsche's emphasis on the "severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy" (GM II 2) involved in the development of custom as the "preparatory task" that would later make possible the emergence of reason and responsibility does not reduce the latter to the former. Along the *continuum* which is the development of life on earth something truly new and important emerged when, after the emergence of custom and on the basis of it, reason and responsibility finally emerged. Nietzsche's non-reductive point is just that, given that that development occurs along a *continuum*, what comes later is not wholly distinct from what comes earlier. The space of reasons is never purified from the "severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy" (GM II 2) of social normativity – or, in other words, rationality is inseparable from a *ballast of irrationality*.

I shall return below to this claim about the impurity of the space of reasons as we know it. But, before we progress any further, it is useful to take a quick view of the broader picture beyond the *Genealogy of Morals*. For Schopenhauer – by far Nietzsche's main philosophical influence –, the fact that human animals have "reason" makes their lives very different from the lives of other animals because it gives them "the terrifying certainty of death", while the other animals *fear* death but have no *concept* of it. Therefore they have no consciousness of their temporal finitude as individuals, and they just enjoy "the absolute imperishableness and immortality of the species."[11] Being certain of its own death, the human being lives in need of

11 See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, *Volume II*, transl. by E.F.J. Payne, New York 1958, §41; see also §46; quoted below as WWR II.

metaphysical consolation, questions its natural, animal fear of death, and attains wisdom if it realises that existence is an "error," something that ought not to be, and so discovers that death is in fact not an evil, but a blessing (WWR II §41, §46). "Metaphysical consolation" is a crucial theme in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. The whole book is permeated by the question of the *justification* of existence. In the tragic age of the Greeks, the justification of existence was aesthetic; after the Socratic turn, reason itself – the rational pursuit of truth – becomes the justification of existence. In Nietzsche's mature writings, the theme of the justification of existence becomes the question about the value of our values, particularly of moral values (GM Preface 6), taken as question about whether they are nihilistic or, on the contrary, affirm life. For our ends in this article, it suffices to establish that, although Nietzsche denies that the rational scrutiny of social norms – as well as of all the values that they express – is ever free of a ballast of irrationality, he is nevertheless aware that no questions about the "value of our values" would ever have arisen in human history if, at same point, "reason", or the space of reasons, had not emerged out of the imposition of social norms upon individuals living in human societies. The human animal is a being which is historically fraught with questions about the value of its values, and the very possibility of questioning one's values involves "reason," or a "space of reasons" (as follows from the analysis of GM II 3.) It is true that "*to the great majority* it is not contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly *without* first becoming aware of the final and most certain reasons pro and con [*Gründe für und wider*], and without even troubling themselves about such reasons [*Gründe*] afterwards" (GS 2). But for Nietzsche as a philosopher that is "contemptible," as he is in fact moved in life by the "folly" which keeps telling him that "every person as a person" [*jeder Mensch… als Mensch*] should feel contempt for those who live their lives"without trembling with the craving and rapture of questioning" (GS 2.)

These preliminary results now lead us to the second half of this article. The goal will be to show that Nietzsche is not a proponent of the kind of "bald naturalism" that authors such as John McDowell, Robert Brandom, and Wilfrid Sellars have shown to be antithetical to the defence of the space of reasons. In order to achieve this goal, we shall start by considering Nietzsche's conception of value, purpose, and meaning.

III.

Let us start by interrogating how Nietzsche conceives of the relationship between nature and *value*. Then we will move to *purpose* (or end) and the question of teleology. Finally, we shall consider what Nietzsche has to say about *meaning* and the relationship between nature and meaning.

Nietzsche's view of value seems to be the very epitome of the kind of "impositionism" and "reductive naturalism" that sustains that "valuing is the source of values" – that values are a *mere* projection "imposed" by a subject upon an intrinsically valueless, natural world.[12] In his *Zarathustra*, for example, Nietzsche writes that "only through esteeming is there value," every "table of goods" is merely "created" by our own "esteeming" (*Schätzen*), as "humans first placed values into things, they first created meaning for things, a human meaning" (Z On a Thousand and One Goals.) And in *The Gay Science*, he writes:

> It is we, the thinking-sensing ones (*Wir, die Denkend-Empfindenden*), who really and continually make something that is not yet there: the whole perpetually growing world of valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations. [...] Whatever has *value* in the present world has it not in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less—but has rather been given, granted value, and we were the givers and granters! (GS 301).

However, closer inspection of these passages shows that what Nietzsche is saying is not as simple as it may seem at first sight. In the passage from *Zarathustra*, his point is not at all that, since value is "created" by human valuing and not given to our minds from outside, we must conclude that it is merely "subjective" and does not belong to the world. On the contrary, what Zarathustra actually says is the following: "only through esteeming is there value, and without esteeming the nut of existence would be

12 See Robert B. Brandom, *Making it explicit*, *Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London, England 1994, 49.

hollow" (Z On a Thousand and One Goals.) So, the point is that "the nut of existence" is *not* "hollow"– because the human creation of value makes it not hollow, human valuing makes the world *itself* have value. (In parenthesis, it is important to underline that, as Heidegger accurately remarks, in passages such as this Nietzsche follows standard Kantian-Schopenhaeurian terminology, and uses the term "existence," *Dasein*, in the sense of "the world," the totality of what there is, reality as whole. What he is saying is that the nut *of the world* is not hollow.)[13]

In the passage from *The Gay Science*, too, Nietzsche invites us to imagine the world, or nature, devoid of the human presence, and hence devoid of value – a valueless nature. It is important to note that Kant, too, evokes this image of a valueless nature in his *Critique of Judgment*: "without the human being," he writes, "all of creation would be a mere wasteland" (KU §86, 442); without the human being the world "would have no value whatever, because there would exist in it no being that had the slightest concept of a value" (KU §87, 449).[14] As is well known, the word "nihilism" was coined by the first time by Jacobi to designate precisely this Kantian image of nature – the image of a purely mechanic world, a world devoid of value and ruled exclusively by the categories of Kant's critique of pure reason, therefore a world in which the human will becomes, as Jacobi puts it, "*a will that wills nothing*".[15] Jacobi identifies this nihilism with "godlessness" ("Jacobi to Fichte," 515), and he sees

13 Martin Heidegger makes this terminological point in *Nietzsche I*, Gesamtausgabe (GA) 6.1, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, 245-246, 442, 465. Heidegger also remarks, correctly, that Nietzsche often uses the term "life," *Leben*, as a synonym of "existence" and "world": *Nietzsche I*, GA 6.1, 246, 297-298, 438-439, 442, 465, 512, 516, also 215, 589. See also the course on the second of the *Untimely Meditations*: Martin Heidegger, *Zur Auslegung von Nietzsche's II. Unzeitgemäßer Betrachtung*, GA 46, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, 83, 140, 211-222. This terminological point is crucial for the interpretation of nihilism as an issue that concerns the world as such, the totality of what there is: see, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, GA 6.2, Frankfurt a. M. 1997, 248-254.

14 References to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* follow the standard German abbreviation given in *Kant-Studien* with indication of the § followed by the page number(s) in the Akademie Ausgabe (AA); all translations from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, transl. By Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis 1987.

15 Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, "Jacobi to Fichte (1799)," in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel* Allwill, trans. with an Introductory Study, Notes, and Bibliography by George di Giovanni, Baskerville 2016, 515-518.

godlessness, or nihilism, as a consequence of transcendental idealism. He thinks that, if we follow Kant, we end up with a Newtonian, mechanic world devoid of value – as, according to the *Critique of Judgment*, we can only *reflect* about value, but cannot have *knowledge* of it –, and moreover, we have to regard that mechanic world as a world of representation, therefore "*a phantom in itself*, a real nothingness, a nothingness of reality" ("Jacobi to Fichte," 512.)

Now, the problem is that, unlike Jacobi — and very much like Hegel in his critique of Jacobi in *Glauben und Wissen* and elsewhere –, Nietzsche does not think that reason compels us to conceive of human subjectivity in terms of a mind that constructs a world of mere representations. The latter image of the world is similar to, and perhaps even identical with, the one that drives to despair the famous "madman" who announces, in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, that "god is dead" (GS 125). The madman shares Jacobi's fear of nihilism, taken as a synonym of godlessness. If God is dead, he reasons, then there is only an "infinite nothingness," an "empty space" (GS 125.) But, *pace* Heidegger and many others, Nietzsche does not identify with the madman, even if he certainly agrees that "God is dead." Instead, as Robert Pippin puts it, Nietzsche sees the madman's despair and melancholy as a "kind of symptom, or a modern pathology," for which he "wants a diagnosis."[16] But, if he does not endorse the madman's Jacobian view of the world, then when he affirms, in *The Gay Science*, that we are the ones who "create" or "make" a "world of valuations" and that nature without us "is always value-less" (GS 301), it cannot be the case that he means that there is a "subject," a *res cogitans*, that "imposes" the concept or thought of "value" onto the world. His starting-point is never the Cartesian mind, but rather what he calls "the optic of Life," "the prism of Life" (BT/ AS 2.) The "thinking-sensing ones" that he mentions in the text, the peculiar beings that "make" a "world of valuations," *are a part of "life," are themselves "nature."* He usually portrays them (that is, us) as a living, sentient body, whose thoughts and desires emerge from the depths of a hierarchical (as well as dynamical and changeable) structure of animal drives and affects — and not at all as merely thinking beings that might somehow stand outside of

16 Robert B. Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1999, 145-149.

nature and "project" their *sui generis* representations, particularly their valuations and their concepts, onto nature. Nietzsche's point is not that the really real is a valueless nature and value is merely a human addition coming, as it were, from outside of nature. His point is, rather, that there is something *in nature*, namely us, that "makes" something different out of it, namely: a world of "valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations" (GS 301.)

Such a world would not exist without the human, and yet the conclusion that Nietzsche draws from this fact is not the idealist conclusion that there is a "thing in itself" devoid of value and, opposed to it, as well as separated from it, a "subject" that imposes value onto it. The opposition that Nietzsche wants to establish is not between nature and the human, but rather between nature without the human and nature with the human. And in establishing this opposition, his aim is always twofold. Firstly, he wants to convey that we have to change our view of the human, and look at the human as nature: the human as a form of life, a body, an organism which is "the valuating animal as such" (GM II 8); the human as "a venerating animal" (GS 346), as the form of animal life which deserves to be called "the esteemer" (Z On a Thousand and One Goals.) But, secondly, Nietzsche wants to convey that, given the existence of the human as a form of life, we also have to change our view of nature, and look at nature not as just space, time, and causality, not just as a mechanic space-time reality devoid of value —the "infinite nothingness" of the madman in *The Gay Science*, the "value-less nature" (GS 301) of the mechanistic world-view—, but rather as a reality consisting of "spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces" (GM II 12) that can be creative to the point of being able to create values. If we look at ourselves, at the human, "through the prism of life," and if in doing that, we recognise in ourselves "the esteemer," then we have to revise, by analogy, our whole conception of life and, indeed, of the world as a whole.

This is what Nietzsche calls in the *Nachlass* his method of philosophising by using the "analogy" of the body and "following the guiding thread of the body."[17] By reflecting upon the human as "the valuating animal *par excellence*" (GM II 8), we are forced to revise our

17 See NL 1884, 26[374], 26[432], 27[27], NL1885, 36[35], 37[4], 39[13], 42[3], NL 1885-86, 2[68], 2[70], 2[91]; NL 1885, 40[21], NL 1886-87, 5[56].

view of life and nature and, as Nietzsche puts it in a posthumous note from 1885, to try to understand "the creativeness in every organic being" ("*das Schöpferische in jedem organischen Wesen*"); to see that all units of organic life weave "small fabricated (*erdichteten*) worlds around them;" to acknowledge that their fundamental capacity is "the capacity to create (give form, invent, fabricate)." The so-called "outside world" of every organic being, Nietzsche writes, is a "sum of estimations of value," and "the mechanistic representation of pushing and shoving" is "only a hypothesis based on sight and touch" (NL 1885, 34[247].) In passages such as this, Nietzsche goes so far as to say that "there is no inorganic world" (NL 1885, 34[247]). The inorganic world is merely the world as seen by the lights of the "the mechanistic representation of pushing and shoving," and this is, at best, a "regulative hypothesis" that we can take as valid for making sense of the the "visible world" (NL 1885, 34[247]), but not for making sense of the world or nature as such.

So, in sum: in esteeming, in giving and granting value to our world, we "make something that is not yet there" (GS 301), but this does not mean that what is really real is a mechanic world of blind causal processes, while our values are mere figments of our imagination; according to Nietzsche, in "making" a world which is a "sum of estimations of value" (NL 1885, 34[247]), the human being, the esteemer, *really makes nature become* something that has value in itself – or, in other words, Nietzsche's claim is that, through the valuing activity of the human animal, *nature* becomes something that has value in its "nut" (Z On a Thousand and One Goals.)

The status of this claim is certainly problematic. It seems to be a claim belonging to a foundational "first philosophy" that could establish, from a transcendental perspective, the reality of our values. But that is obviously not the kind of status that Nietzsche attributes to his philosophical claims. I shall consider this problem in the next section, together with Nietzsche's engagement with the question of teleology (beginning with his study of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* in 1868). But, at this stage of my argument, the really important point is that it is fairly certain that Nietzsche does not want to reduce our values to *unreal* projections of our subjectivity. We could perhaps say that he wants us to conceive of our values as *anthropomorphic but real*. Take,

for example, the most famous posthumous note in which he writes that "facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations" (NL 1886, 7[60].) There, he makes it explicit that he is *not* claiming that "everything is subjective," and he points out that the reason why it would be wrong to make that claim is that "the 'subject' is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is" (NL 1886, 7[60]; I shall get back to this passage in section VII.) Similarly, in a *Nachlass* passage in which he concedes that he has his own "type of 'idealism'" ("*Meine Art von 'Idealismus,'*" NL 1882, 21[3]) insofar as he believes that "every sensation contains a certain estimation of value (*Werthschätzung*)," and that every estimation of value "fantasises and fabricates" (*phantasirt und erfindet*, NL 1882, 21[3]), he writes "idealism" in quotation marks, and he immediately adds that that which our estimations of value fantasise and fabricate is *real*, even if its own kind of "reality" (*Wirklichkeit*) is "completely *different* from that of the law of gravity" (NL 1882, 21[3].) Here, too, he remarks that "we cannot wipe off (*abstreifen*)" all the estimations of value that we fantasise and fabricate (NL 1882, 21[3].) The idea that we could do that, and then just deal with a mechanistic world of space, time, and causality without "projecting" any values onto it, is an idea that he explicitly rejects (see, again, NL 1886 7[60] and, for example, GS 373.)[18]

So, at this stage, the main point is that in writing that, as living beings, we "make" a world filled with value should not be taken as a subjectivist (or "anti-realist") claim, but rather as a claim about ourselves as (part of) "nature" or "life." And, if we now consider how Nietzsche

18 A comparison with Hilary Putnam may be useful. Putnam "welcomes the collapse of the fact-value dichotomy," and he rejects all conceptions of ethics that "start from a view of the world without value" (see Sofia Miguens, "The Human Face of Naturalism: Putnam and Diamond on Religious Belief and the 'Gulfs between Us'", *The Monist* 103 (4) (2020), 404-414). Values are always already, and inescapably, part of what is real for us, because, even if they are created by us, they are nevertheless at the kernel of our responses to the demands that reality makes on us, and that we do not create (Hilary Putnam, *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life: Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Wittgenstein*, Bloomington 2008, 6; Miguens, "The Human Face of Naturalism", 408.) I think Nietzsche would agree with this view, but, unlike Putnam, he would not conclude from that that ethics is objective or that there are universal moral values. There are no universal moral values, and purely rational justifications of values are chimeras. From a purely rational point of view, the values of the Marquis de Sade are as

uses the verb "to make" (*machen*) when he presents his conception of custom or the "morality of mores" (*die Sittlichkeit der Sitte*) in the *Genealogy*, I think we can easily confirm that it is correct to reject a subjectivist reading of his claims about the nature of our values. He writes, in italics, that customs, mores, "*make*" us "to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable" (GM II), and he clearly does not mean that in obeying customs our original nature remains unchanged while a thinking subject imposes upon it a given set of merely subjective representations. He means, rather, that human *nature*, even the human *body*, or *life itself* in the human organism, has been *really changed* by the prevalence of custom. Customs and social life have *made* us different from what we were before. Indeed, through customs and social life, we have acquired a new nature: a "second nature" (*eine zweite Nature*).

Nietzsche uses the expression "second nature" three times in his published writings.[19] In *Daybreak*, he writes that our natural drives can be "transformed by moral judgments," so that they then acquire a "second nature" (D 38); in *The Gay Science*, he points out that what he terms "giving style" to one's character involves adding to one's character "a great mass of second nature," as well as removing "a piece of first nature" (GS 290); and in other aphorism of *Daybreak*, titled "*First nature,*" he writes:

> The way in which we are educated nowadays means that we acquire a *second nature*: and we have it when the world calls us mature, of age, employable. A few of us are sufficiently snakes one day to throw off this skin, and to do so when beneath its covering their *first nature* has grown mature.

justifiable as Kant's (if I may lean on Lacan's famous example.) Nietzsche finds it *reasonable* to *discuss* one's values as something more than merely subjective preferences — and the whole of his writings is such a discussion —, but that is very different from believing that absolute rational justification is possible, or that there is a normative truth out there in the world, and that philosophy should try to get at it. A "reasonable discussion" has a status similar to Kantian "reflective judgments," not the status of objectivity (see section VII below.)

19 See Stefano Marino, "Nietzsche and McDowell on the Second Nature of The Human Being", *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* 9 (2017), 231-261.

With most of us, its germ has dried up (D 455.)

By inhabiting a world in which there are moral judgments, in which we can engage in attempts to reshape our own character, and in which we receive an education, it comes about that we develop valuations and estimations of value that involve the intellect and intellectual judgments. These new valuations and estimations of value involve concepts and reasoning, and that is why our specific way of valuing goes very much beyond the instinctive judgments of the drives of our first nature, and differs so much from the way of valuing of the other types of living beings that we know of. And yet, for Nietzsche, that does not prevent those new valuations and estimations of value from being as *natural* as the valuations and estimations of value that preceded them. In fact, as the three quotes above illustrate, Nietzsche thinks that those supervenient valuations and estimations of value are natural and powerful enough to change our first nature, that is, to *make* a second nature out of our first one. The latter consists of what Nietzsche calls the "old instincts" of the hunter-gatherer, "all those instincts of a wild, free, prowling human being" (GM II 16), the "animal instincts" (GM II 22) that evolved and made our species what it is before it was forced into the "straitjacket" of custom, "the morality of mores," "custom" (GM II 2), and social life in general. These instincts remain active in us while they are gradually changed by our social and spiritual valuations, but even when they "grow mature" instead of "drying up," they are forced to express themselves (to "discharge" themselves) in a social space partially "made" by intellectual judgments, therefore a space in which *reasons* are given and demanded and certainly count for something.[20]

All of this means that Nietzsche is much closer to John McDowell's "naturalism of second nature" than to the "bald naturalism" or the mechanistic, reductive naturalism that many attribute to him. It is also interesting to note that, as Stefano Marino has recently shown,

20 Thus, in this article my position regarding the question of normativity is similar to Emden's, *Nietzsche's Naturalism*, in that it includes not only the claim that Nietzsche does not endorse "bald naturalism", but also the claim, *pace* Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick, that Nietzsche does not see the space of reasons as an autonomous realm of justification separated form the realm of our biology (as an alleged realm of mere causation.) On the other hand, I find it important to emphasise that Nietzsche thinks that the emergence of

the fact that John McDowell took his conception of "second nature" from Gadamer means that he took it indirectly (and unknowingly) from Nietzsche, as Gadamer took his own conception of "second nature" from a whole philosophical and scientific tradition that goes back from Jacob von Uexküll, Max Scheler, and Arnold Gehlen to the passages of *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science* quoted above.[21]

But let us now consider Nietzsche's conception of "purpose" (*Zweck*), and the crucial role this conception plays in his attempts to understand life and nature in non-mechanistic terms.

IV.

In 1868, before starting to work on the texts that would lead, four years later, to the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche studied Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and planned to write a doctoral thesis about the critique of teleological judgment. Recently, Sebastian Gardner's ground-

the space of reasons has a tremendous impact on human existence. It is not a mere addition to our biological existence. It changes our biological existence, as well as our social existence, in a decisive way. Reasons do count for something, reasons are transformative of our nature, and our biological constitution is much more plastic than Emden seems to me to allow for. Or, in other words, I agree with Emden, *Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Normativity*, 106, in that, for Nietzsche, "our conceptual capabilities, but also our practices as well as the psychology of our affects and inclinations, are a constitutive 'part of a larger biological pattern'," but I think that it is important to emphasise that the pattern's "first nature" is substantially changed by the emergence of the space of reasons in human history. (The formula "part of a larger biological pattern" belongs to Joseph Rouse, *Articulating the World: Conceptual Understanding and the Scientific Image,* Chicago 2015; see also Joseph Rouse, *How Scientific Practices Matter: Reclaiming Naturalism*, Chicago 2002. Rouse and Huw Price, *Naturalism without Mirrors,* Oxford 2011, are major influences on Emden's views on Nietzsche on naturalism and normativity: see also Ansell-Pearson/ Emden, "Nietzsche and the Ethics of Naturalism", 2-3.) On Nietzsche on instinctive and intellectual judgments, see Luca Lupo, *Le Colombe dello Scettico, Riflessioni di Nietzsche sulla Coscienza negli anni 1880-1888*, Pisa 2006; Luca Lupo, "Drives, Instincts, Language, and Consciousness in *Daybreak* 119: '*Erleben und Erdichten*'", in João Constâncio / Maria João Mayer Branco (eds.), *As the Spider Spins: Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language*, Berlin/ Boston 2012, 179-195.

21 See again Marino, "Nietzsche and McDowell," 239 and *passim.*

breaking article on Nietzsche on Kant and teleology has made clear that Nietzsche's position in these notes from 1868 is already as complex as is original, for it involves a critical assessment and an effort of differentiation from other positions beside's Kant's, namely Schopenhauer's, Lange'e, and Goethe's.[22] I shall try to show that Nietzsche's very serious and comprehensive engagement with Kant's third *Critique* sheds much light into his mature views on teleology.

The notes are dominated by a basic agreement with Kant in the thought that living beings – given that they are organisms – cannot be understood in mechanistic terms, even if it is also true that scientific knowledge of nature is mechanistic and no other kind of explanation besides the mechanistic can be allowed in natural science (e.g. divine Providence.) In order to make sense of living beings qua instances of "life," i.e. in order to recognise them *as* organisms, we need the concept of "end" or "purpose" (*Zweck*.) In agreeing with Kant on this, Nietzsche points out that, for Kant, "mechanism" is the world devoid of final causes, the world of sheer causality (KGW 1/4, 62[41]); that Kant saw that the natural sciences are "exact" only insofar as they are knowledge of nature as a mechanic world ruled by mathematical laws (KGW 1/4, 62[23]); that he also saw that such a world is the only thing we can properly understand ("Wir verstehen nur einen Mechanismus," KGW 1/4, 62[24]), and that this means that the mechanic categories define the limits of the strictly conceptual: whatever exceeds the realm of the mechanical is beyond the reach of physics as a mathematical science, therefore beyond the reach of constitutive, determining, exact concepts (KGW 1/4, 62[39-41].) As human beings, we are, however, forced to think beyond the mechanical, as we have to think about the phenomenon of "life," both in ourselves and in other organic beings. That is not because the *existence* of living beings requires a non-mechanical explanation. The emergence of living beings can and should be conceived of as accidental,

22 Sebastian Gardner, "Nietzsche on Kant and Teleology in 1868: '"Life" is something entirely dark….'", *Inquiry* 62 (2019), 23-48. As Gardner observes, Kuno Fischer's two volumes on Kant's philosophy (1860) and the third volume of Ueberweg's *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* (1866) were crucial for Nietzsche's understanding of Kant's third *Critique*. See also Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography*, Urbana and Chicago 2008, 48-50.

non-purposive, mechanical (KGW 1/4, 62[52], [5]). But their *form* – i.e., the *way* they exist as individual units of life – is discontinuous with the inorganic and cannot be explained in mechanical terms (KGW 1/4, 62[47]; see 62[24], [43], [45], [46].) What Kant has shown is that organic form must be thought of as internally purposive: the activity of the parts causes the activity of the whole, but the activity of the whole, i.e. the functional, hierarchic relatedness of the parts in a whole, causes the activity of the parts, so that "an organism is that in which everything is purpose (or end) and, reciprocally, means" (KGW 1/4, 62[22].) However, only the concepts of the mathematical and mechanic sciences are determining, constitutive, exact concepts, and therefore judgments involving purposiveness are merely "reflective" (KGW 1/4, 62[40].) They are not knowledge, but only contemplation (*eine Betrachtungsweise,* as Nietzsche puts it, KGW 1/4, 62[23]); or, as Gardner writes, teleology is not explanation but "contemplation according to forms."[23]

So, in sum, Nietzsche endorses Kant's claim that we cannot avoid conceiving of organic units (organisms, living beings) in terms of inner purposiveness, which entails that life as such is already beyond the conceptual in the strictest sense of the word. But, for Nietzsche, this means, then, that "life" is "what causes amazement" (*das Wunderbare*, KGW 1/4, 62[15]), "life" is "unknowable" (KGW 1/4, 62[52]), "life" is "the secret," "the enigma" (KGW 1/4, 62[29]), is "obscure," "something entirely dark for us" ("*uns etwas völlig dunkles*," KGW 1/4, 62[47].) Why this conclusion?

The first step leading to it seems to be the idea that the sensuous form of particular living beings is in fact just the surface, or the appearance, of that which we call "life" in them. In each particular case, that which we call "life" in them is, however, the whole which we cannot avoid conceiving of as the "purpose" of the parts that appear in our sensuous experience (KGW 1/4, 62[47]). But this concept of a "purpose" is not so much something that we discover in the organism as rather a concept that

23 As Gardner observes, these claims respond to Nietzsche's starting-point, namely the contradictory conclusions involved in Kant's Antinomy of Teleological Judgment: "(1) that purposiveness must, and that it cannot, have a mechanistic explanation, and (2) that teleological characterisations are necessarily inferior, and that they are epistemically on a par, with mechanistic characterisations."

we "fabricate" or "invent" (*erfinden,* KGW 1/4, 62[40], [52]) in order to control or subdue (in the realm of the understanding) what we cannot really understand, that is, in order to make sense of "the properties that appear" (KGW 1/4, 62[40]), the organic form: "What we see from life is form; the way we see it is the individual. What lies behind that is unknowable" (KGW 1/4, 62[52].)[24] "What lies behind" the appearance is each particular whole which we think of as the inner purpose of the activity of the parts, but "the concept of the whole refers only to the form, not to 'life'" (KGW 1/4, 62[52]), that is: even after we call it a "purpose" in each individual case, it still remains "entirely dark" – firstly, because it remains the unexplained emergence of something non-mechanical and non-inorganic from the mechanic and inorganic; secondly, because what we conceptualise as the inner purposiveness of an individual organism tells us nothing about *life as such*. Nietzsche unpacks this second idea by writing that there are "innumerous purposive forms" in nature, but "life itself cannot be thought of as a purpose, as it must be presupposed in order to operate according to purposes" (KGW 1/4, 62[46]). Life itself has no purpose, the whole of life is chaos, which means that not only no mechanic causes can really account for the emergence of "life," but also no *reason* can be given for the existence of what we must think of as the individual purposiveness of the innumerous organic forms that interconnect and constitute the whole of life in our planet. As Nietzsche claims several times in the notes (see especially KGW 1/4, 62[46]), life is not *rational*: out of the end-directness of the innumerous existing forms of life one cannot in any way derive the existence of a rational whole or, in other words, a rational end-directness of life itself (which explains why it is so important for Nietzsche to reject one particular idea of Kant's critique of teleological judgment – the idea that we think of purposes in nature by analogy with the occurrence of purposes in our *rational* agency; see Gardner on this point.)

What is important to highlight from all this is twofold. First: Nietzsche takes such concepts as "purpose" or "end," "means," "organ" etc to be "made up," "fabricated," "invented" – and yet he does not

24 See also KGW 1/4, 62[28]: "The concept of the whole is our work. Here lies the source of the representation of the purpose. The concept of the whole does not reside in the things, but in us."

thereby hold that they are *merely* invented. Nowhere does he imply that he is talking about a merely subjective conceptual scheme "imposed" upon something previously given to our senses, "imposed", that is, upon something simply "given" (upon, as it were, a concept-free intuitive datum). He does not deny that the concepts at stake capture a distinction which is real. These made-up concepts are precisely what allows us to conceive of "life," and experience "life," as something different from the inorganic or the mechanic. What we thereby conceive and experience, "life," is therefore *really real*, even if "something entirely dark." Put differently, our made-up concepts do throw some light into what life is, but this light is dim, and so, for us, life will remain forever "an enigma."[25]

The second point that is important to highlight concerns the question of "bald naturalism." Already here Nietzsche claims, in typical fashion, that "life" escapes conceptualisation, or is somehow beyond the reach of even our best concepts. But "life," for Nietzsche, is not a realm of "subsumption under natural laws," or of "blind causality." Life is irreducible to mechanism, life is not accessible to us without the concept of inner purposiveness – even if this concept is only a problematic, "fabricated" concept, because life, like the aesthetic idea in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, is something "to which no determinate thought

25 For Goethe (and, later, for Hegel), the whole which unifies the parts of a living being as one single organised unit of life is an ideal form, i.e. is the "Idea," taken in Kant's sense of "an archetype of the things themselves," or "the ground of possibility for its object": see Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Systematic Reconstruction*, Cambridge, Massachusettes/ London, England 2012, 149, 253 (a book that inspired an important part of Gardner's article). But the "idea" as the archetypical form that makes possible the observable, sensuous, particular form is precisely what Nietzsche finds "entirely dark" – something that we must think of, reflect upon in order to distinguish, say, a plant from a stone, but is nevertheless "an enigma." As Gardner shows, this is the main issue at stake in Nietzsche's references to Goethe in the 1868 notes on Kant on teleology: on the one hand, he feels attracted to "the Goethean aspiration to a scientific-aesthetic world-vision" (whose possibility Goethe thought was confirmed by the unification of teleological and aesthetic judgment in one and the same faculty of judgment in Kant's third *Critique*); on the other, Nietzsche holds, contra Goethe, that there is nothing transparent in the purposiveness, or normativity, that we must judge to be constitutive of nature qua life. The fact that our mechanical categories cannot render life intelligible means that nothing can. If we have an intuitive understanding that gives us access to life itself, what it intuits is that life is "entirely dark."

whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it" (KU §49, 314). Life is beyond the reach of *determinate* concepts, and yet there is no experience of the limits of conceptualisation and no access to life (via art, say) without some *indeterminate* conception of inner purposiveness. And that is why the claim that life escapes (determinate) conceptualisation does not set *fact and value* apart, as if the former belonged to a realm of blind causality and the latter to a realm of subjectivity cut off from nature. Due to the inner purposiveness of living beings, life involves valuing and value, so that what begins to emerge here is (to borrow Hannah Ginsborg's formulation) the idea of a *normativity of nature* (or life).[26]

I shall develop this idea below. Here, it suffices to remark the following: (a) what we saw above about "social normativity" and "rational normativity" already suggests that these are developments, along a *continuum*, of the normativity of nature, such that the latter is not an independent realm separated from the former; (b) if our access to life is problematic – if life is "something entirely dark," life itself has no purpose, the whole of life is chaos, life is not a rational whole etc –, then surely the normativity of nature cannot be taken to be a source of ultimate truth, either about fact or value.

But, before we consider these points in more detail, we have to determine whether Nietzsche's mature views on teleology differ from his early Kantian reflections. A full answer would, of course, require another article, but a few indications that Nietzsche's mature views are basically in agreement with his early ones will suffice here.[27]

26 See Hannah Ginsborg, H., *The Normativity of Nature. Essays on Kant's* Critique of Judgment*,* Oxford 2015. As Ginsborg writes (*The Normativity of Nature*, 239), according to Kant, in making a judgment about the purposiveness of a natural object, "we judge that the object is as it ought to be, or, in other words, that it conforms to a normative constraint;" for example: "being capable of sight is not just a characteristic of eyes, but a normative requirement: an eye which cannot see must be judged, without qualification, to be defective. By contrast, there is nothing which a stone ought to be." That which a given unit of life "ought to be" is what Nietzsche designates very frequently as the "value" that a "drive" purses and strives to impose as a goal to other drives; see below the succinct analysis of the posthumous note in which Nietzsche writes that "every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as norm." (NL 1886 7[60]).)

27 This is also Sebastian Gardner's undeveloped conclusion at the end of his article.

Consider, for example, what Nietzsche writes in *The Gay Science* 109, a crucial text, in which he seems to deny the reality of the teleological by writing that "the total character of the world is [...] for all eternity chaos" (GS 109.) Does he really deny the reality of the teleological in this text? If we take teleology to involve the thesis that there is an ultimate, overriding purpose of the universe, then Nietzsche obviously denies the reality of the teleological. The main point of the text is precisely this: that we ought not to conceive of the organic, and especially of the human – of human life –, as any sort of "secret aim" of the universe (GS 109.) But this is, of course, completely different from denying that there are organic beings and that the inner organisation of living beings must be thought of as involving inner purposiveness. No doubt, Nietzsche claims that "the *total* character of the world is [...] for all eternity chaos" (GS 109, my emphasis), but in claiming this he is also acknowledging that *not everything* is chaos in the universe. The pre-modern belief that the organic is "essential, common, and eternal" in the universe is wrong; the organic is, rather, something "inexpressibly derivative, late, rare, accidental, which we perceive only on the crust of the earth" (GS 109.) But the organic is nonetheless something real; we remain forced to acknowledge the *exceptional* character of living beings: that they exhibit inner order, inner purposiveness in the midst of the chaos that is the universe. Or, as Nietzsche puts it, we still have to acknowledge that "life," or "the development of the organic," is "an exception," and in fact "the exception of exceptions" (GS 109.)

In sum: Nietzsche's fundamental experience of the universe as "chaos" has nothing to do with denying the inner purposiveness of living beings, and is in fact tantamount to the experience of the question about "the value of existence," the "terrifying" question that Schopenhauer was the first to ask in modern times: "*does existence* [i.e. the world] *have any meaning at all?*" (GS 357) Nietzsche is very explicit in presenting the emergence of this question in Schopenhauer's work as the consummation and final expression of the slow historical process that ended with the pre-modern belief in an overriding purpose for the whole universe, particularly a *moral* overriding purpose. He calls the death of this pre-modern belief a "pan-European event," which he describes like this:

> Looking at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and care of a god; interpreting history in honour of some divine reason, as a continual testimony of a moral world order and ultimate moral purposes; interpreting one's own experiences as pious people have long interpreted theirs, as if everything were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of salvation of the soul – that is *over* now" (GS 357.) All of this develops the claims that Nietzsche makes in the notes from 1868: that life is not a rational whole, that there is no purpose in the inner purposiveness of the innumerous manifestations of life, that life is "entirely dark.

It is, of course, true that, in his mature writings, Nietzsche usually avoids the vocabulary of "ends" or "purposes," and tends, instead, to describe the organic, or what he calls the "oligarchic" organisation of organisms (e.g. GM II 1), in terms of dynamic relationships among "spheres of power" and, later, in terms of dynamic relationships among "wills to power." But if one looks, for example, at chapter 12 of the Second Essay of *The Genealogy of Morals* – one of the most important texts in Nietzsche's *corpus* about both the concept of purpose (*Zweck*) and the hypothesis of the will to power (*Wille zur Macht*) –, one can hardly fail to see that, while Nietzsche certainly rejects several aspects of the traditional conception of teleological explanation, at the same time his view of organic life in such a text does not aim to deny that organisms are characterised by inner purposiveness, but only to *re-describe* inner purposiveness in terms of power-relations (or "will to power".) The main idea of the text is that nothing is useful in itself, nothing is born being in itself a means to an end or purpose. Something can only become useful insofar as something else exerts power over it: "purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function" (GM II 12.) And this is so not only with regard to the utility (or external purposiveness) of a chair or an apple, but also to the function of an organ of a living organism. For example, an eye becomes an eye, something that can be used to see, and a hand becomes a hand, something that can be used to grasp, only insofar as the eye and the hand can be mastered

by that unit of "will to power" which is the organism as a whole. But, in Nietzsche's own terms, here a "will to power" is nothing else than a "system of purposes," a "system of ends" (*ein System von Zwecken*, GM II 12, KSA 5.313.) Organisms are systems of ends, organisms can only be rendered intelligible *as* organisms if they are conceived as instances of inner purposiveness – that is, again, Nietzsche's Kantian point.

One should gladly concede that Nietzsche makes this point in terms that emphasise that the biological realm is a realm of evolution, and that every pre-Darwinian conception of inner purposiveness, such as Kant's or Hegel's, has to be conceived anew. Thus, he points out that chance has a decisive role in the course that the evolution of any species or organ takes; he makes clear that no ends and no "systems of ends" that come to being in the biological realm are eternal; and he rightly denies that the development of living beings could be understood as a "*progressus* towards a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the shortest route and the smallest expenditure of force" (GM II 12.) Biological evolution has nothing to do with progress towards a final *telos*, a state of perfection somehow given in advance, and so, again, there is no reason to suppose that there might be an overriding purpose for the whole of life, let alone the whole universe. *But* the conclusion that Nietzsche draws from all this is not at all that teleological reflections should be replaced with mechanistic explanations. Reflections about life have to remain "quasi-teleological" insofar as they have to take "individuals," i.e. all particular units of life, to be "systems of purposes."[28]

Moreover, Nietzsche declares explicitly in the text that his philosophical method is fundamentally opposed to the "now prevalent instinct and taste" which consists in believing in the "mechanistic senselessness of all events" (*die mechanistische Unsinnigkeit alles Geschehens*, GM II 12, KSA 5.315.) In typical fashion (and in accordance with his genealogical way of thinking), he claims that this mechanistic view of nature does not result from any scientific discovery about the objective nature of things, but rather from certain normative prejudices.

28 On Nietzsche's relation with Darwinism, see George J. Stack, *Lange and Nietzsche*, Berlin/ New York 1983, chapter VII; Werner Stegmaier, Darwin, Darwinismus, Nietzsche, Zum Problem der Evolution", *Nietzsche-Studien* 16 (1987), 264-287; Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism;* Emden, *Nietzsche's Naturalism*.

It is the "democratic idiosyncrasy" of the modern age that leads people to avoid acknowledging that power-relations are of the essence of life, and hence that life is a realm of hierarchic organisation resulting from such power-relations – that is, from clashes among "spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces" (GM II 12.) The mechanistic view of nature is a function of our "modern *misarchism,*" and indeed a form of "administrative nihilism," a formula that Huxley coined to reproach Herbert Spencer's mechanistic view of evolution, and that Nietzsche corroborates, adding that (unfortunately) this is "a question of rather *more* than mere 'administration'" (GM II 12.)

But, in considering Nietzsche's mature conception of purposiveness in nature, one should also not fail to mention how he sees the relationship between consciousness and purposiveness. The first obvious point is that he understood very clearly (like Schopenhauer before him) that the inner purposiveness of organisms does not depend on consciousness. As he writes, for example, in a posthumous note from 1888, "let us prevent ourselves from explaining purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) through the spirit: there is no reason to attribute to spirit the exclusive capacity to organize and systematise. The nervous system has a very extensive richness: consciousness is something that is added to it" (NL 1888, 14[144].) This is, of course, fully compatible with Kant's view of the inner purposiveness of organisms, given that he sees it precisely as a process of self-organisation which does not involve any kind of consciousness in most living beings (e.g. in a blade of grass or a tree), and which, even in the case of human beings, is not at all designed by their self-consciousness, and is for the most part as "instinctive" and unconscious as in all other living beings.

It should also be noted that Nietzsche may sometimes seem to deny the very existence of purposes in nature, while he just wants to point out that the inner purposiveness of organisms does not depend on *conscious* purposes and does not manifest anything like the overriding purpose that a mind can give to a series of events. So he writes, for example, in a posthumous note from 1876: "there are no purposes (*Zwecke*) in nature, and yet nature creates things of the highest purposiveness" (*Zweckmäßigkeit*, NL 1876, 23[114].) Likewise, Nietzsche's view of our animal drives and instincts — and how they play a decisive role

in the formation of our conscious thoughts and our deliberate actions – results directly from Schopenhauer's Kantian definition of instinct as "everywhere an action as if in accordance with the conception of a purpose, and yet entirely without such a conception."[29] The claim is not that consciousness is merely an effect of hidden causal mechanisms, but rather that organic forms have to be conceived of as operating according to an inner purposiveness that does not depend on consciousness, let alone on rational agency.

But in order to understand better the implications of this view of life and how it leads to something like the idea of a "normativity of nature," we need to take a brief look at Nietzsche's conception of "meaning" (*Sinn*), which complements his view of value and purpose.

V.

Nietzsche often uses the word "meaning" as a synonym of "purpose," or even "utility" (*Nützlichkeit*) (e.g. GM II 12-13, GM III 28), and he barely distinguishes "meaning" from "value" (e.g. Z On a Thousand and One Goals, GS 373.) This is because he thinks that to find or give meaning to something is to place it within a "system of purposes" (GM II 12), and this involves setting up a certain hierarchy of values. Thus, when Nietzsche describes, as we saw, the inner purposiveness of organisms in terms of "systems of purposes," and argues that "purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function" (GM II 12), he paraphrases this by writing that a thing (be it a chair or a "physiological organ," an organism or "a legal institution, a social custom, a political

29 Schopenhauer, WWR II §44, 540. See also Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I (WWR I), transl. By E.F.J. Payne, New York 1958, §28, 161; and see Kant's notions of *Instinkt* und *Kunsttrieb,* particularly in *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (RGV, AA 06), Anm. IV, 28: "Instinct, welcher ein gefühltes Bedürfniß ist, etwas zu thun oder zu genießen, wovon man noch keinen Begriff hat (wie der Kunsttrieb bei Thieren, oder der Trieb zum Geschlecht)"; see KU §85, §90. On consciousness, instinct, and the organism in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, see João Constâncio, "On Consciousness: Nietzsche's Departure from Schopenhauer," *Nietzsche-Studien* 40 (2011), 1-42.

usage, a form in art or in a religious cult") acquires "utility" and "actual employment and place in a system of purposes" only insofar as it is "again and again reinterpreted to new ends (*auf neue Ansichten ausgelegt*) by some superior power to it" (GM II 12.) "Subduing" or "becoming master" over something is tantamount to "interpreting anew" (*Neu-Interpretieren*) (GM II 12.)

What this implies is, first, that the metaphor of power and the metaphor of interpretation are two complementary ways that we have at our disposal to render intelligible the phenomenon of inner purposiveness. Or, in other words, Nietzsche's point is that living beings do not present themselves to us as mechanisms: we can only access them *as* living wholes if we conceive of the relationships between their parts as power-relations *and* conceive of power-relations as sign-relations, i.e. as *meanings*, not causes. "Interpretation" is, thus, just a new metaphor for the Kantian insight of the 1868 notes: livings beings organise themselves internally by spontaneously giving functional meaning to their organs, thereby *interpreting* themselves as "systems of purposes." Likewise, they deal with their so-called "external world" by *interpreting* what is out there by the lights of their inner "system of purposes." Thus purpose is meaning, and meaning is purpose.

However, if the "meaning" of a hand is that it is useful to grasp, the "meaning" of an apple is that it is good to eat, the "meaning" of an artistic form is that it is beautiful to watch, and so on, then "meaning" is "value," and finding meaning in the world (including in one's actions) is the same as finding purpose and value in the world. (Note that the fact that we cannot avoid interpreting everything by the lights of our inner system of purposes does not imply that we cannot understand, at least to some extent, how other living beings interpret the world and find value, purpose, and meaning in it.)

This equation of meaning with purpose and value explains many aspects of Nietzsche's thought, particularly regarding his view of nihilism. What he calls nihilism is fundamentally the failure of the "valuating animal *par excellence*" (GM II 8), the "venerating animal" (GS 346), "the esteemer" (Z On a Thousand and One Goals) to find any value, purpose, and meaning in the world – a failure which he describes as a sickness, a failure that turns the human being into "the sick animal"

precisely because the *nature* of this animal is to find value, purpose, and meaning in the world (even in the face of tragedy, one might say – although it may be more correct to say: *especially* in the face of tragedy, because it is then that "life" shows itself most clearly as the whole we belong to, or because, then, we are overwhelmed by the "Dionysian," the experience of life as a destructive and, at the same time, creative force that compels us to endorse "the highest of all possible beliefs", namely the belief that "only the individual is reprehensible" and "everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole," TI Skirmishes 49. I shall, however, abstract from this theme here.)

In the economy of the article, what is now crucial is that we give an account of why this equation of meaning with value and purpose involves setting limits on the epistemic pretensions of *conceptual* meaning, that is, of understanding and justification in the "space of reasons." In the next section, I shall try to give this account in a concise way by focusing on only one important text that addresses the question of meaning, namely: Nietzsche's most famous posthumous note about there being "no facts and only interpretations." It should be kept in mind that setting limits on the epistemic pretensions of conceptual meaning is not at all the same as denying conceptual meaning all normative force. Moreover, given that, for Nietzsche, life is irreducible to mechanism and can only be accessed in terms of value, purpose, and meaning, it should already be clear that the sense in which he sets limits to the conceptual has nothing to do with the idea that, as Robert Brandom puts is, "explanations in terms of causes trump explanations in terms of reasons" (Brandom 2020: 565). Nietzschean genealogy does not reduce reasons to causes.

VI.

Here is the whole posthumous note about facts and interpretations:

> Against positivism, which halts at phenomena – "There are only *facts*" – I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing.

> 'Everything is subjective,' you say; but even this is interpretation. The 'subject' is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. – Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis. In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – 'Perspectivism.'
>
> It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as norm. (NL 1886 7[60]).)[30]

As we can see, the text is directed against "positivism," the reductive, mechanistic naturalism which was already mentioned above, and which "halts at phenomena" because it is "only a hypothesis based on sight and touch" (NL 1885, 34[247].) But what does it mean that it is "only a hypothesis"? How does Nietzsche justify this claim?

What is presupposed in the text is that it is only by applying certain categories to what is visible and touchable, thereby rendering it intelligible as a mechanism, that the positivist is led to believe that he only deals with "facts," and that he can ascertain that "there are only facts." As Nietzsche explains in *The Gay Science*, *t*he reason why the positivist is deceived is that he is unable to realize that those categories are "*menschliche Werthbegriffe,*" "human concepts of value" (GS 373.) Those categories put together an *interpretation* of the world – but an "interpretation" in the sense discussed above: a "system of purposes." In this particular case, the system of purposes is conceptual, but concepts of things are in fact "concepts of value:" the determinations of thought are determinations of value. Cause and effect, substance and accident are part of a conceptual scheme whose *purpose* is knowing the truth. Those categories *serve* this purpose, are means to this purpose, and in fact they are devised to make this purpose as easy to achieve as possible.

30 See also NL 1885 2[131], NL 1888 14[82].

Recall Nietzsche's remark in the 1868 notes: "Wir verstehen nur einen Mechanismus," "we can only understand a mechanism" (KGW 1/4, 62[24].) Cause and effect, substance and accident are part of a conceptual scheme that aims to make the world understandable as a mechanism. So, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes that the positivists — whom he calls "Mr. Mechanic" (in the plural in the original German text) – have "faith in a world that is supposed to have its equivalent and measure in human thought, in human concepts of value – a 'world of truth' that can be grasped entirely with the help of our four-cornered little human reason" (*GS* 373.) The positivist's *interpretation* of the world makes the world understandable to reason, but this interpretation "might still be one of the *stupidest* of all possible interpretations of the world, i.e. one of the poorest in meaning," because

> an essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially *meaningless* world! Suppose one judged the *value* of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas – how absurd such a 'scientific' evaluation of music would be! What would one have comprehended, understood, recognised? Nothing, really nothing of what is 'music' in it! (GS 373.)[31]

At the end of the posthumous note, Nietzsche writes that "it is our needs that interpret the world, our drives and their For and Against" (NL 1886, 7[60).] The mechanistic interpretation of the world is a "system of purposes" that is located within a wider "system of purposes" and serves the needs of this system, that is, of a given form of life, an organism. In fact, it ultimately serves the needs of a whole culture, our modern culture based on the ideal of material satisfaction for everyone achieved by means of scientific and technological progress. This is what emerges from Nietzsche's effort to look at science "through the prism of life." And this way of looking at science as conditioned by certain needs of life,

31 See my full interpretation of GS 373 in João Constâncio, "Nietzsche's Aesthetic Conception of Philosophy: A (Post-Kantian) Interpretation of *The Gay Science* §373", in Paul Loeb / Matthew Meyer, (eds.), *Nietzsche's Metaphilosophy: The Nature, Method, and Aims of Philosophy*, Cambridge 2019, 187-206.

such as a need of orientation, a need of material satisfaction, a need to preserve a given culture, to solidify a certain kind of social organisation, etc is *genealogical*. But it is precisely this kind of genealogical approach to science and, more generally, to the "space of reasons" that authors like Robert Brandom believe to involve reducing reasons to effects of "blind causal processes." However, things are much more complicated than that. In saying that it is our needs or drives that interpret the world, Nietzsche is not trying to present life, or a certain form of life, as a "cause" of the conceptual scheme of the mechanistic interpretation of the world. He is, first of all, saying that life is too complex to be understood in terms of cause and effect: these are simplifications, concepts "fabricated," "invented," devised to make everything in the world, and especially life, easier to understand, simpler (GS 112); cause and effect are "logical fictions" (BGE 4), "conventional fictions" (BGE 21), "regulative fictions" (GS 344) or, as pointed out above, "only a hypothesis based on sight and touch" (NL 1885, 34[247].) So, Nietzsche's claim is not that life "causes" the concept of cause and the other mechanic categories, but rather that the concept of cause and the other mechanic categories emerge from life, that is, they develop out of a reality, "life," that is fundamentally different from a mechanism and more complex than a mechanism – a reality that, properly speaking, cannot be said to "cause" anything, as it has to be thought of in terms of inner purposiveness, or, more precisely: in terms of a chaotic multiplicity of units of inner purposiveness.

But it is hard to capture this idea in its full force. It involves a general point about concepts. Nietzsche wants to say that conceptual meaning derives from pre-conceptual meaning, and again: he wants to say that this is not the same as saying that conceptual meaning is "caused" by pre-conceptual meaning. His point is that conceptual meaning is only possible because life, far from being understandable as a mechanism, can only be thought of as evaluative and purposive, *ergo* as "meaningful," "interpretative." Conceptual meaning emerges from life, develops out of life, because life (at least in the only way we can think of it, or judge about it) is already "meaningful" at the pre-conceptual (or infra-conceptual) level. This is the reason why all concepts are "concepts of *value*."

Thus, Nietzsche calls the mechanic categories "*human* concepts of value" (GS 373, my emphasis), but this does not mean that they

are merely "subjective," let alone that *all* our concepts are merely "subjective." No concepts should be understood as a pre-given "form" that a "subject" "imposes" on things (or on non-conceptual intuitions.) As the posthumous note about facts and interpretations makes clear, such a "subject" is "not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is" (NL 1886, 7[60].) Or, in other words, saying that "everything is subjective" or that we need to "posit an interpreter behind the interpretation" is a way of trying to find a "cause" of conceptual meaning. It involves a false conception of the "I" as a cause of our thoughts (TI 'Reason' in Philosophy, BGE 54, etc.)

So, the claim that not only the mechanistic interpretation of the world but, in fact, *all* our conceptual meaning is made of "*human* concepts of value" is the claim that concepts are human evaluations and simplifications, devices that humans invent and devise in order to interpret the world in a simplified way and in accordance with their needs. But it is this claim with a twist. The twist is that Nietzsche wants to say that, properly speaking, conceptual meaning is a device that *life* develops in order to make sense of *itself*. The formula "it is our needs that interpret the world, our drives and their For and Against" (NL 1886, 7[60) means: life itself interprets the world through our bodies, life interprets the world by taking the form of the drives that constitute organisms. This is how Nietzsche historicises all conceptual meaning, including the normativity of our most basic categorisations. There is no Kantian "form of the understanding," except as a historical result of the development of life on earth – the result of a "continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations" (GM II 12), which has not ended and will never culminate in a fixed, unchangeable "human nature."

As for the particular limitation of the mechanistic interpretation of the world (its "idiocy," GS 373), the problem is not so much the fact that cause and effect are human conceptions as rather the fact that "Mr. Mechanic" applies them *to life*, and hence also to things such as love, hate, society, morality, or art. Cause and effect are perfectly sufficient for understanding a watch, or any other mechanism. The problem lies in purporting to be able to understand "existence" as a mechanism, because existence, that is, the world as such and as a whole, includes life.

A mechanic interpretation of a piece of music would "understand really nothing of what is 'music' in it" (GS 373), a mechanic interpretation of a living organism would, likewise, understand really nothing of what is "life" in it, and the same goes, of course, for a mechanic interpretation of life as such. "Mr. Mechanic" thinks otherwise only because he is a particular configuration of drives and affects in which such a poor interpretation of life has come to make sense (which is the kind of thing that usually makes Nietzsche refer to such a configuration of drives and affects as being itself an impoverishment of life.)

However, Nietzsche seems to set a specific kind of restrictions on the epistemic pretensions of *all* of our possible conceptual schemes, and not only on the mechanic interpretation of the world. What exactly are these restrictions supposed to be? Properly speaking, they do not concern knowledge. As Nietzsche writes in the posthumous note about facts and interpretations: "in so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable" (NL 1886, 7[60].) Our "regulative fictions" and "hypotheses" (GS 344), the conceptual meanings that we "invent," "fabricate", "poetise" etc are sufficient for there to be knowledge of the world. They are good enough to give us norms of justification and truth-conditions that allow us to establish whether it is raining or not, to determine that the earth turns around the sun, or that "a chunk of iron reliably responds to some environments by melting, to others by rusting, to still others by falling." (to borrow an example from Robert Brandom.)[32] The problem, for Nietzsche, is not knowledge in this classificatory and inferential sense, but rather *understanding* in a stronger sense. Or one might say, in Hegelian terms, that the problem, for him, is not *Verstand*, but *Vernunft*, not finite knowledge, but knowledge of the whole. The whole, "existence," includes life – and, as Nietzsche concluded from his study of Kant's third *Critique* in 1868, life is "something entirely dark for us" (KGW 1/4, 62[47].) That is why all our possible conceptual schemes have a limited epistemic range. In the posthumous note about facts and interpretations, Nietzsche calls this view "perspectivism." A few remarks on this all-important theme of his mature writings are in place here.

32 See Brandom, *Making it explicit.* 87.

VII.

In the posthumous note about facts and interpretations, Nietzsche writes: "In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – 'Perspectivism'" (NL 1886, 7[60.]) This is one of the central issues of Book V of *The Gay Science* (written around the same period of time as the posthumous note.) For example, in the aphorism about "Mr. Mechanic," Nietzsche writes that the problem with the mechanistic interpretation of the world is that, in the end, it strips the world of its "ambiguous character" or, more literally, of its "polysemic character" (*vieldeutiger Charakter*, GS 373.) The idea here is that, contrary to the conviction of traditional metaphysics, the world "has no meaning behind it" (NL 1886, 7[60]), but its immanent meaning – the meaning in terms of which life and the inner purposiveness of its innumerous manifestations become accessible to us – is intrinsically *vieldeutig*, polysemic, ambiguous. In fact, *The Gay Science* practically commences with this idea: when, in aphorism 2, Nietzsche describes his philosophical way of life as a "trembling with the craving and rapture of questioning [*Fragen*]," he states that what is there to question, the object, as it were, of his *Fragen*, is "the whole marvellous uncertainty and ambiguity (*Vieldeutigkeit*) of existence" (GS 2), that is, the polysemic nature of the world as such and as a whole. In aphorism 375, he gives another name to the character of the world by writing that this character is the "questionable" or "interrogative character of things (*der Fragezeichen-Charakter der Dinge*)" – or, translated slightly differently, "things" have "the character of question-marks" (*Fragezeichen-Charakter*, GS 375.) Things are an enigma for us, things are question-marks, things are something completely obscure for us.

The whole context of these passages shows that they refer to the complexity of life. The world is polysemic and enigmatic because the world includes life, and from our perspective as living, organic interpreters of the world, it is even the case that the whole world *is* life, as in accessing and dealing with the inorganic we cannot avoid giving it value, purpose, and meaning. But note that this does not mean that,

according to Nietzsche, things are polysemic and enigmatic only "for us," only for our "subjectivity." He always tries to reflect, not through the prism of a "subject," but rather through the prim of life itself. Thus, in the *Genealogy* he describes the polysemic and enigmatic character of any unit of life in terms of a "whole synthesis of meanings" whose unity is "hard to disentangle, hard to analyse and, as must be emphasised especially, totally *indefinable*" (GM II 13.) Note that cultural realities ("a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult") are units of life: culture is nature. So, in the *Genealogy*, the example that Nietzsche gives of a "synthesis of meanings" that can hardly be disentangled is the institution of "punishment" (GM II 13.) Punishment cannot be defined ("only that which has no history is definable," GM II 13) because it *is* an extremely complex "synthesis of meanings." And the point is that these meanings are *real*, they really belong to life itself, as they are the purposes or uses that a living thing has accumulated over time and that have made it what it *is*. They are not merely subjective representations of properties.

But, most importantly, for Nietzsche a thing, a unit of life, is *also* a synthesis of *possible* meanings. This is precisely what he means by "perspectivism": that nothing "has a meaning behind it," but everything is "*interpretable* otherwise" (NL 1886, 7[60.]) In aphorism 374 of Book Five of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche gives yet another name to the character of the world. Here, he calls it "the perspectival character of existence (*der perspektivische Charakter des Daseins*)" (GS 374.) Existence, the world is polysemic and enigmatic because it *is (really, intrinsically, not just subjectively*) "perspectival." This Nietzsche explains by writing that "today we are at least far away from the ridiculous immodesty of decreeing from our angle that perspectives are *permitted* only from this angle. Rather, the world has once again become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility *that it includes infinite interpretations*" (GS 374.) A thing is a "synthesis of meanings," and this synthesis is a crossroads of "infinite interpretations" – a crossroads of actual and possible perspectival interpretations that cannot be overviewed from any particular perspective. Every interpretation that can be thought of as really possible is only *one* of the interpretations that constitute the crossroads. Note that this does not mean that every perspective is an

illusion. It means only that every perspective is partial and all possible objectivity is perspectival (as Nietzsche famously puts it in GM III 12, "there is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing': and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity,' be".)[33]

The fact that the mature Nietzsche formulates his perspectivism in terms of the hypothesis of the "will to power" only confirms that he thinks of life as being intrinsically polysemic, enigmatic, and perspectival. Nietzsche conceives of the will to power as the essence of our drives and affects. As he writes at the end of the posthumous note on facts and interpretations, his view is that "every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as norm" (NL 1886 7[60]) But when he introduces his vocabulary of drives and affects for the first time in *Daybreak*, he declares without any roundabouts: "*es ist Alles Bilderrede,*" "these are all metaphors," "it's all a figurative language" (D 119.)[34] In Nietzsche's prolific reflections about consciousness as a mere "surface" whose depths are drives and affects, or about consciousness as "only a certain behaviour of the drives towards one another" (GS 333), etc, his claim is always that all we can think and say about our inner life is just a "sign" of a "movement of drives" (*Triebbewegung*, NL 1880, 6,[253]) – and so that all we can try to understand about this movement will again be a "sign" of another "movement of drives." All our inner access to ourselves is an access to "life," but one which is mediated by such "signs" as "consciousness," "I," "agent," "drive," "affect," "desire,", etc. These words are "signs", and not linguistic expressions of concepts that might be able to render adequately intelligible the reality they refer to. Introspective self-observation is fundamentally empty: we cannot know *ex ante* the thoughts, passions, and desires that we really *are* and that really move us – we can only know about them retrospectively, after they have expressed themselves

33 On this important aspect of Nietzsche's perspectivism, see James Conant, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Perfektionismus & Perspektivismus*, Konstanz 2014, 312-321.

34 Cf. See also NL 1881, 11[128] and Patrick Wotling, *La philosophie de l'esprit libre, Introduction à Nietzsche*, Paris 2008, 163-164.

in our *actions*.[35] Therefore, the words that we use to think about our thinking, felling, and willing are, in fact, linguistic abbreviations ("signs") of *images* that we make of our thinking, felling, and willing, *metaphors* of "syntheses of meanings" which we cannot observe directly, and hence cannot expect to be able to disentangle. Our inner life gives us access to life, but in a way that only confirms the polysemic, enigmatic, and perspectival character of life in general.[36]

However, if this is so, then Nietzsche's genealogical excavations of hidden "drives" and "wills to power" are much better understood in terms of *reasons* than in terms of *causes*. Take, again, "Mr. Mechanic" as an example. In applying the genealogical approach to his interpretation of the world and claiming that the latter emerges from certain "needs"; in understanding that particular interpretation as just a "sign language" (*Zeichensprache*) of a certain configuration of drives and affects (cf. NL 1888, 14[82], 14[122]) and their "For and Against" (NL 1886, 7[60]); in taking that interpretation to be just a "sign" of an order of rank in which the drive for truth has acquired a given shape and prominence, so that it now rules over many other drives and imposes upon them a very simplistic conception of truth as an ultimate purpose; in looking at all of this as just a "sign" and "symptom" of the decay of other drives, as well as of "misarchism" and "administrative nihilism" (GM II 12), a "sign" and "symptom" of a disposition to seek mere preservation and well-being (instead of, for example, "tension of spirit" and "great love" for the "great problems"), Nietzsche is not at all reducing reasons to causes, but rather exposing the most conscious, "superficial" normative commitments of the mechanistic interpretation of the world as dependent upon *other, deeper normative commitments*.[37] Nietzsche refers to these

35 See Robert B. Pippin,"The Expressivist Nietzsche", in João Constâncio / Maria João Mayer Branco / Bartholomew Ryan (eds.), *Nietzsche and the Problem of Subjectivity*, Berlin/ Boston 2015, 654-667; see Maria João Mayer Branco,"Questioning Introspection: Nietzsche and Wittgenstein on 'The Peculiar Grammar of the Word "I"'", in Constâncio / Branco / Ryan (eds.), *Nietzsche and the Problem of Subjectivity*, 454-486.

36 See Werner Stegmaier, "Nietzsches Zeichen", *Nietzsche-Studien* 29 (2000), 41-69, and Constâncio "On Consciousness: Nietzsche's Departure from Schopenhauer."

37 See Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, & First Philosophy*, 26-32, 59-69, 73-75, 84.

other commitments as values pursued by drives (and as hierarchies of values pursued by constellations of drives) because they are, for the most part, *hidden* from those that take them, those for whom they matter, and who are moved by them. For the most part, such commitments operate in us implicitly and at a pre-conceptual level. Nietzsche often treats them as "unconscious." Perhaps, many of them have never been conceptualised, and if we think, for example, of "sex," "beauty," "justice" or "happiness" as "values" pursued by unconscious "drives," we should understand each of them as "syntheses of meanings" that can never be "defined," that is, fully captured and fixed in exact and explicit concepts. And yet, in trying to *understand* them as something that is active in human organisms, we cannot avoid trying to name them and conceptualise them. We cannot avoid using a "sign language" that conceives them *not as causes but as "oughts"* that govern certain "systems of purposes," that is, as *norms* that give people *reasons* to think and act in a certain way — and, thus, Nietzsche himself writes that each drive would like to compel all the other drives to accept its perspective, what is values, "as norm" ("*als Norm,"* NL 1886 7[60].) So, what Nietzsche tries to do in his genealogy of the mechanic interpretation of the world is not to explain it away by invoking the brute force of certain "causes" or "physiological" drives (as if these could have any sort of epistemic authority over reasons), but rather to lay out for his readers the (bad) *reasons* that explain why one might adopt such a reductive, poor interpretation of the world, as well as suggesting to his readers (good) *reasons* to reject it.

That is not to say – by any means – that Nietzsche believes that reason can eliminate all contingency from life, or that conceptual norms could incorporate the non-purposiveness of life itself (of life as a whole), and transform it into necessity. To put it in Hegelian terms: actuality is not rational for Nietzsche. Or, to borrow Martin Saar's formula, "Nietzsche's stance towards values (or normativity in general) is primarily anti-authoritarian," for his stance is neither a constructive stance aiming at reaching normative principles that everyone could accept, nor a reconstructive stance aiming at getting at the genuine content of pre-existing normative practices.[38] In my view, this is because he thinks that

38 Martin Saar, "Die Moral der anderen. Nietzsche's Wertkritik", *Nietzsche-Studien* 44 (2015), 133-137.

there is a fundamental limitation in our access to life, or that life escapes determinate conceptualisation. That is why nothing that he writes about life is supposed to count as metaphysics or first philosophy in the traditional sense. It does not claim to have a transcendental foundation. Its foundation is the experience of the limits of conceptualisation, of the mysteriousness of biological life and the irrationality of social life – i.e., the experience of life as "something entirely dark." For what is the Dionysian if not the experience resulting from gazing at "that which defies illumination" in life, *das Unaufhelbare* (BT 15, KSA 1.101)? According to the view defended in this article, Nietzsche never abandoned his rejection of "Socratism" understood as the belief that "existence" (*Dasein*) can be made "comprehensible" (*begreiflich*) and "justified" (*gerechtfertigt*) (BT 15, KSA 1.99.) In fact, one should wonder if he ever abandoned the Kantian belief – endorsed in the 1868 notes – that our judgments about life are at best "reflective," but never "determinate."[39]

But, on the other hand, one should underscore that Nietzsche is very far from taking his reflections about life to be irrational, a sheer expression of affective preferences. As I have tried to show throughout this article, he does not see the space of reasons as a mere product of subjectivity, and he does not try to replace reasons with blind causal processes. He conceives of rational normativity as a development of social normativity, and of social normativity as a development, along the same *continuum*, of natural normativity. This is a *continuum* fraught with meaning, therefore a *continuum* in which values, purposes, and norms appear that can be questioned and discussed *rationally*. That is why I think that Nietzsche's stance towards values should not, *pace* Martin Saar, be understood as "deconstructive." Saar is right in pointing out that, for Nietzsche, values and norms just *are* objects of interrogation and scrutiny, i.e. of critique (Saar, "Nietzsche's Wertkritik", 26.) But

39 For a provisional attempt to explore this hypothesis, see Maria João Mayer Branco / João Constâncio, "Philosophy as 'free-spiritedness.' Philosophical evaluative judgements and post-Kantian aesthetics in Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*," in Paul Katsafanas (ed). *The Nietzschean Mind*, London/ New York 2018, 299-314; and João Constâncio, "Nietzsche's Aesthetic Conception of Philosophy: A (Post-Kantian) Interpretation of *The Gay Science* §373."
I would like to thank John Richardson, Robert Pippin, Béatrice Longueness, Kelly Sorensen, and Ariela Tubert for their comments on an earlier, unpublished version of this article.

critique is not necessarily the same as deconstruction. Saar is also right in claiming that Nietzsche's critique of "the value of our values" does not give us – ready-made, as it were – the new and different values that he claims we need. Nietzsche does not have a method that might allow him to give us those values. But his reflections on the value of our values are not merely negative, or "deconstructive": they aim at something like the affirmation of life, the preservation and expansion of free-spiritedness, the rejection of the nihilistic devaluation of life, etc. In this sense, they are indeed similar to Kantian reflective judgments about art and life (which discuss, in an intersubjectively meaningful way, what cannot be demonstrated, and which enhance both our *Lebensgefühl* and our *Geistesgefühl*; KU §1, 204; AA 20: 250). Thus, for Nietzsche, the philosopher must be able to combine the spirituality typical of the artist – a "bold and lively spirituality that runs along at a *presto*" – with "a dialectical rigor and necessity that does not take a single false step" (BGE 213.) As the "the human of the most comprehensive responsibility" (BGE 61), the philosopher is a reasoner, even if his, or her, main task is in fact a "transvaloration" and "creation of new values" that depends on a confrontation with life which is tantamount to an experience of the *limits* of reason.

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Values of the Aesthetic? Clearing up the Question

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Introduction

It may be surprising that, almost three centuries after the birth of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, we are still asking such apparently simple questions as "What are aesthetic values?" and "Which values are aesthetic?"[1] Haven't these questions already been asked and answered time and again? Surprisingly, they have not been raised all that often. Or to be fair, they have been raised, but mostly in confused, partial and distorted ways. In fact, there have been many articles and even some books written specifically on "aesthetic values", and yet they seldom provide a proper definition of this term and often assume that everyone is familiar with its meaning, using the phrase in a reductive or confused way. Part of the reason for this may lie, from the outset, in what many still consider the limited scope of aesthetics, which is all too often taken to be equivalent to the philosophy of art.[2] Thus, when considering a matter such as "aesthetic value", some

1 These questions may be taken here as explanatory paraphrases of the question that gives this chapter its title. My aim is not to answer these questions straightforwardly but to clear up the discussion that is prompted by them.

2 Since the middle of the twentieth century — when aesthetics was again deemed a subject worthy of philosophy — a significant number of philosophers in the analytic tradition have seemed to take it this way. There are certain exceptions worth mentioning, such as John Dewey (in his famous *Art as Experience*), J. O. Urmson (e.g. his famous paper 'What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?' from 1957), Frank Sibley (in many papers of the same period), Ronald W. Hepburn ('Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature' from 1963) and those who, like Hepburn, focus on the appreciation of nature, or what has recently been called "environmental aesthetics" (Allen Carlson, Arnold Berleant, etc.). More recently, further exceptions include Robert Stecker (even though he called his general survey of the field *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*) and those who have opened up the field of aesthetics to other areas, such as "everyday aesthetics" (see Yuriko Saito's *Everyday Aesthetics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Of course, we also find the same confusion in the continental tradition, perhaps because it has become common, since Hegel, to treat aesthetics as the philosophy of art and because many philosophers in this tradition do not bother to clarify the distinction or to re-evaluate the scope of aesthetics. Here too, certain exceptions should be mentioned, including Étienne Souriau, certain philosophers from French phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, Mikel Dufrenne), and contemporary philosophers such as Yves Michaud, Jean-Marie Schaeffer, Carole Talon-Hugon, and across the Rhine, Gernot Böhme.

philosophers confuse it with "artistic value", either purposefully[3] or by adopting an aesthetic (functional) theory of art that views art as that which is supposed to provide aesthetic experiences and should therefore be valued because it has aesthetic value.[4] From its very beginnings, however, aesthetics was meant to have a wider scope to the extent that aesthetic experience can arise from outside the realm of art. Eighteenth-century British philosophers[5] famously allowed for aesthetic experiences of nature, but so did Rousseau, Kant and the German Romantics. Although philosophical discussion of aesthetic experiences of nature faded for a time, the American transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau) revived the aesthetic take on nature and influenced a generation of contemporary philosophers who, in the later decades of the twentieth century, expanded the limits of aesthetics as philosophical inquiry into what they have begun to call "environmental aesthetics" (Carlson and Berleant). More recently, a new expansion of aesthetics has engaged contemporary philosophers in thinking about aesthetic experiences in human environments, industrial design, sports and even social and private environments – in sum, in everyday life.[6] As a consequence, answers to questions about aesthetic value that are channelled solely through reflection on art are no longer adequate.

A different problem with traditional accounts of aesthetic value stems from the fact that there is an archetypical concept of aesthetic value

3 As in the case of Berys Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, where Gaut's position is stated very clearly on pp. 34 ff.

4 Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958.

5 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* [1757], ed. with an introd. by Adam Phillips, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

6 Apart from the previously mentioned book by Yuriko Saito, see also Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith (eds.), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, the pioneering work on "prosaics" in Katya Mandoki, *Everyday Aesthetics: Prosaics, the Play of Culture and Social Identities*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, but also Sherri Irvin, 'The Pervasiveness of the Aesthetic in Ordinary Experience', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 48, 1 (2008), pp. 29-44, Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson, *Functional Beauty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, and many articles published in the journal *Contemporary Aesthetics*.

that has dominated philosophical discussions from antiquity to the modern day, to the point that some definitions of aesthetics consider it a theory of this concept, namely, a theory of *Beauty* (or *the beautiful*).[7] Centuries before the epistemological foundation of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline in the eighteenth century, Beauty was already a fundamental problem for philosophers, and to be fair it was still a very important topic for early modern aestheticians, and even for Baumgarten, who takes it into consideration when defining the new philosophical realm.[8] Nevertheless, I believe that it was above all the most influential book in the tradition of philosophical aesthetics, Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), that was responsible for the perpetuation of the concept's central significance in its discussion not only of aesthetic judgment (the judgment of taste) but of aesthetic experience in general,[9] as part of the "Analytic of the Beautiful". Equating the kind of satisfaction that is felt by the subject when making an aesthetic judgment with the *beautiful*, Kant reaffirmed the beautiful as the aesthetic value *par excellence*. It became a paradigm for positive aesthetic evaluation, despite the fact that Kant acknowledged a second kind of aesthetic judgment and thus, perhaps, a second kind of aesthetic value, although one that arises from a very different experience and is ambiguous to the extent that the satisfaction derived from the sublime "does not so much contain a positive pleasure as it does admiration or respect, *i.e.*, it deserves to be called negative

7 The *beautiful* is how this notion has come to be known since the eighteenth century, even though the nature and scope of the concept has surely changed, a development to which I will refer later in this chapter. In the following, I will use the capitalized "Beauty" when referring to the older, metaphysical or idealized sense and the lowercase "beautiful" for this modern sense of the notion.

8 In §14 of Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* we read: "The aim of aesthetics is the perfection of sensible cognition as such, that is, *beauty*, while its imperfection as such, that is, ugliness, is to be avoided" [my italics] (quoted in Paul Guyer, '18th Century German Aesthetics', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/).

9 Even though Kant does not refer specifically to "aesthetic experience" (since it was not yet part of the vocabulary of the time), it is fair to say that the subjective experiences he describes in the first part of the book, 'The Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment' (that is, both the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' and the 'Analytic of the Sublime'), are what we now call "aesthetic experiences".

pleasure".[10] The *beautiful*, however, does seem to have lost its accordance with the experience of modernity – not only modern art but the modern way of feeling and living.[11] Baudelaire certainly noticed a change in our modern aesthetic experience (fleeting and ephemeral, contrasting with the perenniality of ideal Beauty), and modern art seems to have delved into a transformation of traditional aesthetic value.[12] Modern life and modern art made room for competing values (the ugly, the grotesque, the fragmented, the misshapen, the contingent, the dissonant). Certain rare exceptions notwithstanding, philosophical aesthetics did not get the message and insisted on dealing primarily with the beautiful as the epitome of aesthetic value. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to consider whether the "new" aesthetic values are really different or whether they are simple avatars of the *beautiful* (or the *sublime*).

Before delving properly into the heart of the matter, I should also point out two further difficulties that must be examined if we are to accurately understand the question in the title of this chapter. One is the difficult task of distinguishing aesthetic from ethical and cognitive values, which are so interconnected that it is sometimes tricky to say whether we are valuing an aesthetic experience because of perceived aesthetic properties or because we apprehend something from the experience that enriches us intellectually or makes us feel that we have grown as

10 In §23 of Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [1790]. Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 129.

11 See, for instance, Arnold Berleant, 'Beauty and the Way of Modern Life', in *Aesthetics Beyond the Arts. New and Recent Essays*, London/New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 205-212 and Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 139-161.

12 In 1863, the French poet Charles Baudelaire published a well-known essay titled 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne' in *Le Figaro*, which focused on the relatively unknown painter Constantin Guys, sketcher of mundane and urban social life. In this essay, he develops reflections on the fleeting, transient and contingent (aesthetic) experience of modernity (see Charles Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l'Art*, ed. by Francis Moulinat, Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1999, pp. 503-552), but he also refers to this lost sense of ideal beauty, and even to the lost battle between Beauty and the modern artist, in several poems such as 'Hymne à la Beauté' (*Les Fleurs du Mal*), 'Le Confiteor de l'artiste', and 'Perte d'auréole' (both in *Le Spleen de Paris*) (see Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal,* ed. by John E. Jackson, preface by Yves Bonnefoy, Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1999, p. 70 and *Le Spleen de Paris – Petits poèmes en prose*, ed. by Robert Kopp, introd. by Georges Blin, NRF, Paris: Gallimard, 2006, pp. 107-8 and 214-5).

ethical individuals. The other difficulty arises from the close proximity of aesthetic properties to aesthetic values. If aesthetic values arise from the perception of aesthetic properties, and if it is true that we can distinguish between merely descriptive aesthetic properties and evaluative aesthetic properties that specify aesthetic values,[13] how are we to distinguish between aesthetic value *per se* and the evaluative aesthetic property that specifies that value?

Aesthetic values vs. artistic values

I began this chapter by saying that one of the main sources of confusion when discussing aesthetic values derives from overlapping aesthetics and philosophy of art and that although most authors admit that we can also have aesthetic experiences of nature, discussions of aesthetic value are often directed towards the aesthetic experience of artworks, quickly becoming discussions of artistic value. There are of course historical and contextual reasons for this frequent confusion; rather than taking this course of explanation, however, I prefer to offer grounds for maintaining that the realms of aesthetics and philosophy of art should not be confused.

On the one hand, the field of philosophical aesthetics should not be determined by the types of objects that provide (or may be) the focus of aesthetic experiences, as if there were a special type of object that could be called "aesthetic" – where "artistic objects" would allegedly be the strongest candidates for belonging to this type. Instead, it should focus on the fact that there are aesthetic experiences, from which various philosophical questions arise.[14] It should not be determined by aesthetic

13 See, for instance, Alan H. Goldman, *Aesthetic Value*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995, and Robert Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - An Introduction*, 2nd ed, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

14 In the same sense, James Opie Urmson writes: "to me it seems obvious that we also derive aesthetic satisfaction from artifacts that are not primarily works of art, from scenery, from natural objects and even from formal logic; it is at least reasonable also to allow an aesthetic satisfaction to the connoisseur of wines and to the gourmet. I shall therefore assume that *there is no special set of objects which are the sole and proper objects of aesthetic reactions and judgments*" [my italics] (Urmson, 'What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?' [1957], in P. Lamarque and S. Olsen (eds.) *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of*

objects insofar as aesthetic experiences tend to focus on many different kinds of objects – and even beyond objects,[15] on perceptions of states of affairs, events and processes, be they natural, artificial (man-made) or mental (in the imagination), from artworks to flowers, landscapes and sunsets, buildings and neighbourhoods, faces and speeches, atmospheres and mathematical proofs. In its original sense, aesthetics may be said to be the philosophical study of sense and sensibility, that is, sensory perception (αἴσθησις), emotional responses to perceptual experiences, and the cultural meanings of and engagement with such experiences. Reducing aesthetics to the philosophy of art, or even to aesthetic experiences solely derived from the appreciation and evaluation of artworks, therefore excludes a large spectrum of valuable and stimulating types of aesthetic experience that can illuminate a vast range of human experience and can help to clarify philosophical issues such as "aesthetic value".

On the other hand, philosophy of art deals not only with aesthetic issues but also with ontological ones ("What is art?", "What sorts of entities are works of art?"), epistemological and semantic questions (concerning imitation, representation, depiction, expression, form and meaning), methodological and technical issues (different art forms, art processes, the artist and the artwork), and of course the historical, sociological and anthropological issues that surround the art world: art currents, the impact of art on society, the public and spectatorship, political engagement, and, among many other issues, artistic values and the value of art. For our purposes here, I shall focus again on the questions of artistic value and the value of art.

In modern and contemporary times, art has in general been highly valued by society, intellectuals, public institutions and even the economy. At least since the early modern period and the emergence of the system of fine arts, art has, in its varied forms, been viewed as something that

Art – The Analytic Tradition. An Anthology, Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp. 19-26 (pp. 19-20).

15 Of course, the concept of an "object" is so broad that it need not be understood as a corporeal thing, as I am in a certain sense suggesting here. My point is that aesthetics should not be determined by (or depend for its definition on) one type of thing. We can nevertheless use the expression "aesthetic object" in the epistemological and phenomenological (although vague) sense that refers to the "focus of the experience".

contributes to a deepener understanding of life and human nature in a way that not only enriches our collective knowledge and cultural heritage but also affects us in pleasurable and emotionally profound ways. Nevertheless, artworks can be valued for very different reasons: for their historical relevance; for their role in testifying to a particular historical period; for their sentimental value; for being well-crafted, fine specimens that result from the execution of particular techniques; for their economic worth and their potential standing as patrimonial assets; for their role in promoting religious, political and educational views, etc. Some of these values are neither necessarily artistic nor aesthetic, and yet they contribute to the appreciation and evaluation of artworks. Thus it seems that we can distinguish between several types of values within the context of art that help us to understand why it is valued so highly. In addition, there are certain authors who consider art itself a value, thus turning to questions like "Would a world without art be less valuable, or even valueless?"[16] Despite the ontological and epistemological difficulties associated with such questions, calling something art usually does add value to it. This is why when people judge something to be "bad art" (or when they do not understand or simply do not like it), they often claim that it is not art at all. This not only indicates that art and artworks are generally valuable items but may also suggest that there is something inherently valuable about experiencing art. Regardless of the debate on the intrinsic *vs*. instrumental value of art,[17] what we must try to understand is what

16 See Roger Pouivet's chapter 'L'Art', in Julien Déonna and Emma Tieffenbach (eds.), *Petit Traité des Valeurs,* Paris: Les Éditions D'Ithaque, 2018, pp. 31-39.

17 The debate seems to be flawed insofar as what is under discussion is often the value of the experience provided by artworks and not the value of art itself. To complicate the issue, some authors seem to equate the "intrinsic" value of this experience with the aesthetic value of an artwork. Aware of the charge of "aestheticism" to which his position may be exposed, Malcolm Budd defends himself in 'Artistic Value' in P. Lamarque and S. Olsen (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition. An Anthology*, pp. 262-273, which is a reprise of the first chapter of his book *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry and Music*, published in 1995. To be fair to his position, Budd takes "the experience a work of art offers" to be "an experience of interacting with it in whatever way it demands if it is to be understood — reading it, looking at it, listening to it, performing it or in some other way appreciating it. For [one] to experience a work with (full) understanding [one's] experience must be imbued with an awareness of (all) the aesthetically relevant properties of the work — the properties that ground the attribution of artistic value and that constitute the

kinds of values artistic values are, as well as the connection – if there is one – between those values and aesthetic ones.

Artistic values, one assumes, should be values that one may ascribe to artworks precisely insofar as they are works of art. On this somewhat essentialist conception, which has been advocated by a number of philosophers, artistic value is "the one thing we value when we value something 'as art'", as something that is unique to art and shared by all artworks across all art forms, to the extent that they are considered valuable as art, and to the extent that it "render[s] art intrinsically valuable", to echo Robert Stecker's presentation of this notion (although he does not condone it).[18] What stands out about this conception is that it depends on defining what art (or at least what a work of art) is, which greatly complicates the issue. Art is a fluid concept, the scope of which has changed and widened over time – a concept that is certainly open to future meanings. This essentialist path thus seems inadequate from the start.[19] Perhaps a plural, "nonessentialist" view

particular forms of value the work exemplifies. The experience a work of art offers is an experience *of* the work itself: it does not have a nature specifiable independently of the nature of the work. It is also not any person's actual experience, but a type, one that can be multiply instantiated, and more or less closely approximated to" (Budd, 'Artistic Value', p. 263).

18 Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, p. 222.

19 Once again, Malcolm Budd, one of the proponents of this essentialist conception, is aware of this complication and tries to dismiss it: "I do not attempt, first to present a definition of a work of art or a philosophical theory of art or statement of its supposed essence, then to derive from the definition a conception of artistic value, the value of a work of art *as such*, that is, as satisfying the definition. Given what has happened to the concept of art, especially in the twentieth century, it would be fruitless to proceed in this way: an account of artistic value cannot be extracted from the present concept of art. Instead I specify a distinctive value — a value that works of art can possess, and which is possessed to a high degree by all great works of art; I then count an evaluation of art as an evaluation of it *as art* in so far as the work is being evaluated with respect to the distinctive value I have specified. My answer to the question [What is the value of a work of art *as* a work of art?] will demonstrate the unity of the concept of artistic value, or, more accurately, will give unity to it" (Budd, 'Artistic Value', p. 263). If this is not a circular argument from the outset, what happens is that Budd seems to derive the unity of "artistic value" from the "intrinsic value" of the experience, which ultimately comes from the aesthetic values that all works of art are destined to provide (a hint of aestheticism that he also tries hard to avoid).

of artistic values – and of art – should be contemplated instead, one in which many different types of value are to be taken into account when trying to determine the values of art (which is itself a rather complex and multifarious reality that allows for many different approaches and experiences).

Nonetheless, there is a special type of value that is commonly thought to be particularly connected with artistic value and potentially shared by all works of art, to the point that it may be considered the main bearer of value for artworks: *aesthetic value*. On the essentialist conception presented above, aesthetic values may be regarded as the proper and only kinds of value that provide 'intrinsic' value to a work of art. This traditionally implies an aesthetic function of art, that is, the understanding that the purpose of artworks must be to provide aesthetic experiences (valued for their own sake). Even though artworks can provide aesthetic experiences and are often expected to have (evaluative) aesthetic properties, however, what makes them artistically valuable does not end there. There are non-aesthetic properties or attributes of artworks that still contribute to their artistic value. Values such as *originality* (a value much praised in modern art), *authenticity* (as opposed to falsehood or forgery), *craftsmanship* (not a very popular value in contemporary art, but still relevant to some art forms), *shock value* and *disruptiveness*, etc.,[20] are not aesthetic values in the sense that they are not directly perceived by the senses and do not necessarily require taste for their detection, and yet they (may) add to the artistic value of a work of art. Of course, one could say that these values are not exclusive to artworks and can be detected in other practices outside the art world. Nonetheless, they are perceived in the context of artwork evaluation and are taken into account when valuing a work "*as art*"; as such, they are relevant to its artistic value as such. Traditionally, there are other major types of value that are said to be relevant to appreciating and evaluating works of art: cognitive and ethical values. And it is relatively easy – even if somewhat controversial – to accept that valuable artworks add

20 In this sense, and for a number of artistic values that are not necessarily aesthetic, see the collective work by Nathalie Heinich, Jean-Marie Schaeffer and Carole Talon-Hugon (eds.), *Par-delà le Beau et le Laid: enquêtes sur les valeurs de l'art*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014.

something[21] to our general (even if, and especially if, non-propositional) knowledge of life and human nature, possessing the power to affect us emotionally, challenging and sometimes transforming our moral, ethical and political stances and worldviews. Some even think that these cognitive and ethical tenets may be crucial to recognizing their artistic value, especially if they are representational or semantic and conceptual in nature. But since it is not clear that this is specific to artistic value and that it should be excluded when determining what aesthetic value is, I will leave this discussion for a later section of this chapter.

To say that artistic values do not depend exclusively on aesthetic ones is not to say that they are absent or irrelevant when discussing artworks. Quite the opposite, I would suggest that artworks are often the preferred place where aesthetic values are problematized, questioned and particularly intensified. This does not mean that they are the exclusive bearers of either aesthetic values or aesthetic experience. My main stance is that everything can be a focus of aesthetic experience and thus virtually display aesthetic values. And what art often does is to show this, choosing the most ordinary experience or aspect of the world and intensifying (or problematizing) its aesthetic properties (values), be it in nature, in a human environment or in the ordinary situations of everyday life.

Beyond the arts: Environmental and everyday aesthetic values

At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to stress that everything in the world (and even in the imagination) can be the focus of aesthetic experience. We might therefore find aesthetic values well beyond the evaluation of artworks. The broadness of the field of aesthetics – even if we exclude the consideration of art proper – demands an extensive and new exploration of which aesthetic values should be taken into account when studying extended domains of aesthetics such as environmental and everyday aesthetics. This,

21 Or if they transform or create new knowledge of the world. See for instance Nelson Goodman, for whom art is a "way of worldmaking", such that its cognitive value is comparable to that of science (*Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968, pp. 262-5).

of course, requires an extensive research program – one that has already been started, even if timidly, by some authors, and one that exceeds the bounds of this chapter. This notwithstanding, I do not want to proceed without providing a very brief glimpse of what might be at stake in this research into aesthetic values beyond the evaluation of artworks.

Nature has of course long been the focus of aesthetic experiences, many years before this expression was even used in philosophy. It has been a source of inspiration for poets, a wellspring of metaphors for the appraisal of Beauty, and an important reference for the mimetic arts. Following the Renaissance, it became the subject of paintings, which has given rise to the emergence of landscape as a pictorial genre. Thus it was the locus of certain aesthetic values even before they became a philosophical issue. Many eighteenth-century aestheticians reflected on ideas of the *beautiful* and the *sublime* in the face of natural objects, settings and events, and the variety of combinations of form, colour, light and shadow in the contemplation of certain natural settings – which made them ideal subjects for painting and drawing – prompted the use of a new term to refer to this sort of natural beauty: the "*picturesque*".[22] This meant that (visual) art had become (and for a long time remained) a model for the aesthetic appreciation of nature.[23] But there were other ways to connect aesthetically to nature. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the German Romantics tried not only to re-enchant nature, freeing it from the mechanistic view of modern science and instead emphasizing its

22 Introduced in the context of British aesthetics by the English sketcher and Anglican cleric William Gilpin, a devotee of landscape painting (although the Italian word *pittoresco* had been in use in art theory at least since Vasari and Lomazzo), the *picturesque* was defined as "that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture" (in *An Essay on Prints: Containing Remarks upon the Principles of Picturesque Beauty* from 1768). Even if developed at first as a set of rules for the depiction of nature, the "*picturesque*" would quickly become a more comprehensive theory later applied to landscape design and even architecture. The contributions of Richard Knight, Sir Uvedale Price (author of an *Essay on the Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and The Beautiful*, 1794) and Thomas Johnes were important to the theorization of the concept, although the notion assumed a more popular and commercialized character in the middle of the nineteenth century.

23 It might also be fair to say that to some extent, at least while the mimetic principle of art remained in force, some natural aesthetic values (symmetry, structural and formal organicity) also inspired the notion of (natural) beauty.

organic and teleological aspects, but also to reconnect man with nature, advocating a holistic approach that included practical reason, sensibility, feeling and imagination.[24] In a somewhat similar vein, the American transcendentalists also tried to reconnect with nature through writing and sensory experience,[25] recommending watching, listening and feeling it while walking through natural settings. Some naturalists approached this through both scientific knowledge and physical and spiritual experience, thus engaging harmoniously and in an immersive way with nature. The American naturalist John Muir treated nature as a home and deplored man's exploitative destruction of natural beauty. In fact, for him – in the vein of America's first environmentalist, George Perkins Marsh – everything in nature that had not been contaminated by humans was beautiful. This is what would later be called *positive aesthetics*.[26] *Natural beauty* thus seems to be an aesthetic value in itself, but it certainly has an ethical concern and at least seems to be fed by a spiritual belief in nature's intrinsic goodness.

Environmental aesthetics as a specific philosophical endeavour would only emerge in the last third of the twentieth century,[27] but it is still influenced by these early environmentalist concerns to this day. The appreciation of nature and its aesthetic values are in fact approached from different perspectives. Some more traditional perspectives still use models from art appreciation[28] that seem rather inadequate on the assumption

24 Keren Gorodeisky, '19th Century Romantic Aesthetics', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/aesthetics-19th-romantic/.

25 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1836, and Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*, Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854.

26 Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture*, London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 4-5, but mostly pp. 73 ff.

27 Ronald W. Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', in B. Williams and A. Montefiore (eds.), *British Analytical Philosophy*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 283-310 and Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment*.

28 These are mainly the "object model" and the "landscape model", which seem to import the methods of appreciation from sculpture and painting. For a summary presentation of these models, see Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, pp. 16 ff. and Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment*, pp. 5-6.

that nature should be appreciated *as nature* or "on its own terms".[29] Thus a "natural environment model" seems preferable and has been advocated by Allen Carlson (among others), a pioneer in the field. Besides taking nature *as nature*, Carlson also suggests that we need knowledge and information about our natural environment (usually provided by the natural sciences) to be able to properly appreciate it.[30] As an alternative to this cognitive approach, other authors stress the contextual dimension and the multi-sensory aspect of our experience of nature by appealing to our immersion in and engagement with the environment, striving to elide the abstract divide between subject and object, man and nature. This view,[31] advocated by Arnold Berleant, moves in the direction of what he also calls an "ecological aesthetics"[32] and is concerned not only with the appreciation of natural environments but also with human environments (agricultural, industrial, urban, suburban, commercial). This expansion of environmental aesthetics is rather recent and is somewhat parallel to another subfield of aesthetics that contemplates both human environments as a physical context for aesthetic experience and ordinary and social activities (cooking a meal, driving a car, riding a bicycle, going for a walk, engaging in sports, sunbathing on a beach, singing karaoke at a party, watching a parade) that may have an aesthetic dimension.[33] This is called *everyday aesthetics*, and it goes beyond certain

29 Yuriko Saito, 'Appreciating Nature on Its Own Terms', in Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson (eds.), *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, Peterborough, CA: Broadview Press, 2004, pp. 141-155.

30 Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment*, pp. 17 ff.

31 This view is usually known as the "engagement model". There are still other non-cognitive approaches to the appreciation of nature, however. The so-called "arousal model" describes a more visceral experience of nature and proposes that we may appreciate it simply by letting ourselves be emotionally aroused when contemplating our natural surroundings. The "mystery model" holds that we can only appropriately experience nature with a sense of mystery that involves "a state of appreciative incomprehension", thus preserving a sense of separation from nature, which is kept alien, distant and inscrutable (Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment*, pp. 6-7).

32 Arnold Berleant, 'Ideas for an Ecological Aesthetics', in *Aesthetics Beyond the Arts*, pp. 117-130.

33 The examples are countless, but this may involve the aesthetic appreciation of common goods (furniture, clothes, food), events (football matches, rock concerts) and similar activities. The aesthetic dimension is certainly pervasive

features of the traditional conception of aesthetic experience (such as disinterestedness) to the extent that it may involve practical activities in which the subject of the experience is not completely detached, while the aesthetic dimension (aesthetic appreciation of perceptual qualities, evaluative deliberations based on aesthetic judgments) is still undeniably present. It also focuses, among many other things, on the aesthetic qualities of the ordinary, no matter how transient and ephemeral they may be, including *fitness, functional* or *decorative beauty,*[34] *cleanliness, tidiness, cuteness,* and *messiness*.[35]

The interconnectedness of aesthetic values and other evaluative dimensions (such as cognitive and ethical dimensions) can pose a challenge to asserting their proper nature in these new broad contexts of environmental and everyday aesthetics. This exploration seems promising, however, and is sure to expand traditional aesthetic values.

The beautiful and other aesthetic values

There is no aesthetic value more traditional, of course, than the *beautiful*. Indeed, such a claim is still an understatement since all (positive) aesthetic value seems to derive from the archetypical and substantive idea of *Beauty*. Although I do not want to make a historical argument, let us keep in mind that, in pre-modern philosophy, Beauty was not necessarily an aesthetic value but a metaphysical one.[36] It was an Idea in the Platonic sense: an objective, immutable and absolute reality that may eventually be reflected in the sensible world but, crucially, for now can only be found in this world as a reflection of perennial Beauty. Furthermore, in the Platonic world of Ideas, Beauty was not really separate from the Good and Truth (as if they

in everyday life and ordinary experience. See Irvin, 'The Pervasiveness of the Aesthetic in Ordinary Experience', for an elaboration on this pervasiveness.

34 Parsons and Carlson, *Functional Beauty.*

35 Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, pp. 149 ff.

36 See Carole Talon-Hugon, *L'Esthétique*, Paris: PUF, 2004, pp. 11-19, Scruton, *Beauty*, pp. 2-4, and Nuno Fonseca, 'Aesthetic Values Before and Beyond the Evaluation of Artworks', in António Marques and João Sáàgua (eds.), *Essays on Values and Practical Rationality – Ethical and Aesthetical Dimensions*, Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2018, pp. 307-322 (p. 309).

were different aspects of the same reality), a conception that gained a new impetus with Neoplatonist Christian thought inasmuch as these were divine attributes ("transcendentals")[37] or the metaphysical properties of Being (God). It was not until the eighteenth century that *Beauty* (or the *beautiful*)[38] became autonomous and – to use Talon-Hugon's expression – "aestheticized" in the sense that it ceased to be a purely *intelligible Idea* (in the Platonic sense) and became an idea in the mind caused by the experience of the senses: a *sensible idea*, one might say, and therefore an *aesthetic value*. But of course things are not so simple, and the so-called autonomy of the aesthetic did not happen straight away. When early aestheticians discussed the essence or nature of the beautiful, they often restored old metaphysical, (epistemo)logical or moral ties (with the Good, Truth and Perfection). In fact, when trying to find formal principles of the beautiful, they came across properties, such as harmony, proportion, symmetry, unity and perfection, that still echoed intellectual values. By electing *taste* as the "sense" of the *beautiful*, an educated capacity that demanded not only epistemic but also moral virtues, early aestheticians were still summoning cognitive and ethical values.[39] I believe that the idea of the beautiful never really overcame a certain cognitive and ethical dependence, an issue to which we will return in the next section.

37 To some medieval philosophers, these "transcendentals" – Good, Truth, Being, Unity and Beauty – were *convertible*.

38 "Beautiful" is obviously the adjective formed from the substantive "beauty". In the eighteenth century, it became common to use it as a substantive – the beautiful – to refer to the idea of beauty. I will also use it to mark the distinction between a substantial and absolute Idea of *Beauty* and a relative and sensible idea resulting from a subjective and pleasurable aesthetic experience, the *beautiful*.

39 In the preface of his famous *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1726), for instance, Francis Hutcheson refers to a "moral sense of Beauty in Actions and Affections" (ed. by Wolfgang Leidhold, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004, p. 9). David Hume also often draws connections between Beauty, taste, morals and virtue. When in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* he draws a distinction between reason and taste, he says: "The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: The latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. […] Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition" (David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* [1751], ed. and introd. by J. B. Schneewind, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983, p. 88).

Two important features of this *sensible idea* of the beautiful are that it is based on subjective experience and that it is nourished by a pleasurable feeling. Even though there may be objective properties that can be perceived in the focus of the experience, the idea of the beautiful emerges from a subjective encounter with those causal properties. The beautiful is, then, a *relational* and *experiential* quality, and the pleasure that is felt during the experience is in some sense the affective warrant of its positivity (or "goodness", not necessarily in a moral sense – although it is hard to completely expunge the ethical tinge – but in a prosaic sense, as when we say "It made me feel good"). This means that this pleasure, which can be partly sensorial and partly intellectual (recall that Kant derives this feeling from the *free play of imagination and understanding*),[40] explains the sense in which the beautiful became a (positive) aesthetic value. This hedonistic conception of the beautiful as aesthetic value emphasizes the experience undergone by the subject, which departs from previous formal definitions of the beautiful that placed emphasis on the features of the object. The inherent subjectivity of this view may seem to threaten the validity of the aesthetic judgment – "This is beautiful" – and that is why Kant thought that such judgments, despite being subjective, claim universal validity, that is, the notion that everyone else, at least under the right conditions, ought to make the same (aesthetic) judgment (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §8). For this bold claim, Kant presupposes a "common sense" (a "*sensus communis*"), a sort of *a priori* principle of taste (which all humans supposedly possess) that enables the free play of imagination and understanding, or a harmony among these cognitive powers when contemplating the beautiful (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §§20-22). One might say that this Kantian "common sense" echoes the Enlightenment ambition of establishing a universal (political) community for humankind. Regardless of the legitimacy of Kant's assumption, or even the apparent circularity of his argument, what is clear is that he had to assume a common ground to justify the universal validity of aesthetic judgment, and thus to avoid the arbitrariness of subjectivity. Others have attempted to deal with the same issue – searching for a "standard of taste", like

40 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, § 9.

Hume,[41] for instance – but Kant provided the most influential account of aesthetic judgment, to the point that the experience of the beautiful (the experience that underlies the aesthetic judgment) came to be equated with aesthetic experience in general. And thus it is not surprising that the beautiful became – and indeed remains, in a significant number of mainstream accounts – synonymous with aesthetic value.

Most people say of a painting that it is beautiful, a term they would equally apply to a sunset, a landscape, a building, a human being, a piece of clothing, a mathematical formula, a melody, an idea, an action, or even a sentiment.[42] And yet it is obvious that not all aesthetic experiences share an equivalent phenomenology or degree of intensity, and it seems reasonable to think that not all aesthetic judgments are governed by the same rules or values. Thus the beautiful is a polymorphous, vague and ambiguous kind of value that can cover more specific or descriptive aesthetic values.[43] In a famous essay published in 1959, the British philosopher Frank Sibley listed a series of what he called "*aesthetic*

41 See David Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste', pp. 133-154, where Hume begins by recognizing the irreducible subjectivity of the aesthetic experience and the social and historical nature of taste but ends up appealing to the possibility of refining taste, the sense of the beautiful, by practice, education, etc., and thus to the possibility of more consolidated and adequate aesthetic judgments.

42 For a survey of the variety of "visual beauty", see Jerrold Levinson, 'Beauty Is Not One: The Irreducible Variety of Visual Beauty', in Elizabeth Schellekens and Peter Goldie (eds.) *The Aesthetic Mind: Philosophy and Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Of course, we use the word "beauty" and "beautiful" in the context of different sense modalities, and even in intellectual and emotional experiences that do not involve direct sense perception.

43 Roger Scruton mentions two concepts of Beauty: "In one sense 'beauty' means aesthetic success" — and this is certainly why we use it generally and vaguely about so many different experiences — "in another sense it means only a certain kind of aesthetic success. There are works of art which we regard as set apart by their pure beauty — works that 'take our breath away' […]. Such works are sometimes described as 'ravishing', meaning that they demand wonder and reverence, and fill us with an untroubled and consoling delight. And because words, in the context of aesthetic judgment, are loose and slippery, we often reserve the term 'beautiful' for works of this kind, meaning to lay special emphasis on their kind of enrapturing appeal" (Scruton, *Beauty*, p. 13). Thus, if there is this specific kind of aesthetic success, for which we should reserve the word "beauty", there are certainly many other words for the other kinds of aesthetic success.

concepts" – e.g. "*graceful, delicate, dainty, handsome, comely, elegant*"[44] – words or expressions that require "taste or perceptiveness" from a subject in order to be applied in a certain (aesthetic) situation. One could say that these words quoted from Sibley are in some cases mere synonyms, in others specifications of what we usually mean by "beautiful". They arise in a certain aesthetic experience and are efforts to verbalize the aesthetic qualities in the object (or focus of that experience) that cause the pleasurable feeling. Perhaps we can call the substantivized versions of these concepts *aesthetic values* as well, in the sense that they may function in a normative or axiological manner, determining our aesthetic judgments but also our choices and preferences. "Elegance" is certainly an aesthetic value that may serve as a criterion for evaluating artworks – sculpture or dance, for instance – but also in fashion, design, lifestyle and even the appreciation of a mathematical formula. "Elegance" is not a mere synonym of the beautiful (you would never call a sunset elegant), but it can be thought of as a specification of that vague and general positive aesthetic value that we call the beautiful. But are all aesthetic values mere derivations or specifications of the beautiful?

One first (and straightforward) counterexample could be negative aesthetic values such as *ugliness, monstrousness, clumsiness, inelegance, imbalance, discordance*, etc. And yet it may be immediately objected that these are mere negatives of the beautiful and its alleged derivations or specifications. Such terms are employed in the appreciation of aesthetic experiences that produce a painful rather than a pleasurable feeling.[45] In the same way that a pleasant experience is evaluated positively and reveals the subject's attraction or preference, a painful experience is evaluated negatively and reveals repulsion or disgust. Nevertheless, this simple and straightforward binary logic, based on the "goodness" or "badness" of the aesthetic experience, does not seem to do justice to the

44 Frank Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts', in John Benson, Betty Redfern and Jeremy Roxbee Cox (eds.) *Approach to Aesthetics: Collected Papers on Philosophical Aesthetics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, pp. 1-23 (p. 2).

45 Some may of course argue that these negative experiences cannot be considered "aesthetic", but I would disagree; indeed, I would argue that such a view betrays a misunderstanding — more common than one might think — of the concept of the "aesthetic", in which the latter is reduced to the mere "experience of the beautiful" or "of a positive aesthetic value".

manifold and endless variety of aesthetic situations and judgments that are possible, some of them irreducible to this aesthetics of bivalence. Besides, since aesthetic values are cultural and historical, some have been viewed as "negative" at certain times and then later used in a "positive" sense, some have been used for their shock value or apparent "negativity", and others have never fit easily into a dualistic model of aesthetic validity.

In fact, eighteenth-century aestheticians considered different aesthetic values, such as the *sublime* and the *picturesque*. The picturesque referred to an ordered, harmonious and interesting landscape that was an ideal subject for a painting or drawing, and thus one could say that it still had something to do with the beautiful, being a special kind of beauty: one that asks to be depicted. The sublime, by contrast, thoroughly analysed by Burke and Kant, is certainly more ambiguous, dealing with dread, fear, wonder and other thrilling emotions[46] but also referred to as a "negative pleasure".[47] As aesthetic sensibility changed, from Romanticism to modern art, more of these "negative pleasures" – the horrific, the monstrous, the contingent and ephemeral, the ugly, the discordant – spread across the arts, literature, music and popular taste, eventually being praised and promoted.[48] Further examples emerge when we consider how the culture of the masses, the fluctuating exchange between highbrow and lowbrow taste, and the commodification of cultural goods have challenged the hierarchy of aesthetic values. *Kitsch*, for instance, has often been used to distinguish good taste from bad, refinement from tackiness, depth from shallowness, real high art from formulaic, uncreative and blatantly sentimental artefacts that appeal

46 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, part 4, section 3, pp. 119-120.

47 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §23.

48 In a chapter dedicated to "values", the French philosopher Tristan Garcia notes how the beautiful (*le beau*) was de-substantialized and relativized during the nineteenth century, integrating the ugly, the vulgar (Hugo), the ephemeral and transient (Baudelaire), the bitter (Rimbaud) and the imperfect (Oscar Wilde) in its spectrum, changes that would later overflow into the culture of the masses (cinema, television). See Tristan Garcia, *Forme et Objet: Un traité des choses*, Paris: PUF, 2010, pp. 376-8.

to a middle-class sensibility.[49] Although it has served at times to distinguish the avant-garde from traditional, figurative, academic art – the "rear-guard"[50] – it has often been appropriated by modern (and postmodern) art movements (surrealism, pop art, lowbrow), both as a critique of consumer society and as an ironic (or even honest?)[51] espousal of "bad taste" and popular culture. Apparently replicating the irony with which artists approach popular culture, well-educated portions of society sometimes cultivate this "bad taste", collecting and surrounding themselves with kitsch items or even adopting an overinflated kitsch style, in an attitude often called "camp".[52]

49 This German word, which has an obscure etymology, allegedly originated in painting circles around the 1870s, but it was not until 1925 that the first book dedicated to this aesthetic category, *Der Kitsch: Eine Studie über die Entartung der Kunst*, was published by Fritz Karpfen. Other German authors were using the expression at the time in the same critical sense that would influence later approaches by Clement Greenberg and Theodor Adorno. Walter Benjamin, who in all likelihood was not familiar with Karpfen's book, took an alternative approach to the concept of *kitsch*, using it in the context of his "archaeology" of nineteenth-century culture, somewhat influenced by the surrealists' critique of the bourgeoisie and their version of a "dream Kitsch". For a detailed survey of this approach, see Winfried Menninghaus, 'On the "Vital Significance" of Kitsch: Walter Benjamin's Politics of "Bad Taste"', in Andrew Benjamin and Charles Rice (eds.), *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, Melbourne: re.press, 2009, pp. 30-57. For a conservative reappraisal of kitsch aesthetics, see Scruton, *Beauty*, pp. 156 ff.

50 The expression was used in the famous defense of modernist art (the avant-garde) against academic art (the rear-guard) by Clement Greenberg in a celebrated essay 'Avant-garde and Kitsch', published in 1939 in the *Partisan Review*.

51 Irony as a rhetorical artistic device plays on ambiguity, and the artist often (rhetorically) denies his or her own strategy in order to reinforce its ambiguity. Jeff Koons, for instance, an artist who deals very obviously with the category of *kitsch*, often publicly insists that there is no irony in what he does, rejecting any hidden meaning in his work, although his over-the-top commitment to sentimental subjects is constantly challenged by the sensational magnitude of some of his artworks, which de-realizes their content, thus re-instilling doubt about his alleged sincerity.

52 Susan Sontag first explored the meaning and cultural implications of "camp" aesthetics in a celebrated article 'Notes on 'Camp"', published in 1964 in the *Partisan Review*. The flamboyant and bizarre characters of John Waters's films *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Polyester* (1981) can be considered noteworthy instances of this "camp" aesthetic, although it has become increasingly present in everyday contemporary urban culture.

These examples show how other aesthetic values, beyond Beauty and the beautiful, have developed and sometimes played against the hierarchies imposed by traditional standards of taste. We can certainly find more examples of aesthetic values that are not reducible to a semantics of the beautiful if we accept a wider conception of aesthetic experience that is not held captive to a binary logic (the beautiful *vs*. the ugly, pleasure *vs*. pain, good *vs*. bad taste, etc.). If we consider aesthetic experience – or "experiencing aesthetically"[53] – to be a cognitive and affective process that is not necessarily continuous or concentrated in time – as a distinctive, united and congruent, isolated experience (in an honorific Deweyan sense that would make it "*an* experience") – and that may involve a diverse perceptual phenomenology (from merely visual to multisensory) and sometimes an unclear or even nebulous focus (as when we try to sense an ambience or atmosphere),[54] then we can think of a wide range of experiences that do not necessarily need to be governed by a linear normative axis (such as beautiful → neutral → ugly). During these experiences, one perceives and engages with various aesthetic qualities, most of these possessing descriptive or expressive properties and some more evaluative in character. Before offering final considerations concerning the interconnectedness of aesthetic properties and values, I shall very briefly address another intricacy to which I have already alluded in this chapter.

53 Robert Ginsberg, 'Experiencing Aesthetically, Aesthetic Experience, and Experience in Aesthetics', in Michael H. Mitias (ed.), *Possibility of the Aesthetic Experience*, Martinus Nijhoff Philosophy Library, vol 14, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986, pp. 61-78.

54 In the footsteps of the new German phenomenology (a trend initiated by Hermann Schmitz), the philosopher Gernot Böhme has been developing an aesthetics of "*atmospheres*", a concept that appeals to the interconnected relation between environmental qualities and human states while suspending the abstract (but rather common) divide between subject and object. This new aesthetics may be understood as the study of "atmospheric perception", where perception refers to the experience of people, objects and environments, or of "emotional spaces", to use an expression developed by the Italian philosopher Tonino Griffero, who otherwise explores the ontology of these atmospheres, taken to be "quasi-things". For more on this, see Tonino Griffero, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces*, trans. Sarah de Sanctis, Farnham, UK/Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2014.

Cognitive, ethical and aesthetic values

When trying to understand the nature of Beauty as an archetypical aesthetic value, I mentioned its origin in the context of a Platonist ontology, where it had a convoluted bond with other metaphysical Ideas such as Good and Truth. These strong connections were reinforced within the framework of Neoplatonist, and particularly Christian, philosophy, where these Ideas (Good, Truth, Unity, Beauty, etc.) are recognized as attributes of the divine, that is, as different names for the same being: God. Beauty (or the beautiful) would only slowly be emancipated from these metaphysical bonds with the birth of aesthetics and the sought-after autonomy of the realm of art.[55] This slow process of emancipating the artists (no longer mere artisans) and their practices (intellectual endeavours as important as the pre-modern "liberal arts", no longer mere craftworks) can be said to have started at some point during the Italian Renaissance and was matched in the eighteenth century by a concomitant theorization of the beautiful and pleasure as both the unifying principle and the sole purpose of art.[56] These crossed paths, from that point on, allowed for the contemplation of a sphere of aesthetic and artistic autonomy. This meant that the work of artists and the principles that regulated them were allegedly no longer dependent on other kinds of value (religious, political, economic, cultural) and also that aesthetic judgment of the work relied solely on its aesthetic properties.[57] The epitome of this belief in artistic autonomy was represented in the nineteenth century by the advocates

55 Despite the previously stated distinction between the fields of (philosophical) aesthetics and the philosophy of art, it is undeniable that there has been an historical kinship between the emergence of a new philosophical field — aesthetics — and the rise of a system of fine arts. For details on this interaction, see for instance Talon-Hugon, *L'Esthétique*, pp. 35 ff.

56 Charles Batteux's *Les Beaux-arts réduits à un même principe* (1746) was explicit on this. For details on the historical process of emancipation, see the famous two-part paper by Paul Oskar Kristeller 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics' (I) and (II), published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12, 4 (1951), pp. 496-527 and 13, 1 (1952), pp. 17-46, respectively.

57 On the meanings of this aesthetic and artistic autonomy, see the introduction to Owen Hulatt (ed.), *Aesthetic and Artistic Autonomy*, London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013, but also Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, pp. 67 ff.

of "*l'art pour l'art*" – in English, "art for art's sake"[58] – a position that supported the view that art was governed solely by "aesthetic" goals[59] and should be appreciated exclusively through "aesthetic" terms and values (a view that is sometimes associated with "aestheticism"). These somewhat idealistic positions were challenged, however, by other more realistic ones (Freudian, Marxist, functional or institutional, etc.) that view art (artists and critics) as dependent on other aspects of life. The realm of art cannot be convincingly regarded as separate from its social, historical, and cultural context. In fact, a considerable part of an artwork's content – at least when it is representational – is often inspired or related to aspects of life (of the world) that are neither artistic nor even aesthetic in nature, and this usually affects our appreciation and evaluation of it. Besides, as we've already established, when distinguishing between aesthetic and artistic values, the latter are dependent not only on aesthetic properties but on many non-aesthetic properties as well (historical, stylistic, cultural, social, political). Nevertheless, this seemingly straightforward claim is apparently not convincing to those who insist on mistaking aesthetic for artistic value. Among these, some believe that the aesthetic worth of an artwork is significantly – and not just trivially – affected by its moral or cognitive value.

Let us pause for a moment to clarify what is being said. Initially, the Idea of Beauty – which has traditionally been taken as the archetype of aesthetic value – was intricately connected with other values, mainly metaphysical, ethical, logical and cognitive. With the advent of aesthetics and the constitution of the modern system of the arts (the fine arts), aesthetic value progressively emancipated itself from other values; art, as understood

58 The introduction of such views in the literary and artistic discourse is usually attributed to the French poet Théophile Gautier in a preface to his own epistolary novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), where he criticizes utilitarian and moral interpretations of literature. Instead, according to him, a writer or an artist should be concerned solely with creating the beautiful. This evident "aestheticism" would go on to influence British art critics such as Walter Pater, who opposed John Ruskin's social and moral concerns about art, and writers such as Oscar Wilde.

59 This was thus far from the triple goal attributed to art by French aestheticians of the eighteenth century (such as Jean-Baptiste Dubos and even preceding critics and artists such as Nicolas Boileau, André Félibien and Nicolas Poussin) who were inspired by Aristotle, Horace and Cicero: according to them, art should instruct (*docere*), move (*movere*) and delight (*placere*). See Talon-Hugon, *L'Esthétique*, pp. 36-37.

in its modern sense, was sometimes perceived as being autonomous from other aspects of life. This idea of the autonomy of art was most certainly grounded in several specificities that were also associated with the *aesthetic*: disinterested pleasure, the beautiful, the taste and genius (the divine spark) of the artist. More realistic accounts of art have challenged this autonomist stance. All the same, some traditional accounts of artistic value – which frequently equate it with aesthetic value – do not hesitate to adopt ethical or cognitivist approaches[60] to the evaluation of artworks, according to which the aesthetic worth of an artwork may be significantly affected by its moral and/or cognitive merits or flaws.

There are, of course, more radical and more moderate positions in this always intense debate,[61] and it is not difficult to grant that other kinds of values indeed interact in our evaluative appreciation of artworks. On the other hand, it still seems rather intuitive to think that there must be a *conceptual distinction* between aesthetic, ethical and cognitive values. It should therefore be fairly easy to make this distinction; when it comes to determining what makes something – properties, values – *aesthetic*, however, there is much hesitation, ambiguity, confusion, and even plain vagueness.[62] As I have suggested elsewhere,[63] these difficulties are intrinsic

60 For a detailed survey of these approaches, see Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, particularly chapters 7 and 8 for aesthetic cognitivism, and indeed the entire book for the ethical stance (as this is Berys Gaut's own position). Another lucid paper on the debate and the issues at stake is Cain Todd, 'Aesthetic, Ethical, and Cognitive Value', *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 26, 2 (2007), pp. 216-227. Unfortunately, he does not clarify what it is that supports the "conceptual distinction" between the different types of values: *aesthetic, "ethicist"* and *cognitive*.

61 Analytical aesthetics has thoroughly – and somewhat scholastically – debated the interactions between aesthetic, ethical and cognitive values, almost exclusively concerning the evaluation of artworks (and often representational or literary kinds), but I have been claiming – and I am certainly not alone in doing so – that aesthetic experience goes far beyond the arts, and thus the discussion cannot be clarified within this restricted area of aesthetics.

62 An historical attempt to do so can be found in J. O. Urmson's famous 1957 paper 'What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?'. Despite its well-knit argument, the answer – the way something presents itself to the senses, the way it appears – still seems slightly weak and vague (Urmson, 'What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?', pp. 24-5). However, I am arguing that this is not a weakness that we should attribute to the author but rather an intrinsic feature of the realm of aesthetics.

63 Fonseca, 'Aesthetic Values Before and Beyond the Evaluation of Artworks', pp. 310-314.

to aesthetics as a philosophical discipline because of its affinities with other areas of philosophy, namely what we now call epistemology and ethics. It has both a theoretical and a practical inclination; it is both descriptive and somewhat prescriptive; it aims to explain how we can learn about and experience the world through sensory perception, but also what sense we can make of these experiences and our emotional responses to them. Aesthetics is about reflecting on the phenomenology of our perceptual (and imaginative) experiences and measuring (appreciating, evaluating) the intensity of our perceptual and emotional engagement with the world. It is not just about how things – states of affairs, events and processes – appear to us but also about how we cognitively and emotionally engage with them. This is why, when we try to clarify what aesthetic values are, we end up having to confront their cognitive and ethical nuances.

This does not mean that it is impossible or useless to distinguish conceptually between aesthetic values on the one hand and ethical and cognitive values on the other. These different types of value fulfill different practical and theoretical roles,[64] and thus the distinction may also be useful when assuming different perspectives in the analysis of the same or similar situations. Still, some values in grey areas may be taken as aesthetic, cognitive or ethical depending on the emphasis one needs to give them. If, for instance, we think of "orderliness" as a value and "ordered" as a property of something (a painting, a mathematical formula, a rescue operation), we can certainly recognize it from both an aesthetic point of view and a cognitive or ethical one.

64 As I tried to summarize succinctly elsewhere: "*ethical* values govern or justify actions or behaviours, the practical choices that guide each individual in his daily intercourse with states of affairs and other individuals; *cognitive* values are those that manage the possibility and validity of knowledge; and *aesthetic* values are those that condition the appreciation, contemplation and evaluation of aesthetic experiences, in other words, those which enable the association between sensible, expressive and formal — configurational and structural — properties and qualities of objects and states of affairs — situations or events — and the corresponding affective responses of the subject who experiences them" (Fonseca, 'Aesthetic Values Before and Beyond the Evaluation of Artworks', p. 313).

Aesthetic properties and aesthetic values

As a final thought, I would like to consider the interconnectedness of, and the sometimes delicate distinction between, aesthetic properties and aesthetic values.

There is a pervasive ambiguity in our current use of the term "value", which is particularly striking in the realm of aesthetics. It designates both the principle or standard for the evaluation of something and the quality – intrinsic or subjective worth – attributed to something that affects us. For instance, I can say that elegance is the standard that regulates my aesthetic appreciation of flower arrangements and that this particular garland strikes me as elegant. This is not just the difference between abstract and concrete, between general and specific, but between a norm, a standard for evaluation, and the particular attribution, the (evaluative) property ascribed to the focus of an experience. The expression "aesthetic property" is therefore similarly blurry, referring to a broad variety of terms and meanings.

To follow Alan Goldman's famous classification and examples, aesthetic properties may include: *pure value properties* (being beautiful, sublime, ugly), *formal qualities* (being balanced, tightly knit, graceful), *emotional properties* (being sad, joyful, angry), *behavioural properties* (being bouncy, daring, sluggish), *evocative qualities* (being powerful, boring, amusing), *representational qualities* (being true-to-life, distorted, realistic), *second-order perceptual properties* (being vivid or pure colours or tones), and *historically related properties* (being original, bold, derivative).[65] Before proceeding, I would just like to note that Goldman had in mind the aesthetic terms usually used by art critics, and thus some of these properties are more useful for ascertaining artistic value than aesthetic value (for instance the latter type, "historically related properties", and to some extent "representational qualities"). This is an unnecessary level of confusion that we can avoid by ignoring them. Another obvious remark about this list concerns the indistinct use of the terms "properties" and "qualities", which I admit has often

65 This list was reprised in Alan H. Goldman, 'Aesthetic Properties', in Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., Oxford:

contaminated my own choices throughout this chapter. In a pragmatic sense, this is of course unproblematic insofar as the term "property" is used interchangeably – even in a philosophical technical use – with "quality" or "attribute" to designate an entity that can be predicated of things (objects, states of affairs, events, persons, etc.) or attributed to them. Semantically, however, and when thinking about aesthetic experiences, it is easy to slip from the general and substantive meaning of *quality* to the adjectival *qualitative*, and thus to thinking of the phenomenal character of perceptual experiences. This brings to mind the fact that certain properties of things may be intrinsic, objective, non-relational or primary in the Lockean sense, and others secondary, mind-dependent, and relational, resulting from perceptual experience. Aesthetic properties are most certainly of the second type, even if they may *supervene* on physical, objective ones.[66] In fact, when talking about aesthetic properties, we can probably say that they are *response dependent* inasmuch as they are relational and depend on how they affect the subject of the perceptual (or imaginative) experience. Some authors offer a more nuanced interpretation of the response dependency of aesthetic properties depending on their kind, that is to say, depending on whether they are *general-value properties* (those that specify an overall aesthetic value like the beautiful or the sublime), *specific-value properties* (those that refer to an object's form or structure, such as being balanced or harmonious, to

Blackwell Publishing, 2009, pp. 124-128 (p. 125), from chapter 2 of his famous book *Aesthetic Value* (1995), but a similar classification of "aesthetic qualities" had already been presented by the Swedish philosopher Goran Hermerén in 'The Variety of Aesthetic Qualities' (chapter 2 of the 1988 book *Aesthetic Quality and Aesthetic Experience*, ed. by Michael H. Mitias, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 11-23): "emotion (or expressive) qualities", "behaviour qualities", "gestalt qualities", "taste qualities", "reaction qualities" and a particular set he later adds in the same chapter, "nature qualities" (such as *cold, warm, cool, bright, luminous, deep, rugged, smooth, soft, tender*, which are usually used to describe the physical world but can also be used metaphorically to describe works of art).

66 There is no absolute consensus on this, however. The American philosopher Marcia Muelder Eaton believes that aesthetic properties are *real* and *intrinsic* and that they are not supervenient. In fact, Eaton avoids supervenience to explain aesthetic properties and dissensus about aesthetic judgment by approaching the issue epistemologically, not metaphysically, making "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" "relative to beliefs, various sources of evidence, and community practices" (Marcia M. Eaton, *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 31-44).

the evocation of the feelings it arouses, such as being joyful or amusing, or to "higher-order perceptual" effects such as vividness and dullness) or *purely descriptive properties*.[67] At any rate, what seems obvious is that the ascription of aesthetic properties – if they are response dependent – can only be properly understood with reference to aesthetic experiences.

Worries about subjectivism, relativism or plain antirealism concerning aesthetic properties have generated plenty of realist objections and revisionary proposals to this alleged response dependency – mostly in the analytic tradition, where the discussion emerged[68] – in order to save the validity and cogency of aesthetic judgement. However, most of these worries ultimately derive from a regrettably restricted view of aesthetics, since most of the participants in these discussions remain focused on the evaluation of artworks and are somewhat obsessed with the correctness of the critics' verdict.[69] Aesthetic experience is not all about this kind of evaluation, of course; even if this were its sole purpose, however, the "correctness" of the evaluation would always be relative to a social, historical and cultural context.[70] This is not to say that "anything goes". On the contrary, the fact that it is based on a complex social, historical and cultural context means that it is deeply established but also seriously scrutinized. Nor does it meant that, since it is based on a (personal) perceptual experience, the verdict is always

67 Robert Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, pp. 67 and 75.

68 In the celebrated 1959 paper 'Aesthetic concepts', where Frank Sibley defined aesthetic terms as those which — in the context of critical and evaluative discourse — require taste or perceptiveness in order to be applied to something, the whole issue seems to be how to explain the relationship between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties in a sound aesthetic judgment if aesthetic concepts are not rule governed, such that no logical entailment exists between both types of properties: "If we are not following rules and there are no conditions to appeal to, how are we to know when they are applicable?" (Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts', p. 13).

69 Expressions like "ideal observers", "the right kind of observer in the right kind of conditions", and "those who perceive and understand it correctly" are far too commonly used by the authors involved in this discussion. I take these examples from Stecker (*Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*), who does not necessarily embrace these positions but rather presents them for didactic purposes.

70 Such common sense relativism was, of course, already famously avowed by Hume in 'Of the Standard of Taste'.

purely subjective or merely related to impressions and feelings. Aesthetic experience is not a hallucinatory or delirious experience;[71] it is a sensory, perceptual experience – even though it is also in part an imaginative and emotional experience – of the external world. Thus there is always an objective focus of the experience that is a determining factor of this rich perceptual, imaginative and emotional engagement with the world. Aesthetic properties arise from this interaction, this in-between dynamic, and are the bearers of aesthetic value.

Once again, it is not easy to distinguish aesthetic properties, which are the sources of aesthetic value, from aesthetic values that emerge from particular aesthetic experiences, but this is because the process of the ascription of aesthetic properties has a certain evaluative character. Even so-called "purely descriptive properties" may require some amount of "aesthetic attention" for their detection and appreciation if they are to be part of an (evaluative) aesthetic experience. To speak of aesthetic properties is thus in a sense already to speak of aesthetic values to the extent that they are part of an ongoing (aesthetic) evaluation – one that is not so much a differential diagnosis to distinguish good from bad experiences, or the beautiful from the ugly, as an unfolding process of making sense, via the detection, appreciation and ascription of aesthetic qualities and values, of the cognitive, affective, perceptual and imaginative experience that is *aesthetic experience*.

Concluding remarks

Asking what an aesthetic value is and what aesthetic values there are reveals the convolutions and uncertainties associated with the aesthetic as an inherently vague and nebulous concept, and with aesthetics as a broad and somewhat hybrid philosophical discipline. Many confusions and misunderstandings when discussing aesthetic value result from traditionally restrictive, narrow views of aesthetics, which often result in an overlap between the aesthetic and the artistic. Recent developments

71 Or at least it does not have to be one, even though drugs might affect the possibility of having aesthetic experiences by distorting, intensifying or dulling the senses and aesthetic awareness.

and extensions of the scope of aesthetics (such as environmental and everyday aesthetics), although they still need to grow and to attract the interest of more traditional aestheticians, will certainly help to dissolve some of those amalgams, leading to deeper and more interesting clarifications concerning the nature and meaning of aesthetic experiences and revealing a richer variety of aesthetic values, beyond the beautiful and the sublime. Emancipating the question of aesthetic value from that of beauty or intrinsic value might also help to clarify the practical use of aesthetic values in new areas of scientific research and theoretical discourse, as well as in decision-making procedures and policy debates involving contemporary issues (such as ecology, sustainable growth, and urban development).

The World and Life are One:

Sense and Value in Early Wittgenstein

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Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is a work of formal precision that aims to reveal the limits of what can be said clearly. Yet Wittgenstein's endeavour for clarity as regards human language surpasses this goal. If taken in earnest – and not as philosophical wordplay – it displays both the sphere of natural sense, that is to say, of propositions which portray facts, and what one may see once the threshold of the sayable is finally reached, namely a realm of value, true and absolute. How it does so, and what sense and value mean for the early Wittgenstein, are questions I mean to address in this chapter. The 'Lecture on Ethics' will thus be taken into consideration; although it was delivered in 1929 and belongs to a later period of Wittgenstein's thought, it is still very much in the spirit of his initial views and sheds light on them. Altogether, the following will make clear how sense and value for the early Wittgenstein are at the core of the indivisible union between both world and life on the one hand and ethics and aesthetics on the other, allowing for the blending and combining of the sphere of aesthetics and values.

The only book

The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is the only book that Wittgenstein published during his lifetime (apart from a dictionary for elementary school children). The *Philosophical Investigations*[1] only saw the light of day posthumously and constitutes the more polished version of the book that would have followed the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* had it been completed. The fact that it was not has to do with the methodologies that Wittgenstein came to adopt later in life. In accord with his restless philosophical activity, his neverending pursuit of clarity would never

1 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, Peter Michael Stephan Hacker and Joachim Schulte, rev. fourth ed. by Peter Michael Stephan Hacker and Joachim Schulte, Malden: Willey-Blackwell, 2009.

again know or fit a fixed and definitive style of the sort found in the *Tractatus*. Given its static conception of language, the *Tractatus* allowed for a final presentation of the views it advanced; that is to say, the content allowed for conclusive phrasing and orderly progression. It would be impossible to replicate these formal features in any of Wittgenstein's future works. Wittgenstein's renewed vision of language, resulting in part from his critique and revision of his own earlier position, portrayed it as dynamic and alive, his style doing justice to its nature. Still, that philosophy's goal should be peace, and that Wittgenstein could not for his life leave philosophy alone, is no less contradictory than the famous so-called paradox of the *Tractatus*.[2] Language use constantly gave him food for thought and presented him with puzzles and problems in need of dissolving. Alas, he did not publish what came after his only book of philosophy, although he thought of his lectures as a kind of publishing. After all, they were public.[3]

Even after the apparent respite that followed the completion of the *Tractatus* and saw him embark on a schoolteacher's life on rural Austria, it can be said that he remained occupied and troubled by its problems. One need only glance at the writings from that period to confirm this. And what, precisely, were the problems that philosophy should investigate and solve, according to Wittgenstein at the time? Answering this requires taking into account the focal point of the *Tractatus*, from which all other issues seem to radiate.

It appears that the central point of concern is logic, or better yet, logic and philosophy, as the full title explicitly signals, a hyphen connecting the two. Logic will help to treat philosophy; it will help it to see its problems clearly for what they are, so that it might finally

2 Rush Rhees provides a particularly interesting report on this subject; see Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rush Rhees, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophical Conversations with Rush Rhees (1939-50): From the Notes of Rush Rhees', ed. by Gabriel Citron, *Mind*, 124, 493 (January 2015), pp. 1-71, p. 54.

3 See Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir. With a Biographical Sketch by G. H. von Wright*, 2nd ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 48. See also David G. Stern, Brian Rodgers and Gabriel Citron, 'Editorial Introduction', in David Stern, Brian Rodgers and Gabriel Citron (eds.), *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge, 1930-1933, From the Notes of G. E. Moore*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. xxx.

understand both what its scope is and what lies beyond that scope.[4] At the same time, it is up to philosophy to perform an analytical role: "All philosophy is 'critique of language'".[5]

Be that as it may, when Wittgenstein was trying to have his book published, he said to Ludwig von Ficker, his prospective editor, that the aim of the book was ethical – therein lay its importance – and that by remaining silent about ethics it was in fact more eloquent than any other work ever printed on the subject.[6]

This leaves us with a challenging issue. On the one hand we have logic – and philosophy; on the other hand we have ethics, which, Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus*, is one and the same as aesthetics.[7] How does one reconcile this apparent clashing of purposes? I intend to offer an analysis and investigate this difficulty in the following sections – and to reach the point where the central concern and the aim of the book meet each other – in the interest of giving clarity to the question of sense and value, and, moreover, to the relation between aesthetics and values. (The goal is to reveal the priority of the latter, that is to say, how their coming together via a perceptive exercise that has its parallel in how we see and experience art can indeed be a major, momentous, noteworthy experience of the world – one that carries on into life, slips into it and becomes part of the drama, a way of living.) The literature

4 On the subject of logic as the method of philosophy, of its importance not only in the early writings but also in later Wittgenstein, and for an account of the relevance of Wittgenstein's work as a logician, see Oskari Kuusela, *Wittgenstein on Logic as the Method of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

5 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by Charles K. Ogden and Frank P. Ramsey, London: Kegan and Paul, 1922 (henceforth styled TLP), 4.0031.

6 "For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that, strictly speaking, it can *only* be delimited in this way. In brief, I think: All of that which many are babbling today, I have defined in my book by remaining silent about it. Therefore the book will, unless I'm quite wrong, have much to say which you want to say yourself, but perhaps you won't notice that it is said in it" ('Ludwig Wittgenstein to Ludwig von Ficker, November 1919', in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Monika Seekircher, Brian McGuinness, and Anton Unterkircher, Innsbrucker elektronische Ausgabe, 2004. I follow Ray Monk's translation of the excerpt, printed in Ray Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, London: Vintage Books, 1991, p. 177).

7 See TLP 6.421.

on the topic of ethics and/or aesthetics in the *Tractatus* is substantial, and we can find worthwhile examples that discuss its connection with the problem of the meaning of life, and with his way of doing philosophy.[8] This chapter also addresses these connections. In addition, it considers the role played by the terms sense, value, and meaning, since their use is so precise in this context, each playing a specific role.[9] As we will see, the book attempts to reform our relationship with language and life in order to put a stop to our futile striving to convey in words an excess that they cannot hold – an excess that turns our musings about the meaning of life, among other major problems, into sheer nonsense – while concurrently restructuring how we look at the world, such that we no longer feel the urge to talk about ineffable things (including the transcendental pair of ethics and aesthetics). Achieving this involves many demanding and difficult – all well worth it – levels of comprehension and engagement with the book's sparse and seemingly simple prose. And since one of the relationships at stake is language, I will start with the level of the nature of the proposition in the *Tractatus* and take it from there. Before I get to this, however, some elucidations concerning Wittgenstein's only book are in order. The *Tractatus* is not your average philosophy book. As it stands, it does not waste precious time presenting arguments in favour of its gnomic and terse assertions.[10] Of the utmost effect and importance is the way

8 A few examples: Benjamin R. Tilghman, *Wittgenstein, Ethics and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity*, London: MacMillan, 1991; Peter B. Lewis et al., *Wittgenstein, Aesthetics and Philosophy*, ed. by Peter B. Lewis, London: Routledge, Ashgate Wittgensteinian Studies, 2017; Reza Hosseini, *Wittgenstein and Meaning in Life: In Search of the Human Voice*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

9 For instance, Ulrich Arnswald speaks of the particular use of the concept of sense in the *Tractatus*: "In the Tractatus, 'sense' is used as a terminus technicus (Ulrich Arnswald, 'The Paradox of Ethics: It Leaves Everything as It Is', in Ulrich Arnswald (ed.), *In Search of Meaning: Ludwig Wittgenstein on Ethics, Mysticism and Religion*, Karlsruhe: Universitätsverlag Karlsruhe, 2009, p. 13).

10 Bertrand Russell drew Wittgenstein's attention to this and advised him to do so if he wished to be understood: "Wittgenstein was not one to debate his most fundamental convictions. Dialogue with him was possible only if one shared those convictions. (Thus, dialogue with Russell on ethical questions was soon to become impossible.) To one who did not share his fundamental outlook, his utterances – whether on logic or on ethics – would, as likely as not, remain unintelligible. It was a tendency that began to worry Russell. 'I am seriously

it is designed and structured – which proves essential to fulfilling its aim. Although Wittgenstein does not put forward a doctrine and is not trying to set up and found a system, his book is a methodical, stylistic, and systematic form, a device, both philosophical and literary[11] – an indication, a sign, a presage of the mingling of aesthetics and values, given the former's rapport with a certain kind of style, and of style as a demonstration, a kind of statement, of what we hold dear above all else, such that we rule and orient our life and our work, including the logical, ethical, moral, deep-thinking, artistic, etc., accordingly: tenets, views, value (in *The Tractatus*, which is the case in point, the ineffable). The book is philosophical because, even if he does not set out to defend his position with argumentation, he nonetheless defines what kind of activity philosophy is and what it can really achieve, given the bounds of sense by which our language must abide if it is to avoid slipping into the territory of the nonsensical. Moreover, these bounds are reached and defined from within language, which means that his propositions are meant to bring the reader somewhere still well inside the confines of the expressible, a place from which he can capture the big picture – a place where the limits of the sayable, along with what lies beyond them, are crystal clear. Doing this without violating these bounds calls for great precision and austerity – perhaps even asceticism – in writing down one's thoughts. Wittgenstein naturally had to use words, but he used his means sparingly – in the pursuit of an end. And he did so by performing an outstanding literary feat. This end is the ethical part that he did not write but which is revealed, that is to say, projected, by the form of the book – just as the raised line on a record projects a

afraid', he told Ottoline, 'that no one will see the point of what he writes, because he won't recommend it by arguments addressed to a different point of view.' When Russell told him he ought not simply to state what he thought, but should also provide arguments for it, he replied that arguments would spoil its beauty. He would feel as if he were dirtying a flower with muddy hands: 'I told him I hadn't the heart to say anything against that, and that he had better acquire a slave to state the arguments'" (Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, pp. 53-54).

11 "The work is strictly philosophical and at the same time literary, but there is no babbling in it" ('Ludwig Wittgenstein to Ludwig von Ficker, November 1919', in Wittgenstein, *Briefwechsel*. I follow Ray Monk's translation of the excerpt, printed in Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, p. 178).

musical thought, which is an image of the score, etc.[12] – an image of the sphere of that which is beyond the world and thus beyond language: value.[13] For example, the way in which the content is arranged and numbered is of paramount importance to orienting the reader[14] – and probably does at least as good a job as providing arguments does in other philosophical texts; it has a strangely compelling quality. For these reasons alone, it is clear that the literary character is in no way less important than the philosophical, since: "[o]ne name stands for one thing, and another name for another thing, and they are connected together. And so the whole, like a *tableau vivant* [*lebendes Bild*], presents the atomic fact".[15]

His method and style are one; the philosophical is so tied up with the literary that they are equally responsible for the outcome. Because of this, the nature of the proposition is made pristine, as is the nature of logic, the limits of sense outlined, as are those of the world, and throughout it all Wittgenstein manages to reveal the need to stay firmly within those limits while being able to see over and above them. Philosophy is unmistakeably contemplative, besides being a form of critique. After having learned about all of these things – that is, after having gone through the difficult task of climbing the rungs of the ladder – we readers get to contemplate, we perceive, and we recognise the upshot. We can then ponder it all with attention and in silence[16] – an aesthetic exercise, if ever there was one, filled with a sense of just how valuable and thus quite indescribable all of it – the feeling that overcomes us, the affect – really is.

12 See TLP 4.014, TLP 4.0141 and TLP 4.015.

13 Value in *The Tractatus* will be analysed further in the coming sections in the interest of understanding how paramount it was for Wittgenstein – namely as a token, or *the* token, of an absolute that can only be lived through but cannot fully be translated in discourse; see TLP 6.4 and TLP 6.41.

14 Wittgenstein's guidelines – the only footnote in the book, on the first page following the Preface – read as follows: "The decimal figures as numbers of the separate propositions indicate the logical importance [*logische Gewicht*] of the propositions, the emphasis laid upon them in my exposition. The propositions *n*.1, *n*.2, *n*.3, etc., are comments on proposition No. *n*; the propositions *n.m*1, *n.m*2, etc., are comments on the proposition No. *n.m*; and so on".

15 TLP 4.0311. Translation slightly modified.

16 See TLP 6.54 and TLP 7.

A fundamental difference makes all the difference

"Transcendental" and "unassailable" – both fitting for something as sublime as God's holy truth – are words that are well suited to describing logic in the *Tractatu*s. Wittgenstein conceives of logic as the scaffolding of the world and as *a priori*: a "great mirror"[17] by which language and thought reflect the world with extreme accuracy and isomorphy – that is to say, the same atomic arrangement – due to its pure, crystalline quality, owing to the fact that it is untainted by experience, since it precedes it.

This conception of logic has ample consequences, among them the impossibility of coming up with something that represents it, something like a theory, for example. In fact, Wittgenstein declares that his "fundamental thought"[18] consists in stating the impossibility of delegating logic by mandate, meaning that there are no proxies or replacements for it. This makes it all the more critical that we are able to see it, and that the book makes it clear. Hence the significance – throughout the *Tractatus* – of images, models, figures, configuration, pictures, picturing, form, and the plethora of terms related to the word *Bild*, understood as "image" or "model", such as *logisches Bild, Bildhaftigkeit, abbildenden internen Beziehung*, *Urbild*, *lebendes Bild*, etc.

To be added to this is the fact that when, in 1919, Wittgenstein sent his book to Russell, he told him that the issue of logical propositions was a corollary and that the real, cardinal problem of philosophy had to do with a specific distinction, that between what can be said (*gesagt*) – or, what is the same, what can be thought – and what cannot be said but can only be shown (*gezeigt*) in what is said.[19] So, if the cardinal problem of philosophy is this distinction, solving it – making the logic of language appear lucid and plain – can be understood as a perceptive exercise. The same is true of the *Tractatus*.

17 TLP 5.511.

18 TLP 4.0312.

19 See Ludwig Wittgenstein to Bertrand Russell dated 19.08.1919, in Wittgenstein, *Briefwechsel*.

Since solving the chief problem of the book hinges on the distinction between what can be expressed in propositions and what cannot be thus expressed but is nonetheless disclosed in what is uttered with sense, elucidating the nature of propositions is fundamental to making logic perceptible.

In the *Tractatus*, ethics, aesthetics, the sense of life and of the world, as well as the mystical, are, like logic, impossible to express in language – this does not mean, however, that they are all equivalent or of the same kind. In reality, although ethics (which is one with aesthetics) is, like logic, transcendental, it is also supernatural, as Wittgenstein puts it in the 'Lecture on Ethics'.[20] It is truly outside the world and so too of language and the limits of sense, that is to say, beyond facts that are representable. Propositions that try to talk about this higher sphere – of values – are *unsinnig* (like our efforts to explicate logic), and although they may seem to say something meaningful, logical analysis will make clear that they do nothing of the sort.

Fortunately, "logic takes care of itself ";[21] it suffices that it is made clear – we do not have to explain it further – we must only allow it to shine through propositions with sense that are images of the facts they describe. A proposition, like a model, projects the form

20 Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Lecture on Ethics', in *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951*, ed. by James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993, p. 40. Regarding logic, we have, on the one hand, logical propositions, the *Scheinsätze* that are without sense, *sinnlos* (for example, tautologies and contradictions). The limits of language are grounded in the logic of language and the bipolarity of propositions, which warrant the possibility of representing a state of affairs in a proposition and of its being compared to reality in order to determine its truth or falsity. Tautologies and contradictions are limiting cases of language and thought – the first sanctions all states of affairs, the second, none – and for this reason they are not images of any fact, because they do not depict a possible situation. On the other hand, we must consider propositions *about* logic and their *unsinnigen* character, for they belong to a different kind of proposition without sense, i.e., they are different from *sinnlosen* propositions. These propositions are not limiting cases: they are propositions that exceed the limit of what is sayable with sense. Thus, attempting to talk about logic, which permeates the world, is *unsinnig*.

21 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks: 1914-1916,* ed. by Georg Henrik von Wright and Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, trans. by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969, 13.10.1914, p. 11e.

of its correlation with a state of affairs – without the need to produce further elucidations; it depicts the reciprocal position of its elements and represents what is essential. Understanding this is a touchstone for understanding Wittgenstein's philosophical undertaking in the *Tractatus*, why he chooses to avoid pseudo- propositions (well, at least as much as possible). Wittgenstein must write to see his task through, which means not completely following the strictly correct method in philosophy (and going beyond only saying "propositions of natural science, i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy")[22] – the strictly correct method of simply demonstrating to anyone who wants "to say something metaphysical"[23] that he has failed to give a precise meaning (*Bedeutung*) to certain signals in his propositions.

And since write he must, Wittgenstein ends up choosing to be neither completely unmetaphysical[24] nor totally mute about the inexpressible. But even if it were the case that the *Tractatus* did not contain a single proposition on the subject, we could still say that it pointed to and thus fulfilled the aim and purpose that Wittgenstein thought his book accomplished, namely, the ethical. The *Tractatus* would still draw the frontier line and delimit the ethical from the inside, by keeping silent about it and allowing readers to grasp that what is most valuable is ineffable in language, untouchable in *sinvoll* propositions. (Indeed, if it had done

22 TLP 6.53.

23 *Ibid*.

24 This is not the place to discuss the extent to which the *Tractatus* is – or is not – metaphysical. Iris Murdoch, for instance, wrote of the *Tractatus* that it is "a definitive metaphysical handbook, with its numerous visual metaphors: logical space, the limited whole, inside and outside, looking in a certain light (*sub specie aeterni*). We might here conjure up something like a picture by Blake, with the factual world spinning as a sort of glittering steel ball and the spirit of value silently circling around it. Or we may see, in a reversal of the Platonic image, the limited factual whole together with the encircling value appearing like an eclipse of the sun, with the dark object in the middle and the light round the edges. There is no light in the world: what obscures it is the whole of the world" (Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, London: Penguin Books, 1992, p. 31). In any case, it may sound strange – and thus, actually, in tune with the Tractatus, which, as noted earlier, is not your average book of philosophy — but Wittgenstein's swerve into metaphysics is not a good indicator of his views on it, meaning that he still thinks that those who try to say something metaphysical are talking nonsense (see TLP 6.53).

so, it would be up for debate whether the *Tractatus* was paradoxical.) Because it delineates the sayable and simultaneously discloses that which is inexpressible in language, the *Tractatus* is an "ethical deed",[25] as well as an aesthetic one. It leads readers to a position from which they can see the world correctly, and from which they can do justice to the feeling – which cannot be put into words – of seeing the world as a whole, which for Wittgenstein was the feeling of the mystical (more on this later).

Fact and value

> "Value" in the Tractatus, or the moral subject, of whom we cannot speak (6.423), resides rather in an attitude or style in one's acceptance of all the facts... The distinction between fact and value, the protective segregation of value from the world is seen by Wittgenstein as a form of silent stoical understanding and way of life.
> Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as A Guide to Morals*

The difference between what can be said and what cannot be said but is shown is a nodal point of the *Tractatus*. Ethics and aesthetics, the sense of the world and the meaning of life, plus the mystical, are each inexpressible in language, and each has to do with value – not fact. Thus the key distinction between saying and showing once again proves consequential. For one, it helps us to delimit two realms, namely the realm of necessity and the realm of contingency, the former being transcendental and the latter empirical.[26] Or we can say that, when it

25 See Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1996, pp. 167-201.

26 I would like to elucidate the nature of necessity in view of the *Tractatus* – given that the distinction between the necessary and the contingent is at play in what follows. Bearing in mind TLP 6.124, especially the notion that "in logic the nature of the essentially necessary signs speaks for itself ", such that "if we know the logical syntax of any sign language, then all the propositions of logic are already given", we can say that logic takes care of itself, dispensing with a doctrine that would establish its connection to the world. The non- arbitrary nature of the connection that obtains between logic and the world has to

comes to value, one is better characterized by the word "absolute" and the other by "relative". Both terms make an appearance in the 'Lecture on Ethics', which expands some of Wittgenstein's earlier views. He distinguishes between the "relative good" and the "absolute good", once more enhancing the insuperable division between fact and value, and with the purpose of determining that judgements of fact are always relative to some standard to be achieved, while ethical judgments have an absolute, resolute quality to them, which is not dependent on an event or action's reaching a certain measurable worth. Another point at which Wittgenstein is driving in the 'Lecture' is that all relative judgements of fact can be made into descriptions of fact – and are for this reason quite simply without value. By contrast, a judgement of value that really was a judgement of value could never be turned into a statement of fact. Wittgenstein of course concludes that we can never come up with such an evaluation that would really be *the* thing, that is to say, an ethical, absolute judgement of value, precisely because value, unlike fact, is indescribable in language. The best way to come to grips with all of this is to investigate the scenarios and examples that Wittgenstein offers in the 'Lecture': the examples of "wandering at the existence of the world"[27] "feeling absolutely safe",[28] and of "seeing the world as a miracle".[29] The

do with the necessary character of the signs that express internal relations and ensure the visibility of form. Form, *qua* possibility of structure, already contains all the possibilities of logical construction; all possible propositions are already fixed: any proposition with sense that we can construct in the future must be capable of being constructed now, such that it can be said that "there can *never* be surprises in logic" (TLP 6.1251). Any imagined world – any experience of thought – with sense does not depend on a causal link between a present event and a future one. The only significant connection is logical – viz. the connection of the proposition with sense, within which names have meaning. Likewise, the only necessity that exists is logical necessity (TLP 6.37), and the absence of any other kind of necessity means that outside of logic, everything is accidental (see TLP 6.3). Nothing ensures the apparent regularity of how things happen in the world, since all compulsion is logical, and logic "*precedes* every experience – that something is *so*. It is before the How, not before the What" (TLP 5.552). Thus, "[t]hat the sun will rise tomorrow [...] is an hypothesis; and that means that we do not *know* whether it will rise" (TLP 6.3611).

27 Wittgenstein, 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 41.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

reason behind them is that Wittgenstein is fixed on explaining what he means by "absolute or ethical value", and the first thing that comes to his mind is his "experience *par excellence*"[30] of that idea. As he says: "I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world*".[31] He then adds that on such occasions he feels like using phrases like "how extraordinary that anything should exist"[32] or "how extraordinary that the world should exist".[33] Wittgenstein immediately complements the previous description with another example: "the experience of feeling *absolutely* safe",[34] meaning the state of mind that prompts one to utter things along the lines of "I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens".[35] Upon starting to analyze the examples, Wittgenstein immediately emphasizes that what they have in common, to begin with, is that they all misuse language: they are all nonsense. And this is where the clarifications made earlier about the nature of the propositions with sense come in handy. Recall that, for a proposition to have sense, it must be possible to compare it with reality and determine its truth or falsity. Simply put, a proposition must be bipolar: one must be able to imagine its being the case and its not being the case. If it is the case, when compared with reality, we discover that the proposition describes a positive fact, if not, a negative one, and its truth value will be True or False, respectively. Recall also that both tautologies and contradictions, which are senseless, do not describe any state of affairs in the world, since the former are always true and the latter always false, and we cannot therefore imagine any possible existence that they would depict. For a phrase to have sense, it has to reach the world – like an arrow[36] – and represent something thinkable, given that language and thought mirror each other and the world. If we,

30 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*

36 "States of affair can be described but not *named*. (Names resemble points; propositions resemble arrows, they have sense.)" (TLP 3.144).

like Wittgenstein, say that we wonder at the existence of the world, we are wondering at the existence of something – not a fact, but the totally of facts – which we cannot imagine not being the case: we cannot conjure up in our mind the contrary of this possibility. Put differently, we do not have an image for it, which is why we cannot compare it with reality in order to determine its truth or falsity, and since what we are trying to do is use language to talk about an experience that is truly outside the space of all possible facts, it is not only senseless but nonsense to do so. We are past contingent, relative factuality and have entered the sphere of necessary, absolute value.

Wittgenstein follows this with further elucidations. When he refers to the second experience, the experience of being absolutely safe from harm whatever happens, he suggests that the way we are using the word "safe" is different from our usual use: as we customarily use it, being safe from something is not an absolute state. It is always relative, e.g., "I am safe in my room, when I cannot be run over by an omnibus".[37] If to be safe is to be safe from certain things, Wittgenstein reasons, "it is nonsense to say I am safe *whatever* happens":[38] "Now I want to impress on you that a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions. All these expressions *seem* prima facie, to be just *similes*".[39] A real simile stands for something, and it is possible "to drop the simile and to describe the facts without it".[40] Since our ethical and religious expressions want to point to and designate something beyond the factual, as soon as we try to substitute the simile for a description, we are left emptyhanded: "And so, what first appeared to be a simile now appears to be mere nonsense".[41]

Wittgenstein does not want to give up just yet, and thus he tries one more scenario in the hopes of solving the "paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have supernatural value".[42] He

37 Wittgenstein, 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 42.

38 *Ibid.*

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

does this in order to justify the word he used as an alternative in the description of his experience of wondering at the existence of the world, viz. the word "miracle", "simply an event the likes of which we have never seen".[43] He imagines something that would be extraordinary – somebody's suddenly growing a lion's head and beginning to roar – and that would probably result in a scientific study of what occurred. Such a study could lead to nothing, and the collective reaction would most likely be that of thinking that one day the mystery will be solved. But this, according to Wittgenstein, is not the right angle from which to look at it: science has not disproven the existence of miracles; science is just too self-assured to part with inexplicable things. Clearly, by then, after endeavoring to explain what happened, the miraculous would already be completely gone – gone the minute an explanation was sought. So, to counter this, Wittgenstein rephrases his first experience as a third one: "the experience of seeing the world as a miracle".[44] He instantly shifts this, though, by stating that what could better communicate what he wants to say is not an expression by means of language but the existence of language itself, which in turn leads to the recognition that "all we *say* about the absolute miraculous remains nonsense".[45] Having come to this, Wittgenstein acknowledges that nothing we can ever say or write about these experiences will ever be truly ethical. The 'Lecture' is one long realization that all he wanted to do was "*to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond language":[46] "My whole tendency... was to run against the boundaries of language".[47]

Wittgenstein is convinced that, insofar as ethics is born from the desire to speak of the "ultimate meaning of life", it will never become a body of knowledge. He says this out of great esteem for the matter. When he calls our ethical or religious expressions nonsense, Wittgenstein is certainly not dismissing them, nor is he being disdainful. He is far from ridiculing and closer to admiring the tendency he refers to, which is an

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

attitude we can trace back to *Tractarian* times – as will become evident in the next section. What will likewise become evident is that Wittgenstein's strict separation of fact and value – with a view to protecting the latter from nonsense – which ultimately has us running against "the walls of our cage",[48] is not completely futile or ineffective. Although it leaves us mired, the 'Lecture on Ethics' also leaves us this: knowledge that our struggle to understand the absolute constitutes "a document of a tendency in the human mind".[49] That is to say, our effort to give shape to value by whatever means lie at our disposal and to make sense of the world is not without manifestations in the world: "science – religion – and art"[50] spring from a striving to form our "style in one's acceptance of all the facts".

Making sense of the world

Still, the question remains: if our efforts to give shape to the feeling Wittgenstein describes result in so many human manifestations, why does he so strictly separate fact from value? (After all, they too can be reduced to facts. Are they totally deprived of value? If not, does the distinction between and separation of fact and value hold true?)

Possibly, because that separation ensures that, no matter how hard we try, some things will always remain inviolable and sacred. That is to say, there will always be an exalted excess to which we can aspire, and into which we can peer.[51] Perhaps this can be a comfort for the soul –

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.*

50 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 1.8.1919, p. 79e.

51 Think of Dora, standing before a painting in Murdoch's *The Bell*, who realizes exactly this: "Here was something which her consciousness could not wretchedly devour, and by making it part of her fantasy make it worthless ... the pictures were something real outside herself, which spoke to her kindly and yet in sovereign tones, something superior and good whose presence destroyed the dreary trance-like solipsism of her earlier mood. When the world had seemed subjective it had seemed to be without interest or value. But now there was something in it after all. These thoughts, not clearly articulated, flitted through Dora's mind. She had never thought about the pictures in this way before; nor did she draw now any very explicit moral. Yet she felt that she had a revelation. She looked at the radiant, sombre, tender, powerful canvas

rather than a source of despair stemming from our awareness that we are hopelessly and fruitlessly aiming for the true ethical fact (a "chimera").[52] It seems to me that Iris Murdoch got it exactly right when she said that the "segregation of value from the world" is "protective".

True, we are destined to keep trying to "go beyond language and so beyond the world", but that is human nature, and it is not forcefully or entirely bad that it is so. Our determination to surpass the frontier has given form to a valuable testament to our humanity (which includes "religion – science – and art") – perhaps the most valuable. And even if its worth is not essentially elevated and grand, but rather relative to some human standard of what it means to be good, our attempts to express the sublime not only give it air but create new sites where we can articulate our feeling for the transcendent, which, at the end of the day – and even though if we were to analyse these sites they would still only be facts – "seem to those who have experienced them ... to have in some sense an intrinsic, absolute value".[53] Maybe, that counts for something – if not for more, then at least for being a guiding light in our darkest times, when "the sun has left its heaven".[54]

At some such moments, why is it that we desperately seek to make sense of the world and find that it has contracted to the size of whatever problem we are facing? Why is it that we cannot see past it?

From what we have gathered so far, the world – that is to say, the world as whole, as a constellation of all facts – which, per the 'Lecture on Ethics', we cannot imagine not being the case, does not have a sense. (Only propositions, which portray *a* fact, have sense.) This had already been expressed in the *Tractatus*:

> 6.40 All propositions are of equal value.
> 6.41 The sense of the world must lie outside the world.

of Gainsborough and felt a sudden desire to go down on her knees before it, embracing it, shedding tears" (Iris Murdoch, *The Bell*, London: Vintage Books, 2004, pp. 274-275).

52 See Wittgenstein, 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 40.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

54 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 119.

> In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value – and if there were, it would be of no value.
> If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental.
> What makes it non-accidental cannot *lie* in the world, for otherwise this would again be accidental.
> It must lie outside the world.
> 6.42 Hence also there can be no ethical propositions. Propositions cannot express anything higher.
> 6.421 It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed. Ethics are transcendental.
> (Ethics and aesthetics are one.)[55]

As noted earlier, ethics – one with aesthetics – is transcendental, but unlike logic it is also *supernatural*. Logic pervades the world, but the same is not true of ethics and aesthetics. As such, the sense of the world, which lies outside it, cannot be natural propositional sense: its essence must be of a different kind. And since propositional sense is dependent upon the possibility of language's representing the world, and, given that thinking is equivalent to it (a thought is a fact, a proposition),[56] where is the subject that can make sense of it all? Where is the "bearer of ethics"?[57] According to Wittgenstein, it cannot be found anywhere in the world: "The thinking, representing subject; there is no such thing"[58] – of course, because representing is up to language. (Back to square one.) "*The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world".[59] Notice that Wittgenstein is here referring to *my* language. It seems that the "deeply mysterious"[60] "I" may

55 TLP.

56 See TLP 3 through 3.1.

57 See Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 5.8.1916, 80e. Also, "where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be noted?" (TLP 5.633).

58 TLP 5.631. Translation slightly modified.

59 TLP 5.6.

60 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 5.8.1916, p. 80e.

not be completely out of the picture – even if he is "an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it".[61] "The philosophical I... the metaphysical subject... not a part of the world"[62] does not entertain ideas – except just "it" is the "I" that is of any concern in philosophy, and hence Wittgenstein terms it so. And this because if he did entertain ideas, all of them would be propositions with natural sense that fall outside the scope of philosophy and within that of science. Its relation to the world is based not on *how* the world is but rather on the recognition *that* the world is. What the philosophical "I" then means with *my* language, *my* world, is not a single fact but the sum total of facts – in other words, the totality of experience, life itself: "The world and life are one. /I am my world. (The microcosm.)".[63]

So, the question now is not only "What is the sense of the world" but also "What is the meaning of life"?: "There really is only one world soul (*Weltseele*) which I pre-eminently call *my* soul and as which alone I conceive the soul of others".[64] The only way to understand the meaning of life and to make sense of the world is to acquiesce to the fact that there is only one way of going about it; since there is only logical compulsion, "logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits".[65] There is only one necessity, one nature, one essence, one soul, to put it as Wittgenstein does – and then there is "style in one's acceptance of all the facts". Style "is the expression of a universal human necessity. This applies to literary style as well as to architectural style (and to any others). Style is the universal necessity seen *sub specie aeterni*".[66]

Our vital relation to language, though ineffable in light of the *Tractatus*, is properly expressed by our attitude towards the world, by style (a "form of *silent* stoical understanding"). That is how those who have understood and apprehended the sense of the world show their recognition of its independence from individual will, which is "an

61 TLP 5.64.

62 TLP 5.641.

63 TLP 5.621 and 5.63.

64 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 23.5.1915, p. 49e.

65 TLP 5.6.

66 Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ms 183, 9.5.1930. My translation.

attitude of the subject to the world".[67] Their attitude is an indication of that knowledge and of having grasped something beyond the arbitrariness of facts. Come what may, they stand face to face with necessity, having seen it from the point of view of the eternal – of the world as a whole, as a great organization or order of things, which the "I" (in particular) calls the microcosm.

Thus style, by equating expression through life with the acceptance of the world as a whole, equates to universal necessity transformed into universal human necessity. And its physiognomy is evident and perceptible in literature, in architecture, and in how we bear what life throws at us. The latter is what best proves that ethics and aesthetics are one and the same thing, when life is carried out in a manner that attests to having seen past contingency – *sub specie aeterni* – and agreeing to it. The ethical – absolute value – is enacted through a form of conduct that espouses it, thus becoming its aesthetic expression. The aesthetic in turn displays the ethical character of seeking to happily agree to the totality of experience.

We can make the things we cannot say material by committing to them, and by observing them a certain way, the limits of the world are altered:

> 6.43 If good or bad willing changes the world, it can only change the limits of the world, not the facts; not the things that can be expressed in language.
> In brief, the world must thereby become quite another, it must so to speak wax or wane as a whole.
> The world of the happy man is quite another than that of the unhappy.[68]
> Our will may concentrate on a fact and be concerned only with it, such that the world consists in nothing more but that restricted moment in space and time, or it may find "the solution of the riddle of life... outside space and time"[69] :

67 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 4.11.1916, p. 87e.

68 TLP.

69 TLP 6.4312.

> The contemplation of the world *sub specie aeterni* is its contemplation as a limited whole. The feeling that the world is a limited whole is the mystical feeling... There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical.[70]

Language cannot part with representation, such that in the end there remains the inexpressible, and with it our longing for it. This is why contemplation can be filled with a mystical feeling, why this longing is thereby somehow quieted – everything seems to fall into place, and we can begin to make sense of the world.

Wittgenstein thought that how we look at art is the epitome of contemplation *sub specie aeterni*. That this is so has to do with the internal relation between an attitude that is inherent to artistic observation and the kind of object a work of art is, which is a consummate expression, *qua* presentation of the world, of its sheer existence. Just as the mystical is "*that* it [the world] is",[71] so too is the aesthetic: "Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That what exists does exist. Is the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks at the world with a happy eye?"[72]

Let us then stand before a painting, or enter a beautiful building so that we might see with a happy eye. These experiences teach us. We can learn to see – and to remain silent if we have to, to give in and acquiesce. But, must we? Later on, more specifically in his *Lectures & Conversations*,[73] Wittgenstein advances his position and makes room for more considerations on the subject, namely pertaining to the matter of how we judge works of art and to criticism.[74] The aesthetic is still very much related to behaviour, to the performance of values – and thus to style – but the matter is extended to include talk of our

70 TLP 6.45 and TLP 6.522.

71 TLP 6.44. My square brackets.

72 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 20.10.1916, 86e.

73 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief: Compiled from Notes taken by Yorick Smithies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor*, ed. by Cyril Barrett, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.

74 See *ibid*., pp. 1-7.

reactions. Nevertheless, the initial and earlier conception of the meaning of aesthetics is not completely eclipsed. Wittgenstein will never accept that we can explain a work of art satisfactorily – the same may as well apply, for example, to a wondrous landscape. We forever run the risk of ruining the experience, of diluting the aesthetic by tempering it with too many words and the wrong attitude. If we try to explain, say, what the artist was trying to achieve and communicate, are we still focused on the creation? That is why Wittgenstein will prefer description over explanation.[75] He will admit that we do more than shut our mouths when bewildered by art, but not so much that we should try to uncover a cause for the effect and suppose that, when contemplating something, what we feel is the same emotion that drove the artist to create, which triggered our response. Because, really, there are no causes we can give, only reasons, e.g., for reading a poem in a particular rhythm so that someone else can get it just right and enjoy it.[76] Another reaction we can then conceive of as correct and fitting – and not as something that will completely destroy our sensibility – is the ekphrastic move of only relating what is seen, the latter having the added advantage and dimension of itself being an (at least somewhat or conceivably so) appropriate, artistic – *qua* creative and original – result.

The world and life are one

What follows are the first words of David Foster Wallace's posthumously published *The Pale King: An Unfinished Novel*:

> Past the flannel plains and blacktop graphs and skylines of canted rust, and past the tobacco-brown river overhung with weeping trees and coins of sunlight through them on the water downriver, to the place beyond the windbreak, where untilled fields simmer shrilly in the A.M. heat: shattercane, lamb's-quarter, cutgrass, sawbrier, nutgrass,

75 See e.g.: Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951*, p. 120.

76 See Wittgenstein, *Lectures & Conversations*, pp. 13-17, p. 21.

> jimsonweed, wild mint, dandelion, foxtail, muscadine, spinecabbage, goldenrod, creeping charlie, butter-print, nightshade, ragweed, wild oat, vetch, butcher grass, invaginate volunteer beans, all heads gently nodding in a morning breeze like a mother's soft hand on your cheek. An arrow of starlings fired from the windbreak's thatch. The glitter of dew that stays where it is and steams all day. A sunflower, four more, one bowed, and horses in the distance standing rigid and still as toys. All nodding. Electric sounds of insects at their business. Ale-colored sunshine and pale sky and whorls of cirrus so high they cast no shadow. Insects all business all the time. Quartz and chert and schist and chondrite iron scabs in granite. Very old land. Look around you. The horizon trembling, shapeless. We are all of us brothers.[77]

This paragraph is an opening in more than one sense. It illustrates how a description might awaken us to wonder, to the feeling that the "world and life are one",[78] or the *Tractarian* mystical. "We are all of us brothers" is a declaration that stands for a view of the world that is vast, open, and full of meaning. Everything in it has a pulse; it is like a song. "Look around you. The horizon trembling, shapeless". All talk grinds to a halt, and the "I" sees the entire landscape; the entire expanse is coordinated with it; it sees an assembly – animal, botanical, mineral – in a boundless, endless field of vision in which all of us are related. This same such sentiment, humane, wide, capacious, permeates the writings of the early Wittgenstein. In truth, it never leaves them – or him. (Though later, it

77 David Foster Wallace, *The Pale King: An Unfinished Novel*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011, p. 16. Incidentally, D. F. Wallace admired Wittgenstein: "I like to fancy myself a fan of the mind-bending work of its namesake [Wittgenstein]" (David Foster Wallace, 'The Empty Plenum: David Markson's Wittgenstein's Mistress', in *Both Flesh and Not*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012, p. 75). For more on this see: Lance Olsen, 'Termite Art, or, Wallace's Wittgenstein', *Review of Contemporary Fiction,* 13, 2 (1993), pp. 199-125, and Marshall Boswell, 'The Broom of the System: Wittgenstein and the Rules of the Game', in *Understanding David Foster Wallac*e, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003, pp. 21-64.

78 TLP 5.621.

will of course take on new forms.)[79] And it is this aspect that makes them so great – why they go well beyond establishing a way to steer clear of nonsense. It is a sentiment that goes against a certain kind of coolness – a coldness, to be sure – against confining and restraining how we perceive the world. Since, make no mistake, the world is as it is, what matters is how we grasp it: "The world of the happy is quite another than that of the unhappy"[80] means roughly that the same world, including the same problems and what we think of as tragedies and wrongs or injustices, is felt differently by each of us. Such a difference in perception is determined by an internal disposition, a style of acceptance, that does not merely accommodate itself – with unhappiness or compliance – to the world but embraces it without reserve. It welcomes all of it, and thus the world is not merely endured with apathy but seriously and decidedly lived. This does not, however, entail sentimentality or soppiness. Wittgenstein was not in the business of encouraging "positive vibes only" – not by a long shot. In no way was he suggesting the sort of guiding principles we encounter everywhere nowadays, from coffee shops to social media: "just be yourself", "do you" and "live life to the fullest". Not even remotely. Wittgenstein did not think that we are here to enjoy ourselves, and he would not understand why one should not want to be perfect, merely accepting (even celebrating) our flaws. In fact, the realization that we are flawed and the accompanying feeling of *Angst* are, for Wittgenstein, the first steps that lead us to want to better ourselves, to live "with a bright halo round" our lives:

> The solution of the problem you see in life is a way of living which makes what is problematic disappear.
> The fact that life is problematic means that your life does not fit life's shape. So you must change your life, & once it fits the shape, what is problematic will disappear.
> But don't we have the feeling that someone who doesn't see

79 On what came after the *Tractatus*, see: David G. Stern (ed.), *Wittgenstein in the 1930s*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017. See also: Alois Pichler, *Wittgensteins Philosophische Untersuchungen: Vom Buch zum Album*, Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2004.

80 TLP 6.43.

> a problem there is blind to something important, indeed to what is most important of all?
> Wouldn't I like to say he is living aimlessly – just blindly like a mole as it were; & if he could only see, he would see the problem?
> Or shouldn't I say: someone who lives rightly does not experience the problem as *sorrow*, hence not after all as a problem, but rather as joy, that is so to speak as a bright halo round his life, not a murky background.[81]

It takes true grit to grab problems at their roots; a swift or ingenuous gesture or posture does not suffice. And the thing is, we do not just start to look at things otherwise; we look at things otherwise because of some vital activity that got us to a place where we are capable of doing so. Given that things are not curbed or glossed over but recognized in their complexity and intricacy, this change of outlook does not simply mean that we should just let troubling thoughts pass by and proceed to centering ourselves in our bodies and in the present moment. (Not everybody has the luxury of discounting facts and taking their sweet time to re-centre their thoughts and wait for things to calm down. Besides, when it comes to our lives, we cannot just cut off the adverse and hope for the best.) The change must be real, internal, not merely an averting of things but a sincere and felt agreement with the world; that is to say, we must look our lives squarely in the eye. It is a forceful stand, and we may often feel that it is beyond our reach. (Let us come clean: sustaining it at all times would be a prodigious feat of endurance.) We would thus do well to remember that such a stance is never simple or straightforwardly cosy and relaxed. Nonetheless, it is a desirable mindset and one that is deserving of our efforts.

81 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen: Eine Auswahl aus dem Nachlaß/ Culture & Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*, ed. by Georg Henrik von Wright, Heikki Nyman, text rev. by Alois Pichler, trans. by Peter Winch, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, Ms 118 17r c: 27.8.1937, p. 30e. On the question of the problem of life for Wittgenstein, see Gabriel Citron, 'The Problem of Life: Late Wittgenstein on the Difficulty of Honest Happiness', in Mikel Burley (ed.), *Wittgenstein, Religion and Ethics: New Perspectives from Philosophy and Theology*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, pp. 33-48.

Sense and value

The matter seems to prompt the question "How can we effect this change of outlook?" How are we to value and see all facts without relativizing or trivializing them? To begin with, we must treat them as absolutely worthy, as we would treat an object displayed before us, such that it stands out from all other ordinary and familiar things "as the true world among shadows",[82] making everything else disappear into the background: in other words, as a work of art. Naturally, in order for this solution to work, our conception of works of art must somehow portray them as having the ability to expand, enlarge, and magnify what we call our world. Reading a lot and listening to music, going to the movies, attending performance, etc.: do these stimuli numb us, or do they amplify our perspective? What do we learn from experiencing art that we can use in other parts of our lives? How we answer matters, especially if we believe, like the early Wittgenstein seemed to, that other primordial forms of representation, such as language and thought, are not without their limits. Of course, they can point beyond language and thought – and the *Tractatus* is proof of that – but once we have reached the threshold of their powers, we are left to our own devices when it comes to envisioning and restructuring the sensible. We learn something from experiencing art. In particular, we engage in a perceptive exercise that allows us to realise the possibility that art embodies in other modes – modes that will equally widen our worldview and counter the narrowing of our lives.

If we had to summarize this exercise, we could start by saying that it mostly requires that we face facts for themselves, without any thought to their practical utility. And this is something that we only accomplish if we reconcile our action and our perception. Which is why ethics and aesthetics are one and the same, because how we act reveals how we see: it reveals our sense of our life and the value we attach to it. (That is, we value it for itself, and not because of any particular event. To do so would be to instrumentalize it, and that would – again – lead to unhappiness, whenever we found that we could not profit from it as we wished to.)

82 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 8.10.1916, p. 85e.

If one is happy, one is not removed but joined together with the world; more precisely, if one is happy one is – rather obviously – not unfeeling towards everything that "happens as it does happen",[83] though this, at least according to the *Tractatus*, to other writings dating from the same period, and to the 'Lecture on Ethics', has no value in itself. It is up to us to express value through our lives, to live with our eyes open, especially to the hard truth that our happiness does not stand in any causal relation to the world – although we think it does. Because we sometimes feel anger and at other times feel bliss, when what we wished for comes to pass. But true happiness arises not from a wish fulfilled but from finding our sense of life and learning to live by it – no matter what. That being so, we can appreciate that its value is not relative to or dependent on a certain state of affairs but rather absolute, unremitting.

83 TLP 6.41.

The Glow of Irrationality in Art. The Question of Artistic Values in Hermann Broch

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Le vrai est inimitable, le faux intransformable.
Robert Bresson, *Sur le Cinématographe*

Motto: The Earthly Absolute

If hubris is the trait that marks the face of the hero by absorbing all others, with Nietzsche this trait met an unprecedented fixation among the moderns: inactuality – a form of inadaptability engendered by the dispute between unrestrained historicism and the tortured desire to face the day, to collect its ashes. The city can no longer sing its heroes. A particular case of inactuality is to be found in Hermann Broch, presented in its most precise, concise expression as "the earthly absolute" ("das irdisch Absolute").[1] This notion is about inhabiting the Earth, converting the weight, the impenetrability, the hardness, the opacity that belongs to those who inhabit it into a transcendent reflection, from the movement of the legs as they climb onto a train to sleepless night games. There is nothing on Earth that does not engender surpassing oneself, uniting man to himself, uniting man to each thing, uniting man and each thing to the whole, to the heart of life, to the very first cosmic beat. The absolute breaks free from the inexorable character of life and its empirical element (the blood that flows in our veins, the blood that flows from a wound, blood of my blood, the breath that makes one's chest rise and fall, the creaking door whose whispers mingle with the secrets from deep inside the body of the child, heavy with sleep: inside the ears, inside the womb, the back of the head, and so on), the power whose limits are always on the threshold of what is already there, what has just occurred, what precipitates itself, what falls. As Broch

1 A concept coined by Broch in the context of his political writings. See *Politik: Ein Kondensat (Fragment)*, especially part 1, chapter 1, 'Das irdisch Absolute', in *Essays. Erkennen und Handeln*, vol. 2, ed. by Hannah Arendt, Zürich: Rhein, 1955, pp. 204-219.

observes, "that which is infinite happens only once": its repetition does not invalidate it, as the infinite changes its scale each time. In his poetry and essays, the paradox of those for whom the principle of the excluded third is unfounded rules. This means that the human being is bound to antinomy, which is not the result of a dialectical endeavour in which reason is entangled but rather fixes a tension, swaying between opposites (of which life and death are the most prominent). One cannot but imagine their fusion – *The Death of Virgil* being its most exalting revelation. Hence, antinomy cannot be beaten by any argumentative medium, by any conceptual clarification: before it, in the face of it, in its heart, the only way is to try to draw its aspects, to take its pulse, to multiply and collect its effects.

The development of this "motto" follows the traces of the confrontation with antinomy (the human atmosphere as such), which become apparent in its project of establishing a value system in which the arts take centre stage, in the understanding of the invincible gap that betrays the poetic word, where the conflict between the beauty of singing and the need to attend to others takes the lead; in the mystical vision of culture inseparable from an utterly lucid critique of all forms of nihilism, including the Babelian catastrophe that, together with the fire of Alexandria,[2] threatens to return again and again; finally, in the knowledge of death, which brings about a supreme metamorphosis: a resurrection, freed from a sheltering (established, stable) belief in the afterlife. It is here on Earth that all metamorphoses and yearnings are engendered – the chain of beings, which extends beyond it, can only be recognised from the earthly perspective. Those who exceed it are promised a double return: to the rainbow and the deep mine of the heart. This is what the poet and thinker Hermann Broch sought to understand.

2 This idea reappears several times in Hermann Broch's writings, especially in his letters, such as his letter to Else Spitzer dated 12 April, to Ralph Manheim dated 3 August and to Stefan Zweig dated 18 August, all from 1939.

Development

1. Biographical Data

Born on 1 November 1886, which unfortunately
one cannot help […], I felt somewhere inside me
the yearning to encompass everything.
Hermann Broch's letter to Willa Muir,
24 November 1931

According to Broch, his self was born when he was around nine years old.[3] The birth pains made themselves heard by means of his sudden awareness of the solitude of the soul as it was formed, accompanied by the demand to devote his life to the pursuit of knowledge, i.e., aware of the inviolability of the soul, to commit to the task of providing him with a world, which is the same as operating the mystical transformation of the oneiric landscape into a gift of the Earth, transforming the chaos of the empirical element, the land that bewitches and terrifies, into the promised land.

The Platonic experience is both the very first confrontation with the solitude of the self and the discovery that knowledge of the world is a gift given to the world. This implies a recognition of the immortality – the invulnerability – of the soul and the demand to devote one's whole life to clarifying this discovery, to glorifying the confrontation. Furthermore, the responsibility of being alive in this way calls for a long life. Broch the young Jewish man knew the reasons for this better than Broch the Catholic convert.

3 Broch describes this in his *Psychische Selbstbiographie [Psychological Autobiography]*, ed. by Paul-Michael Lützeler, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999. Others have viewed his discovery as the birth of the *Selbst*. Otto Weininger referred to it indetail in *Geschlecht und Charakter [Sex and Character]* from 1903, quoting testimonies from Novalis, Jean-Paul and Schelling. As it is safe to say that Broch – like all attentive spirits of the time – read this difficult, terrific work, he could not ignore its affiliation. I believe the most fertile problematic presentation of the discovery of the *Selbst* is made by Franz Rosenzweig in *Der Stern der Erlösung [Star of Redemption]* from 1921/1930.

Time and time again in writings from the 1930s onwards, with special emphasis in *The Sleepwalkers*, we come across the concept of the position of position [*die Setzung der Setzung*], the scope of which is always ethical (and therefore metaphysical): a way – long-established and fixed in philosophy ever since Kant and developed by German idealism, particularly by Fichte – of referring to the experience of pure knowledge and freedom as a gift. Time and again, the relation between self and non-self is exposed, sometimes directly associated with the concept of Platonism and Platonic experience. This relation may be replaced (it will be, with a clearer conceptual determination, moving closer to what Broch meant) with an absolute (pure) self and an empirical (impure) self, as well as absolute consciousness and empirical consciousness, all of which may bring us back to the wider opposition between thought and life, or between *cogito* and *sum*. In the human soul, this opposition becomes a form of quietude, surpassing antinomies, if, as he discovers that he will die alone, man, who is a prisoner of anguish, attends to his own solitude, i.e. shapes his anguish: baking bread, weaving, discovering an axiom – these are some of his possible accomplishments. Each of these forming acts quenches the thirst of life's interests, of empirical life, and is the result, to different degrees, of his metamorphosis into a Platonic idea. The meeting of the interest in life and its metamorphosis is called value: "the Platonic idea of empirical life" or even "the idea of an empirical element in itself". One of the key essays on this concept is 'Das Böse im Wertsystem der Kunst' ['Evil in the Value-System of Art'].[4]

Broch read Fichte. He does not merely mention him; his concept of self and its non-self correlate has a Fichtian heritage, via the Romantics, yet he indeed viewed Platonism as the quintessential category of the universal sentimental, architectural, harmonic experience, which is the foundation of all knowledge and where the principles of the *logos* and the spirit [*Geist*], i.e. the universal form and the breath that breathes life into it, become one. More on this later.

The poles of the Earth were reached when Broch was young. He deemed it the proclamation of the traffic age, the coagulation of geography's utopian movement – the Earth definitively announcing itself

4 See Hermann Broch, 'Das Böse im Wertsystem der Kunst', in *Essays. Dichten und Erkennen*, vol. 1, ed. by Hannah Arendt, Zürich: Rhein, 1955, pp. 311-350.

as universal circulation – yet he also embraced its predictions, relativising to the point of ashamed indeterminacy (under the noble title "we are all the same") who one is and where one comes from, in this case, Broch himself: an Austrian writer born in Vienna on 1 November 1886, of Jewish origins and then later, as a young man, a convert to Catholicism, an accredited engineer, a practiced mathematician and lover of philosophy.

2. A Doctrine of Values: The "Earthly Absolute" Constellation

"If we take the concept of 'value' in a broad sense, rational operation always establishes value, but not vice versa". This means that "the axiological domains of rational operation are special cases within more general axiological domains". Thus begins Broch's essay 'Gedanken zum Problem der Erkenntnis in der Musik' ['Reflections on the Problem of Knowledge in Music'].[5] His broad concept of value is based on three constitutive elements: 1) the axiological event as such, i.e. the formative act; 2) knowledge of death, which is the core of axiological knowledge; and 3) the progress of values, which is the law that formalises and particularises the relationship between the axiological event and knowledge of death. The most general axiological domains are the expression of a relationship with death, which is knowledge of death, a form of redemption.

As for rational operation, Broch highlights its maladjustment regarding the axiological act, since the latter cannot be assimilated by rational operation. However, it is the former that runs through, supports and feeds any rational operation if it is not to be degraded (this maladjustment will be resumed later through the concept of an irrational element, which can be recognised by feeling). This is pointed out implicitly by his statement of the two founding elements of any rational operation: 1) it is determined by human insufficiency as somewhat earthly finite; and 2) it is sustained by the supra-human infinity of the *logos*.

A finite number of rules, a finite number of elements and the possibility of communicating those rules are part of any rational

5 See Hermann Broch, 'Gedanken zum Problem der Erkenntnis in der Musik', in *Essays*, vol. 2, pp. 91-101.

operation. Broch sets out the possible scenarios of such an operation. In the first, one state of things derives from another state of things, either materially or through imagination, according to a finite number of logical steps – a series of actions designed to start a machine, for instance. Any theory or scientific experiment is structured according to this model. In the second scenario, the state of things can be logically constructed from a finite number of elements: a chemical synthesis, for instance. Finally, in the third scenario, one state of things is reproduced according to a finite number of elements, as in photographic reproduction or the act of definition. Rational operation becomes rational knowledge through the intensification – which actually implies a change in degree – of the communicative principle, of communicability. This communication principle is not immediately that of truly human language.

Indeed, for Broch, rational operation encompasses the world of animals and its organisational structures, which, unlike human structures and despite the theory of evolution, do not evolve: there is no record of internal progress in the order of termite states, for instance. Rational knowledge, which is proper to human beings, does not fit entirely into the form of knowledge that is produced and communicated in language: science (mathematics being the limit case and the matrix of all other cases) tends to distinguish itself from other theoretical activities via the creation of a notation and communication system that immediately dispenses with natural language, though this does not happen at all stages of its constitution. Yet the use of natural language is seen as a moment that is never decisive – the social, exoteric side of science. Still, the model of understanding remains that of language, i.e., as far as what is represented is concerned, the way it is represented tends to come closer to the statement "This is this". Nothing is actually said in rational operation; furthermore, strictly speaking, rational knowledge nearly always dispenses with natural saying. Hence, the way in which something is represented may only be assumed by truly human language as an interpretative deviation. We might add that only language is allowed to do this. This caveat means that only language utters, translates, and interprets, and conversely that all of these actions aim to appropriate – both failing to do so and remaining aware of this – the distancing of that which does not belong to language from the language that utters, as in poetry.

This means that the distancing of any non-linguistic knowledge from its translation into language is not only inherent to physical/mathematical rational knowledge and the like, but also a condition that points to the conflict between the uttered word and the uses of the uttered word. Broch does not really stress this in his essay, although he obviously points it out since the *light source* (in the sense of photographic exposure) of the "progress" that is characteristic of all axiological domains is rational knowledge, especially the knowledge that is expressed through language, "for nowhere does the logical element operate more unequivocally than in the conscious knowledge process, nowhere is it more unequivocally guided by the infinite goal of truth that lies in the *logos*, nowhere does the result of the finite earthly step more deeply have the character of what is provisional".[6]

Broch points this out more clearly in 'Zeit und Zeitgeist' ['The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age'],[7] where he shows that without language (or utterly distrusting words, as has been the case ever since positivism perversely took over all domains, including philosophy, and abandoned them to the mutism of facts), the ethical domain disfigures itself to the point of unrecognisability: "This is where the tragic begins. It surpasses the tragedy of man at the service of knowledge and creation and becomes the tragedy of the world that, for lack of an ethical principle, is on the verge of disintegration. For the ethical would not be able to live without language […]".[8]

The distancing of the thing from the word is simultaneously the limit of language and its infinite freedom: to hover, like the spirit, above the waters, and also its violence and love for itself – to take over all that it formulates. To be more precise, for Broch, language is the *logos*, yet

6 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

7 See Hermann Broch, 'Zeit und Zeitgeist', *Kommentierte Ausgabe. Schriften zur Literatur und Theorie*, vol. 9/2, ed. by Michael Lützeler, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975-1980, pp. 177-201.

8 The same concept is to be found in Walter Benjamin – who is incompatible with Broch in so many other respects – and in Rosenzweig. Hence the affinity between the three regarding their interpretations of tragic mutism, as the hero has been hit by a blow, for that which he has received as his tradition is no longer of use to him, and that which he needs to support and express himself remains unknown.

at the moment of mystical incandescence, language as *logos* is aware of its union with the spirit, with the irrationality of language (in poetry, for instance). In other words, when language becomes an instrument of the poetic, the irrationality of language becomes self-aware, thus entering the domain of rationality.[9] We shall now return to the 'Gedanken'. In the architectural form of language, in the earthly and heavenly edifice of language, when all is intertwined in a simultaneous, hierarchised and quiet expressiveness, "the residue of the lyrical element that belongs to feeling" is the spirit acting in language or the *logos* guided by spirit. This architecture – whose formula, according to Broch's essays, is a sequence: a thought (a moment), a sentence, a thought (a moment) – cannot be translated into human language and can only be interpreted (in a different way than the untranslatability of rational operation and rational knowledge). Hence, the poem says what it says using those words by which it says. In that sense, no translation is possible – even if one is, it will always be a Kierkegaard-like "indirect communication". Therefore, there must be a specific character of this interpretation that is born of what has already been uttered, born of an interpretation that is naming rather than non-naming, i.e., words must resist words in a way that differs from the resistance that is inherent in any form of understanding other than the emitting of *logos* through language. In short: the resistance of words to words cannot be equivalent to the resistance of things to words. As we walk along the difference, we discover something else: there are words that attend, heal, save. No system of justice, medicine or religion can fulfil them – to give "one's word", to seek "the word that saves". Here shines the view that, when words are given and begged, they become pure transports of the spirit, igniting the *logos* without turning it to ashes. To Broch's great, irreparable sorrow, this is not the case with poetry.

This is how I seek to understand the Brochian statement quoted above, according to which the ethical would not be able to live without language. The natural element of the ethical is not rational operation: it is the language born of the land of men and which only bears fruit in this land, as both an architectural tone and a finite step.

9 In a sense that is not equivalent to the concept of rationality in the case of rational operation and even of rational knowledge, more on this later.

What does Broch refer to when he speaks of "semi-naming"? It is the linguistic function that is to be found in domains which are not constitutively linguistic, as is the case with the use of *Leitmotif* in music, and which we may deem the influence of language in all rational knowledge. In fact, it is possible to find semi-naming in all forms of rational knowledge, albeit to varying degrees and extents, which may be demonstrated by the interpretative activity that is developed as a requirement for communication in all such forms. In a move that takes him both closer to and further away from Benjamin's thought, Broch ultimately points out what is often silently taking place in other essays and other passages in the essay: music, painting, etc., are forms of knowledge rather than forms of language.

Let us look at this more closely. For Benjamin, human language is the expression of human essence. The name intensively receives and expresses the coining of that essence. Naming is an act of knowledge proper to human beings, knowledge that is developed "as", knowledge in which time, in all its many different aspects, is generated. Although they are included in the language of naming, the arts (including poetry, although to a lesser degree) mostly share the silent, anonymous voice of things and beings that are bound to the laws of matter. Hence Benjamin's inability to make up his mind as to the redeeming character of artistic activities, as they possess a strangeness of their own in relation to that which constitutes humankind and in relation to whom and to that which will save it from death.[10]

For Broch, the *logos* is behind all axiological movement, yet it also includes – and is more than – the human naming word. Ultimately, any axiological movement bears the seal of supreme knowledge: the knowledge of death, i.e., the core of the universal axiological movement. In any case, like Benjamin, Broch never did make up his mind as to the

10 See Walter Benjamin, 'Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen' ['On Language as Such and on the Language of Man'], in *Gesammelte Schriften*, II. 1, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, in collaboration with Theodor W. Adorno and Gerschom Scholem, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972-1990, pp. 140-157, as well as his letter to Florens Christian Rang dated 9 December 1923, see Walter Benjamin, *Briefe*, 2 vols., ed. by Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966.

redeeming character of artistic activities, and this for different reasons. Although poetry, music and art have a religious mission, they cannot save man. Art's only mission is to seize the "world day of the age" [*Welt-Alltag der Epoche*]. In the high clarity of the expression, which is taken from 'Erwägungen zum Problem des Kulturtodes' ['Considerations on the Problem of the Death of Civilisation'],[11] he condensed his belief that poets and artists feel everyday life, are taken by it, and try to rescue the idea, i.e. the "world-day of the age", from its chaotic material, becoming a mirror image of the process (a mirror in which the active ingredients of the age disappear and immerse themselves and in which their real forces become visible). All of this is wrapped in deep mystery, the deepest mystique, for the human being – his humanity, his culture – is a mystical being.

An aprioristic content inherent in an interior experience, on the one hand, and a vital expansion and immediacy that are nearly unreachable by rational knowledge, on the other hand, signal supra-rational knowledge. It is both touching and excellent that the whole world concentrates on this "nearly": the tension between what exceeds the clarity of conscious linguistic expression and the fervour felt by language forall that is always exceeding it. One can observe the excess as it is converted into an aspiration for the axiological event and becomes a common word circulating among men. Indeed, we are unable to stop the generative act of language: translating, interpreting all there is and ever was and ever will be, visible or invisible in utterance, that which is seen almost as a curse, a merciful curse – that of exceeding itself.

In this sense, according to Broch, logical forms also belong to irrationality; i.e., the *logos* is not the same as rationality. As a consequence, strict rationality – self-sustaining rationality – is the bewilderment of the *logos* in relation to spirit, which is its origin, its path and its goal, whose immediate expression, the prime form of the mastery of the kind of knowledge that is more than knowledge, is the feeling that knows, spiritual feeling, a sentimental form of knowledge – over-knowledge.

Just as the degradation of art, in its most perverse form – the form of kitsch, on which I shall expand later – malevolently imitates art and deceives *connoisseurs* wherever it occurs, so the degradation of human

11 See Hermann Broch, 'Erwägungen zum Problem des Kulturtodes', in *Essays*, vol. 2, pp. 103-110.

reason makes its lines laughable and insatiable by underlining them, in its caricature of human reason, hysterically mechanising their ever-more accurate, controlled, functional operations, transforming everything into the indifferent stage of its movements, a reproduction mechanism that often seems much more convincing than reason, the *logos* on which it was modelled.

At this point, Goethe would say that reason has lost contact with Earth.[12] Broch, who does not think of himself as Antaeus but is constantly subject to the effects of chthonic forces, knows all too well the lure of living, breathing things, does not absorb them as Rainer Maria Rilke[13] does but rather tastes them (even the lethal ones, even the most lugubrious ones) and describes their taste. Suddenly, all that is generated in the earthly element – while being lugubrious or simply a desire to drink, or raising one's leg to climb onto the train – is cast away to a promised land, can be seen, remaining what it is, torn off from what it is, saved because (of what) it is. There is a kind of sleepwalking inherent in being (nearly) pulled and cast away to the other side.[14] A brief word on the subject: man dies, and his undying appeal is that of freedom – freedom which, like all Brochian concepts (hence his constant

12 See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey. Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 6, ed. by Thomas P. Saine, Jeffrey L. Sammons, trans. by Robert R. Heitner, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 98: "The whole of this bright and beautiful day I have spent in the open air. I scarcely ever come near a mountain, but my interest in rocks and stones revives. I feel as did Antaeus of old, who found himself endued with new strength as often as he was brought into fresh contact with his mother-earth" (Bologna, Oct. 20, evening).

13 As he confides to Lou Andreas-Salomé in a letter dated 26 June 1914: "I am so like the little anemone I once saw in the gardens in Rome; it had opened itself up so wide in the course of the day that when night fell it was no longer able to close. It was quite shocking to see it so open in the darkened meadow, still avid to *take in* – into its frantically-wide-open chalice; swamped by the night above it – inexhaustible… I, too, am as irremediably turned outwards, and I am consequently distracted by everything, refusing nothing. My senses, altogether without my permission, make towards every disturbance: when there is noise, I give myself up and I *am* that noise – and since anything that is focused on stimulus *wants* to be stimulated, I clearly want to be disturbed, and am so, without end" (see Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus and Letters to a Young Poet*, trans. by Stephen Cohn, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2012).

14 See Hermann Broch, *Die Schlafwandler, Kommentierte Ausgabe*, vol. 1, ed. By Michael Lützeler, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975-1980, section 77.

demonstration of the unacceptability of the principle of the excluded third), is double edged. In this case, freedom wins over death and is inebriated with itself.

In its corrupted form, reason loses contact with the Earth. It becomes a self-controlled, self-contained system, subject – though it may think it is free – to all opportunisms of operatory ends, all petty regulations that were set without the smallest hint of disquiet by something above. Reason, forced – in effective, enterprising servitude – to forever run away from death or to mask death to render it unrecognisable, is thus entirely at its mercy. The human being is rudely unprepared: he is armed to the teeth against the one who hands him the weapons, giving free rein to the terrifying irrational element that looms gingerly, poisoning man with its dark breath.

In short: both rational and irrational, reason is the *logos*, a universal condition of understanding and its intertwining in the abyss. The influence of the abyss in reason constitutes reason as the *logos*. Reason elaborates on the affections of a lifetime, either at the moment they occur or a moment later, restless because it is unable to elaborate, pausing and then resuming, taking over the word, whose bad reputation prospered in Broch's century, which was our own as well. That is why, in order to fight its deadly dangers, reason yearns for universal forms, on which it paradoxically discovers it cannot fully elaborate, as those forms are words that constantly run ahead of those who utter them (such is the forever-untasted fruit of positivism). This means that the abyss (which will later be called by its name, or rather its condition), the chaotic forces which rise alongside death and the fear of death pervade the concepts of reason and cast them away to a point where reason falls short of being able to rationalise, a point where the supreme metamorphosis of irrationality takes place: the axiological goal, the irrationality that is proper to the Platonic act, to Platonism.

Irrationality is double edged as well: the empirical domain – the dark, chaotic chthonic element that is a source of panic – or the ultimate harmony, the house where everyone can dwell, a source of ecstasy. We may admit that there are multiple intermediate soul experiences between panic and ecstasy. The abyss of death and all its kin is the basis of life, the forces that ceaselessly cast away, pull and release, equivocal. The

dilacerations caused by them may drive man to run away from them, to submit to them, to pit their wits against them and transform them into a form of redemption, an ultimate vision. According to Broch, this is justifiable because the *logos* and the spirit are part of the impenetrable, inscrutable precondition of life [*unerforschliche Vorbedingung*]: "In the beginning was the *logos*", and "the spirit of God floated upon the waters". This precondition receives its flesh in the key experience of the self, of the human soul. This is how the abyss that threatens us, the blind ones, becomes the baseless condition of life, an abyss that is ours as well.

The earthly absolute is neither the abyss nor its transformation into infinity, but rather the intensification of the relationship between both, their support. Let us present it once again in a different way: "What has never anywhere come to pass / That alone never grows old", Schiller wrote. Broch would add a correction, obviously not to Schiller's verses but rather to their predictable understanding: what does not grow old – that which has never happened – is always segregated by what has happened and never ceases to happen.

This is always a matter of not allowing the empirical world to be robbed of what is rightfully its own. It is a matter of not allowing empirical facts, bestowed with false nobility titles, to be reduced to mere illustrations of theories. To lead phenomena back to unity, to save phenomena: this is the effort that drives human reason to surpass itself, the effort that arises from the confrontation with death. Broch calls it universal Platonic thought. The reason which surpasses itself is therefore divine; i.e., through its aspiration to conquer death, human reason meets its splendorous entourage: infinity, truth, freedom, God. In these theoretical texts influenced by *The Sleepwalkers*, Broch undertakes a kind of transmigration from one verbal person to another, moving from soliloquy to argumentative discussion or third- person description without any significant change in punctuation or any explicit unfolding of discourses and their authors: sometimes responding to objections, sometimes rearguing previously explained theses or establishing dialectical variations. The latter is his trademark critical gesture: the destitution of the principle of the excluded third, which comes from the awareness that "nothing in empirical life is univocal", which implies that there are two

sides to every concept: the end is always a beginning, decadence has its own fertility, redemption must come from the most humble (from the most lurid, even), etc.

> From this arises a confusion of thoughts that is extremely worthy of our attention, which, besides, is fuelled by the knowledge that, after the destruction of an old value system and its rational connections, irrational forces have always ended up segregating a new axiological unit, according to which there must be an original period of life in every *cogito* period so that a new *cogito* may be born from this *sum*.[15]

3. The Glow of Irrationality in Art: Describing the World as it is Desired and Feared

We are confused. One of the signs of our confusion is worrying about words, as we suddenly discover that we do not understand what we are talking about. We strive to find ways and means to determine what it is we are talking about (art, artwork, value, good, evil, water, distance), what it is we are ceaselessly talking about. This shows, first, that we can talk about what we do not know and, second, that we are constantly talking about that which we do not know, only to find out that this is the way we talk or that talking involves that experience – as the word is always shared, received, inherited – with which we must compromise every time, no matter how we do it. This bears witness to the original gesture that is inherent in human language: to search for what we are saying. In its most authentic way, that which we talk about without knowing (because we do not know it yet or have ceased to know) may become something we are searching for, the subject of an inquiry in which our words are converted, as are we. Our starting point is always chaos – sustained, defended by this fragile thing, this tenuous seat, which is wanting to say something to someone and to ourselves

15 Hermann Broch, 'Leben ohne platonische Idee', in *Die unbekannte Grösse und frühe Schriften mit den Briefen an Willa Muir*, ed. by Ernst Schönwiese and Eric W. Herd, Zürich: Rhein, 1961, p. 281.

– always chaos, indeterminacy, scattered impressions, forgetfulness and repetitions, many voices screaming at the same time, all skilfully melted by the demons of historicisation. All archives, all encyclopaedias, all data banks, all definitions are there for the taking. This is about immediately consuming the present moment in the coming moment, losing the moment, dissipating it into multiple isolated domains that fight each other in a fury of self-justification. Hermann Broch calls this atmosphere the tragic element of our time.

As a reluctant poet – echoing Hannah Arendt's beautiful, fair words[16]— Broch is deeply divided regarding what it means to be a poet. As a Jewish man, an artist, as he writes in his essay on Hofmannsthal,[17] he never achieves complete assimilation. He is the eternal guest, the foreign guest: he plays the part without letting it affect his power to stay, to linger on. Working according to the creation of his own existence, the poet is threatened with a double doubling, which in any artistic domain can be seen as its fundamental ambiguity.

Hence Broch's attraction to those authors who wished their work to be destroyed: one of these, Virgil, chosen as the one who would die for him, the original theme behind his decisive work, *The Death of Virgil*; the other, Kafka, who was the unfailing guide to all his work. In his commentary on his novel, written as if he were someone else, 'Bemerkungen zum *Der Tod des Virgil*' ['Observations on *The Death of Virgil'*],[18] Broch describes the work as the poet's facing his own life, questioning the fairness and the moral falsity of his life as a poet,

16 See Hannah Arendt, 'The Reluctant Poet', in *Men in Dark Times*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968. Hannah Arendt was an exceptional reader of the works of Hermann Broch. She wrote one of the first and more lucid reviews of *The Death of Virgil* and maintained an unfailing friendship with Broch until his death in 1951. Arendt was behind the publication of a two-volume edition of Broch's essays in 1955. Her article 'Der Dichter wider Willen' ('The Reluctant Poet') in *Men in Dark Times* was taken from the first section of the introduction to the book of essays. It is the most concise, appropriate assessment of Hermann Broch ever written.

17 See Hermann Broch, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit. Eine Studie' ['Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time: Art and Its Non-Style at the End of the Nineteenth Century'], in *Essays*, vol. 1, pp. 43-181.

18 See Hermann Broch, 'Bemerkungen zum *Der Tod des Virgil*', in *Essays*, vol. 1, pp. 265-275.

the legitimacy of his poetic act. Impelled, pushed forward to face the phenomenon of death, made stronger by the lucidity given to the patient by fever, Hermann Broch, speaking of Hermann Broch, finds in an interposed poet, Virgil, that act which is justified as knowledge of death. Not many works of world literature (to use the "*Weltliteratur*" concept, created and developed by Goethe in the final years of his life, between 1827 and 1830)[19] have dared – using purely poetic means, of course – to place themselves so boldly at the mercy of the phenomenon of death. Hermann Broch is not a poet who renounces the word. He is not a poet who holds hands with he who is about to renounce the word, like Lord Chandos and Hofmannsthal, at a time when the purest philosopher slandered silence.[20] No, like Virgil, Hermann Broch burns with fever, shivers with lucidity, and speaks, hurriedly writing his book so that he may be able to deliver it to the Alexandria Library before the fire has been started.

Being aware of breathing, feeling perspiration spreading on your skin, being covered by skin, being aware of your countless blood vessels, arteries, bones, feeling your blood throbbing, the saliva in your mouth, being nauseous, holding your hand to your chest and feeling it rise and fall, being aware that you have lungs, being aware that you were born of another body, your mother's body, listening to the scream about to be screamed, transforming all this into something that is being learned, something that, with every pause (such as holding your hand to your chest), was being learned, involves the movement from the empirical to the metaphysical, a movement that is never fixed, as the empirical always breaks out with every new transposition and the metaphysical is always reabsorbed by the empirical, contributing to its outbreak.

The empirical is that which cannot be anticipated. It is also an amalgam of that which cannot be anticipated and that which can always be anticipated, the anticipation of which is always yearned

19 See 'Goethe's wichtigste Äusserungen über "Weltliteratur"', *Werke, Schriften zur Literatur. Maximen und Reflexionen*, vol. 12, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982.

20 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness with an introduction by Bertrand Russell, London/New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, proposition 7.

for – a combination that may somewhat be related to Kant's feeling of life [*Gefühl des Lebens*], as he conceived of it in his third *Critique*: on the one hand, the impossibility of purifying the feeling of life becomes the empirical element *par excellence*; on the other hand, as an expression arising from *Gemüt*, the inevitability of seeing it as a feeling of reflection, of the attention to multiplicity with no determined concept, as the devolution of life in the sense of its tones, its hues – infinite.

The empirical is that which could not have been made up. Even Chazotte, the painter in Karen Blixen's short story *Ehrengard*, who was neither modest nor presumptuous and thought highly of himself, although he was almost certain that he could have invented some of the existing things, meditated on the impossibility of inventing dew.

Thus, life is empirical: life and its mysteries of blood, sex, the mystery of persevering in life, of keeping on living, which is there in all its aspects. Broch dubs these values, as in the case of the rope maker (who knows all the secrets of ropes and knots), the soldier, the writer, the scientist (we might also add the baker, the shepherd, the fisherman, the caretaker, the prophet, the philosopher). Each of these interests has its own secret or principle, which is shaped every time one of them points to an ultimate goal, an absolute, which is a kind of dream of life – a kind of survival's purifying fire.[21]

"Value is an interest [*eine Angelegenheit*] of life": a subject that concerns empirical life (as in "it's up to it"). That is why what we might call pure consciousness knows nothing about value, does not stand before life, receiving it. It has cleansed itself of it. As a system of conditions of possibility gathered in an imaginary focus, pure or absolute consciousness is completely blind as to living: time, the mysteries of blood, family, sex, decisions related to living with others, in the ever-present premonition of death and darkness. For Broch, the empirical is actually a dimension of irrationality.

Being so alien, how do pure or absolute consciousness and empirical consciousness or the empirical element relate to each other? If pure or

21 These considerations (as well as those that follow) on the value system of art and extreme evil have their origin in the key text cited above: Broch, 'Das Böse im Wertsystem der Kunst', pp. 311-350.

absolute consciousness can only think of itself in unassailable solitude and knows nothing of death – for it is free from death, in the sense that it can only be perceived as an incessant and endless act of thought – and if empirical conscience is devoted to and affected by death and the opposition between life and death, how does one come to be aware that one dies alone? Broch imagines a projection of pure consciousness onto empirical consciousness. It is from that projection that he engenders the perception of the solitude of death, anticipation of the fact that one will die alone.

Hence, pure or absolute consciousness as the power to say "I" shapes the premonition of death; i.e., its original self-standing character – its solitary nature – projects itself onto the empirical experience of death, leading to the discovery that one dies alone (which is not the same as Wittgenstein's statement that "as in death too, the world does not change, but ceases",[22] although one may glimpse an affinity), from which the true ethical principle is born. Although the self is locked within its mystical isolation, it is through that very isolation that it is able to reach its kin, which implies that a feeling of surpassing oneself – as well as a harsh critique of sentimentality and sentimental rhetoric – grows in isolation. Circumscribing a set of gestures linked to a commitment that voices the need to keep on living, the value is the fixation of an act that fights anguish: "nothing is produced on Earth that may not fight anguish", as Broch says. A passage from the non-formed, from the in-formed, to the formed or the better formed: value is a double-sided, double-faced effort. On the one hand, it concerns a way of knowing that always tends to surpass death, to rage against the darkness, i.e., an ethical form. On the other hand, as a result, it is a tangible expression of a received and a given form, i.e., an aesthetic expression.

We are confused; we are familiar with extreme confusion, the kind that appears as detailed, exclusivist regulation (I wonder if any of our academies would still be able to discuss the subject of the progress of human faculties by asking whether the arts and sciences contribute to the elevation of humankind). Values are in a state of dissipation, collapse, ceaseless disfigurement. The tension between domains monstrously

22 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, proposition 6.431.

exceeds its resolution; the attempt at resolution is met with indifference, while, in a fury of self-justification, the domains rush against each other: "every man for himself and God against all".[23]

Is art up to this disfigurement? Can art bring to expression the age of all horrors, in an age when all images of the world fade away and are dismembered? These questions bring us to the core of the dispute between art and life. The difficulty in distinguishing art from life is presented as an objection against art or a lament of its decay, or even an attack against it. Yet the symmetrical difficulty is also heavy with consequences: that of moving from art to life. We can address both by asking: What does this have to do with life or art? What does art do to life? What is clearly evidenced here is the paradox proper to that activity, that value system, which seeks by itself to portray human drama, purifying it, prophesising it, deepening its own tensions, using it to slash itself – which is why art sets its own laws and cannot help being against them at the same time.

Unlike science, art is impatient. It is the very seal, the noble coinage of the impatience of knowledge. There is nothing additional or cumulative in it. There is no real "little-by-little" progress (although there is an "as" in every artwork, though magically converted into a simultaneity). Born of the need to obey the moment rather than answering to its needs, multiplying them, contributing to their evolution, art, poetry, seek to compose a body, a finite thing, foreshortened, a miniature, a new face of the lure of the dark forces, of irrationality, symbolically bringing them to light.

This impatience is not just the intimate feeling of the one who lives on Earth, bound to Earth, who will eventually be buried or dispersed among other ashes, on Earth, but also the impatience of the one who wishes to be connected, who wants to belong to everything that can be connected, that which can connect each one to each other: the impatience of the religious man who, looking at brevity, acutely recognising the brevity of life, seeks totality – to question, to cry for help, to answer. And yet, "our current practice of art is no longer a divine craft". It mumbles the dream, the "un-interpreted" sign, recognising only

23 *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* is the German title of Werner Herzog's film *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974). The source of the blasphemous sentence is Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma* (1928).

in its own creative act preparation to become an interpretation, as if forever waiting, knowing that it is in vain. All that is truly human takes place in the domain, in the realm of antinomy, or, as Novalis put it, the human being is the being that is polarised by nature to the extreme.[24] The symbolic surpassing of antinomy is the promise, the poet's vow. This is the power of the presentation, the *Darstellung*, which accomplishes the disciplined metamorphosis of the life dream into a cold dream, the cold dream of art: the dream that realises it is a dream, from which the supreme irony blows, that of the dreamer that stands before the dream – an irony that may ultimately become horror, tiredness and the demand that others destroy one's own works, wipe away the dream that makes him, the dreamer, smile, laugh.[25] Still, the metamorphosis is rather an amalgam, a confusion "of the waters of life and dream, the glow of which is the symbol. An ever-hovering image" (close to Kant's "das schwebende Bild"),[26] the image that heralds the cosmogony of the future (promised and nearly always about to be deciphered), the image of the angel that was missing, the necessary angel – as Wallace Stevens called him, the angel of Earth:[27]

> And even if it is an undemonstrated – maybe it cannot be demonstrated – hypothesis that a cosmic, supraterrestrial clarity hovers over all that man dreams, it is certain that humanity's great dreams are bathed in the glow of that transcendent cosmic light; it is certain that literature, like all other human value-oriented aspirations, is driven by human

24 See Novalis: "Der Mensch ist diejenige Substanz – die die ganze Natur unendlichfach bricht – i.e. polarisirt" ["The human being is that substance – that all nature breaks in infinite ways – i.e. polarizes"] (Novalis 'Freiberger Naturwissenschaftliche Studien 1798/99', in *Schriften. Das Philosophische Werk II*, vol. 3, ed. by Richard Samuel, in collaboration with Hans-Joachim Mähl and Gerhard Schultz, Stuttgart/Berlin/Mainz/Köln: W. Kohlhammer, 1968, p. 92).

25 As happened with Kafka and Virgil as well. In both cases, their request that their works be destroyed was not met.

26 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyer and Eric Mathews, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, §17.

27 See Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

> anguish and, taming it, takes it, carrying the reflection of that transcendent glow.[28]

Let us repeat the question: is art up to this transfiguration? Can the disfigurement of value systems be represented? An absolute non-value, death, is also the great resuscitator, the great purifier, that which, together with the solitude of the self, makes it possible to transmute empirical life into metaphysical life, infinity. Knowing this sheds light on our lives, although it is always ready to destroy us: to defend ourselves from death, to allow death to be there every step we take, watching over us. These are the opposite, inseparable winds of our fortune.

In the value system of art, should the world be described as it really is or as we desire it and fear it? The ambiguity of art lies in the fact that both answers are valid, which means risking becoming prey to chaos, reflecting the inhuman in the chaotic man – the man who fails to see the solitude of his own death before him – as well as mistaking the world as it is for the world as I want it to be, as it would suit me now (the true criterion of bad art, kitsch). The true artist must collect "vocabulary units of reality" ["Realitätsvokabeln"] (a man crosses the street, to use Broch's example), must choose and immerse himself in the intermediate space between words and words, between blots and blots, sounds and sounds, which restores the living tension of its darkest forces, which releases unuttered expectation, which searches for what lingers between ephemeral moments. Conversely, evil – not exactly the bad artist, the loser, but rather the criminal who burglarises his own home – escapes in the face of death, an escape that does not contribute to the abolition of death. Evil in art lies in showing the world by leaving it abandoned, shapeless, a hobby art designed to pass time. The evil in the value system of art lies in its inability to recognise that it is in between, indifferent to the tension that hurts every word, pushing it towards another, and that sustains and lifts it up, viewing tensional motion as a representable resolution, an imitable, reproducible recipe.

Everything that art aims to present becomes its infinite goal, irrationality in its mystical dimension, as its absolute, which can only be

28 Hermann Broch, 'Das Weltbild des Romans. Ein Vortrag' ['The Vision of the World Given by the Novel. A conference'], in *Essays*, vol. 1, p. 231.

perceived as a construction and is generated in the to and fro between "describing the world as it is" and "describing the world as it is desired and feared". Naturally, as Aristotle says in the *Poetics*, the subjects of tragedy are deadly events among those of the same blood. Naturally, Aristotle goes on, the poet comes across these subjects by chance, shared in myth. He does not need to travel to find them.[29] These are always the events into which the poet delves deeply, life's mysteries. His effort lies in converting them into an image. As he receives their impetus, he penetrates them and sets himself free of them through an image, which is in turn incorporated into the mysteries and reveals itself to another, intersecting with other images in an unbroken chain, a magical circle which only a new work of art may interrupt by creating a new origin. Unlike the philosopher, who patiently remains on the edge of the abyss, peering into it, the poet rushes into the depths and is drawn by darkness, opening his eyes impatiently.

29 See Aristotle, Longinus, Demetrius. Aristotle: *Poetics*. Longinus: *On the Sublime*. Demetrius: *On Style*, trans. by Stephen Halliwell, W. Hamilton Fyfe, Doreen C. Innes, W. Rhys Roberts, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995, chapter 14, 1453b15 and 1454a9, respectively.

Values

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1. Introduction

Values organize our lives and guide our actions. Broadly speaking, we compare items of various kinds such as possible future actions, policies, states of affairs, goods, and even persons on the basis of values and often try to determine whether one item is better than another or strive to pick what we consider the best or most suitable item from a number of alternatives. The choice-guiding nature of our evaluative practices is an important aspect of values that relates them to practical reasoning but it does not suffice to distinguish values from related notions like emotions, preferences, and desires. Instead of attempting to find a precise definition of 'value', many authors presume that we have an intuitive, pre-theoretic grasp of what we find valuable or worthy in one sense or another and develop taxonomies on the basis of a rich existing vocabulary of value terms such as 'good', 'healthy', 'brave', 'virtuous', 'nice', and 'beautiful'.

Values are investigated in philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, and theology. In philosophy values are primarily studied within the field of value theory (axiology) as a part of metaethics that is concerned with the structure of rational 'better than' comparisons and those by similar gradable value adjectives, normative definitions of 'good' and the nature of goodness, the identification of positive and negative value relations and further distinctions like intrinsic versus extrinsic value, the connection between values and practical reasoning and, more broadly conceived, our evaluative practices. Much of the philosophical work on values is also concerned with their metaphysical status and with the relation between axiology and moral philosophy in the deontic and virtue-ethical traditions.

2. Fundamental Distinctions

In this section, a number of distinctions are laid out that are commonly found and debated in the axiological literature.

2.1. Value, Disvalue, Value Neutrality

'Value' can either be used as an umbrella term and further distinguished into positive and negative value or one may distinguish *value* from *disvalue*. If an item has value, then we say that it is good in some respect related to that particular value. Likewise, if an item has disvalue, then we say that it is bad in respect to that value. For example, a steak might be good for someone from the perspective of hedonic goodness because it provides pleasure and might be bad for the same person from the perspective of medical goodness because it increases the likelihood of cardiovascular diseases.

Items can also be *neutral* with respect to a particular value. For example, one may argue that some actions may be neither overall good nor overall bad. The extent to which neutral cases are allowed for different kinds of values and overall betterness is controversial and hinges on the presumed metaethical theory. A summing act-utilitarian might deny that actions can be neutral with respect to overall betterness, as this would contradict the principles that individual agents only act if they consider the perceived outcome of an action as good and that the overall level of utility of actions of a group is the sum of the utilities of actions by group members. In contrast to this, a political philosopher in the tradition of classical liberalism might consider an agent's action neutral with respect to overall betterness, as long as it does not impact the resources and freedom of others.

2.2. Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value

An item has *intrinsic value* if its evaluation only depends on the 'intrinsic nature' (Moore 1903) of the item under consideration, i.e., on the item's intrinsic properties. For example, according to Scanlon (1998) friendship has intrinsic value to humans independently of any additional positive effects that having friends might have. We value friendship for itself and not because it makes us feel better or because we benefit in other ways from our friends. This is evident, according to Scanlon, from the fact that we would not readily dump one friend in order to get twenty new friends; a person who did that would not be considered a real friend. In contrast to this, money is a typical example of something that we desire for its *extrinsic value*. While obtaining money may give us a good feeling, it only does so because it allows us to obtain *other* items that we value; it receives its value only by its function as an exchange medium, not because of its intrinsic properties. Another example of extrinsic value is the value we commonly attribute to items such as coins and antiques mainly because they are rare, since *being rare* is not an intrinsic value of any item.

2.3. Final Value and Value of Means (Non-final Value)

A related distinction is that between *final value* and the conditional value of a *means* to an end. For instance, a hedonist could claim that being healthy has no value on its own but is only valued because being healthy leads to more pleasure and deteriorating health may lead to pain. From a hedonist point of view pleasure and pain are final values, whereas being healthy is only good in virtue of its conduciveness to pleasure. As another example, for Kant good will has value for its own sake; it is not valuable because it serves as a means to an end but by being an end in itself. In contrast to this, happiness is in his view only good when it is attributed to a person with good will (Orsi 2015: 31-32). Value of means is also sometimes called *instrumental value* or *technical value*.

There is a seeming overlap of this distinction with intrinsic vs. extrinsic value. Money also has only value as a means of acquiring goods, whereas the final value could be happiness from an eudaimonological perspective or pleasure obtained from the possession of the acquired goods from a classic hedonist point of view, for instance. However, the distinction between final value and value of means concerns the means/end relation, i.e., a functional aspect of the evaluation relative to practical goals, whereas the distinction between intrinsic vs. extrinsic value concerns metaphysical aspects of the items under consideration and how we evaluate them. Therefore, the two distinctions need not coincide (see Korsgaard 1996; Kagan 1998; Parsons 2006).

Some authors like Orsi (2015) further distinguish conditional from unconditional value. The former depends in its having a value on the presence of some other value, whereas the latter does not. For example, friendship may be conditional on other values like happiness and altruism, yet be desirable for its own sake and thus a final value.

2.4. Observer- and Agent-Relative vs. Agent-Neutral Value

If *A* and *B* are two equally qualified competitors for a job and *A* gets the job and *B* does not, then the obtaining states of affairs is good for *A* and not good for *B*. The value of getting the job is relative to an agent because that agent is the *benefactor*, which may be expressed in this case by the phrase 'good for *A*'. However, values can also be relative to observers. For example, *C* and *D* may be *A* and *B* parents respectively, and then *A*'s obtaining the job may be judged good relative to *C* and bad relative to observer *D*. Many languages do not linguistically realize this interpretation of relative value in a clear way. For example, the phrase 'for *A*' may express a benefactor or a purpose but only in a more derived sense someone else's perspective (Cullity 2015: 98).

In contrast to observer-relative value, an agent- and observer-neutral value is supposed to be the same no matter which perspective is taken. For example, if one says that vaccination is good this might not necessarily be meant as stating that it is good for those people who

would be at risk of getting sick without vaccination. Instead, one may believe that, all things considered, the world has become a better place because of the herd immunity induced by general vaccination programs and the resulting general reduction of illness. In a similar vein, it is a possible moral viewpoint that democracy is good even in a world in which no country is democratic and thus no particular group benefits from democracy.

Whether there are relative and neutral values and whether one type of value can be explained by the other is an ancient topic of moral philosophy that is still hotly debated today.

2.5. Realism and Anti-Realism about Value

Questions about value realism and anti-realism concern the ontic status of values. Are values imaginary, social constructions, or real, and in which sense of these words? Do values only exist in the sense of being shared to some extent by some group or do they exist partly independently of humans? Value realists believe that at least certain values are real in a sense similar to how one might consider numbers real, and that the members of a group may be wrong about values or endorse values that do not exist. In contrast to this, an anti-realist about value would explain their being as psychological or social constructions, as depending in their existence on human nature in some essential way.

Realist conceptions of value need to explain how we access them, and positions range from a mystic insight into the good in Plato's *Politeia* to the perception of values as secondary qualities in McDowell (1985). Anti-realist conceptions of value split up into many different traditions such as expressivism, prescriptivism, alethic value relativism, moral contextualism, and social constructivism. There are also stances that defy this classification, for example it is controversial whether Berlin's (1969) 'objective pluralism' establishes a value-realist pluralism or should be considered a form of moral relativism despite Berlin's insistence that his position is not relativist.

It is possible to be a realist about relative value, for instance one could claim that nature is such that some form of pleasure is good for

one person but not for another (e.g. the pleasure of collecting stamps), and equally possible to be an anti-realist about agent-neutral value, for example when one defends the thesis that an assertion of "Bach's music is good" merely expresses a subjective taste without thereby implying that the utterance expresses the viewpoint that the music is good from the perspective of the speaker or assessor of the utterance only.

2.6. Multidimensionality, Thin and Thick Concepts

Aggregative value predicates like 'good' have been called thin, since they are purely evaluative and do not express descriptive conditions. Conversely, thick value predicates such as 'brave', 'courageous', and 'cruel' have been analyzed as expressing two components: an evaluative and a descriptive part. Being courageous is good and being cruel is bad, but these value judgments for themselves do not constitute courage and cruelty. Instead, an agent must fulfill some descriptive criteria for counting as courageous such as having a willingness to take risks and personal sacrifices without acting thoughtlessly. It is debated whether the evaluative part of thick value predicates is part of their meaning or whether it should be explained in pragmatic terms (Väyrynen 2013).

Although aggregative value predicates like 'good' are usually considered thin, there is compelling linguistic evidence that they are multidimensional (Sassoon 2013). In this context, multidimensionality means that the value predicate expresses – or, on a different view, a judgment corresponding to a use of the predicate is justified – on the basis of different evaluative criteria or reasons that are combined into an overall assessment. The step of combining the criteria is called *value aggregation* and studied in formal axiology, economics, and decision making. For example, when we say that a policy is good for society we usually mean that it is good for society in certain respects and that the goodness or badness of the policy results from a weighing or ranking of various criteria or reasons for and against the policy.

2.7. Value Monism vs. Value Pluralism

According to Bentham (1789), all other values such as being healthy or happiness are valuable only insofar as they are conducive or detrimental to pleasure and pain. Humans strive to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. This is an example of value monism, since in Bentham's utilitarianism pleasure and pain form one evaluative dimension to which all other types of value assessment are ultimately subordinated. Likewise, from the perspective of (monist) eudaimonology all other ways of evaluating items are subordinated to their role in being conducive to happiness, being detrimental to happiness, or being neutral about it.

In contrast to this, Mill's hedonism is sometimes portrayed as pluralist, since he distinguishes between higher and lower pleasures, which are qualitatively different from each other and may be in conflict (Mill 1861: Ch. 2). However, he argues that higher pleasures are always superior to lower pleasures and it may therefore be questioned whether he counts as a genuine value pluralist. Modern value pluralists emphasize the existence of qualitatively distinct values such Ross's distinction between innocent pleasure, virtue, and knowledge.

Without a monist value that subordinates them, qualitatively different values may be in conflict with each other and may lead to *moral dilemmas*. For example, Sartre (1946) discusses a resistance fighter torn between caring for his sick mother and the duty for his country. Since monists acknowledge the existence of other values, as evidenced by our rich vocabulary of evaluative predicates, and only claim that these are in one way or another secondary to a primordial value such as conduciveness to happiness or pleasure, it may be necessary to define pluralism as the possibility that justifiable strong value conflicts and moral dilemmas may occur when overall betterness comparisons are made.

3. General Philosophical Problems about Value

3.1. The Fitting Attitude Analysis of Value

An idea that goes back to Brentano (1889) is to analyze value as being the fitting object of a pro attitude, and correspondingly having a fitting con attitude for disvalue. This *Fitting Attitude Analysis of Value* (FA) has been endorsed by many authors such as Ross (1930), Ewing (1948), Chisholm (1986), Scanlon (1998), and Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004). The analysis can be understood as a way of reducing the axiological realm to deontic constraints. This may be thought to explain why values motivate in practical reasoning, namely by an agent's having a pro or con attitude such as desiring or avoiding, and it may be used to explain why values have normative force, namely by virtue of the requirement that the agent needs to have the 'right' or 'fitting' attitude. For instance, if something is good, it is fitting to desire it but not fitting to avoid it.

3.2. Moore on 'good' vs. the Buck-passing Account of Value

The *buck-passing account of value* (BP) was introduced as a reply to Moore (1903) by Scanlon (1998) and is based on the fitting attitude analysis. Moore (1903) famously argued that 'good' cannot be analyzed exhaustively because for an analysis such as 'being good means being desirable' one may ask whether being desirable is really good. Many philosophers consider this *Open Question* argument flawed. As a general thesis about any conceptual analysis it is sometimes called the *Paradox of Analysis* and many authors in the wake of Moore (1903) have argued that it does not constitute a genuine paradox and that the puzzle can be solved. For 'good' in particular, however, Mooreans accept the Open Question argument and consider goodness a primitive concept that cannot be analyzed any further. According to a Moorean conception of goodness, 'good' expresses the primitive first-order property of being good that is attributed to an item under consideration. One may also

defend the thesis that 'good' expresses a primitive concept independently from the Open Question argument and Moore's far-reaching critique of conceptual analysis.

In contrast to this, according to Scanlon (1998) we may 'pass the buck' from the axiological to the normative realm by explaining value in terms of reasons for having a fitting pro attitude. 'Good' does in this view not express a first-order property but only the second-order property of being such that there are reasons for having a fitting pro attitude. An item *x* is good if and only if there are reasons for having a fitting pro attitude towards it, and it is those reasons that ultimately account for the value of *x* and explain why we consider *x* good. Being good means giving reasons for having fitting pro attitudes.

Various objections have been raised against Scanlon's version of FA. On the one hand, the buck-passing account of value only seems to work for overall goodness and similar overall value assessments, but not for attributive uses of 'good' like in the phrase 'a good thief'. If a person is a good thief, this ought not give us reasons to admire that person or hold any other pro attitude towards her (Zimmerman 2015: 23). On the other hand, numerous authors have pointed out that there can be situations in which someone has the wrong kind of reasons for having a pro attitude. This is called the *Wrong Kind of Reasons Problem* (WKR). For example, as Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004) point out, an evil demon could threaten to cause great havoc unless we admire it. So we have reasons to admire the demon in order to avoid the harm it would otherwise cause, but we would not say that therefore the demon is good. In such cases the reasons for the pro attitude are of the 'wrong kind'. Many different attempts have been made to counter WKR and discern the right from the wrong kind of reasons.

Another possible reply to these problems is to give up the attempt to explain goodness in terms of other, normative notions like reasons for having pro attitudes. This does not necessarily imply that one has to defend a Moorean conception, for one might argue that multidimensional value predicates like 'good' (all things considered) can be explained in terms of other values as part of a multidimensional analysis of value. From this perspective, an overall use of 'good' is decomposed into a complex weighing or ranking of other attributes under the given reading

or 'covering consideration' (R. Chang) that are broadly-conceived evaluative. Such attributes can be costs and benefits, aesthetic appeal, being desired or being generally desirable, and being conducive to happiness, health, or well-being, for instance.

3.3. Values and Rational Choice

Values are choice-guiding but in which way? It is commonly thought that values guide an agent's choices insofar as the agent is rational only, but there is substantial disagreement about the way and the extent to which this guidance should take place and how related notions like emotions and desires interfere or help with decision making. On the one hand, practical reasoning theories in moral philosophy primarily take into account deontic principles about what one is permitted to do and what one is prohibited from doing, as well as plans and desires, whereas values enter the picture only in a second step by means of a fitting attitude analysis or by supporting plans and desires. In economics, on the other hand, the standard modeling is based on *preferences* and two major theses connect preferences and values. First, according to the *Preference Satisfaction Thesis* people generally choose what is best for them. Second, according to the *Revealed Preferences Thesis* of economists like Pareto (1906) and Samuelson (1947) preferences are revealed by an agent's choices. Both views have been criticized. As authors like Sen (1973) and Broome (1999: p. 4) have pointed out, the Preference Satisfaction Thesis is simply implausible in general. It is a fact of life that we do not always choose what is best for us. For instance, a smoker might prefer having a cigarette to not smoking at a given time, even though she knows that not smoking would be best for her. (However, an antipaternalist liberal might still wish to defend the principle as a guideline.) Methodological concerns have been raised against the Revealed Preference Thesis, too, and many economists and utilitarian philosophers like Harsanyi (1977) by now resort to the concept of 'informed preferences', i.e., preferences in the absence of akrasia and other hindering factors, that are obtained upon sincere reflection and with full access to all relevant information.

Many philosophers still do not consider informed preferences adequate as a representation of values, because (i) values may be more public and shared from the start, (ii) preferences and desire may lack the normativity of values, (iii) the formal structure of standard preferences does not allow for a ranking of values, for incompleteness, and for incommensurability, and (iv) standard preferences may be based on stricter rationality postulates than what our evaluative practices reveal. Therefore, formal axiologists have explored alternative value structure to some extent independently of the modeling in decision making and economics.

4. Key Problems of Value Structure

Besides more detailed questions, the main problems of value structure (formal axiology) are how to deal with incommensurability, noncomparability, and moral dilemmas, whether there are essentially only three overall value relations 'better than', 'equally good', and 'worse than' (Trichotomy Thesis), and what rationality constraints are satisfied by intrinsic betterness, for example, whether it is a transitive relation or not. Another important question of value structure is whether 'good' can be derived from 'better than' or, vice versa, betterness is obtained by comparing different 'amounts of goodness' in items.

4.1. Background

For brevity, we denote overall 'better than' by '$\succ$', 'equally good' by '$\sim$', and consider 'A is worse than B' as equivalent to $B \succ A$ (Unipolarity of Value). Given that, it is possible to define a single base relation '$\succcurlyeq$' as $A \succcurlyeq B$ if and only if $A \succ B$ or $A \sim B$. By the same token, if '$\succcurlyeq$' is taken as a basis, then the other relations can be defined from it as $A \succ B$ if and only if $A \succcurlyeq B$ and not $B \succcurlyeq A$, and $A \sim B$ if and only if $A \succcurlyeq B$ and $B \succcurlyeq A$. Relation $\succcurlyeq$ is complete (total) if and only if for any two items A, B we have either $A \succcurlyeq B$ or $B \succcurlyeq A$ (or both). Relation $\succcurlyeq$ is reflexive if and only if $A \succcurlyeq A$ for any item A. Relation $\succcurlyeq$ is transitive if and only if from $A \succcurlyeq B$ and $B \succcurlyeq C$ it follows that

A⪰C, for any items A,B,C. Regarding notation, it is also common to use 'P' for strict preference / better than, 'I' for indifference / equally good, and 'R' for at least as preferred as / better than or equally good.

If the relation ⪰ is complete, reflexive, and transitive then it is a complete preorder and also sometimes called a weak preference relation. In that case, ≻ defined as above is a strict preference relation. If the domain of items is finite or countably infinite, then a complete weak preference relation allows one to construct an ordinal utility function from items to real numbers such that the representation condition $u(A) \geq u(B) \Leftrightarrow A \succcurlyeq B$ is fulfilled. (For uncountable domains, some additional, more technical conditions need to be fulfilled.) It can be shown that if u represents a weak preference relation ⪰ in this way, then any increasing transformation of u also represents that preference relation. This means that utility differences of such an ordinal utility function and its actual numerical value for some item (its 'intensity') are meaningless, since they are not preserved under any such transformation. Ordinal utility functions are merely an alternative representation of the underlying preference relations.

In contrast to this, a cardinal utility function on an interval scale also represents an underlying preference function but in addition allows for comparing differences between utility levels. If a cardinal utility function u represents ⪰, then every linear transformation $u'(x)=au(x)+b$ for a>0 also represents ⪰. The linearity requirement of u' ensures that difference comparisons like $u(a)-u(b)>u(c)-u(d)$ remain valid for u'. In addition to this, when a utility function is defined on a ratio scale then the zero point $u(x)=0$ is meaningful. For example, temperature in Kelvin has an absolute zero and is thus based on a ratio scale.

It is an open question whether and which uses of overall 'better than' are based on ordinal or cardinal utility and, in case of the latter, whether there is a meaningful zero value or neutral zone. Many ethicists believe that the standard account of preferences cannot be adequate for 'better than'. However, it can be very difficult to explain phrases like 'extremely good' and 'much better' without cardinal utilities. Another problem is that in decision making under risk principles like the Expected Utility Principle, Maximin, and Minimax with Regret require the multiplication of quantified risk with utility, which presumes cardinal utility functions. The divergence of this 'standard' modeling and

philosophers' intuitions about the nature of betterness leads to many philosophically and technically challenging problems.

4.2. Incommensurability and Parity

Regarding overall 'better than' one may ask whether we can always judge about two items A and B whether A is better than B, B is better than A, or A and B are equally good. This holds according to the Trichotomy Thesis if in addition Unipolarity is presumed. Formally, this means that the relation '$\succcurlyeq$' (better than or equally good) is complete. However, the existence of moral dilemmas seems to indicate that sometimes we are unable to decide of two items in which of the three relations they are. This means that sometimes the overall comparison fails and thus $\succcurlyeq$ is not complete, written here as $A \| B$. A consequence of this seemingly small change is that transitivity may fail, because it may hold that $A \succcurlyeq B$ and $B \succcurlyeq C$ but $A \| C$. Another consequence is that the representation theorem for ordinal utility is weakened to $A \succcurlyeq B \Rightarrow u(A) \geq u(B)$.

Chang (2002) argues that Trichotomy fails because of some special type of incomparability called parity. For instance, the creativity of Michelangelo and the creativity of Bach cannot be compared directly but one might consider them on a par: Neither is one of them judged more creative than the other nor are they judged equally creative, since in that case a slightly more creative Michelangelo would have to be considered more creative (Small Improvements Argument). Instead, we would continue to judge them on a par with respect to creativity. Some authors like Broome argue that parity is just rough or vague equality but Chang discusses various counter-arguments against this analysis. Gert (2004) tries to give an account based on interval relations which falls prey to counter-arguments in Chang (2005). Rabinowicz (2012) defends an account based on sets of individual favorings of items that deviates far from the traditional modeling of 'better than'. A more conservative reply can be found in Carlson (2010), and the debate about parity is still ongoing.

4.3. Spectrum Arguments and Failure of Transitivity

Temkin (2012) and Rachels (1998) have devised arguments to show that overall betterness is not transitive, which are closely related to Parfit's Repugnant Conclusion. In a typical Spectrum Argument there are two value domains such as the intensity of hedonic pleasure and its duration, and their interplay generates some conflict that leads to a failure of transitivity. As an example, suppose that A is one year of very intense pleasure, B is five years of slightly less pleasure, C is ten years of slightly less pleasure, and so on. (Since pleasure could be replaced by welfare in such examples, their hedonistic underpinnings are irrelevant to the argument. Temkin (2012) provides many more examples in all domains of practical reasoning.) Then, according to Temkin and Rachels we would generally judge $B>A$, $C>B$, and so forth. However, at some point Z the level of pleasure would be so low as to become irrelevant and we might judge $A>Z$. This violates transitivity of $>$ and thus also that of $\succcurlyeq$. Variants of these spectrum cases and possible ways of salvaging the transitivity of betterness have been discussed extensively in the literature. An analogue discussion can be found in the literature on decision making such as Schumm (1987) and gave rise to nontransitive models of decision making such as Fishburn (1991).

Two cases of failure of transitivity need to be distinguished. The relation $\sim$ (equally good) may fail to be transitive, as Luce's (1956) coffee example illustrates. Suppose you think that black coffee is better than coffee with sugar and imagine there is one cup of coffee without sugar A, one with one grain of sugar B, one with two grains of sugar C, and so forth. Then you may judge $A\sim B$, $B\sim C$, $C\sim D$ but at some point Z notice the difference and judge $A>Z$. Thus, $\sim$ is not transitive and hence $\succcurlyeq$ is not transitive either. However, in that case the strict part $\succ$ may remain transitive. Although they change the utility representation, such examples can be dealt with by making $\succcurlyeq$ an interval ordering relation or, slightly weaker, a semiorder relation. Such a representation would occur naturally whenever there is uncertainty or there are measurement errors about 'equally good' or, in the preference setting, 'equipreference' which is also

sometimes called 'indifference'. In this case, strict betterness remains transitive, provided that '$\succcurlyeq$' is complete. In contrast to this, spectrum arguments aim at showing that strict betterness is not transitive, and therefore they are more devastating for decision making and much more at odds with our commonsense views about 'better than'. (Some authors use the term 'intransitivity' for Temkin's cases but this terminology should be avoided. A relation can fail to be transitive without being an intransitive relation.)

Many replies to Rachels's and Temkin's arguments focus on ways to defend the transitivity of strict betterness. Handfield (2016) argues that completeness should be given up. As laid out above, it may need to be given up because of moral dilemmas anyway. However, the idea that somewhere in the spectrum no pairwise comparison can be made seems unjustified. Nebel (2017) argues that spectrum cases constitute a reductio ad absurdum because it follows from the nontransitivity of 'better than' that the positivity of 'good' no longer holds, which would be absurd. Positivity is, mathematically speaking, a monotonicity condition that states that if A is good and $B>A$, then B is also good. Others like Voorhoeve (2013) argue that there is a change in the items that are compared and if the spectrum cases are formulated correctly, then 'better than' remains transitive. All of these proposed solutions are controversial and overall the problem remains open.

It is sometimes claimed that failure of transitivity implies that no rational decision can be made, and so it is worth noting that this view is incorrect. The minimal conditions for the choice-guidance of a (monist) value relation are laid out in the first chapters of Hansson (2001). In a particular decision situation with given set of items, *weak eligibility* is a condition that prescribes that there is at least one item A such that no other item is strictly better than A. In addition, weak eligibility is required to be top transitive: If $A{\sim}B$ and A is weakly eligible, then B is weakly eligible, too. For a finite number of items these conditions ensure that at least one item can be selected. Below the weakly eligible item(s) arbitrary cycles can occur that violate the transitivity of strict betterness. However, no general utility representation is available for models that only impose these minimal conditions and so it would be difficult to combine them with conceptions of cardinal betterness.

4.4. 'Good' in Terms of 'Better Than'

Another important problem of axiology is the definition of intrinsic 'good' in terms of intrinsic 'better than'. In an influential article Chisholm & Sosa (1966) criticize previous naive definitions as incorrect and lay out a logic of 'intrinsic better' based on five axioms and principles that distinguish good, bad, and neutral states of affairs. Similar accounts have been proposed for 'better than' and for logics of preference, see for instance Halldén (1957), B. Hansson (1968), and von Wright (1963). A general overview of this area can be found in Rønnow-Rasmussen & Zimmerman (2005).

The literature on preference logic is primarily concerned with comparisons between *combinative preferences*, i.e., comparisons by preferences between items such as state of affairs whose description uses logical connectives and may not be mutually exclusive (like in "I prefer fish with white wine over meat"). However, it is doubtful whether such comparisons make sense in general and it seems advisable to require preferences to be *exclusionary* for sound decision making. In contrast to this, the debate about intrinsic betterness focuses on the role of neutral states of affairs, the fruitfulness of the notion of intrinsic betterness, and the correctness of the proposed definitions. For example, Quinn (1977) objects to Chisholm & Sosa that their logic excludes the possibility of noncomparable items and S.O. Hansson (1990) allows nontransitive betterness. Another proposal by Carlson (2016) presumes that value bearers can be 'concatenated' akin to the way rulers are used for measuring length. This formal area of inquiry about values draws heavily from logic and from measurement theory in mathematics like Krantz et al. (1971, 1989, 1990).

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II.
Nietzsche Studies

Questioning Introspection: Nietzsche and Wittgenstein on "The Peculiar Grammar of the Word 'I'"

Maria João Mayer Branco

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Mais vous qui doutez de tout et ne pouvez douter
de vous-même, qui êtes-vous?
René Descartes, *La recherche de la vérité*

I.

In spite of considerable differences in their thought, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein share a philosophical interest in common problems and an "unconventional" way of treating them that justifies approaching these thinkers together. In his Introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, Hans Sluga speaks of Wittgenstein in terms that could easily apply to Nietzsche, highlighting "the unconventional cast of his mind, the radical nature of his philosophical proposals, and the experimental form he gave to their expression".[1] Sluga goes on to compare Wittgenstein's reception with Nietzsche's, arguing that "both have been acclaimed as new starting points in philosophy and both have been dismissed as not really being philosophers at all."[2]

It is certainly true, as Robert B. Pippin has recently emphasized, that "both Ludwig Wittgenstein and Nietzsche were trying to say something about what it might mean for philosophy itself to come to an end, for a culture to be 'cured' of philosophy"[3]. According to this view, there is a close affinity between the two thinkers in that they agree that "there is no such thing as philosophical theory", although there could still be philosophers and attempts at "conventional restatements" of their thinking are "understandable"[4]. Their work can in fact be said to

1 Sluga (1996), p. 1.

2 Sluga (1996), p. 29.

3 Pippin (2010), p. xiv. Pippin refers to Bernard Williams paper "Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology", published in Schacht (1994), pp. 237-247.

4 Pippin (2010), pp. xiv.

constitute an effort to "avoid doctrines"[5], particularly every doctrine's main metaphysical assumption: the assumption of a conceptual "supra-individuality" or universality, immune to the conditions of communication, that is to say, the assumption that a theory could ever use concepts that might be neutral and independent from their use and users. Moreover, both thinkers refuse to build systems (Nietzsche: "I distrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity", TI Arrows and Epigrams 26), they both renounce all theory (Wittgenstein: "The difficulty of renouncing all theory: One has to regard what appears so obviously incomplete, as something complete", RPP §723), and by doing this they both conceive of philosophy as the manifestation of a "continuousness of critical energy, never itself quite housed within theses and doctrines"[6].

Bringing these two philosophers together from this perspective implies situating them within a precise moment of the history of philosophy. It requires recognising that their philosophical proposals belong to the moment where the status of metaphysics as 'first philosophy' was questioned and where philosophy proved once again to be a problem for itself. This critical moment corresponds to the interrogation of what grounds philosophical activity and to what extent its existence still makes sense and contributes for the development of Western culture. Nevertheless, when it comes to their understanding and expectations in regard to philosophy, Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's positions are quite distant from each other, or at least show differences that can by no means be diminished. In fact, while Nietzsche worries about the threat that modern nihilism and philistinism represent for the "philosophers of the future" (e.g., BGE 42) and hence still considers philosophy to be a means for the overcoming of cultural diseases, Wittgenstein speaks of his work as "one of the heirs of the subject that used to be called philosophy" (*Blue Book* — BLBK, p. 28)[7], thereby indicating that he understands philosophical anxieties as something of the past and philosophers of today as beings whose task,

5 See Stegmaier (1995).

6 Eldridge (1997), pp. 14-15.

7 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, "The Blue Book", in Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations", Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books, Second Edition (1969), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1998, p. 28.

experiences and problems are infinitely more modest, more prosaic or less "tragic" than what Nietzsche expected or hoped for.[8]

The affinities and differences between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein certainly deserve more attention than they have received so far, as comparative studies of these philosophers remain scarce[9]. It is certainly true, as Marco Brusotti has recently and convincingly shown, that we cannot speak of a direct influence of Nietzsche on Wittgenstein[10]. Textual references to Nietzsche or quotations from his work do not abound in Wittgenstein's writings. Those that exist clarify Wittgenstein's position regarding the ideas that he attributes to Nietzsche, as well as his evaluation of Nietzsche's historical significance and importance in the intellectual atmosphere of his age, particularly within the Vienna Circle. But obviously the absence of a direct influence of one thinker over another does not necessarily imply that comparing their views on specific themes cannot be philosophically valuable.

The aim of this paper is to contribute comparative study of these

8 This seems to be clear in one of the rare occasions in which Wittgenstein's writings explicitly mention Nietzsche: "There are problems I never tackle, which do not lie in my path or belong to my world. Problems of the intellectual world of the West which Beethoven (& perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled & wrestled with but which no philosopher has ever confronted (perhaps Nietzsche passed close to them). [...] In this world (mine) there is no tragedy & with that all the endlessness that gives rise to tragedy (as its result) is lacking / It is as though everything were soluble in the ether; there are no harnesses / This means that hardness & conflict do not become something splendid but a defect / Conflict is dissipated in much the same way as is the tension of a spring in a mechanism that you melt (or dissolve in nitric acid). In this solution tensions no longer exist." Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Culture and Value, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1998, pp. 11-12.

9 Although it is possible to find references to Nietzsche in work done by Wittgenstein scholars — e.g., Sluga (1996); Cavell (1979, rep. 1999) and, more recently, Cavell in Day/Krebs (2010), p. 86; Mulhall (2007), pp. 109, 113-114; Schulte (2013) —, a substantial comparative study of both is still missing (to our knowledge, Gordon Bearn's Waking to Wonder (1997) and Glen T. Martin, From Nietzsche to Wittgenstein: the problem of truth and nihilism in the modern world (1989) are some of the (not so recent) and rare works that discuss Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's philosophical views). Nevertheless, we can find recent work by Wittgenstein scholars on Nietzsche— Sluga in Young (2015); Mulhall in Came (2014) and Mulhall (2013) — but less on Wittgenstein by Nietzsche scholars, apart from the recent and valuable work done by Marco Brusotti (2009 and 2014).

10 Brusotti (2009).

philosophers by focusing on the concrete topic of subjectivity. Underlying this aim there are two main ideas. The first is that despite the fact that they are both highly critical of the philosophical tradition — which is manifest in Nietzsche's positions against his predecessors and in Wittgenstein's rare references to the history of philosophy, writing almost as if he was the first philosopher on Earth[11] —, their thought should be understood in the light of their specific historical-philosophical contexts. This is not to suggest that their work must be "incorporated into traditional philosophical theory"[12], but it does imply that their critical positions with regard to traditional answers to certain philosophical problems are a way of coming to terms with them. Despite their originality and unconventionality, it remains true that their work emerges from a dialogue and engagement with the work of previous philosophers, particularly from the Cartesian tradition. The first assumption of this article is hence that Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's views on the problem of subjectivity involve an engagement with the philosophical tradition, even if this engagement is fundamentally critical and the views they put forward are fundamentally new.

The second idea underling this article concerns the theme that suggests a greater affinity between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, which is language. Wittgenstein's interest in Nietzsche was mostly focused on Nietzsche's approach to ethical and cultural questions and it is doubtful whether he had any interest in Nietzsche's critique of language,[13] but it is nevertheless undeniable that there are crucial similarities in their understanding of language and these similarities concern aspects of their thought that determine the whole of their philosophical inquiries and, particularly, their views on subjectivity.

I shall start by briefly summarizing the Cartesian conception of the self in order to clarify Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's common point of departure. I shall then analyze, in separate sections, their criticisms of Cartesianism by focusing mainly on Nietzsche's Daybreak, Beyond Good and Evil, Twilight of the Idols and The Gay Science and on Wittgenstein's

11 According to Cavell, "The call upon history will seem uncongenial with Wittgenstein. He seems so ahistorical. — He is ahistorical the way Nietzsche is atheistical." Cavell (1979, rep. 1999), p. 370.

12 Pippin (2010), p. xv.

13 Brusotti (2009).

famous 'private language argument' (PI, Part I, §§ 243-315), as well as on crucial passages from his *Blue Book*. By showing that those criticisms are grounded on the attention both thinkers pay to language, I shall try to clarify the reasons for their rejection of introspection. These are at the basis of the proposals that they put forward in opposition to the traditional understanding of subjectivity. More precisely, I shall argue that the experience of immediacy and self-coincidence of the subject, which both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein analyze through the example of the experience of suffering or of being in pain, is not a moment where the truth about who we are reveals itself, but a moment where we lose track of what such 'truth' might signify. In other words, by focusing in the experience of suffering, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein show that in it the subject comes to realize, not the 'truth' about his identity, but rather the degree in which the latter depends on the existence of other subjects. The paper will then conclude with a contrast between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's views on the possibility of self-knowledge.

II.

Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's reflections on the modern conception of the subject or of the 'I'[14] can be said to have the same philosophical starting point. As has been already claimed, they both belong to "a kind of brotherhood of modern anti-Cartesians"[15] since they question the philosophical treatment of the self as a truth or the truth upon which it might be possible to ground the totality of knowledge. In other words, they question the *(ego) cogito* as a self-grounded, immediate certainty, as knowledge that is supposed to be free from all doubt, and instead is certain

14 The specific sense of each of these terms will not be distinguished here since Nietzsche and Wittgenstein seem to use them indistinctively when dealing with questions of subjectivity (also resorting to the words 'ego', 'consciousness', 'self' and 'soul', for example). This does not, of course, imply that all these terms have equivalent meanings or that they don't deserve further and more careful examination, but rather that they will be here treated as variations of the general topic at stake.

15 Pippin, p. 77. See also Pier (2015). On such "brotherhood" and Nietzsche's explicit place on it, see Sluga (1996), p. 327.

and capable of making the 'I' correspond to the truth, or to true being.

Descartes has famously introduced this conception of the self by arguing that "this proposition, 'I am, I exist', whenever it is uttered by me, or conceived in the mind, is necessarily true"[16]. Descartes contrasted the certainty of the subject's self-knowledge with the doubtfulness of knowledge about external realities. While knowledge of phenomena belonging to the outer world is dependent on the mediation of the senses and thus remains always uncertain, the thinking subject can perceive itself immediately, that is, by introspective insight or intuition, being, therefore, beyond doubt. Thus, according to Descartes, introspection guarantees epistemological certainty and it provides what he considers to be 'first knowledge', that is to say, the foundation or the ground for any other kind of knowledge. Furthermore, introspection presupposes that the subject is capable of somehow withdrawing from the external world in order to achieve a state of self-consciousness independent from his physical or bodily existence. In other words, the Cartesian *(ego) cogito* is a metaphysical reality, is devoid of extension and hence distinguished from the *res extensa*, is self-sufficiently and immediately self-conscious, and is fundamentally characterized by the capacity to think. The 'I' corresponds, therefore, to a thinking subject that exists separately from the external world. The latter cannot be reached without mediation and its existence is thus doubtful. Self-knowledge, by contrast, is certain, immediate and self-grounded, and this certainty amounts to truthfulness: "I am therefore, speaking precisely, only a thinking thing, that is, a mind, or a soul, or an intellect, or a reason (…). I am therefore a true thing, and one that truly exists (…)"[17].

What the "brotherhood of anti-Cartesians" to which Nietzsche and Wittgenstein belong mainly criticize in Cartesianism[18] is, in the

16 Descartes (2008), pp. 13-17.

17 Descartes (2008), p. 19.

18 It is worth noticing two things about what I call here "anti-Cartesianism", namely that in spite of their criticisms 'anti-Cartesians' owe a great deal to Descartes (concerning Nietzsche and Descartes, see Isabelle Wienand's chapter in this volume), and that "Cartesianism" here corresponds to a generalisation of Descartes's philosophical views that is not completely fair to the author because, as Garry L. Hagberg has correctly pointed out, it means a set of "metaphysically dualistic views" that were not explicitly advanced by Descartes. See Hagberg (2008), "Introduction: The Cartesian Legacy", p. 3.

first place, the ontological conception of the subject that transforms the self into a metaphysical substance completely transparent to itself and detached from the world in which it lives.[19] This conception of the self not only denies the self's bodily and physical constitution by conceiving it as a pure interiority that can only be grasped through inward intuition. It also allows for the conception of the world as will and representation, as in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (who, as is well-known, was a decisive influence on both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, such that Nietzsche's thought can be seen as a long-term attempt to overcome Schopenhauer's pessimism, and Wittgenstein's thought, a long-term attempt to overcome Schopenhauer's solipsism[20]). Secondly, anti-Cartesianism rejects another important consequence of Descartes's solipsistic views of the self, namely the ego's self-sufficiency. Anti-Cartesianism questions the epistemology of Cartesian self-knowledge by criticizing the way it draws the line between subject and world and renders not only the existence of physical objects doubtful, but also the existence of other minds, from which, according to Descartes, the existence of the thinking subject is considered to be completely independent. Against this view of an 'I' that is absolutely isolated from other selves, the anti-Cartesian conception of the 'I' will argue for an 'I' that is constituted in relation to others and has a fundamentally constitutive social dimension[21]. In the case of the authors here at stake, this dimension is mainly considered through the analysis of the role that language plays in the constitution of the subject. Both for Nietzsche and Wittgenstein there is a fundamental (and also problematic) linguistic or conceptual connection between the individual subject and an intersubjective linguistic common space that Descartes failed to acknowledge, but whose epistemological importance, they argue, can by no means be neglected and allows for a different, non-Cartesian account of what is at stake in what we call the 'I'.

I shall argue that Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's main criticism addresses Descartes's claim that there is immediate access of the subject

19 See Lacoue-Labarthe (2012), pp. 7-21.

20 See Hagberg (2008), chapter 1 and Glock (1996), pp. 348-352.

21 For a development of the social dimension of Nietzsche's views on the self, see Cristina Fornari's and Herman Siemens' chapters in this volume.

to itself, i.e. the supposed immediacy involved in the experience of introspection, as well as the presupposition that such an experience is the ground of all specifically human relationships with an external world. The rejection of immediate introspection entails several other criticisms that the authors develop with different consequences, but that nevertheless present some affinities. In effect, if, as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein argue, the I is not immediately available to itself, than it is not prior to any other experience and the refusal of its immediacy entails the rejection of its anteriority, as well as of its foundational and unconditioned status. On the other hand, the rejection of immediacy also entails a questioning of the self's transparency to itself, that is to say, of the possibility of a direct, neutral, access of ourselves to ourselves. Hence, by rejecting introspective immediacy, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein propose that the 'I' is not an object of immediate intuition, that is to say, that it cannot know itself instantaneously by means of a peculiar inward vision. They both conceive of the 'I' as emerging from a process that requires time and reject that it can be immediately present in introspective moments and reveal itself as an immutable, self-coincident entity. This, in turn, implies that they both put to question not only its immediacy, anteriority, transparency, and instantaneity, but also its interiority. Thus, both for Nietzsche and for Wittgenstein, the self is not a hidden or concealed entity, or a inner, invisible and inexpressible substance available only to itself. By questioning the self's epistemological immediacy, transparency and interiority, they will insist on the possibility that self-knowledge is rather an indirect, mediated access of the 'I' to itself in which language plays a decisive role. Consequently, they will convert the Cartesian ontology of the ego and its epistemological claims into a linguistic or grammatical question that brings to light the opaque but also public nature of selfhood.

On the other hand, by showing Descartes's disregard for the constitutive role played by language in the very process of philosophical thinking, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein clarify the reasons why that negligence made Descartes overlook the limitations of his own account of the thinking subject. As their criticisms make clear, the Cartesian views on the 'I' were determined by Descartes's rather naive reliance on

linguistic transparency. By shifting the perspective towards the linguistic "prejudices" (Nietzsche) or "bewilderments" (Wittgenstein) that led to the Cartesian account of the self, they bring the question of subjectivity back to its starting point and make the 'I' a philosophical problem yet to be resolved. By doing so, they propose new ways of dealing with it that are grounded on the conviction that the human subject has an irrevocable linguistic constitution and is, therefore, inextricably linked to the existence of other subjects.

III.

Nietzsche's criticisms of the Cartesian subject are often expressed in his writings from the year of 1885 and they become explicit in Part I of *Beyond Good and Evil*, titled "On the Prejudices of Philosophers". In BGE 16, without naming Descartes, Nietzsche writes:

> There are still harmless self-observers who believe in the existence of "immediate certainties," such as "I think" (…): just as if knowledge had been given an object here to seize, stark naked, as a "thing-in-itself," and no falsification took place from either the side of the subject or the side of the object. But I will say this a hundred times: "immediate certainty," like "absolute knowledge" and the "thing in itself" contains a *contradictio in adjecto*. For once and for all, we should free ourselves from the seduction of words! (BGE 16)

These lines present Nietzsche's two main claims against the Cartesian *cogito*. They develop, firstly, a refutation of its epistemological immediacy, a refutation of the "immediate certainty" or "nakedness" of the "I think". Nietzsche refuses the supposed transparency of the thinking subject by arguing that the *cogito* is not an immediate object to himself because it is given in language and language 'falsifies'. And this entails a second claim: introspection does not give evidence of the existence of the I as a simple and stable unity, so that the 'I' is in fact given as complex and opaque.

Contrary to what the word 'I' seems to indicate, the 'I' is only given as a dynamic complexity. The linguistic concept 'I' abstracts from this complexity, thereby convincing us of a simplicity and unity that are false, that are linguistic falsifications. This is Descartes's "naiveté" regarding the word 'I', a naiveté that made him accept without further questioning a set of pre-conceptions about the "I think" that are "difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish" (BGE 16), namely:

> that *I* am the one who is thinking, that there must be something that is thinking in the first place, that thinking is an activity and the effect of a being who is considered the cause, that there is an 'I,' and finally, that it has already been determined what is meant by thinking, — that I *know* what thinking is." (BGE 16/JGB 16)

Hence, Nietzsche's questioning of the immediacy and simplicity or unity of the 'I think' entails the questioning of the very existence of a stable entity that thinks and that is the condition of the act of thinking or, in logical terms, its cause. In other words, by questioning the unity and simplicity of the Cartesian 'I', Nietzsche ends up questioning its causality, that is to say, the precedence of a neutral and permanent substance that is supposed to be the cause of all thoughts. By doing this, Nietzsche undermines Descartes' demand for certainty, that is, for an indubitable ground of all knowledge to be found by self-observation. He casts doubt onto the radicality with which Descartes led his entire philosophical inquiry, accusing him of being "superficial" (BGE 191) because he did not draw the ultimate consequences of his own methodological proposal[22]. Descartes was a victim of the "prejudices of philosophers", namely because he was a-critically seduced by the simplicity of the word "I"[23] and because he simply established without

22 As Nietzsche puts it in 1887, following Descartes's path, "one does not reach something absolutely certain, but only a very strong belief" (1887 10[158], KSA 12.549, my translation).

23 See 1884-1885, KSA 11, 40[23], where Nietzsche mentions Descartes's falling into "the trap of words" not realising that "cogito is just a word but it means something multiple".

further questioning that "the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think'" (BGE 16)[24].

Nietzsche's more general point is that the Cartesian conception of the self suffers from the tendency to establish a "logical-metaphysical postulate" such as "when there is thinking, there ought to be something that 'thinks'" that is nothing but "an expression of our grammatical habit which adds a doer to every deed" (1887 10[158], KSA 12.549, my translation; see also BGE 17). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche further develops the consequences of these "grammatical habits" for philosophy by arguing that they force us "to make use of unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, objectification, being" (TI Reason 5). They are a result of the "presuppositions of the metaphysics of language", which

> sees doers and deeds all over; (…) it believes in the 'I', in the I as being, in the I as substance, and it *projects* this belief in the I-substance onto all things – this is how it creates the concept 'thing' in the first place… Being is imagined into everything – pushed under everything – as a cause; the concept of 'being' is only derived from the concept of 'I'… (TI Reason 5)

Nietzsche's claim is that language is an "advocate for error" (TI Reason 5), that it fosters, among other errors, the "error of false causation" (TI Errors 3) according to which the "realm of 'inner facts'" is a realm of causes (consciousness being the cause of actions and the 'I' the cause of thoughts — TI Errors 3). But for Nietzsche this realm of 'inner facts' that we place beyond doubt has not at all been proven to exist. In fact, it is "full of illusions and phantasms" and has become "a fiction, a

24 On the "fictions" of causality and unity denounced in BGE 16, see Patrick Wotling's analysis in La pensée du sous-sol. Statut et structure de la psychologie dans la philosophie de Nietzsche, Éditions Allia, Paris, 1999, pp. 26 ff. See also Giuliano Campioni's chapter in this volume, which shows the important influence of French authors such as Bourget, Stendhal, Taine and Ribot and of the theory of the 'petits faits vrais' on Nietzsche's critique of the "atomism of the soul" (BGE 12), a critique, moreover, that is crucial for Nietzsche's diagnosis of European nihilism and décadence. Campioni extensively develops this reading in Campioni (2001).

play on words"[25] (TI Errors 3). So, Descartes's *cogito* corresponds to an "objectification" (TI Reason 5) of the 'I' that results from linguistic prejudices and not from an immediate (self-)knowledge that could guarantee epistemological certainty. In fact, an immediate knowledge of the 'I' is not at all possible precisely because knowledge is always mediated by language, including the knowledge of our 'inner world'. Accordingly, we can refer to 'inner facts' only by using "the words that lie to hand" (D 257), and we should doubt that words adequately represent such 'inner' reality.

In the famous aphorism of *Daybreak* titled "The so-called 'ego'" (D 115), Nietzsche had already called attention to the fact that

> language and the prejudices upon which language is based are a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes and drives: because of the fact, for example, that words only exist for superlative degrees of these processes and drives; and where words are lacking, we are accustomed to abandon exact observation because exact thinking there becomes painful (…) We are none of us that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have consciousness and words (…) (D 115)

Three things deserve discussion in this passage: i) Nietzsche treats language as a "hindrance", ii) he states that where words lack exactness, thinking becomes painful, and iii) he equates consciousness with words. Let us start by this third aspect that is perhaps the most crucial for understanding Nietzsche's counter-proposal to the Cartesian *cogito*. He develops it at length in section 354 of *The Gay Science*, the text where Nietzsche more extensively develops his conception of consciousness, and where he concludes with the assertion that his interest in consciousness has nothing to do with "the opposition between subject and object":

25 On Nietzsche's scepticism regarding knowledge of the inner world and Lange's decisive influence on Nietzsche in this respect, see Gori's, Jensen's and Constâncio's chapters in this volume. For a discussion of the three chapters, see the Introduction.

> I leave that opposition to those epistemologists who have got tangled up in the snares of grammar (or folk metaphysics). Even less am I concerned with the opposition between 'thing in itself' and appearance: for we 'know' far too little to even be entitled to *make* that distinction. We simply have no organ for *knowing*, for 'truth' (...) (GS 354)

Thus, Nietzsche refuses conceiving of consciousness as a 'thing', as an object for a knowing subject.[26] On the other hand, as already seen, he also does not conceive of consciousness as a metaphysical substance, as a thing in itself located beyond worldly appearances and that could only be reached by a special kind of 'organ for knowing'. He presents his interpretation of consciousness as an "extravagant conjecture" (GS 354) according to which "our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and, as it were, to place them outside of ourselves, has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs" (GS 354).[27] In other words, Nietzsche's "extravagant" view is that consciousness is very far from implying the subject's withdrawal into itself, or into silent concentration and inward-observation, and in fact involves the capacity to externalize 'inner facts' by finding a *medium* to convey them, i.e. to the "*ability to communicate*" (GS 354). Put differently, Nietzsche's suggestion is that consciousness is not placed inside but outside the subject because it corresponds not to one's effort of becoming transparent to oneself, but rather to the effort of becoming understandable to others. Consciousness therefore depends on communication, and to a very important degree, on language.

26 Consciousness is, according to Nietzsche, more a "process" than an "entity", as João Constâncio points out in his reading of GS 354, calling attention to the fact that GS 354 explicitly refers to the gradual becoming aware of oneself and of one's inner states ("Sich-Bewusst-Werden"). See Constâncio (2012) in Constâncio/Branco (2012), pp. 197-231.

27 In his work Le colombe dello scetico. Riflessioni di Nietzsche sulla coscienza negli anni 1880-1888, Luca Lupo develops a careful analysis of GS 354 insisting on the relation between consciousness, language and experience and clarifying the views that Nietzsche puts forward in that text through the reading of important notes from the Nachlass of the same period. See Lupo (2006), esp. pp. 185-202.

This dependence, however, raises the first problem mentioned above, namely that "language and the prejudices upon which language is based are a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes" (D 115). More precisely, it raises several problems which Nietzsche dealt with in his earlier writings and that are at the basis of his criticisms of language.[28] The first of these criticisms is that words are abusive generalisations which treat different things as if they were identical. Nietzsche analysed this difficulty in *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*, where he showed that words fix in general abstractions the incommensurable multiplicity of what exists, taking what is different to be identical. By unifying distinct and irreducible things in identical terms and naming each individual object with words that apply to several objects, i.e. with words that are general or common, language fails to do justice to each thing or object and, therefore, "lies". But in addition to preventing the apprehension of singular objects, language also hinders the expression of human individuality.[29] By "overlooking what is individual (*das Uebersehen des Individuellen*)" (TL 1), words presuppose "similar experiences" in different individuals (BGE 268). Therefore, by expressing what is "similar" or "common" ("base", *gemein* – BGE 268), words "falsify and corrupt" what Nietzsche designates as the most "personal" aspect of ourselves (NL 1885-86, KSA 12, 1[202], my translation). For this reason, he claims,

> (...) all communication by words is shameless; words dilute and make stupid; words depersonalise (*entpersönlicht*); words make the exceptional (*das Ungemeine*) base (*gemein*)" (NL 1887, KSA 12, 10[60], Kaufmann's translation, modified).

28 I have developed this problem elsewhere, and here I shall only summarize some of the points made in Branco (2012) in Constâncio/Branco (2012), pp. 233-253. On Nietzsche's views on language, see Constâncio/Branco (2011) and Constâncio/Branco (2012).

29 In a recent paper, Jonh Richardson analyses Nietzsche's critical judgments on language and distinguishes Nietzsche's two "complaints" against it: the first is a general "epistemic" complaint that has to do with language's "referential use" regarding objects (it equates different objects); the second is an "existential" one, that concerns language's "expressive use" and regards the way words "harm our individuality" by "commonizing" it. See Richardson (2015).

Thus language falsifies because it equates different objects and because it de-individualizes us. Additionally, Nietzsche also identifies a third problem. Language is not just a moving away or deviation from things. By corrupting singularities and falsifying what is unique it creates a new reality, or rather, it creates appearances which are later taken to be truths. Insisting on the discrepancy between language and reality, between language and truth, Nietzsche highlights the absence of neutrality that is characteristic of the first: words are human creations with a history and a context, such that prejudices are implicitly sedimented in them but the passing of time makes us inattentive to that fact. We forget that we invented those words on the basis of particular experiences and perspectives and use them as if language restored things to us in a neutral way. Therefore, Nietzsche dismisses the idea of a coincidence between language and reality and conceives of their relation not as one of adequacy, but rather as a creative one involving what he calls "errors", "falsities", "fictions" or "lies". Words do not restore things, they create them (GS 58); and this is why, in spite of the many objections Nietzsche raises against language, he does not understand its inadequacy only as a failure, or only as the impossibility of expressing things, an assertion of the ultimate unutterability of what is. What Nietzsche's philosophy shows is that there is no "truth" beyond linguistic articulation and that "*what things are called* is unspeakably more important than what they are" (GS 58). The problem is that

> the reputation, name, and appearance, the worth, the usual measure and weight of a thing — originally almost always something mistaken and arbitrary (…) — has, through the belief in it, and its growth from generation to generation, slowly grown onto and into the thing and has become its very body: what started as appearance in the end nearly always becomes essence and *effectively acts* as its essence! (GS 58)

As initially underlined, this is one of Nietzsche's main criticisms of Descartes' (*ego) cogito* and it brings us back to *Daybreak* 115 and to the idea that "language and the prejudices upon which language is based are

a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes" and that "where words are lacking, we are accustomed to abandon exact observation". Nietzsche's first point is that we live in the reality created by language, in the linguistic illusions that we no longer perceive as such because we cling to them and become habituated to them as if they told the truth, even about the most irreducible of facts, the 'inner facts' that constitute what we take to be our singularity, the uniqueness of our individuality. His second point, however, is that outside or beyond that linguistically created reality, that is to say, "where words are lacking", we abandon "exact observation (*genau zu beobachten*)" (D115). Even more precisely, his idea is that we abandon exact observation "because exact thinking there becomes painful (*weil es peinlich ist, dort noch genau zu denken*)" (D 115). Simply put, where words are lacking thinking becomes difficult. The lack of words prevents "exact thinking", which means that it promotes its opposite, i.e. impreciseness, confusion or obscurity, uncomfortable situations that put us in a "painful" state from which we feel the need to free ourselves. Hence, if it is true that language equates what is different, and if it furthermore vulgarizes our individuality and fosters prejudice and habit preventing exact observation, it is also true that where language fails we are faced not with the ideal transparency of thought that words are supposed to hinder, but with the impossibility to think clearly. Put differently, where words are lacking, and particularly where they are lacking and "we want to explain inner processes" (D 115), we must deal with a painful state of confusion that precludes precise expression and communication — with the state, that is, of isolation.

Nietzsche describes this state in the text that immediately precedes the one just quoted and which is dedicated to "the knowledge acquired through suffering" (D 114). There he considers suffering as a state of immediate self-presence where the subject cannot fail to identify his 'inner facts' because the sufferer "lies there before himself stripped of all colour and plumage" (D 114). It is therefore a state that recalls Nietzsche's description of Descartes's thinking subject and where this subject presents itself to itself "stark naked, as a 'thing-in-itself'" (BGE 16), as well as a state about which no doubt can be raised. However, according to Nietzsche, this state is not desirable, but intolerable. It is the state of extreme individuation where the subject coincides with itself but finds

such self-coincidence unbearable. Suffering "separates", as Nietzsche claims (BGE 270), it distinguishes and arises a "silent arrogance" in the sufferer and the "certainty" that he knows what nobody else can know (BGE 270, D 114). Nevertheless, however valuable and "noble" (BGE 270) this state may be — and there certainly is an abundance of texts in which Nietzsche claims that this state has a crucial differentiating and ennobling effect on the human body and soul —, it demands "relief" (D 114). Its "antidote" is "to become estranged from ourself and depersonalised, after pain (*der Schmerz*) has for too long and too forcibly made us *personal*" (D 114).

Pain is where we experience the most radical transparency to ourselves, where we become more "personal" or more individualised, more distinct from any other individual. Precisely for this reason, it is the state where we most clearly feel that words are lacking, such that there seems to be an almost absolute coincidence between what we feel and what we are. This is what makes that state so difficult to communicate, so difficult to share with someone else. When we are suffering, we cannot be mistaken about the pain that we feel and, therefore, error and illusion seem almost impossible here, so that we seem to have reached precisely the kind of immediate knowledge that words were supposed to hinder according to Nietzsche. And yet we do not want to remain in this state. In other words, in this situation where it seems that we finally achieve direct, immediate access to ourselves and to our 'inner world', we wish for "depersonalisation", for "disguises" or "masks" (BGE 270) that may protect us from the painful state of being totally exposed — and totally lost or detached from the rest of the world, totally separate from every other individual. Nietzsche claims in BGE 289 that "every word is a mask", meaning that it conceals or protects at the same time that it communicates or speaks. Language hides or hinders, but it does not hide a meta-linguistic secret essence; it hides what it reveals, because it is a medium, something that impedes direct access but that, at the same time, connects (a "net" — as in GS 354). Language separates what it binds together, i.e. each individual from others and the individual from itself[30] allowing it to distance itself from what is happening to it in order to see and think more exactly.

30 See Hamacher (1986).

Hence, in spite of his criticisms of language, Nietzsche seems to admit of situations where linguistic falsification and the commonality or depersonalisation that it promotes are not only desirable, but highly valuable because they serve an imperative need. For this reason, if Nietzsche conceives of consciousness as a development of the "*ability to communicate*", Nietzsche also stresses that "the ability to communicate, in turn, [developed from] to *need to communicate*" (GS 354). Extreme situations of suffering as the one mentioned in D 114 are analogous to the ones from which consciousness developed and which are described in GS 354, i.e. painful situations of danger and vulnerability, situations where human survival is at stake. Accordingly, Nietzsche writes that

> as the most endangered animal, [man] *needed* help and protection, he needed his equals; he had to express his neediness and be able to make himself understood — and to do so, he first needed 'consciousness', i.e. even to 'know' what distressed him, to 'know' how he felt, to 'know' what he thought. (GS 354)

The painful state of not being able to think "exactly" which Nietzsche refers in *Daybreak* can thus be considered a state of self-coincidence and transparency, but one that reveals not the subject's auto-sufficiency, but rather its need, its dependence on a medium even when it wants to know what it feels and thinks. We need words that separate us from ourselves and through which we gain distance from and become conscious of our own ('inner') experiences. This is why Nietzsche conceives of consciousness, not as the capacity to know by identifying something that lies, so to say, silently within our minds, but as a development of the need to "place outside" our 'inner facts', to communicate them. Consequently, "consciousness is really just a net connecting one person with another" (GS 354). Nietzsche's conclusion is thus twofold: on the one hand, "the development of language and the development of consciousness (…) go hand in hand", and, on the other hand, "only as a social animal did man learn to become conscious of himself" (GS 354). This, however, raises the problem of knowing what does self-knowledge amount to if Nietzsche does not reduce it to painful states in which the becoming personal

becomes intolerable. Put differently, if consciousness depends on the mediation of language and is achieved, not in isolation, but socially, not by means of introspection, but by means of communication, and given that Nietzsche does not seem to give up on the idea that we should nevertheless strive for the preservation of our inalienable individuality, how are we supposed, not only to protect it, but to effectively get to know it — to know who we are? In Nietzsche's philosophy, self-knowledge certainly constitutes a key-problem with which he constantly must deal with. In GS 354 he identifies this problem by writing that

> My idea is clearly that consciousness actually belongs not to man's existence as an individual but rather to the community- and herd-aspects of his nature; that accordingly, it is finely developed only in relation to its usefulness to community or herd; and that consequently each of us, even with the best will in the world to *understand* ourselves as individually as possible, 'to know ourselves', will always bring to consciousness that which is 'non-individual', that which is 'average' (…) At bottom, all our actions are incomparably and utterly personal, unique, and boundlessly individual, there is no doubt; but as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*… (GS 354)

We shall briefly come back to this problem after turning now to Wittgenstein.

IV.

Wittgenstein's views on the self suffer considerable modifications throughout his work. In the *Tractatus* he presents a defense of solipsism that he will afterwards gradually put into question in order to grasp both the meaning of the concept of the 'I' and the linguistic constitution of the subjective realm of inner experience. In doing so, Wittgenstein relentlessly interrogates the traditional philosophical understanding of the subject

and maintains, from beginning to end, a clear anti-Cartesian position.[31] Arguing against the existence of "the thinking subject" (TLP, 5.631), of a "bodiless" *cogito, ergo sum* (BLBK, p. 69)[32] and of "the soul" (TLP, 5.5421) in his earlier writings, he will end up proposing a clarification of the "grammatical fiction" (PI §307)[33] that grounded the conception of the (*ego) cogito* and by revaluating his own Tractarian account of the self. His account of subjectivity can therefore be characterized as a transference of the Cartesian substantive and individuated self onto a linguistic plane.[34]

Underlying the anti-Cartesian views of Wittgenstein's earlier writings is the conviction that "the I is not an object" (NB, p. 80)[35] and that empiricism, physicalism and mentalism consist of objectivist views of human subjectivity that are simply philosophically insufficient. The I is neither an external, nor an interior object because "the I objectively confronts every object. But not the I." (NB, p. 80). Thus, it cannot become an object either to science, or to itself, which makes Wittgenstein assert in a note from his wartime diary: "The I, the I is what is deeply mysterious" (NB, 80).[36] According to the metaphysics of the *Tractatus*, science cannot solve this mystery that lies outside of the world (TLP 5.631). The philosophical 'I' is not an object but a "metaphysical subject", meaning that it cannot be found within the physical world describable by natural science (TLP 5.633). The "philosophical self", Wittgenstein argues, is "a limit — not

31 On Wittgenstein's "enduring hostility to the idea of an individuated, substantive self" and on the anti-Cartesianism of his positions, see Hans Sluga (1996), pp. 320-353. Sluga relates Wittgenstein's anti-Cartesianism to the anti-objectivism and anti-referencialism that characterize his proposals concerning subjectivity, and we will closely keep to his arguments in this article.

32 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, "The Blue Book", in Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations", Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books, Second Edition (1969), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1998, p. 69.

33 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Philosophical Investigations, G.E.M. Anscombe (Trans.), Second Edition (1958), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, Part I, § 307, pp. 102-103.

34 See Glock (1996), "I/Self", pp. 160-164.

35 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Notebooks 1914-1916, G.E.M. Anscombe, G.H. von Wright (Eds.), G.E.M. Anscombe (Trans.), Second Edition (1979), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1998, p. 80, 7.8.1916.

36 Ibid., 11.8.1916.

a part — of the world" (TLP 5.641): it consists of "a contraction, a point without extension" that embraces or circumscribes external reality (TLP 5.64). Accordingly, it cannot be seen or observed, or objectively confronted, and therefore it cannot become an object of knowledge.

But although the subject of experience cannot be part of experience, he is logically presupposed in every experience, because belonging to a subject is a logical feature of every experience. Therefore, the connection between I and world is logical and not a constructive or creative relation where the I might be causally effecacious and intervene in empirical reality.[37] As Wittgenstein writes, "the world is independent of my will" (TLP 6.373).[38] Nevertheless, the reduction of the subject to a limit of the world makes it coincide with the point outside the world where meaning happens and from where the very existence of the world ultimately depends (TLP 6.431). This dependence is, as already mentioned, logical and it entails a model of metaphysical adequacy that has important consequences for the understanding of language. In effect, the Tractarian solipsistic view is connected with the idea that there must be a correspondence between the logical form of meaningful sentences and the logical structure of the facts which they refer to — that is to say, that "there must be something identical in a picture [i.e. in a proposition] and what it depicts to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all" (TLP 2.161). In other words, in order to be meaningful, the structure of propositions should correspond to one and the same logical structure — the hidden, metaphysical structure of the world. The latter, however, cannot be named. It is beyond "the limits of language" (TLP 5.6). It shows itself in the world, but, just like the "mysterious", metaphysical I, it is not a part of the world and cannot be part of the propositional world. Hence, not only the 'I' cannot be known, it also cannot be designated or described. Since it is not an object of knowledge because it is not a part of the world, it can neither be pointed at nor referred to. Thus by rejecting objectivism, Wittgenstein's solipsism

37 Sluga distinguishes Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's proposals on the self referring precisely to this crucial point. See Sluga (1996), p. 329.

38 On the mystical attitude proposed in the Tractatus and the "ideal of thought and speech and action" that it supports — and in contrast with Sluga's interpretation —, see Eldridge (1997), pp. 112-117. On Schopenhauer's influence on the Tractarian solipsistic view, see Glock (1996), "Solipsism", pp. 348-352.

at the same time rejects both the possibility of introspective self-knowledge and the application of a linguistic referential model to a subject, for this subject lies beyond the limits of language.

Wittgenstein's early solipsism is grounded on the assumption that meaning is linguistic, so that the solipsist's "godlike self-consciuousness"[39] is in fact already conceived of as a "discursive consciousness".[40] This aspect has several consequences in Wittgenstein's post-Tractarian approach to subjectivity. It leads, in particular, to the famous discussion of the 'private language argument' in the *Philosophical Investigations*. This discussion had already been prepared in the *Philosophical Remarks* (PR 57-58)[41] where Wittgenstein presented the hypothesis of a language from which the first-person pronoun was eliminated, a mono-centered language

39 See James C. Edwards quoted by Eldridge (1997), p. 114.

40 See Eldridge (2010), pp. 162-179.

41 See Stern (2010), pp. 178-196. Stern uses the second edition of the *Philosophical Remarks* in his paper: Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Philosophical Remarks, Rush Rhees (Ed.), Raymond Hargreaves, Roger White (Trans.), Second Edition (1975), Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1998. Wittgenstein's text runs as follows:
"We could adopt the following way of representing matters: if I, L.W., have tooth ache, then that is expressed by means of the proposition 'There is toothache.' But if that is so, what we now express by the proposition 'A has toothache', is put as follows: 'A is behaving as L.W. does when there is toothache.' Similarly we shall say 'It is thinking' and 'A is behaving as L.W. does when it is thinking'. (You could imagine a despotic oriental state where the language is formed with the despot as its centre and his name instead of L.W.) It's clear that this way of speaking is equivalent to ours when it comes to questions of intelligibility and freedom from ambiguity. But it's equally clear that this language could have anyone at all as its centre.
Now, among all the languages with different people as their centres, each of which I can understand, the one with me as its centre has a privileged status. This language is particularly adequate. How am I to express that? That is, how can I rightly represent its special advantage in words? This can't be done. For, if I do it in the language with me as its centre, then the exceptional status of the description of this language in its own terms is nothing very remarkable, and in the terms of another language my language occupies no privileged status whatever. The privileged status lies in the application, and if I describe this application, the privileged status again doesn't find expression, since the description depends on the language in which it's given. And now, which description gives just that which I have in mind depends again on the application.
Only their application really differentiates languages; but if we disregard this, all languages are equivalent. All these languages represent only a single incomparable and cannot represent anything else. (Both these approaches must lead to the same result: first, that what is represented is not one thing

from which the word 'I' was suppressed. The presupposition of this hypothesis is that the word 'I' is redundant when we speak of "immediate experiences" (PR 57), as in the case of pain experiences. The idea at stake is that sentences like 'I am in pain' are not open to ignorance or doubt and thus seem to convey irrefutable truths. Wittgenstein thus seems to give up the earlier idea according to which language serves the single purpose of depicting or representing objects of external reality. Language now seems rather more suitable for expressing inner or private processes, whose certainty confers an almost unquestionable authority to the speaker.[42] This authority, however, is grounded on the impossibility of comparing the special kind of objects that inner, private experiences are. It is, therefore, a very questionable authority precisely because it relies on the subject's self-sufficiency and it does not admit comparison, it cannot be contrasted.

It is exactly this argument that Wittgenstein uses against the alleged privacy of subjective experiences in the *Philosophical Investigations*. It leads to the conclusion that "an 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" (PI §580). In order to reach this conclusion, Wittgenstein recurs once again to an anti-objectivist and anti-referentialist interpretation of the self by developing the typical linguistic or grammatical view adopted in his later works. Instead of the suppression of the word 'I', the idea is now that the philosophical and particularly the metaphysical "use" of that word has to be questioned or interrogated:

> When philosophers use a word — "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" — and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used this way in the language which is its original home?
> What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI §116)

among others, that it is not capable of being contrasted with anything; second, that I cannot express the advantage of my language.)"

42 As Eldridge argues, "One of the first things to be recognized about the fantasy of having knowledge of inner experiences and how they lie behind, explain, and justify one's public performances is that it is a fantasy about the acquisition of authority." See Eldridge (1997), p. 243.

It is this procedure that is at stake in the famous private language argument developed in §§243-315 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, which Wittgenstein introduces as follows:

> A human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it. We could even imagine human beings who spoke only in monologue; who accompanied their activities by talking to themselves. — An explorer who watched them and listened to their talk might succeed in translating their language into ours. (This would enable him to predict these people's actions correctly, for he also hears them making resolutions and decisions.)
> But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences — his feelings, moods, and the rest — for his private use? — Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? — But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language. (PI §243)

A private language would thus be the opposite of an "ordinary", public or common language, that is to say, it would be a language "for private use" and a language that could not be shared. It would correspond to the language that a Cartesian *cogito* would speak in order to refer to its "inner experiences" and "immediate private sensations". It would, therefore, not only rely on the mentalist assumption according to which psychological words stand for phenomena that occur in a private mental theatre only accessible to the subject himself; it would also presuppose a referentialist conception of language according to which the meaning of words is given by what they stand for.[43] The supposed privacy of such phenomena further implies both the idea of their exclusive ownership by the subject and an epistemological privacy, that is to say, that their

43 See Glock (1996), "Private Language Argument" (pp. 309-315) and also Sluga (1996).

knowledge is exclusive to their owner.[44] Accordingly, no one else can have my sensations, my thoughts, my pains, or know what I feel when I experience them, but also no one else except me can understand what I mean when I say 'pain', for example.

The possibility of a private language raises the discussion about "how do words refer to sensations" (PI §244), as well as about the effective privacy of sensations. It serves to interrogate the linguistic referentialist model and to propose a new conception of inner phenomena that defies the model 'object and designation' (PI §293), i.e. the idea that there are inner objects that can be designated by a (private) sensation language. For these reasons, the private language argument is directed "against the objectivism embedded in the Cartesian conception of the mind".[45] Wittgenstein puts forward imaginary situations that exemplify a private linguist's conception of language and of himself, such as giving a name to one's own pain (PI §244, §253), keeping a diary about a recurring sensation (PI §258) or playing a game by oneself (PI §248), whereby he will once again interrogate the possibility of introspective self-knowledge, i.e. its alleged immediacy, transparency, certainty, identity, interiority, and self-sufficiency.

Wittgenstein starts with the example of the way a child learns to express pain. In asking the question "how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? — of the name 'pain', for example" (PI §244), he advances the possibility of words being connected with primitive, natural expressions of sensation and being used in their place, as when a child learns linguistic "pain-behaviour" that replaces cries.[46]

44 See Glock (1996), "Privacy" (pp. 304-309).

45 See Sluga (1996).

46 "How do words refer to sensations? — There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connexion between the name and the thing named set up? This question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? — of the word ''pain'' for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour.
'So you are saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?' — On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it." (PI §244)

The first thing that this example stresses is that an inner phenomenon like pain is not necessarily invisible, inaccessible to the gaze of others and only reachable by inward observation. Furthermore, pain is not an object that appears among other objects and to which a name is made to correspond, as if this name could only be given by the subject who is suffering. The name, in this case, is something we learn from others (in this case, our parents; see also PI §257). Consequently, even the meaning of those words that refer to the most intimate of sensations, pain, is something acquired or for which we need instruction and mediation, not something we ourselves immediately attribute to our inner experiences, as if it could only be understood by individual introspection. In addition, this example does not at all imply a contrast between cries and words. On the contrary, it implies a connection between them, as PI §245 confirms.[47] What is at stake is not an ascription of linguistic terms to something that is not linguistic, but a replacement of natural, non-linguistic expressions or manifestations of sensations by linguistic expressions. Wittgenstein is interested here in how parents teach their children "new pain-behaviour" when they cry, that is to say, he is interested in the variety of possibilities of pain expression. Designating pain by using the word "pain" is only one among other such possibilities.

As it becomes clear in the other examples that Wittgenstein gives, he is here engaging in a discussion about, on the one hand, the idea that words refer to sensations as names designate objects and, on the other hand, the idea according to which sensations are private phenomena that do not manifest themselves or are inexpressible, and cannot therefore be perceived from the 'outside' of the thinking-feeling subject. Throughout this discussion, Wittgenstein questions the privacy of inner experiences, i.e. the idea that "only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it", as the private linguist puts it in PI §246. The latter insists that, even if "very often" other people know he is in pain, they do not know it "with the certainty with which I know it myself!" (PI §246) The argument is, of course, Cartesian, in that my inner experience is beyond doubt and it is only accessible to me. And if others can know about it, their knowledge of it is knowledge of an external fact, a knowledge that remains

47 "For how can I go so far as to try to use language to get between pain and its expression?" (PI §245).

uncertain because it is mediated by sense impressions, a knowledge that is the opposite of the immediate, introspective knowledge, which guarantees epistemological certainty. So, the private linguist's conclusion is that "it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself." (PI §246) Wittgenstein's refutation of this certainty is grounded, firstly, on the rejection of the privacy of inner sensations, of the idea that they are placed within a subjective, and somehow secret, interiority. This does not mean that he is here arguing for a purely bodily location of pain, as it becomes clear in PI §286[48], but rather that he is again proposing the possibility raised in the example of the crying child. Pain, being a sensation, is expressive of and manifests itself through visible, outer or public phenomena. This being so, others can know that I have a sensation because it is not necessarily hidden and available only to the subject — although he can, of course (although only within certain limits), conceal it.[49]

So, privacy corresponds less to metaphysical isolation than to our capacity to isolate ourselves if we choose to do so (by controlling the expression of our sensations or by pretending to have sensations we do not have)[50]. Nevertheless, the private linguist does not give up his idea. In another imaginary example Wittgenstein presents a dialogue about someone who intends to keep a diary about a recurring sensation

48 "What sort of issue is: Is it the body that feels pain? — How is it to be decided? What makes it plausible to say that it is not the body? — Well, something like this: if someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so (unless it writes it) and one does not comfort the hand, but the sufferer: one looks into his face." (PI §286)

49 And even so, we must considere that concealing is — like pretending or lying — already "a language-game that needs to be learned like any other one." (PI §249). See also PI §250.

50 This suggestion made by Mulhall (2007), p.60. Mulhall also points out that, considered from this perspective, the comparison between the propositions "Sensations are private" and "One plays patience with oneself" (PI §248) brings to light that even a game that involves only one player can be played in a space that is shared with other people, under the eyes of other people, if the player so decides. It is, moreover, this possibility that makes it a game, i.e. that enables us to give it rules and therefore to learn and teach how to play it and how to follow it when another is playing. The comparison makes clear that the privacy of sensations does not imply that they are beyond the public sphere, beyond the reach of words. See Mulhall (2007), pp. 59 ff.

to which this person refers to with the sign 'S' (PI §258). In response to the objection that this sign's definition cannot be formulated at all, the private linguist's says that "I can give one [definition] to myself as a kind of ostensive definition!" Wittgenstein rejects this possibility asking whether it is really possible to "point to the sensation". The diarist's answer summons up the traditional, Cartesian, metaphysical use of the word 'I' that the private language argument tries to bring back to its everyday use:

> How? Can I point to the sensation? — Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation – and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. – But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition serves to lay down the meaning of a sign, doesn't it? – Well, that is done precisely by concentrating my attention; for in this way I commit to memory the connection between the sign and the sensation. – But 'I commit it to memory' can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection *correctly* in the future. But in the present case, I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem correct to me is correct. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'correct'. (PI §258)

Thus, while the Cartesian-private-linguist insists that the meaning of the sign or word is given by means of inward concentration or introspection, its anti-Cartesian opponent argues that such inner "ceremony" does not provide any "criterion of correctness" for relating words and object-sensations. Put differently, Wittgenstein emphasizes that solitary "inward pointing" is not sufficient to establish or determine the meaning of a word because it simply indicates an act of self-referentialism, a reference of the self to himself comparable only to the self-giving act in which the right hand gives money to the left one (PI §268)[51]. Furthermore, this "pointing-into-yourself" or "pointing with your attention" (PI §275) is not what the

51 A procedure, moreover, whose model is again the relation with others, as Mulhall points out. Mulhall (2007), p. 122.

subject understands he is doing when he expresses his private experiences, the ones that putatively belong only to him. As Wittgenstein claims, "the essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have *this* or something else" (PI §272). In fact, a private experience is an experience one considers as "something quite definite" (PI §276), that is to say, so irreducible or "'specific'" (PI, Part II, xi, p. 224) that it can only be defined by inward pointing or pointing to oneself.[52] But the problem is that when one speaks about the irreducible specificity of his experiences, one is not offering "an intersubjectively helpful criterion for testing the relevant statements"; consequently, "other people will not know how to deal with my statements" but also "I myself" will have no means of testing them and so they will also be nonsensical to me.[53]

Self-referentialism, private ostensive definition or inward, introspective pointing are therefore rejected because they presuppose the same auto-sufficiency that was already at stake in the passage of the *Philosophical Remarks* mentioned above. They are based on the allegedly indisputable authority of the thinking subject — "whatever is going to seem correct to me is correct" (PI §258) — which, according to Wittgenstein, is highly problematic. Wittgenstein's opposition to the private linguist is based on the fact that an ostensive definition already implies linguistic rules that cannot be individually determined. Even more precisely, what he shows is that any 'private' ostensive definition implicitly depends not on introspective insights, but on the existence of a language that is not created by a single individual and could never be intelligible only to himself. It is rather a 'public' language, in fact a language that exists previously to the existence of each individual (therefore, individuals receive it from other individuals instead of giving

52 For a discussion of the assumption that the word 'specific' refers to and defines private experiences, see Schulte (2003), pp. 50 ff. . Schulte argues that "the specificity of any experience can only be elucidated within appropriated circumstances" and that "it is necessary to find or bring out a situation in which the person in question can learn to apply the word concerned", that is to say, "whatever appears specific in an experience will have its basis in the relevant language game" (p. 51). For this reason, Wittgenstein concludes that "the expression 'specific psychological phenomenon' corresponds to that of the private ostensive definition" (RPP I §200).

53 Schulte (2003), pp. 60-61.

it to themselves, as was already the case with the crying child). This idea becomes clear in the following remarks:

> "What reason have we for calling 'S' the sign for a *sensation*? For 'sensation' is a word of our common language, not of one intelligible to me alone. So the use of this word stands in need of a justification which everybody understands. — And it would not help either to say that it need not be a *sensation*; that when he writes 'S', he has *something* — and that is all that can be said. 'Has' and 'something' also belong to our common language. (*PI* §261)

Wittgenstein's conclusion is that the idea of a private language is incoherent because such a language would still have to rely on the existence of a common language. The incoherence of the idea of a private language is furthermore proved by the fact that it presupposes a conception of what language is: an activity guided by rules that determine the correct use of words in order for them to be understood or have meaning. A private language would not obey any rules — the idea of a private rule is nonsensical — and so its words would be meaningless. Hence, it would prevent effective communication, but even more importantly it would not be intelligible for his only speaker. The latter would still have to use words like "sensation" or "pain" whose meaning is public and does not depend on inner mental phenomena available only to one individual's introspective insight. Consequently, any meaningful account of subjective experiences is necessarily structured by language or conceptually constituted. Even more precisely, to gain consciousness of oneself and of one's inner processes always involves gaining a "discoursive consciousness"[54] that is not achieved immediately by means of self-observation, but always through the mediation of others. The solipsist is thus forced to recognize that he is not a metaphysical subjectivity isolated from the empirical world and skeptical about the existence of other minds, but one human being among others of whom he depends, even — and perhaps above all — whenever he tries to know who he is.

54 See Eldridge (2010).

Thus, Wittgenstein's discussion of the private language argument does not, as it becomes clear, propose another philosophical meaning for the philosophical words that "try to grasp the *essence* of the thing": "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" (PI §116). It rather contests the traditional philosophical conception of these words by paying attention to "their everyday use" (PI §116) and shows, in particular, that they raise misunderstandings about subjectivity that must be clarified. This is particularly the case with the meaning and use of the word 'I', or with the self-reference that we associate with it. According to Wittgenstein, in order to clarify what is at stake in such self-referentialism it is necessary to analyze "the peculiar grammar of the word 'I', and the misunderstandings this grammar is liable to give rise to" (BLBK, p. 66).[55] The peculiarity consists in that the first person pronoun can have a "use as object" and a "use as subject" (BLBK, p. 66)[56]. In the first case, it is used to speak of the human body and its physical characteristics (e.g., "My arm is broken" or "I have grown six inches"); in the second case, it is used to speak about mental states and sensations, like the feeling of pain. If, in the first case, its use is referential because it is meant to designate an object, in the second case no object is referred to, so that in the sentence "I have pain" no description is made. Hence, contrary to the traditional, Cartesian and referentialist assumption, first-person propositions are not descriptions of (inner) objects and they can even fail to have any referential function at all. And this means that the problem with Cartesian referentialism is not so much that it corresponds to an epistemological error as rather that it is grounded on a misunderstanding of grammar: "we feel that in the case in which 'I' is used as subject, we don't use it because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics; and this creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless, which, however, has its seat in our body" (BLBK, p. 69).

Wittgenstein's effort, of which the private language discussion is exemplary, is thus to clarify "one of the great sources of philosophical bewilderment: a substantive makes us look for a thing that corresponds

55 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, "The Blue Book", in Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations", Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books, Second Edition (1969), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1998, p. 66.

56 On this distinction, see Sluga (1996).

to it" (BLBK, p. 1). What he intends to prove is that this tendency prevents us from considering the possibility that a sentence like 'I am in pain' could stand, not as the description of an experience, but as its utterance or expression. To understand this, it is also necessary to attend to the "behavior" of the speaker (PI §281). But to the question whether Wittgenstein is "saying that everything except human behaviour is a fiction" he replies: "If I speak of a fiction, then it is of a *grammatical* fiction." (PI §307)[57]. In other words, his concern is to do away with the ontological distinction between inner and outer, mind and body, I and others by showing that it really consists of a grammatical question. The grammatical fiction is grounded on the confusion between the two possible ways of using the word 'I' and on the idea that language merely serves one purpose, "to convey thoughts — which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or anything else you please" (PI §304). Both behaviorism and its apparent opposite, Cartesian mentalism, suffer from the effects of this misunderstanding because they both assume that words always have meaning by standing for something. In order to fight this grammatical illusion, Wittgenstein suggests that more attention should be paid to the assumption that the subject and its inner experiences must be considered as objects and that nouns and pronouns are names or descriptions of objects[58].

The model of 'object and designation' (PI §293) must therefore be definitely rejected with regard to what modern philosophy called the "subject". In addition to all the misunderstandings it creates — about the I's certainty, immediacy, privacy etc. —, it also fosters the illusion of a permanent and stable identity that the example of the beetle in the box denounces ("One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing"

57 Wittgenstein's insistence on behaviour does not commit him to a behaviourist conception of the self and he clarifies that if behaviour stands as an outer criteria that enables ascribing inner experiences, then "there is a difference between pain-behaviour accompanied by pain and pain-behaviour without any pain" (PI §304). See Sluga (1996) and Schulte (2003).

58 It is precisely this assumption that is depicted in the imaginary example of the beetle in the box: "If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word 'pain' means — must I not say the same of other people too? And how can I generalize the one case so irresponsibly?
Now someone tells me that he knows what pain is only from his own case! — Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a 'beetle'.

and "the box might even be empty"). Insisting on the constitutive role of language for the way we can eventually come to know ourselves, the private language discussion hence discards the idea that the 'I' is a secret substance, protected within the walls of an inner realm (within a box) and transformed into a "thing" about which only the subject himself can speak. To speak of myself in terms that no one else understands is the same as uttering "inarticulate sounds" (PI §261) — as inarticulate as the cry of a child in pain and whose meaning the child herself cannot fully grasp until she is capable of achieving a perspective on herself, that is to say, the capacity for what can properly be called selfhood. Being constitutionally linguistic such perspective threatens the idea of an original self-sufficiency, of the individual's absolute singularity and of his self-possession. In other words, it brings "an inevitable sense of dispossession: the loss of a certain possible ideal of philosophical self-coincidence and self-assurance, of the self's transparency to itself, beyond any allegiance to the common ground of human life, and the everyday words that thread through it".[59] To recognize that our relation with ourselves is mediated by language thus implies accepting that it presupposes a connection to something that lies, so to speak, beyond or outside the self itself. Moreover, this is something that the subject cannot achieve merely by himself and for the acquisition of which he shall always depend on others.

> No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. — Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. — But suppose the word 'beetle' had a use in these people's language? — If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. — No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.
> That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant." (PI §293)

59 Mulhall (2007), p. 101.

V.

This is how Wittgenstein sees the problem of self-knowledge — the problem that was raised above with respect to Nietzsche. The truth is that neither of them provides a straightforward answer for this problem, although they both agree that introspection is not the way to deal with it. As we saw already, they both consider that Descartes's introspective method relies on an objectification of the 'I' and on a referentialist model that fosters "grammatical habits" (Nietzsche) or a "grammatical fiction" (Wittgenstein) whereby the self remains unknown. On the other hand, insisting on the role played by linguistic mediation in the self's relation with itself, they underline that whatever the 'I' may be, it is not a silent or mute entity that lingers in a secret place waiting for the only eye that is capable of finding it, i.e. its own. For both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, the 'I' is not incommunicable and it can even be said that it ultimately consists in nothing but communication and expression. In fact, any possibility of self-knowledge must rely precisely on communication and expression. Communication and expression provide us with a perspective on ourselves fostering, not a coincidence, but a differentiation of distinct moments and states that cannot be reduced to a single, simple, substantive entity, as well as the capacity for distancing ourselves from our sensations, thoughts or emotions, from their presence and eventual control over us. They allow us to articulate the alleged 'inner states' and to recognize their transience, to compare them with other moments of our experience, thereby displacing or freeing us from being overwhelmed by the state in which we provisionally are.

According to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, selfhood does not therefore depend on the absolute concentration of the 'I' on himself (i.e, on introspection, self-presence, self-coincidence, etc.). It is rather achieved through a process of self-differentiation, through our ability to separate ourselves from what we feel and think, thereby realizing that we are not immersed or enclosed within our present condition. Nietzsche called this possibility "pathos of distance" (BGE 257), considering it not as a form of knowledge, but as an affect that demands "new expansions of distance within the soul itself" (BGE 257) and incites the capacity to recognise differences "inside the same person even, within a single

soul" (BGE 260). He conceives of it as a sign of nobility, that is to say, the opposite of vulgarity or commonness that language always entails, because it allows for a continual differentiation that escapes being fixed in the words which it nevertheless cannot fail to use and say. The pathos of distance is probably at the root of Nietzsche's "unconquerable distrust in the possibility of self-knowledge" and of his "kind of revulsion against believing anything definite about myself" (BGE 281). His idea that "we are unknown to ourselves" (GM Preface 1) must not be understood as his conclusion regarding the problem of self-knowledge, but as this problem's starting point, which Nietzsche also formulates as follows: "each is furthest from himself'" (GM, Preface 1).

As regards Wittgenstein, it can also be said that in all the examples that show the attempts to constitute a private language its speaker is conceived as always already divided, being on the one hand the one that feels, and on the other hand, the one that points to or names what is being felt, thereby implicitly acknowledging the process of self-differentiation that he must go through, as well as "the internal relation between the acquisition of language and the acquisition of selfhood"[60]. This relation is also explicitly proposed by Nietzsche in GS 354, as discussed above, although he nowhere raises the possibility of a private language. Nietzsche certainly addresses the question of the difficulty of being understood by others (e.g., GS 381, BGE 290, GM Preface 1) and, as was also pointed out, his writings constantly give voice to the tension between the individual quality of experiences and the public dimension of their linguistic account. His complaints about language bring to light a degree of resistance to the linguistic formulation of thoughts and experiences that can, therefore, be compared with the private linguist's resistance to use public terms to refer to inner phenomena. The text where Nietzsche seems to be more aware of the private linguist's aversion for common language is the following:

> We stop valuing ourselves when we communicate. Our true experiences are completely taciturn. They could not be communicated even if they wanted to be. This is because the

60 Mulhall (2007), p. 113.

> right words for them do not exist. The things we have words for are also the things we have already left behind. There is a grain of contempt in all speech. Language, it seems, was invented only for average, mediocre, communicable things. People vulgarize themselves when they speak a language. — Excerpts from a morality for the deaf-mutes and other philosophers. (TI Skirmishes 26)

But even here, the last line is clear about Nietzsche's position, which is that the solipsist's insistence on the 'specificity' of his experiences and on the impossibility of restoring them by means of a language that is not his own is dismissed as a demand of a "deaf-mute". A deaf-mute here is someone deprived of the senses that allow for linguistic contact with other human beings. The deaf-mute is incapable of receiving and using verbal language, and he is isolated from the "net" that connects one person to another. Nietzsche's irony thus allows for the following interpretation of his words, in that we start to value ourselves only when we communicate (as only then do we become conscious of ourselves), our true experiences are loquacious (we feel the need to communicate them), the words for them are "the words that lie to hand" (D 257) (the common words), and the things we have words for are the things that constitute our world (the human world of appearances created by language). But we could even risk a bit more in the reading of the last lines of TI Skirmishes 26 and conclude that for Nietzsche there is an increase in self-esteem in speaking, that language was also invented for the exceptional things, and people are able to ennoble themselves when they speak a language.

We shall conclude the comparison between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein by focusing precisely on this last idea. Is it really possible to sustain such an interpretation of Nietzsche's words? Is he not saying the opposite?

In order to understand the reading that is proposed, one has to be reminded that both for Nietzsche and for Wittgenstein consciousness, self-knowledge or self-awareness is something acquired that allows for degrees. This is the idea that Nietzsche puts forward in GS 354 and that Wittgenstein also subscribes, considering that self-awareness can be more or less perfect, more or less developed. Accordingly, each of us can

fail to understand the inner phenomena to which we give nevertheless expression, as is the case in Wittgenstein's examples of the child and the diarist. In other words, we can be unknown to ourselves even if we are not aware of that (as in the case where someone "thinks he understands" and attaches "some meaning to the word, but not the right one"— PI §269). For Wittgenstein, as seen above, this can also be the case of someone who is in pain precisely because he is overwhelmed by his suffering. And this being the case, that person can eventually be better known and understood by someone who is not in his position, who is not suffering or having that experience. Hence, one can counter the private linguist's certainty about his inner states of which "only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it" (PI §246) with showing instead that the possibility arises that the very expression of pain consists not in an identification or a register of an inner fact, but rather in the attempt to be acknowledged. In other words, the alleged certainty brought about by the state of pain can correspond instead to the expression of one's ignorance and incapacity for dealing with the actual state of one's inner life, that is to say, to the possibility of one not (or not yet) being able to understand this life and expressing it in ways that are not understandable to others and to oneself — so much so that one can conceive of the possibility of inventing a private, 'specific' language in order to deal with it. Furthermore, with this possibility, Wittgenstein opens up space for a reversion of the idea according to which knowing oneself is something guaranteed while knowing another corresponds to an impossibility. His proposal is that self-knowledge must necessarily rely on the way others can help us understand ourselves, an idea that he summarizes thus:

> It is correct to say 'I know what you are thinking', and wrong to say 'I know what I am thinking'. (A whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar)." (PI, Part II, xi, p. 222)

Nietzsche's idea is not exactly the same, but it ultimately manifests something in common with what Wittgenstein was trying to point at. But it does that to a different degree. While suspecting of the possibility

of consummate self-knowledge, Nietzsche nevertheless at least insists in our capacity for exercising it as a continuous process. He also admits of degrees of self-awareness or consciousness and seems to reserve the higher ones to the most noble and distinguished of men, those spirits who are freer than common or vulgar human beings, and also more free from the constraints of language. These free spirits are not solipsists, they do not dismiss common language as being inadequate to their experiences and they do not dispense with the need to communicate with others. On the contrary, while expressing their extreme individuality, they address common words to a wide human community. Nietzsche sees them belonging to the "genius of communication" (TI Skirmishes 24) and he is thinking of artists and philosophers, who are not interested in inventing a private language, but in creating a "new language" (BGE 4) that is a "new convention" (MA II WS 122) whereby many individuals can continue to develop consciousness and self-understanding, and find "new expansions of distance within the soul itself" (BGE 257). Nietzsche certainly includes himself within this group of exceptional individuals, considering his works and his philosophical concepts as a contribution to Western community and society and believing that the community of his readers will expand in future generations, enabling him to be born again, "posthumously"[61]. Therefore, according to Nietzsche's most personal and peculiar grammar of the word 'I', the latter will only become transparent through his writings, of which he says

> 'I' am in them, together with everything that was inimical to me, *ego ipisissimus*, indeed, if a yet prouder expression be permitted, *ego ipsissimum*. (HA II AOM Preface 1)

61 On Nietzsche's creation of "new commons" that aim to impact "wider communities" and even "changing society (even, grandly, human history)", see again Richardson (2015).

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Parrhesia and Affirmation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

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I.

In the final chapter of *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a Destiny", Nietzsche explains Zarathustra's "monumental and unique place in history" by appealing to his particular brand of truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) and courage (*Tapferkeit*). In his words,

> Zarathustra is more truthful than any other thinker. His teaching is the only one that considers truthfulness to be the highest virtue – that means the opposite of the *cowardice* of "idealists", who take flight in the face of reality; Zarathustra has more courage in his body than all thinkers put together. To speak the truth and *shoot well with an arrow*, this is the Persian virtue.[1]

Following the track of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, this article will focus on the particular relationship that Nietzsche establishes between truthfulness and courage, especially (but not only) regarding the character Zarathustra. I shall do this with the aid of the Greek conception of *parrhesia* (generally translated as "free speech", "frank speech" or "honest speech"), as it is built and grounded precisely on the notions of courage and truth. This is a conception that Michel Foucault appropriates and extensively analyses in the last period of his thought, giving it a philosophical dimension and meaning that may shed light on Nietzsche's conception of truthfulness –

1 *Ecce Homo,* trans. Judith Norman, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, "Why I Am a Destiny" / *EH,* "Warum ich ein Schicksal bin", § 3. Cf. also *Ecce Homo,* Preface / *EH*, Vorwort, § 4: "With [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*] I have given mankind the greatest present that has ever been made to it so far. This book, with a voice bridging centuries, is not only the highest book there is, the book that is truly characterized by the air of the heights – the whole fact of man lies *beneath* it at a tremendous distance – it is also the *deepest*, born out of the innermost wealth of truth, an inexhaustible well to which no pail descends without coming up again filled with gold and goodness." A certain truthfulness and courage in the face of truth is also associated with the overman, the type of man who "conceives of reality *as it is*" and "has the strength to do this", this being "*the only way someone can achieve greatness*" (*Ecce Homo,* "Why I Am a Destiny" / EH, "Warum ich ein Schicksal bin", § 5).

and honesty (*Redlichkeit*)[2] – in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and beyond.[3] Thus, following Foucault's account, after providing a brief introduction to the concept of *parrhesia* as presented by Foucault in his late, recently published lectures (Section II),[4] I shall present Zarathustra as a *parrhesiastes* in order to (a) clarify Nietzsche's attribution to Zarathustra of the particular virtues of truthfulness and courage (Section III), (b) distinguish Zarathustra's peculiar form of truthfulness from other modalities of veridiction, such as prophecy and wisdom (Section IV), and (c) establish the relationship between truth-telling and affirmation of life in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Section V). My aim is not only to shed light on Nietzsche's enigmatic statement regarding Zarathustra, but also to bring to the fore the important connection between truthfulness, courage and affirmation of life.

2 The virtue of honesty (*Redlichkeit*) also plays an important role in *Zarathustra,* often with the same explicit relation to wisdom and courage: see e.g. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* trans. Adrian del Caro, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, "On War and Warriors" / *Za,* "Vom Krieg und Kriegsvolke"; in the words of "The Leech" / *Za,* "Der Blutegel": "Where my honesty ceases I am blind and also want to be blind. But where I want to know, I also want to be honest, namely venomous, rigorous, vigorous, cruel and inexorable."; and in the speech of "The Magician" / *Za,* "Der Zauberer", § 2 : "[...] Oh Zarathustra, I seek someone who is genuine, proper, simple, unequivocal, a human being of all honesty, a vessel of wisdom, a saint of knowledge, a great human being! Do you not know it, oh Zarathustra? *I seek Zarathustra*."

3 The similarity between Nietzsche's favorite virtues of truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) and honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and the Greek conception of *parrhesia* has been acknowledged mainly in the context of the study of the relation between Nietzsche and the Hellenistic schools: see R. Bracht BRANHAM "Nietzsche's Cynicism: Uppercase or lowercase?", in: Paul BISHOP (ed.) *Nietzsche and Antiquity. His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition*, Suffolk, Boydell & Brewer, 2004, pp. 176-181; Melissa LANE "Honesty as the Best Police: Nietzsche on *Redlichkeit* and the Contrast between Stoic and Epicurean Strategies of the Self", in: Mark BEVIR, Jill HARGIS, Sara RUSHING (eds.) *Histories of Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge, 2007, pp. 25-51 and William DESMOND, *Cynics*, London / New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 231. For a previous exploration of the meaning and role of Zarathustra's "risky truth-telling practice" with the aid of the concept of *parrhesia*, see Nina TOLKSDORF "Riskante Redlichkeit – Wharsprechen in Nietzsches Also sprach Zarathustra", in: Helmut HEIT / Sigridur THORGEIRSDOTTIR (eds.) *Nietzsche als Kritiker und Denker der Transformation*, Berlin / Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2016, pp. 37-48.

4 I will focus in particular on Foucault's last lecture course at the Collège de France, *The Courage of the Truth* (1984), and the lectures given at Berkeley in 1983 under the name of "Discourse and Truth", which were compiled and edited by Joseph Pearson in the volume *Fearless Speech.*

II.

Etymologically, "parrhesia" derives from "pan" ("everything") and "rhema" (that which is said). Thus the one who uses *parrhesia,* the *parrhesiastes*, is the one who says everything on his mind, not hiding or concealing anything but rather exposing his thoughts with absolute honesty and frankness.[5] In *parrhesia*, the speaker is also supposed to use clear and direct language and to avoid all rhetorical devices, which would otherwise veil what he thinks; in contrast to the rhetorician, "the *parrhesiastes* acts on other people's minds by showing them as directly as possible what he actually believes"[6]. In this sense, *parrhesia* is a particular speech activity in which the speaker accepts being absolutely exposed and disclosed by what he says: in *parrhesia*, it is the speaker, more than what he says, that is at stake. From this follow the two main characteristics of *parrhesia*, namely a very strong connection with the truth and a situation of absolute vulnerability, danger and risk for the speaker, which in turn implies a particular form of courage on his part.

Let us consider these two aspects in turn. The connection with the truth is established by the absolute coincidence between what the speaker thinks and what he says. What he says is in turn the truth because what he thinks is true, and he knows that it is true. In Foucault's words, "the *parrhesiastes* is not only sincere and says what is his opinion, but his opinion is also the truth. He says what he *knows* to be true"[7]. This, of course, implies that not everybody can speak with *parrhesia*, since not everybody is in possession of the truth. One must here recall the Greek synthesis between truth and moral perfection and the interchangeability of the two notions. Accordingly, "the 'parrhesiastic game' presupposes that the *parrhesiastes* is someone who has the moral qualities which are

5 This is not to be confused with the pejorative sense of the word, which consists in "saying any – or everything one has in mind without qualification" and is, thus, equivalent to "chattering" (Michel FOUCAULT, *Fearless Speech,* edited by J. Pearson, Los Angeles, Semiotext(e), 2001, p. 13).

6 Michel FOUCAULT, *Fearless Speech*, p. 12.

7 Michel FOUCAULT, *Fearless Speech,* p. 14. On the coincidence between the truth and the subject, see the next section.

required, first, to know the truth, and, secondly, to convey such truth to others"[8].

This is, as it were, the first condition of *parrhesia*. But access to the truth and its transmission to others is still not enough to build a *parrhesiastic* game. The hallmark of *parrhesia* is that this truth-telling implies risk or danger for the one who tells it. This brings us to the second feature of *parrhesia* mentioned above, namely the courage of the *parrhesiastes*. A truth-teller is a *parrhesiastes* insofar as he says something dangerous, which puts him at risk. This can be risk of death, but not necessarily so. The one who says something in public that differs from what the majority believes, the one who addresses himself to a tyrant, criticizing his government, or even the one who tells a painful truth to a friend incurs a certain risk or danger, which might range from losing a friendship to risking one's own life or well-being (in the case of torture, punishment, exile, and so on). The crucial point is that the *parrhesiastes* is courageous enough to put himself at risk for the sake of truth, this being what chiefly distinguishes *parrhesia* from other forms of veridiction. It is in this sense that a traditional teacher does not use *parrhesia*, even though he conveys the truth to his students, and a tyrant cannot be a *parrhesiastes*, even if he tells the truth, for in both cases there is simply no risk involved. *Parrhesia* only occurs when there is "courage in the face of danger" and, more specifically, when there is "the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger"[9]. And because in a *parrhesiastic* game it is one's own life that is exposed, it necessarily implies a certain relationship to oneself and a certain form of life. In Foucault's formulation, "when you accept the *parrhesiastic* game (…) you risk death to tell the truth instead of reposing in the security of a life where the truth goes unspoken"[10].

Besides this relationship to oneself, *parrhesia* also implies a relationship to others which, according to Foucault's account, must be shaped by the notions of criticism, duty and beneficence. That is, *parrhesia* is always a game between the one who speaks the truth and the one who listens to it, and the truth that is told must somehow affect (by

8 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech,* p. 15.

9 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech,* p. 16.

10 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech,* p. 17.

hurting, offending or angering) the interlocutor. In other words, *parrhesia* implies criticism of the Other and the courage to tell him that a certain action, behavior, thought or way of being was or is wrong, regardless of the reaction he might have to those words. In this sense, the danger involved in *parrhesia* always comes from the Other, who in turn must be in a position of superiority to the speaker, or at least in a position that can harm the speaker in some way.[11] Clear cases of *parrhesia* thus include the philosopher's criticism of a tyrant, the citizen's criticism of the majority, the pupil's criticism of a teacher, and so on. In Foucault's formulation, "the *parrhesia* comes from 'below', as it were, and is directed towards 'above'"[12]. Finally, this criticism of the Other must be voluntary and motivated by a moral sense of duty and beneficence toward the Other. A *parrhesiastes* cannot be forced to speak; he must have the option of remaining silent. There is no *parrhesia* under torture, for example, as *parrhesia* necessarily implies freedom. A *parrhesiastes* is thus somebody who voluntarily decides to tell the truth, putting himself at risk because he feels it is his duty to do so in order to benefit the interlocutor, the friend, or the city.

Summarizing the information above and using Foucault's succinct definition,

> *parrhesia* is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (…), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and

11 The *possibility* of a hostile reaction from the one who is being told the truth – and the corresponding courage of the speaker to face that possible reaction – is a structural element of the parrhesiastic game, even if the reaction might, in the end, be pacific and accepting: "And if the parrhesiast's truth may unite and reconcile, when it is accepted and the other person agrees to the pact and plays the game of *parrhesia*, this is only after it has opened up an essential, fundamental, and structurally necessary moment of the possibility of hatred and a rupture." (Michel FOUCAULT *The Courage of the Truth (The Government of Self and Others II). Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984,* edited by Frédéric Gros, translated by Graham Burchell, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 25).

12 Michel FOUCAULT, *Fearless Speech,* p. 18.

> duty. (…) In *parrhesia,* the speaker uses his freedom and choses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.[13]

These are, in a nutshell, the main characteristics of *parrhesia*, as described by Foucault. We are now in a position to consider the sense in which and the extent to which Zarathustra can be interpreted as a *parrhesiastes*.

III.

If my reading is correct and Zarathustra can be interpreted as a *parrhesiastes*, then all the features mentioned above must apply to his character and to the journey presented in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. More concretely, Zarathustra must have a relation to truth through frankness and a relationship to his life through danger; his journey must, moreover, be free and motivated by a relationship with others characterized by criticism, beneficence and duty.

Starting from the latter, there seems to be no doubt that Zarathustra's journey is totally free and voluntary: as the Prologue makes clear, Zarathustra gets tired of his own solitude and wisdom and one day decides to descend from his cave in the mountains in order to meet human beings again. There is no one and nothing forcing him to do so, except, perhaps, a certain internal compulsion that orders him to leave the comfort of his home and to share the wisdom he has acquired with others who might eventually profit from it. Zarathustra clearly needs it for his own happiness, as "a cup that needs to overflow", but this overflow is also – and perhaps first and foremost – a sort of blessing, or, in his words, a "gift" that he wants and indeed feels he *must* offer to others. As Zarathustra confesses to the sun right before his departure,

13 Michel FOUCAULT, *Fearless Speech,* pp. 19-20.

> Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it from me. I wish to spread it and bestow it, until the wise have once more become joyous in their folly, and the poor happy in their riches. For that I must descend into the depths, as you do in the evening when you go below the sea and bring light also to the underworld, you superabundant star! Like you, I must descend – as the men, to whom I shall go, call it.[14]

Zarathustra does not speak of truth here or elsewhere in the preface, where the meaning of his journey is clarified, perhaps because there is in fact no truth to be transmitted or revealed, except that which he has incorporated and of which he is an expression. Zarathustra is an embodied truth,[15] as it were, and it seems to be precisely this that he seeks to expose during his journey. He of course makes several speeches, and his journey is permeated and mediated by *logos* from start to finish, but this *logos* is inseparable from the form of life he manifests, and his words are nothing but an echo of this form. This understanding of truth is very similar to that which we find in ancient Greece, where truth was conceived not as something detached or external to the subject, accessible by a simple act of knowledge, but rather as something internal, intrinsically dependent on a spiritual transformation or transfiguration of the subject himself. This means that, according to this understanding, truth is not simply given to the subject as a result of (or reward for) a given act of knowledge: on the contrary, truth is something that must be conquered and that above all changes, enlightens, and transfigures the subject, provoking a rupture with his previous form of existence and converting him to

14 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za,* "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 1.

15 Pierre Hadot has extensivly written on the relations between truth, wisdom and way of life in his studies devoted to ancient philosophy. In the present context, see especially Pierre HADOT *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* edited by Arnold Davidson, translated by Michael Chase, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, p. 265: "real wisdom does not meraly cause us to know: it makes us 'be' in a different way."

a new one that encompasses every single act, behavior and thought of his being.[16]

A transfiguration of this kind seems to have happened to Zarathustra, as expressed in the words of the first old man he meets in the forest, who clearly recognizes him but cannot help but feel a profound transformation in his being: "No stranger to me is this wanderer", says the old man. "Many years ago he passed this way. Zarathustra he was called, but he has changed. At that time you carried your ashes to the mountains; would you now carry your fire into the valleys?" And a little bit further he adds: "Zarathustra has changed, Zarathustra has become a child, Zarathustra is an awakened one"[17]. The metaphor of an awakening can also be found in ancient texts precisely in the sense described above. The passage from ignorance to knowledge and truth is a passage from null to one: there is no real evolution or progression towards truth, but rather a sudden change, like a flash of lightning which enlightens and provokes an ontological shift, like a blind man who can suddenly see or a sleeping person who suddenly awakens. From that moment on, there is a perfect coincidence between subject and truth, and truth is granted by the one who tells it. It is also precisely in this context that *parrhesia*, that speech activity "by which the subject manifests himself when speaking the truth"[18], acquires its full meaning: more than the spoken words, in *parrhesia* it is the subject of speech that is exposed, and it is through this exposure that truth is revealed.

As we saw in the brief analysis of *parrhesia* above, this exposure never comes without risk, and the presence of this element in Zarathustra's journey is also clear from the very beginning of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Throughout the preface, Zarathustra is warned several times of the dangers he is incurring by leaving the mountains and is advised not to proceed. The first (and perhaps most significant)

16 Cf. Michel FOUCAULT, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject. Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-82,* edited by Frédéric Gros, translated by Graham Burchell, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 15-16. See also the notion of "conversion" in Pierre HADOT, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique,* Paris, Albin Michel, 1993, pp. 223-235.

17 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za*, "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 2.

18 Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 2.

warning comes from the old man quoted above. Perplexed, the old man asks repeatedly:

> Zarathustra is an awakened one; what do you now want among the sleepers? (…) You lived in your solitude as in the sea, and the sea carried you. Alas, would you now climb ashore? Alas, would you again drag your own body?[19]

To this interrogation Zarathustra simply answers that he loves man, and a little bit further he adds: "I bring men a gift"[20]. Before these words and in the face of Zarathustra's unshakable determination and persistence, the old man states his concern and advice perhaps more clearly:

> Then see to it that they accept your treasures. They are suspicious of hermits and do not believe that we come with gifts. Our steps sound too lonely through the streets. And what if at night, in their beds, they hear a man walk by long before the sun has risen – they probably ask themselves, Where is the thief going? Do not go to man. Stay in the forest![21]

With these words, the old man touches on the kernel of what seems to be the greatest danger incurred by Zarathustra, perhaps without even

19 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za*, "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 2. See also the even stronger warning – in the form of threat – from the jester: "Go away from this town, oh Zarathustra," he said. "Too many here hate you. The good and the just hate you and they call you their enemy and despiser; the believers of the true faith hate you and they call you the danger of the multitude. It was your good fortune that they laughed at you: and really, you spoke like a jester. It was your good fortune that you took up with the dead dog; when you lowered yourself like that, you rescued yourself for today. But go away from this town – or tomorrow I shall leap over a dead one." (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za*, "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 8).

20 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za,* "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 2.

21 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za,* "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 2.

being aware of it.[22] As we saw, the risk that a *parrhesiastic* game involves might range from risking one's own life to risking the relationship which makes one's *parrhesiastic* discourse possible in the first place. It is debatable whether Zarathustra risks his life by facing the mob, even though there are situations where at least his physical integrity and well-being are clearly endangered. In any case, it seems that the real focus of danger for Zarathustra is the *parrhesiastic* game itself, that is, the constant risk of its failure or destruction: for a *parrhesiastic* game always implies the courage of the speaker to tell the truth to the other, regardless of the consequences this act might have, but it also necessarily implies the openness and availability of the other to being told the truth. This "pact" between speaker and listener, as Foucault calls it, is at the heart of the *parrhesiastic* game.[23] But since *parrhesiastic* truth is always an inconvenient, uncomfortable, hurtful truth for the interlocutor, it is always possible that he will not welcome what is being told: he may take offence or be hurt by what the speaker says; he may reject it, misunderstand it, and consequently punish the speaker, taking revenge on him; or he may simply take leave and refuse to listen, thus breaking the *parrhesiastic* game. In short, *parrhesia* requires one or several listeners who can accept being told the truth and who are able to welcome the truth that is being told to them, regardless of how painful or annoying it may be. And it is precisely this that Zarathustra has difficulty finding. For even though he believes he is bringing human beings a gift, this gift is indeed an inconvenient and annoying truth, totally at odds with the beliefs and worldviews of those he meets on his journey. Zarathustra is thus faced from the very beginning with human beings' indifference, resistance and even unacceptance, that is, with the failure of his *parrhesiastic* game, which in turn constantly endangers his whole journey and puts in question his most intimate motivation to do it. Thus, strictly speaking, it is in fact his very existence that is at stake and put at risk.

22 The fact that Zarathustra might not have knowledge of the precise nature of the danger he is incurring does not preclude his awareness of danger, as he himself acknowledges at the end of the prologue: "[...] I found it more dangerous among human beings than among animals; Zarathustra walks dangerous paths. May my animals guide me!" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "Zarathustra's Prologue" / *Za,* "Zarathustra's Vorrede", § 10).

23 Cf. Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 13.

IV.

I shall return to this point in the next section, but before doing so I would like to finish this short illustration of Zarathustra's use of *parrhesia* by contrasting it with other modalities of truth-telling or veridiction which have also been ascribed to Zarathustra, notably prophecy and wisdom. By doing this, both the specificity of *parrhesia* and Zarathustra's particular form of truth-telling shall become clearer.

According to Foucault's account, *parrhesia* is distinct from prophecy in three main respects : first, the prophet does not speak in his own name but rather serves as an intermediary for a voice, a truth, that comes from elsewhere (typically God); second, the prophet is between the present and the future and reveals what is absolutely concealed or remains inaccessible to human beings (generally the future); finally, the prophet speaks in riddles – that is, prophecy is always enigmatic and obscure: it always requires interpretation and uncertainty regarding what is being told. Even though Zarathustra's character certainly presents prophetic elements, at least in some moments, it also contrasts with this modality in important respects. Most notably, Zarathustra is not an intermediary for some other voice; he always speaks for himself, and the truth he conveys certainly belongs to his own thought, belief, conviction, worldview – this is what puts him at risk. Secondly, even though Zarathustra does bear a relationship to the future, he does not foretell the future. He does try to unveil what human beings are yet unable to see, but this unveiling concerns what they are and what is concealed from them – not, in Foucault's words, "due to an ontological structure, but due to some moral fault, distraction, or lack of discipline, the consequence of inattention, laxity, or weakness"[24]. Finally, even though Zarathustra's speeches are not always as clear and direct as those of a strict *parrhesiastes*, he certainly does not speak in riddles. Due to the metaphoric nature of the language he employs, he might leave something to interpretation, but the important aspect that brings him closer to the *parrhesiastes* than the prophet in this regard is that the major task he leaves to his listeners is

24 Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 16.

not one of interpretation but rather one of acceptance, incorporation and improvement, that is, "the courage to accept this truth, to recognize it and to make it a principle of conduct"[25]. This ethical dimension of the interaction between the truth-teller and his listeners is a hallmark of *parrhesia*.

Regarding wisdom, which is actually the word Zarathustra employs to describe what he wants to share with human beings when he leaves his cave, Foucault identifies as distinguishing marks silence and isolation. That is, wisdom is regarded as a kind of plenitude or completion, a stage where the subject lacks nothing – especially not interaction and communication with others. Besides, the sage generally speaks of what is, the being of the world, nature and things, and if he gives advice, it is in the form of a general principle of conduct. The *parrhesiastes,* on the other hand, addresses particular situations and individuals, telling them what they are, what is wrong with their conduct, and how they can improve their lives and characters. Unlike the prophet, the sage speaks in his own name, and like the *parrhesiastes* what he says is an expression of his mode of being, which in turn grants the truthfulness of his discourse. Unlike the prophet and the *parrhesiastes*, however, he seldom speaks, feels no compulsion to share his truth with others, and "keeps his wisdom in a state of essential withdrawal, or at least reserve", speaking only when asked something or in an emergency, and then generally in riddles. As Foucault puts it, "the sage is wise in and for himself, and does not need to speak"[26]. Thus, one could say that even if Zarathustra could be considered wise during his years of isolation in the cave, his status changes when he feels the deep need to share his wisdom with others. This sense of duty, obligation, or responsibility, as well as the deep ethical dimension of his speeches, are, as we have seen, two fundamental characteristics of *parrhesia*.[27]

25 Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 16.

26 Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 17.

27 Cf. Foucault's schematic summarization: "Fate has a modality of veridiction which is found in prophecy. Being has a modality of veridiction found in the sage. *Tekhne* has a modality of veridiction found in the technician, the professor, the teacher, the expert. And finally, *ethos* has its veridiction in the speech of the parrhesiast and the game of *parrhesia*." (Michel FOUCAULT, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 25).

It is important to note that prophecy, wisdom and *parrhesia* correspond not to three different social characters or roles, but rather to different modes of truth-telling, which means that they will often be combined with each other. It is thus not strange that Zarathustra presents certain features of prophetic and wise truth-telling, even if his specific mode of veridiction would undoubtedly count as *parrhesia* on Foucault's account. Zarathustra certainly has the wise man's strength of virtue, endurance and capacity to detach himself from the world, as well as a certain prophetic relation to the future and enigmatic language (at times). He nevertheless remains essentially a *parrhesiastes* because he feels an internal compulsion or duty to speak and share his truth with others, his speeches bear a fundamental relation to what the Greeks called *ethos*, and, above all, his truth-telling involves a risk which in fact encompasses and endangers his entire existence. In the remainder of this essay, I would like to return to this risk and consider more closely the relation between *parrhesia* and Zarathustra's message, or, more generally, the former's relation to the affirmation of life and the corresponding way of life that Zarathustra embodies and expresses in his journey.

V.

I have already implied that the major risk that Zarathustra incurs in his *parrhesiastic* journey is the failure of the *parrhesiastic* game itself, that is, the inability to share and communicate to others a truth that he no longer wants to keep exclusively to himself – or, in other words, his listeners' inability to welcome and accept the truth that is being shared with them. To a great extent, as we saw, this risk is a necessary element in any *parrhesiastic* game, but it need not necessarily have the implications it has for Zarathustra. For in the case of Zarathustra, the failure of the *parrhesiastic* game paradoxically puts at risk the very truth that is being conveyed – the truth that most deeply characterizes his being and that motivated his journey in the first place.

Recall that Zarathustra leaves his cave after ten years of complete isolation in order to reunite with human beings and to share his incorporated truth with them – to show them a new greatness and happiness, to spread

among them a new love of life, the Earth and humankind, and to proclaim the overman. Along his journey, however, besides being unable to find real followers, companions or even listeners, Zarathustra must constantly deal with the misunderstanding and indifference of human beings, withstand their pettiness and self-satisfaction, overcome the constant disgust that they provoke in him, and remember and fight the reasons that once led him to escape the human world. This journey is thus a constant test or proof of his truth in the sense that he is constantly forced to overcome the "sickness"[28] that current human beings represent for him and, despite this or precisely through this, to reaffirm and reinforce his fidelity to the Earth, his love for life, and his hope in the future of humankind. This task becomes progressively harder and more difficult to accomplish, and we will often find Zarathustra having doubts concerning the meaning of his journey, the possibility of his task, and even the truthfulness of his message, the future of human beings and the strength of his affirmation of life. Thus, when Zarathustra puts to the test the truth that he has acquired by trying to share it with human beings, it is in fact his affirmation of life that he is endangering and putting at risk.

Note, however, that this is the very condition of possibility of a real affirmation of life, as Nietzsche conceives it. More concretely, there is no real affirmation of life without the courage to put it at risk and the capacity to reaffirm it in absolute confrontation with and truthfulness towards the world, others, and above all oneself – hence the clear relationship between *parrhesia* and affirmation of life. As is well known, affirmation of life in a Nietzschean sense implies that one is able to face, confront, overcome, accept and love absolutely everything in life, down to the smallest trait and detail, including – or especially – that which is most scary, terrifying and horrifying about it.[29] In this way, Zarathustra's affirmation of life in his cave in the mountains was not yet a real affirmation, in the sense that he had not yet put it to the test; that is, he had not yet confronted it with

28 Cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "On Great Events" / *Za,* "Von grossen Ereignissen".

29 See the texts on "amor fati", especially *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am So Clever" / *EH*, "Warum ich so klug bin", § 10: "My formula for human greatness is *amor fati*: that you do not want anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity. Not just to tolerate necessity, still less to conceal it – all idealism is hypocrisy towards necessity –, but to *love* it...". Cf. also *The Gay Science* / *FW*, § 276 and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, Epilogue / *NW*, Epilog, § 1.

what was most hateful and difficult for him to accept in existence, namely his "great disgust with man"[30], the eternal return of the "small man"[31], and the danger of the "last man". Zarathustra, the "advocate of life"[32], had yet to go through this definitive test, and without it his affirmation of life was not yet absolute or complete. Clear signs of this are the moments where Zarathustra vacillates or hesitates in his life-affirming message – moments where he becomes ill, sad or weary, as in the meeting with the soothsayer and especially in the chapter "The Convalescent", where he must face the ultimate challenge of the thought of the eternal return of the same.

These moments clearly show that no one, not even Zarathustra, is totally safe from being caught up by pessimism, nihilism, and the sense of the absurdity, nothingness and meaninglessness that might ensue from understanding that God is dead. Zarathustra himself often recognizes that it is not possible to live "either into the incomprehensible or into the irrational"[33], describes the breaking of the old tables of values as "the great fright (…), the great looking-around oneself, the great sickness, the great nausea, the great seasickness"[34], and compares the thought on the conjecture of God to "a dizzy whirl for human bones, and a vomit for the stomach"[35]. The fact that not even Zarathustra is totally immune to this kind of void and seasickness – especially when confronted with the eternal return of the indifference, smallness and pettiness of human beings – testifies to the fragility of the affirmation of life, showing how thin the line between negation and affirmation really is and how easy it is, even for the keenest affirmer, to fall from deep affirmation to absolute negation. This means that life affirmation is not something that one can acquire once and for all, but rather something that must constantly be

30 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "The Convalescent" / *Za,* "Der Genesende", § 2.

31 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "The Convalescent" / *Za,* "Der Genesende", § 2.

32 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "The Convalescent" / *Za,* "Der Genesende", § 1.

33 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "On the Blessed Isles" / *Za,* "Auf den glückseligen Inseln".

34 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "On Old and New Tablets" / *Za,* "Von alten und neuen Tafeln", § 28.

35 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* "On the Blessed Isles" / *Za,* "Auf den glückseligen Inseln".

conquered, confirmed and reaffirmed afresh until there is nothing left that can call it into question.

Zarathustra's *parrhesiastic* journey is a clear image of this. By deciding to leave his cave to reencounter human beings and share his new truth with them, Zarathustra is in fact putting his truth in danger, and with it the affirmation of life that he has safely acquired. On the other hand, however, only because he had the courage to expose his truth to others – that is, only because he had the courage to call his truth into question and risk his affirmation of life by confronting himself with what could refute it – could he confirm his affirmation and become a real "advocate of life". Thus, Zarathustra's truth-telling journey had meaning and changed the very core of his being, so that the Zarathustra who returns to the cave at the end of the third book is not the same man who leaves it in the Prologue.[36] Through his journey, Zarathustra meets countless difficulties and adversities, and his truth, his love and his faith are shaken and endangered several times. But since Zarathustra is able to overcome, accept and affirm all of these, he returns stronger and above all with his truth and love for life renewed. In short, it is because Zarathustra has the courage and truthfulness to face and "conceive[] of reality *as it is*"[37], to overcome all obstacles and reinforce his love for life and human existence through the sharing of his truth with others, that he exemplifies like no other character – except, perhaps, for Nietzsche himself[38] – the "courage of truth" that Foucault associates with *parrhesia* and that seems to be at the core of Nietzsche's affirmation of life.

36 In fact, by the first time he returns to his cave, at the end of the first book, Zarathustra has already changed, as reported by Nietzsche himself: "But what were his own words when he returned to his solitude for the first time? The exact opposite of what a "wise man", "saint", "world redeemer", or other decadent would say in this situation… He does not just talk differently, he *is* different…" (*Ecce Homo,* Preface / *EH*, Vorwort, § 4). One of the hallmarks of *parrhesia* is precisely, according to Foucault's account, that it is not only a way of telling the truth, but a way of constituting the subject through the truth that is being told: *parrhesia* is one of those practices of the self – to which Foucault devotes the last years of his work – through which the subject is or might be constituted. Cf. e.g. Michel Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth*, p. 3 ff.

37 *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny" / *EH*, "Warum ich ein Schicksal bin", § 5.

38 See Victor Berríos Guajardo, "Nietzsche parresía y locura. Lo demás es silencio…", in: *Hybris,* Vol. 2, Nr. 1, 2010, pp. 20-26.

Nietzsche and the Good European Spirit

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1. A European event

If we want to find a unitary theme in the sort of organic, tentative, and therefore non-systematic – though surprisingly coherent – event which is Nietzsche's thought, a good candidate seems to be that of culture and civilization, that Nietzsche strongly intertwines with a philosophical anthropology. That is, a retrospective reading of Nietzsche's philosophical journey allows us to appreciate that the various questions he addressed over the years fit into the thematic context of an inquiry on modernity whose primary aim is to reconstruct genealogically the origin of moral evaluations and to observe their effects on both the physiological and the spiritual development of the «human type» (cf. GM, *Preface* 6). The anthropological question, thus interpreted, emerges as a relevant philosophical issue especially in Nietzsche's late writings (1886-1888), where Nietzsche further engages questions that he already addressed in earlier works, with a different attitude and a different purpose. Among these considerations we find interesting reflections on the European cultural framework and how it influenced the development of the individual human being (the European citizen). In Nietzsche, that issue significantly has an "extra-political" value, because Nietzsche conceives primarily (and almost exclusively) of Europe as the context of an educational path ("educational" in the sense of the German *Bildung*) that might lead to the creation of "future philosophers".

The way *Twilight of the Idols* was supposed to end is of some interest in order to reflect on Nietzsche's anthropological ideal, that is, the type of man destined to deal with the «sort of destiny of a task» outlined in his late works (TI, *Preface*).[1] As we read in the letter he sent

1 Nietzsche's works are cited by abbreviation, section title or number (when applicable), and paragraph number. Posthumous fragments are identified with reference to the Colli/Montinari standard edition and are cited by group number, fragment number, and year. The abbreviations used are the following: HH = *Human, All Too Human*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 1996; OM = *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (in HH II); WS = *The Wandered and His Shadow* (in HH II); GS = *The Gay Science*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 2001; BGE = *Beyond Good and Evil*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 2002; GM = *On the Genealogy of Morality*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 2004; TI = *Twilight of the Idols*, eng. trans. Cambridge

to Heinrich Köselitz on September 12, 1888 (KSB 8, p. 443), the final chapter of that book was indeed the section *Skirmishes of an Untimely Man*, whereas Nietzsche originally intended the chapter *What I Owe to the Ancients*, with its autobiographic flavour, to be part of *Ecce Homo*.[2] The last three paragraphs of the *Skirmishes* are devoted to Goethe, one of the few figures that Nietzsche evaluates positively within his 1888 book. For Nietzsche, Goethe is «the last German [he has] any respect for» (TI, *Skirmisches* 51), a thinker for whom Nietzsche has a deep affinity, mainly because of his "untimeliness". In Goethe, Nietzsche finds an expression of what Germans lack, that is, a *realist* approach to life which, for Nietzsche, is the crucial feature of future philosophers. Furthermore, Goethe conceived of a «strong» type of man, a «spirit ... who has *become free*» and «stands in the middle of the world with a cheerful and trusting fatalism» (TI, *Skirmisches* 49) – that is, precisely the sort of human being that Nietzsche displays as an upholder of *Dionysian* wisdom.

It is not my intention to examine why Nietzsche thought this of Goethe. I am rather interested in the significant fact that, because of this interpretation, the latter is introduced in TI, *Skirmisches* 49 as «not a German event but a European one». This definition indeed prompts a series of questions. What does it mean to be a *European* (event), for Nietzsche? And in what sense does he contrast this with being *German*? From the way Goethe is presented here, it is clear that the first attribute has a positive meaning, while being German – as any Nietzsche reader knows well – is hardly a good thing. But the answer might not be as

University Press, 2005; A = *The Antichrist*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 2005; PF = *Posthumous Fragment*, in *Writing From the Late Notebooks*, eng. trans. Cambridge University Press, 2003; KSB = *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienaufgabe in 8 Bänden,* dtv/de Gruyter, Berlin 2003.

2 Nietzsche decided to add the chapter on the *Ancients* to *Twilights of Idols* just before sending back the final proofs of this book to the editor. This can be explained by a twofold editorial strategy: firstly, that section allows Nietzsche's book to gain perfect circularity, leading back to the "tragic" attitude toward life that characterises the ancient Greek world, and which Socrates irremediably undermined; secondly, it links two volumes which are supposed to prepare the ground for the forthcoming *Revaluation of All Values,* by presenting Nietzsche as a philosopher (*Twilight of the Idols*) and as a man/author (*Ecce Homo*). On this, see P. Gori and C. Piazzesi, *"Un demone che ride". Esercizi di serenità filosofica*, in F. Nietzsche, *Crepuscolo degli idoli*, (ed. P. Gori and C. Piazzesi), Carocci, Roma 2012, pp. 9-35.

trivial as it seems, especially since it involves secondary questions about the sense this attribute has in Nietzsche. Is it political? Or is it a purely cultural issue? Or is the question even subtler, such that Nietzsche is in fact dealing with a matter that is anthropological at its very core?

As is often the case in Nietzsche, there is no one-sided answer to these questions. They are in fact intertwined, and it is impossible to maintain a strong distinction between the political, cultural, and anthropological aspects of the issue. What makes TI, *Skirmishes* 49 interesting is that it contains all the elements of a conceptual constellation that can help us to deal with the matter. "German", "European", and "Free spirit" are the main notions involved, and how Nietzsche relates them – how he (albeit implicitly) suggests that one should deal with them – deserves thorough investigation, to be carried out in light of his attempt to realize a countermovement to the nihilistic pessimism he attributes to Schopenhauer: that is, an attempt at a *revaluation of all values* (cf. GS 357 and PF 11[411], 1887-88). I therefore aim to shed light on what it means, for Nietzsche, to overcome German culture, but also on the sense in which and the extent to which we can call ourselves Europeans. Finally, I aim to clarify why future philosophers should be prepared to leave this latter attribute aside, that is, to *de-europeanize* themselves, thus becoming *supra-europeans*.[3]

Nietzsche's interest in Europe can be traced back to the late 1870s, when he started dealing with the problem of German culture and civilization. In WS 215 we learn that Europe – including «America ... insofar as it is the daughter-land of our culture» and, within geographical Europe, «only those nations and ethnic minorities who possess a common past in Greece, Rome, Judaism, and Christianity» – is not a political space but rather a cultural one.[4] German culture is left out of this picture,

3 Duncan Large writes of a «self-de-europeanization of the Good European», in Nietzsche (D. Large, «Nietzsche's Orientalism», *Nietzsche-Studien* 42, 2013, pp. 178-203, p. 195). The Nietzschean notion of the «supra-european» (über-europäisch) appears e.g. in BGE 255; in PF 34[149]; 35[9]; 41[7], 1885; and PF 2[36], 1885-86. On this, see M. Brusotti, *Européen et supra-européen*, in *Nietzsche et l'Europe*, eds. P. D'Iorio and G. Merlio, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 2006, pp. 193-211.

4 As Ralph Witzler observes, for Nietzsche Europe is primarily and most importantly a «spiritual attitude» (R. Witzler, *Europa im Denken Nietzsches*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2001, p. 199).

or at least it plays a secondary role insofar as it is the expression of a nationalistic attitude, which Nietzsche considers quite dangerous and detrimental to civilization. This is well expressed in a passage from *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, where Nietzsche reflects on the idea that «to be a good German means to degermanize oneself» (OM 323). Here, we read that one must not stop at the level of national character if one «labours at the *transformation* of convictions, that is to say at culture» (*ivi*). The national appearance of a people is like a girdle that must be burst open, for Nietzsche; if a people «remains stationary, if it languishes, a new girdle fastens itself about its soul, the crust forming ever more firmly around it constructs as it were a prison whose walls grow higher and higher» (*ivi*). Cultural development is therefore only possible if we manage to get rid of what *hitherto* defined us as a people, if we learn to grasp what is different from us, what lies outside the realm of our culture and civilization, absorbing those elements that can help our own culture to grow. Applied to Germans, Nietzsche argues that one must first ask oneself not only «What is German» in general, but rather «What is *now* German» – that is, what characterizes the German people historically, socially and politically – in order to see how it «can grow more and more beyond what is German», through the assimilation of the «*ungermanic*» (*ivi*).

This is not a matter of mere politics, however. *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, § 323 is a starting point for a set of reflections that Nietzsche would carry out over a decade. It shows how deeply culture and politics are intertwined and, most importantly, that these issues can be projected on a purely philosophical plane. By this I mean that Nietzsche is not primarily focused on the political problem of nationalism; rather, he aims to stress that this attitude and the culture it presupposes influence the spiritual development of a people. Thus, it seems possible to further elaborate the question Nietzsche poses by asking what a German would *become* were he to succeed in *degermanizing* himself. Would he still be a German? Or would he become a different type of man, someone who still holds his "Germanness" inside him as an early stage of development? As the passage on Goethe seems to imply, it might be argued that Nietzsche

considers Europe a broader cultural dimension that can host this human type. This idea can also be defended on the basis of *The Wanderer and His Shadow* 87, where nationalism is presented as the «sickness of this century».[5] At our stage of culture, Nietzsche argues, it is fundamental «to learn *to write well and even better*», which means «also to think better; … to become translatable into the language of one's neighbour; to make ourselves accessible to the understanding of those foreigners who learn our language» (*ivi*). This is multiculturalism at its finest. For Nietzsche, the development of a people depends on its ability to understand the representatives of other cultures but also to make oneself accessible to them. Any attempt to limit that attitude is detrimental to the growth of civilization and, as Nietzsche observes, makes impossible the rise of «free spirits» and «good Europeans», who in a near future are meant to «direct and supervise the total culture of the earth» (*ivi*). As early as 1878, then, Nietzsche outlines the conceptual triad that we find in the late passage on Goethe: the good European and the free spirit are presented in opposition to the German bearer of "petty politics" (cf. BGE 208 and GS 377), which attempts to affirm sterile nationalism. Given the importance of these figures within Nietzsche's thought and the fact that they intertwine the cultural, political and anthropological plane, it is clear that they deserve further exploration.

2. Good Europeanism and Free-Spiritedness

From what has been argued thus far, it can be maintained that Nietzsche characterizes the European viewpoint in contrast to the German perspective of his time, in particular as an attempt to go beyond the short-sighted nationalism that he observes throughout his fatherland. But it is also clear that the question is not limited to the political plane, as the context of TI, *Skirmishes* 49 also suggests. For Nietzsche, Europe

5 Nietzsche's peculiar way of treating culture from a medical viewpoint is well known. On this, see e.g. D. Ahern, *Nietzsche as Cultural Physician*, Pennsylvania 1995, and P. Van Tongeren, *Vom "Artz der Cultur" zum "Artz und Kranken in einer Person". Eine Hypothese zur Entwicklung Nietzsches als Philosoph der Kultur(en)*, in *Nietzsche – Philosoph der Kultur(en)*, ed. A. Urs Sommer, de Gruyter, Berlin/New York 2008, pp. 11-29.

has a variety of anthropological manifestations, some of which embody the spirit of that cultural realm properly and contribute to its further development. This is what chiefly interests Nietzsche. His treatments of Germany, Europe, and other socio-political and cultural dimensions always focus on the human types that grow out of these dimensions, with the aim of outlining an educational path (an ideal of *Bildung*) that will give birth to a "strong" and "healthy" form of mankind. In the following section, I will say something about the kind of "strength" one can attribute to Nietzsche's late ideal of the "new philosophers" and the "Europeans of the future" and how it can be achieved. For now, allow me to deal with the two figures introduced in WS 87, for they are crucial to understanding Nietzsche's conception of the relationship between politics, culture, and anthropology.

The two (often related) concepts of the "good European" and the "free spirit" occur over a broad time period in Nietzsche's work, although they only appear in a limited number of passages. As noted above, Nietzsche introduces them in the late 1870s, but it is in his late period (1885-1888) that their importance to Nietzsche's philosophical project is revealed. It is not my intention to deal with them exhaustively here, as thorough studies on them have been already published.[6] Instead, I will focus on one aspect that I take to be worthy of attention, that is, the connection between good Europeanism and free-spiritedness on the one hand and the issue of the "type of man" as it appears in Nietzsche's late writings.

After a period that can be defined as one of productive sedimentation,[7] both the good European and the free spirit reappear jointly in the 1886 *Preface* to *Beyond Good and Evil*, where they finally reveal their philosophical relevance. Here, Nietzsche presents these figures as the last stage of a spiritual development that is supposed to overcome

6 On this, see e.g. A. Venturelli, «Die gaya scienza der "guten Europäer". Einige Anmerkungen zum Aphorismus 377 des V. Buchs der Fröhlichen Wissenschaft», *Nietzsche-Studien*, 28, 2010, pp. 180-200; P. Gori and P. Stellino, «Il buon europeo di Nietzsche oltre nichilismo e morale cristiana», *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana,* 7/XII, 2016, pp. 98-124. Of some interest, despite the controversial thesis she defends, is also M. Prange, *Nietzsche, Wagner, Europe*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston, 2013.

7 Cf. Gori/Stellino, *op. cit.,* pp. 103-112.

the dogmatic heritage of Western (i.e. Platonic and Christian) metaphysics. Being «neither Jesuits nor democrats, nor even German enough, … *good Europeans* and free, *very* free spirits» are, for Nietzsche, «the heirs to all the force cultivated through the struggle against [the dogmatist's] error» and the upholders of the «magnificent tension of spirit» that has been created «in Europe, the likes of which the earth has never known: with such a tension in our bow we can now shoot at the furthest goals». This passage aligns thematically with TI, *Skirmishes* 49. Indeed, a primarily philosophical issue is explored in both texts, and free-spiritedness is ascribed to a European – not a German – "event". But the *Preface* contains something more, a few elements that play an important role in BGE and that have to do with the anthropological status of the modern citizen. By speaking of «Jesuits and democrats», in fact, Nietzsche outlines a well-defined political framework, the effects of which on Western civilization are displayed, for example, in BGE 62 and 203. In both paragraphs, Nietzsche stresses the *degenerative* consequences of Christian-European morality and culture – that is, how it affects the human type physiologically.[8] In BGE 62, «the European of today» is famously described as «a herd animal, something … sick and mediocre», the final product of a process of «deterioration of the European race» of which Christianity is to be blamed. The same idea is further stressed in BGE 203, where Nietzsche deals with the democratic movement as an expression of European Christianity's interest in keeping «everything living that can be kept in any way alive» (BGE 62). Nietzsche considers «the democratic movement to be not merely an abased form of political organization, but rather an abased (more specifically a diminished) form of humanity, a mediocritization and depreciation of humanity in value» (BGE 203). Furthermore, he interprets the activity of modern socialists as the cause of «the total *degeneration of humanity* … into the perfect herd animal», which for Nietzsche is only a «brutalizing process of turning humanity into stunted little animals with equal rights and equal claims» (*ivi*).

As in BGE 62, attention is paid first and foremost to the «*Typus 'Mensch'*» that arises from this cultural and political framework, but

8 The theme of *degeneration* in Nietzsche has been recently explored by Ken Gemes in his paper «The Biology of Evil: Nietzsche on *Entartung* and *Verjüdung*», *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 52/1 (2021), pp. 1-25.

Nietzsche now moves a step beyond the diagnostic moment. He does not provide a mere passive observation of the fact that «the religions that have existed so far … have played a principal role in keeping the type "man" on a lower level» (BGE 62); on the contrary, Nietzsche seems to be confident of the fact that the same conditions that determined the actual state of affairs can give birth to a countermovement whose outcome will be «*new philosophers*, … spirits who are strong and original enough to give impetus to opposed valuations and initiate a revaluation and reversal of "eternal values"; … men of the future who in the present tie the knots and gather the force that compels the will of millennia into *new* channels» (BGE 203). In line with what we read in the *Preface* to BGE, Nietzsche imagines the growth of a new human type as a further development of a spiritual path involving Western humanity, for he believes it «has still not exhausted its great possibilities» and that only «a favourable accumulation and intensification of forces» is needed to produce this effect (BGE 203). Thus, what Nietzsche tells the free spirits – for this passage is explicitly addressed to them – is that a revaluation of values and the anthropological modification it involves must be carried out from the inside, by exploiting the conditions of our own existence. In other words, to contrast Christian-European morality it is necessary to follow Christian-European morality to its extreme consequences, or, as Nietzsche suggests, to «outgrow Christianity and [become] averse to it – precisely because we have grown *out* of it» (GS 377).

The realization of «Europe's longest and most courageous *self-overcoming*» (GS 357) is perhaps the main characteristic of the good Europeans, the «rich heirs of millennia of European spirit» to which Nietzsche commends his «secret wisdom and *gaya scienza*» (GS 377). It is precisely *because* they are Europeans that they can overcome Europe. They are the good ones *among* Europeans, this goodness being a spiritual condition of strength and health that enables oneself not to be affected by the disease of Western metaphysics and its morality – in a word: free-spiritedness (cf. BGE 203 and WS 87). It is worth mentioning that Nietzsche deals with good Europeanism in light of the issue of a «strengthening and enhancement of the human type» (GS 377) in the *Gay Science* as well. In my view, this is a clear sign of the important role that the anthropological problem plays in Nietzsche's late philosophy

and of how strongly it is intertwined with the figures he outlined almost ten years earlier. To further support this idea, it is possible to consider the *Genealogy of Morality*, for the observations on the good Europeans that Nietzsche published in GS 357 also appear in the second to last section of the third essay of the 1887 book – where, quite significantly, Nietzsche announces the forthcoming publication of «*The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*» and declares the future task to which he will devote himself in the following years. This task, as is well known, is to take care of the problem of the value of truth, thus touching on the very core of Christian morality and, supposedly, destroying it from the inside (cf. GM III 24 and 27). Yet it can also be argued in this case that Nietzsche's urge to accomplish this task is primarily anthropological if we consider that in the *Preface* to the *Genealogy* he portrays morality as «the danger of dangers» and as that which is to be blamed «if man, as species, never reached his *highest potential power and splendour*» (GM, *Preface* 6).[9] His attempt is therefore to tear open this cultural girdle so as to allow humanity to grow, free at last, a feat that can be accomplished by contrasting the principle of Western thought – that is, the «will to truth» – with the anti-dogmatic *perspectivism* that Nietzsche mentions in the *Preface* to *Beyond Good and Evil* and that he apparently attributes to the good Europeans and free spirits.

Allow me to sum all this up. Nietzsche's reflections on good Europeanism and free-spiritedness in the period from 1885 to 1887 form a coherent an integrated picture of a turning point in cultural history. Nietzsche observes the (to his mind) critical situation of a society that is not growing as one might expect it to insofar as its institutions, both political and educational, are obstacles to its development. As a result, mankind is becoming weak, for the physiological always corresponds to the spiritual, and one cannot separate the cultural from the anthropological. But this can be stopped. Even better, we can turn this around and achieve the improvement of the human type by changing our political and cultural systems. All we need are new guiding figures

9 The anthropological problem of the "*Typus Mensch*" in Nietzsche has been explored in particular by Richard Schacht. See e.g. R. Schacht, *Nietzsche and Philosophical Anthropology*, in *A Companion to Nietzsche,* ed. K. Ansell Pearson, New Jersey, Hoboken 2006, pp. 115-132.

capable of countering the current state of affairs due to their higher spiritual condition and "great health".[10] Nietzsche's development of his early criticism of German nationalism and its supposedly "Great politics" is therefore positive, and perhaps even optimistic. Although the good European and the free spirit seem to be only *ideal* figures that will never be properly realized (much like the community of readers to whom Nietzsche refers during his late period),[11] the overall progress of the European as a human type is observed as actually having been set in motion. In BGE 242, Nietzsche talks of «the *European in a state of becoming*», as «an immense *physiological* process» that is taking place «behind all the moral and political foregrounds that are indicated by formulas like … "civilization" or "humanization" or "progress"», formulas which give respect to what is «simply labelled as Europe's *democratic* movement». As noted above, Nietzsche's viewpoint is not merely cultural or political; he considers European events through the lens of a philosophical anthropologist, giving attention to what humankind has become and, especially, to what it might become. He believes that «the same new conditions that generally lead to a levelling and mediocritization of man – a[n] … able herd animal man – are … suitable for giving rise to exceptional people who possess the most dangerous and attractive qualities» (*ivi*). But this will be possible only when men finally «overcome atavistic fits of fatherlandishness» (BGE 241), when they accept that a secure but sterile reaffirmation of traditional values is not the best solution for their culture or for themselves as human beings. This is precisely what Nietzsche defines as «good Europeanism»,

10 See e.g. HH II, *Preface* 6. For more on this, see e.g. M. Letteri, «The Theme of Health in Nietzsche's thought», *Man and World* 23 (1990), pp. 405-417, and M. Faustino, *Philosophy as a "Misunderstanding of the Body" and the "Great Health" of the New Philosophers*, in *Nietzsche on Instinct and Language*, eds. J. Constâncio and M.J. Mayer Branco, de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2011, pp. 203-218.

11 In HH I, *Preface* 2, Nietzsche expresses his doubts about the actual existence of "free spirits", which for him are a regulative idea for future humanity. On the contrary, he sometimes talks of the good European as an existing figure, or, better, of good Europeanism as an attitude that has already been realized in certain individuals. In any case, it is worth considering that in the 1886-1888 works Nietzsche often uses the first person plural when speaking of the good Europeans and free spirits (e.g. BGE, *Preface*, 203 and 243; GS 377). On this, see Gori/Stellino, *op.cit.* 111 ff.

that is, the ability to grow *out* of the culture that has represented our own soil. In line with his 1878 remarks, Nietzsche thus conceives of «an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of person [*Art Mensch*] who, physiologically speaking, is typified by a maximal degree of the art and force of adaptation» (BGE 242). Those «born Mediterranean, … those rarer and rarely satisfied people who are too far-ranging to find satisfaction in any fatherlandishness, and know how to love the south in the north and the north in the south» (BGE 254), are the kinds of people who learned to write well and to think better, who have become translatable and accessible to others, and who are conversely ready to hear what foreign cultures have to share. The strength of this people seems to reside precisely in its power of adaptation, as well as in the *tolerance* it possesses as its most important feature.

Returning to the issue of the anti-nationalistic attitude, to be read in light of Nietzsche's overall anti-Germanism, we find a hint that will help us in our discussion of the last element that is meant to complete the picture of the anthropological ideal that Goethe helps Nietzsche to outline – that is, the question of what kind of (spiritual) strength characterizes the «spirit who has *become free*» and embraces a purely Dionysian faith. In the next section, I will try to deal with this issue by focusing on a further element that, albeit apparently in contrast to what has been said thus far, I believe will in fact prove relevant to my overall purpose: Cesare Borgia and the civilization of the Italian Renaissance.

3. Great men, great health

Twilight of the Idol's *Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* can be interpreted as a metaphorical raid on (or incursion into) modernity, which Nietzsche performs in the context of his «great declaration of war» against Wagner, Germany, and Christian Europe more broadly.[12] The aim of the section is thus to deal critically with the thinkers and intellectual movements that Nietzsche believes to be the most representative expression of the culture

12 Cf. TI, *Preface*; Nietzsche's letter to Köselitz, September 27, 1888, KSB 8; and Nietzsche's letter to Overbeck, October 18, 1888, KSB 8.

of *décadence*. Among these are a number of positive figures, however, such as Goethe, who at least represents certain positive features of an ideal future humanity. Another figure whom Nietzsche speaks positively of, a few pages before introducing Goethe, is Cesare Borgia, the finest representative of the Italian Renaissance. Nietzsche's portrayal of him is somewhat problematic, for Borgia apparently embodies those elements that can be found in the most superficial misinterpretations of Nietzsche's "*higher men*" and "overman". Nevertheless, a *careful* reading of what Nietzsche writes about can help us – as always – to view these observations from the right perspective and to show their coherence with the overall picture depicted in *Twilight of the Idols*.

As is well known, Nietzsche had positive things to say about the Italian Renaissance, describing the period as «the last great cultural harvest that [Europe] still could have brought home», but which the Germans stole (A 61). For him, the Renaissance was in fact «the *revaluation of all Christian values*, an attempt … to allow the *opposite* values, *noble* values to triumph» (*ivi*). Or at least it would have been, if only the Reformation had never occurred and Luther had not «*re-established the church*» (*ivi*). As Nietzsche observes in *Human, all too Human* I, 237, «The Italian Renaissance contained within it all the positive forces to which we owe modern culture [and …] which have *up to now* never reappeared in our modern culture with such power as they had then». Unfortunately, «the great task of the Renaissance could not be brought to completion, [for] the protestation of German nature grown retarded … prevented it» (*ivi*). Among these positive forces we find «liberation of thought, disrespect for authorities, … enthusiasm for science» (*ivi*), and, most importantly for the late Nietzsche, the affirmation of an aristocratic, noble individualism that would prevent the levelling of education and culture that characterized modern Europe.[13]

Nietzsche's view is deeply inspired by Jakob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), where Nietzsche encountered an alternative interpretation of humanism to that which was popular in his time and which can be contrasted to the

13 Cf. M. Ruhel, *Burckhardt and Nietzsche on the Modern Self*, in id., *The Italian Renaissance in the German Historical Imagination, 1860-1930*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 86.

Wagnerian project of restoring antiquity.[14] As Martin Ruehl observes, Burckhardt's view of the Renaissance should be read in light of Nietzsche's anti-German and anti-Wagnerian critique of culture. For Wagner, «Renaissance Italy was a "corrupted world", imbued with a superficial aestheticism whose dissemination into the North proved to be "detrimental" to the development of a genuine German *Kultur*».[15] Furthermore, he thought that the Renaissance humanists lacked «a true understanding of the tragic nature of Ancient Greek civilization», and thus their attempt to restore antiquity was destined to fail.[16] In Nietzsche, it is quite the opposite. The Renaissance is the historical dimension on which the agonal and aristocratic spirit of ancient Greece would have been restored if it had been possible to complete the cultural event that the German Reformation had put a stop to. It is precisely in Burckhardt that Nietzsche encountered the idea that «the great task of a cultural renewal could be carried out by a small group of superior human beings»,[17] healthy individuals who understood that history is a battleground of instincts and power.[18] Furthermore, Burckhardt allowed Nietzsche to realize the important shift from a historical-sociological to an anthropological-psychological viewpoint, which characterizes GM I, 16 and TI, *Skirmishes* 37 and 44, for example.[19] In these texts, Nietzsche focuses on the *higher* nature of the men of the Renaissance as a product of social and political conditions that enabled the development of precisely the kinds of traits that are contrasted in BGE 62 to traits deemed *degenerative*: being «high and hard enough to give human beings artistic form; … strong or far-sighted; … noble enough to see the abysmally different orders of rank [*Rangordnung*] and chasms of rank between different people».

14 See on this T. Gontier, «Nietzsche, Burckhardt et la "question" de la Renaissance», *Noesis* 10, 2006, pp. 49-71. References will be given to the open access version, available at https://journals.openedition.org/noesis/422.

15 Ruhel, *op. cit.,* p. 74.

16 *Ivi*.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

18 Cf. Luca Farulli, «Immagini in movimento: l'Italia del Rinascimento tra Jakob Burckhardt e Friedrich Nietzsche», *Horizonte* 1, 2016, pp. 32-73, p. 63.

19 Cf. Gontier, *op. cit.*

This idea of a fundamental difference between individuals is reaffirmed in TI, *Skirmishes* 37, where Schopenhauer's «*moral of pity*» and the Spencerian ideal of altruistic progress is criticized in particular.[20] Nietzsche calls this conception *Pathos der Distanz* (cf. JGB 257 and GM I, 2) and views it as the actual promoter of a cultural and historical development. History fears stasis; stasis is the result of balance among forces; therefore, any state of affairs resulting in equilibrium is to be avoided if one wants the process to continue. Conversely, instability is desirable, for it is full of possibilities, giving rise to a plethora of new events. This idea is implicit in Nietzsche's observation that «"equality" … essentially belongs to decline: the rift between people, between classes, the myriad number of types, the will to be yourself, to stand out, what I call the *pathos of distance*, is characteristic of every *strong age*» (TI, *Skirmishes* 37). Socialism and the democratic movement are expressions of this *décadence* in politics, for their ideal undermines further changes both on the cultural and on the anthropological plane. As noted above, the development of a cultural process in fact implies the development of the human type; therefore, a "higher man" can only grow out of a social context where agonal forces are powerful and the tension separating individuals is great. But this is precisely the image of the Renaissance that Nietzsche finds in Burckhardt, whose positive evaluation of that age focused not on the intellectual movement inspired by Classical antiquity which was popular at the time but rather on the social and political conditions that allowed the Italian genius to rise.[21] Accordingly, Nietzsche maintains that the «Renaissance [is] the last *great* age», a historical period antithetical to modern Europe, «with our virtues of work, modesty, lawfulness, and science – accumulating, economic, machine-like – … a *weak* age» (*ivi*). What is the product of the modern age? The herd animal. What was the product of the Renaissance? Cesare Borgia – and, perhaps most importantly, a type of man who can tolerate his power and therefore *resist* him.

20 On this, see M. C. Fornari, *Die Entwicklung der Herdenmoral. Nietzsche liest Spencer und Mill,* Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2009.

21 Cf. Gontier*, op. cit.*, p. 7. Accordingly, Ruhel (*op. cit.*, p. 89) maintains that «tyrannical self-fashioning, according to Nietzsche, … aided the growth of culture. Under a tyranny, he argued [in GS 23], "the individual is usually most mature and 'culture', consequently, most developed and fertile"».

This is the point I would like to stress. Despite the fact that Cesare Borgia is defined as «a "higher man"» and «a type of *overman*» (*ivi*), it seems to me that the main contrast we find in TI, *Skirmishes* 37 is not actually between him and us, but rather between us and the people of the Renaissance. Nietzsche indeed observes that «we should be under no illusion that Cesare Borgia's contemporaries would not laugh themselves to death at the comic spectacle of us moderns, with our thickly padded humanity, going to any length to avoid bumping into a pebble» (*ivi*). Thus perhaps we should not focus on Borgia himself, on the attributes we can ascribe him, but rather evaluate this anthropological figure in terms of what he accomplished, the role he played in his historical and political context – and the *reactions* he generated from his people. This does not mean that we must reject Nietzsche's positive assessment of Borgia, which is indisputable. For Nietzsche, Borgia symbolizes a *strong* age; he is the «iconic negation of all the sickly instincts … of those Last Men populating Europe»,[22] and his ascension to the papal throne would have constituted the realization of the Renaissance as a countermovement to Christianity, in fact (A 61). At the same time, however, Borgia seems to be an incomplete figure, as it were, or at least he does not seem to embody the type of man Nietzsche invites us to look for. Indeed, in TI, *Skirmishes*, Nietzsche's path through the various manifestations of modernity does not stop with Cesare Borgia but rather continues until we encounter Goethe and the «spirit *finally become free*», which the latter apparently conceived of and which can be viewed as the actual anthropological ideal of the late Nietzsche. The characters Nietzsche attributes to this human type do not correspond to his description of Cesare Borgia. The «strong, highly educated, self-respecting human being» described by Nietzsche is «skilled in all things physical and able to keep himself in check»; he «could dare to allow himself the entire expanse and wealth of naturalness» and «is strong enough for this freedom»; most importantly, he is «a person who is tolerant out of strength and not weakness because he knows how to take advantage of things that would destroy an average nature» (TI, *Skirmishes* 49).

22 Ruhel, *op. cit.,* p. 102.

Tolerance is the key term for defining the kind of strength that is peculiar to the new humanity, future philosophers, etc. As we read in the important fragment written in *Lenzer Heide* (PF 5[71], 1886-87), Nietzsche indeed considers the «*strongest*» human beings to be «the most moderate, those who have no need of extreme articles of faith, who not only concede but even love a good deal of contingency and nonsense, who can think of man with a considerable moderation of his value and not therefore become small and weak: the richest in health, who are equal to the most misfortunes and therefore less afraid of misfortunes – men who are *sure of their power* and who represent with conscious pride the strength man has achieved». In the light of this, it can be argued that the highly educated (*hochgebildet*) free spirit Nietzsche describes is not a tyrant, but nor is he a passive victim of tyrannical forces. On the contrary, he is characterized by a moderate nature that allows him to avoid succumbing to the affirmative power of men such as Cesare Borgia, to *resist* this power, thus revealing his actual strength. But this is the very dynamic of the *will to power*, properly interpreted, that is, not a violent affirmation of self over others, a will to dominate permanently and to obliterate what is different from ourselves, but a «relationship of tension» between «dynamic quanta», whose very «essence consists in their relation to all other quanta, in their "effects" on these» (PF 14[79], 1888). According to this picture, the «degree of resistance» is as important as the «degree of strength» (*ivi*), and neither of these is a fixed amount. What can be observed is only the result of a never-ending process that in fact defines both subjects involved. Correspondingly, Nietzsche held that the value of a human being, his spiritual strength and health, must be tested in order to be defined and that this can only be achieved if extreme individuals such as Cesare Borgia exist.

It is now clear why I suggest that the role played by Cesare Borgia can be evaluated indirectly, by looking at the impact that a man like him has on his historical, social and cultural framework. In Nietzsche, Cesare Borgia is an example of an individual who, unlike the weak *decadents* but like his contemporaries, manages his instincts precisely *because of who he is*, because of his tyrannical nature and behaviour. Thus, as with the other «great human beings» mentioned by Nietzsche in his writings, Cesare Borgia's greatness rests in his being a *necessary stimulus* for the

education (*Bildung*) of the strong humanity imagined by Goethe (cf. TI, *Skirmishes* 44).

In the light of this, I would like to briefly make some final remarks. As I have tried to show, all of the elements considered thus far can be combined in a coherent picture that allows us to describe the human type that Nietzsche has in mind when he «give[s humanity] its most independent book» (TI, *Skirmishes*, 51). This picture involves two important Nietzschean figures (the good European and the free spirit), who may be viewed as expressions of a mere regulative anthropological ideal. Both Goethe and Cesare Borgia can be seen as tentative realizations and/or incomplete incarnations of this ideal. Neither properly represents it, but at the same time they both play a role in Nietzsche's attempt to provide us with hints as to the direction in which Europe should move. Europe as a cultural space is in fact the main issue that interested Nietzsche. From 1878, Nietzsche contraposed it to the «petty politics» of German nationalism, which is detrimental to the human type because of how it obstructs the proper spiritual development of a people. Therefore, for Nietzsche, (at least a future) Europe seems to be a multicultural and «supra-national» space that hosts those who have learned to write well and, consequently, to think well, to become readable and comprehensible to other people, and finally, to be tolerant toward other cultures, merging them with their own. Good Europeans are precisely these kinds of people, healthier human beings who have resisted the dogmatic disease of nationalism and who have grown strong, transcending the boundaries of their original culture. In this sense, they are the heirs of Europe's own «self-overcoming», and they seem to be prepared to ultimately set aside this cultural dimension as well.[23] As I have suggested, the Renaissance plays a role in this picture and, broadly, in the development of Nietzsche's anti-*décadent* view. For Nietzsche, the Renaissance was indeed the historical and cultural period that made the kind of anthropological figures he praises possible, for it gave birth to «great men» such as Napoleon and Cesare Borgia, who acted as a stimulus to their people, thus allowing them to

23 The fact that Nietzsche does not mention the "good European" after the publication of the fifth book of the *Gay Science,* while the free spirit is still referred to (e.g. in *Twilight of the Idols*), can be interpreted accordingly. On this, see Gori/Stellino, *op. cit.*, pp. 122 ff.

grow *strong*. Thus the positive way in which Nietzsche describes this age and its "finest products" does not undermine moderate interpretations of his late anthropological ideal. On the contrary, it helps us to understand the kind of strength one must attribute to «the spirit *finally become free*» and the sense in which Nietzsche describes him as being «tolerant out of strength and not weakness». The Renaissance allowed for the education (*Bildung*) of the human being precisely in that sense, not as a tyrant but rather as one able to *resist* tyranny and acquire new strength. My claim is therefore that Nietzsche is not interested in the Renaissance as an ideal, superior age to be restored; rather, his focus is on those elements that might allow the European event we are living to develop further, once it has finally freed itself from short-sighted political institutions.

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III. Wittgenstein Studies

Wittgenstein on Translation: Sense-for-sense and Epistemological Issues

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Introduction

In this paper I analyse some of Wittgenstein's remarks on translation both from his early and later thought. In a letter to C. K. Ogden, dated 23 April 1922, written just before the English publication of the *Tractatus*, he said that "[t]he translation […] was in many points by far too literal" and that all his effort in the revision was made "in order to translate the *sense* (not the words)" (Wittgenstein 1973: p. 19). This brings to the fore the linguistic distinction between sense-for-sense and word-for-word translation, with Wittgenstein giving a number of reasons for rejecting the latter. What he discards is the possibility of a direct, literal translation that operates *verbatim*, or *verbum pro verbo*, i.e. one word at a time, without looking at the whole context. His view is that only a sense-for-sense translation can do justice to the text since one needs to take into consideration what the words mean in the different contexts in which they occur. In the first part of this paper I illustrate Wittgenstein's perspective with examples from the *Tractatus*, accompanied by comments on English and Portuguese translations of the work. However, I shall argue, Wittgenstein's comments on translation are not limited to its practice but involve other aspects, particularly of an epistemological nature. These include: (i) definitionality; (ii) presuppositional knowledge; (iii) rule-following; (iv) the translation of facts into propositions; and (v) thinking without speaking and the translatability of "wordless thought into words". I concentrate on each of these issues in the second part of the paper. My aim is to draw attention to certain aspects, not to offer a detailed treatment of them.

1. Sense-for-sense in the *Tractatus*

The first case I would like to discuss is the translation of proposition 3.001. The German reads as follows:

> "Ein Sachverhalt ist denkbar" heisst: Wir können uns ein Bild von ihm machen. (Wittgenstein 1922: 3.001)

Wittgenstein's comment on the original translation of this proposition, in the above-mentioned letter to Ogden, is telling not only in regard to his view of what translating a sentence should be but also in regard to his philosophical standpoint. Ogden had proposed to Wittgenstein the following:

> "An atomic fact is thinkable" – means: we can make for ourselves a picture of it. (Wittgenstein 1973: p. 38; cf. Wittgenstein 2016a: 10r)

He then says:

> *3.001* I don't know how to translate this. The German "Wir können uns ein Bild von ihm machen" is a phrase commonly used. I have rendered it by "we can imagine it" because "imagine" comes from "image" and this is something like picture. In German it is a sort of pun you see. (Wittgenstein 1973: p. 24)

Accordingly, the final version of this proposition in the Ogden translation – to which Frank Ramsey has decisively contributed[1] – was:

> "An atomic fact is thinkable" – means: *we can imagine it*. (Wittgenstein 1922: 3.001, my emphasis).

But this would not be the only translation of the *Tractatus* to appear in English. Some years before the publication of the correspondence between Ogden and Wittgenstein, which testifies to his involvement in the process, David Pears and Brian McGuinness published a new translation of the book. Not surprisingly, the finale of the proposition in question appears there in a much less natural way:

> "A state of affairs is thinkable": what this means is that *we can picture it to ourselves*. (Wittgenstein 1961: 3.001, my emphasis)

1 See the beginning of a letter from Wittgenstein to Ramsey of 1923 published in Wittgenstein 1973: p. 77.

For readers of Portuguese, I ought to say that, in his Brazilian edition, J. A. Giannotti would make this proposition almost unintelligible, rendering it confusingly enough as:

> "Um estado de coisas é pensável" significa: *podemos construir-nos uma figuração dêle*. (Wittgenstein 1968: 3.001, my emphasis)

The ending in English would amount to "we can build us a figuration of it". But even more confusing, to my mind, is M. S. Lourenço's Portuguese translation of this proposition, a translation that appeared, it must be emphasized, when the Ogden-Wittgenstein correspondence had been published long before. It runs:

> "Um estado de coisas *é pensável*", quer dizer: *podemo-nos fazer dele uma imagem*. (Wittgenstein 1995 (1987): 3.001, my emphasis)

This last part would mean in English something like "we can make ourselves a picture from it"! The most recent Brazilian edition by L. H. Lopes dos Santos offers a much clearer version:

> "Um estado de coisas é pensável" significa: *podemos figurá-lo*. (Wittgenstein 2001 (1993): 3.001, my emphasis)

However, respecting Wittgenstein's instructions, I would rather translate the final part of the proposition in a more colloquial way as "podemos imaginá-lo", that is, "we can imagine it", instead of "we can picture it".

Another proposition that has raised difficulties for translators is 2.1. It is noteworthy that in the *Prototractatus* manuscript the same proposition has a different wording, one that was retained in the typescripts of the *Tractatus* and only hand-corrected in TSS 202 and 204. Here is the original formulation:

> Die Tatsachen begreifen wir in Bildern. (Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 104, 3; cf. TSS 202-204, 3r)

The final version reads:

> Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen. (Wittgenstein 1922: 2.1; cf. Wittgenstein 2000/2015: TS 202 and 204, 3r)

In the Ogden translation this appears as:

> We make to ourselves pictures of facts. (Wittgenstein 1922: 2.1)

Interestingly, the first version of the translation was "for ourselves" (Wittgenstein 2016a: 6r). A letter from Ogden that was published only in Wittgenstein's *Gesamtbriefwechsel* contains an allusion to it:

> 2.1. "We make for ourselves pictures of facts". Are you here discussing psychology, or is Russell right in saying that this is an entirely non-psychological set of propositions? In 4.1121 we seem to have statements (a) That you are not concerned with psychology, and (b) That you are studying thought processes (which is commonly regarded as psychology). (Wittgenstein 2004a: 20.3.1922)

But in a questionnaire from Ogden received by Wittgenstein in May 1922, a facsimile of which was included in the 1973 publication of their correspondence, we already find the final translation of 2.1 (Wittgenstein 2016b: 1r).

The option adopted by Pears and McGuinness was not considerably different:

> We picture facts to ourselves. (Wittgenstein 1961: 2.1)

But Giannotti's and Lourenço's translations are again puzzling. I quote the two together:

> Fazemo-nos figurações dos fatos. (Wittgenstein 1968: 2.1)

> Fazemo-nos imagens dos factos. (Wittgenstein 1995 (1987): 2.1)

In English they would correspond to "We make ourselves figurations of facts" and "We make ourselves images of facts", respectively. Closer to Wittgenstein's sense, Lopes dos Santos' version runs thus:

> Figuramos os fatos. (Wittgenstein 2001 (1993): 2.1)

This is equivalent to "We picture the facts". But I think that the authority of the Ogden translation should be sufficient to translate this proposition as "Fazemos para nós imagens dos factos", that is, "We make to ourselves pictures of facts".

The third and last example I wish to consider is the translation of proposition 4.01. The German original is:

> Der Satz ist ein Bild der Wirklichkeit.
> Der Satz ist ein Modell der Wirklichkeit, so wie wir sie uns denken. (Wittgenstein 1922: 4.01)

This was initially rendered as:

> The proposition is a picture of the reality.
> The proposition is a model of the reality, as we think of it. (Wittgenstein 2016a: 21r)

But Wittgenstein replied to Ogden in his letter of 23 April 1922 as follows:

> *4.01* "As we think of it" isn't what I mean. What I mean is, roughly speaking, that a prop[osition] is a model of reality as we imagine it (i.e. as we imagine reality). (Wittgenstein 1973: p. 25)

The typescript of the translation was then corrected and this is how the proposition reads in the final translation:

> The proposition is a picture of ~~the~~ reality.
> The proposition is a model of the reality~~,~~ as we ~~think of~~

> ~~it~~ think it is. (Wittgenstein 2016a: 21r; cf. Wittgenstein 1922: 4.01)

Pears and McGuinness have captured Wittgenstein's intentions well, translating the proposition in question in the following manner:

> A proposition is a picture of reality.
> A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it. (Wittgenstein 1961: 4.01)

On the contrary, Giannotti and Lourenço have rendered this exactly as Wittgenstein did not want it. Once again I quote the two translations together:

> A proposição é figuração da realidade.
> A proposição é modêlo da realidade tal como a pensamos. (Wittgenstein 1968: 4.01)

> A proposição é uma imagem da realidade.
> A proposição é um modelo da realidade tal como nós a pensamos. (Wittgenstein 1995 (1987): 4.01)

Lopes dos Santos' version is preferable here too:

> A proposição é uma figuração da realidade.
> A proposição é um modelo da realidade tal como pensamos que seja. (Wittgenstein 2001 (1993): 4.01)

I could add other instances but I am convinced the cases discussed suffice to show that to translate a work like the *Tractatus* one needs to take into consideration all possible sources of explanation of more unclear passages. The correspondence with Ogden is an indispensable tool as it often reveals Wittgenstein's aims in an unparalleled way. Whereas translators before 1973 had no access to it, all subsequent endeavours to render the *Tractatus* cannot pass silently by Wittgenstein's own word on many propositions. Against the background of further materials related

to the publication of the work,[2] we can see that his goal, despite the technicalities of the book, was to use everyday expressions that only a sense-for-sense translation can capture.

2. Epistemological Issues

(i) Definitionality

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein wrote:

> Definitions are rules for the translation of one language into another. Every correct symbolism must be translatable into every other according to such rules. It is *this* which all have in common. (Wittgenstein 1922: 3.343)

What this means is that symbolism, which includes, besides logical notations, languages like English, German or Portuguese, is not essential. What is essential is a *rule of thought* that enables us, for example, to translate "table" as "Tisch" or "mesa". But how does this rule work? We do not explicitly define that a table must have this and that ontological characteristic for there can always be empirical innovations. Yet some basic properties must be defined, though inexplicitly, in order to not confound a table with any other object. The definition of "table" as such and such that can be translated as "Tisch" or "mesa" depends indeed on our having a series of aspects in mind that go much beyond the mere identification of the thing in question. This involves the simultaneous definitionality (and translatability) of what can be called *object extensions*, e.g. immobility, solidity, weightiness, etc. Every definition is linked to a set of extensions of which only a few are overtly considered ($O_{ext\ 1}$, $O_{ext\ 2}$, $O_{ext\ 3}$, etc.). The remainder lie at the back of our intricate mental processes ($O_{ext\ n}$). Needless to say, what happens with the definition of objects applies to that of relations (to the left or to the right of, in front of or behind, etc.) and states (fast or slow, happy or unhappy, etc.).

2 See Wittgenstein 2004b and the more recent Wittgenstein 2016a and 2016b.

Definition is therefore a form of presupposition.

(ii) Presuppositional knowledge

Also in the *Tractatus* we find the following propositions addressing the theme of translation:

> The translation of one language into another is not a process of translating each *proposition* of the one into a *proposition* of the other, but only the constituent parts of propositions (*Satzbestandteile*) are translated.
> (And the dictionary does not only translate substantives but also adverbs and conjunctions, etc., and it treats them all alike.)
>
> The meanings of the simple signs (the words) must be explained to us, if we are to understand them. (Wittgenstein 1922: 4.025-4.026)

These are preceded in the *Tractatus* by a proposition that reads:

> To understand a proposition means to know what is the case, if it is true.
> (One can therefore understand it without knowing whether it is true or not.)
> One understands it if one understands its constituent parts (*Bestandteile*). (Wittgenstein 1922: 4.024)

In the *Prototractatus* manuscript (Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 104, 49), the proposition corresponding to the first paragraph of 4.025 of the *Tractatus*, numbered 4.0261, is to be found between the one numbered 2.011 in both texts and 5.30222 in the former and 5.454(1) in the latter. They run as follows in the Ogden translation:

> It is essential to a thing that it can be a constituent part (*Bestandteil*) of an atomic fact.

> In logic there is no side by side *(Nebeneinander)*, there can be no classification. (Wittgenstein 1922: 2.011 and 5.454(1))

In the process of translation, we can consult the dictionary in order to be sure about the meanings of some puzzling words, but we do not use the dictionary for every bit of text. We presuppose, for instance, that the German word "in" means the same as the English word "in" and we only *translate* what is not immediately clear to us. The important thing is to understand the "constituent parts" of the proposition. If I were to translate a sentence written in Chinese, a language that I do not know, I would not even be able to recognize a sentential structure, i.e. its "constituent parts". It is thus fundamental to presuppose a series of elements exactly as we do in regard to experience in general. That is why translating is first and foremost a cognitive endeavour. What the translator does is to replicate an epistemic situation in which something is grasped. The understanding of each *definiens* is attained by our connecting several *definientia* in a systematic manner. No surprise then that native speakers, who master their language as a whole, can perceive nuances that are usually lost to non-native speakers.

(iii) Rule-following

In the transitional period, Wittgenstein speaks about the "dictionary" in terms of "rule of translation". Here are two illustrative passages, the first dating from 31 July 1930 and the second from 23 October 1930:

> Controlling a translation [according to the dictionary] is exactly the same as controlling a calculation according to the calculation rules. (Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 109, 75, my translation)

> The dictionary ~~is~~ [gives] the general rule of translation. But even the dictionary must be understood [so] in first place. Is there an understanding of a general rule [as such] except through its

> application? (Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 109, 169, my translation)[3]

Wittgenstein's teaching is that we must already be in possession of some knowledge that authorizes us to follow the rule of translation. Again, a Chinese-English dictionary would be of no help to someone who does not have a command of the Chinese language. That is why Wittgenstein calls our attention to the analogies between translating and calculating. Imagine that to calculate we had to consult the rules of calculation at all times – it would not work. Take the case of

$$200 + 200 + 225$$

A straight way of calculating this is to add 200 to 200, obtaining 400, and then add the final 225 to obtain 625. Maybe in our minds we have actually added 200 to 200 and, to make things easier, 400 to 200 adding the final 25 only later to arrive at 625. These calculations are done without looking at multiplication tables or reckoning, for example, that 25×25 or 25^2 equals 625, even if these possibilities can also be considered. We once more have a case of presuppositional knowledge. The rules are obeyed somehow *blindly*. Only in this way can a calculation or a translation be natural. For Wittgenstein, the rules we follow are not laid down permanently before us but our obedience to them flows like our life.

(iv) The translation of facts into propositions

Consider now the following remarks dated 10 February 1931 selected for *Culture and Value*:

> The limit of language manifests itself in the impossibility of describing the fact that corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence without simply repeating the sentence.

3 Wittgenstein's own words are: "Das Kontrollieren einer Übersetzung nach dem Wörterbuch ist genau analog dem Kontrollieren einer Rechnung nach den Rechnungsregeln." And: "Das Wörterbuch ~~ist~~ gibt die allgemeine Regel der Übersetzung. Aber auch das Wörterbuch muß ja so erst verstanden werden. Gibt es ein Verstehen einer allgemeinen Regel als solcher außer durch ihre Anwendung?"

> (We are involved here with the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy.) (Wittgenstein 1998 (1977): p. 13)

What does Wittgenstein mean by "the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy"? He seems to be saying that we cannot, as the *Critique of Pure Reason* claims, arrive at the facts themselves, only at our subjective projections of them. True, the Kantian limits of knowledge are the Wittgensteinian limits of language. What is at stake is that we cannot go beyond what our language projects. Any attempt to go deeper into the description of a fact leads us to new projections that ultimately do not touch the very same fact we are describing.

There exist other passages on translation in the same manuscript volume that are similarly epistemological in nature. One of them was written down on 20 June 1931 and around 1933 made its way into the so-called *Big Typescript* (TS 213). There it reads:

> After all, our grammatical investigation differs from that of a philologist, etc.: what interests us, for instance, is the translation from one language into other languages we have invented. In general the rules that the philologist totally ignores are the ones that interest us. Thus we are justified in emphasizing this difference. (Wittgenstein 2005: p. 305; cf. Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 110, 194-195)

Another related passage dates from 1 July 1931 and runs thus:

> When I say that every picture still needs an interpretation, then "interpretation" means the translation into another picture or into action. (Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 110, 244, my translation)[4]

A leitmotiv of Wittgenstein's philosophy, both early and late, is the pictorial character of our understanding of the world. No fact is accessed

4 Here is the German original: "Wenn ich sage, jedes Bild braucht noch eine Interpretation, so heißt 'Interpretation' die Übersetzung in ein weiteres Bild oder in die Tat."

without our integration of it into a proposition that appears before us as an image. We can only think through images and we move from image to image, creating a world picture. Taken as a whole, these remarks make us see that in the transitional period Wittgenstein did not give up entirely the peculiar transcendental solipsism held in the *Tractatus*. Even though he made solipsism coincident with realism, this view encompasses an indeterminacy or a relativism that has consequences for both epistemology and translation studies. It is only in action that indeterminacy or solipsism disappears. As Wittgenstein's later writings demonstrate, it is a question of logic – the logic of our experience – to reject a sceptical attitude towards the world.

(v) Thinking without speaking

In various documents belonging to the *Nachlass*, Wittgenstein discusses, in connection with William James' *The Principles of Psychology*, whether "one can think (*denken*) without speaking" (*sprechen*).[5] James' problem is how to translate "wordless thought into words". But can we really articulate thoughts without language? Here is how James saw the problem:

> [...] a deaf and dumb man can weave his tactile and visual images into a system of thought quite as effective and rational as that of a word-user. *The question whether thought is possible without language* has been a favorite topic of discussion among philosophers. Some interesting reminiscences of his childhood by Mr. Ballard, a deaf-mute instructor in the National College at Washington, show it to be perfectly possible. (James 1890: p. 266)

According to the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, thought is only possible within language and that is the reason why metaphysical or mystical thoughts are nonsensical since they go beyond significant language and consequently do not form possible states of affairs. But in his later

5 Cf. Wittgenstein 2000/2015: MS 165, 195-196; MS 129, 4-5; TSS 241a/b, §82.

philosophy Wittgenstein opens the way to the untranslatability of certain thoughts of a psychological nature into language. There are indeed several remarks belonging to the texts on the philosophy of psychology that point to the incapacity we have of verbally expressing some feelings. What they suggest is a priority of thought over language against which the author of the *Tractatus* so forcefully raised his hand.

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Wittgenstein, Justice, and Liberalism

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(Ta Pragmata Livros). Praxis.

1. Introduction

In this chapter I intend to discuss two philosophers, Richard Rorty and Chantal Mouffe, whose work has been influenced by Wittgenstein and whose political philosophies are left-liberal. Both of these philosophers have audiences that go beyond academia. In both cases their work has had a significant impact on public opinion about politics and has gone some way to shaping political activity. My argument will be that, despite some recent claims to the contrary[1], Wittgenstein was not a liberal and his philosophy does not imply a liberal viewpoint. His work does not provide a justification for the political philosophy of Rorty or of Mouffe. Moreover, we might also think that Wittgenstein's philosophical remarks actually contain the seeds of a critique of liberal philosophy and the resources for picking apart aspects of Rorty's and Mouffe's philosophical views. The critique of liberalism is becoming increasingly important as liberal democracies are showing themselves to be incapable of dealing with the major crises facing us: the climate crisis, endless war, pandemics, and the growth of the far right, posing as an alternative to corrupt liberal governments[2].

1 See, for example, Richard Eldridge's (2003) 'Wittgenstein and the Conversation of Justice', where he argues that "…a kind of substantive or weak perfectionist liberalism" follows from "…the condition of the human person that is enacted in *Philosophical Investigations*" (pp. 127-8) and Robert Brice's (2014) *Exploring Certainty*, (pp. 86-94) where he argues that there are hints of liberalism in Wittgenstein's remarks, although he ultimately concludes that there is no better case to be made for him being a liberal than for him being a conservative. For a discussion of Brice and Eldridge's arguments see Chapter 4 of my *Wittgenstein and the Social Sciences*, London: Anthem Press, 2020.

2 These are, of course, interconnected. Deforestation, factory farming, and battles over fossil fuels promote global heating, and have also been connected to a growing risk of new viruses spreading throughout the world. A recent article in *Scientific American* notes that "The conditions in which we often farm animals today – crowding tens of thousands of animals wing-to-wing or snout-to-snout – serve as 'amplifiers' for viral pandemics" (Shapiro, P. 'One Root Cause of Pandemics Few People Think About', March 24th 2020, https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/one-root-cause-of-pandemics-few-people-think-about/ (accessed 04/05/2020)).

2. Liberalism – Locating Rorty and Mouffe

Before discussing the views of Rorty and Mouffe and their relation to Wittgenstein's philosophy let us first of all get a bit clearer about what liberalism is, the varieties of liberalism, and where Rorty and Mouffe's political views fit within the spectrum of liberal opinion.

The most obvious thing to say about liberalism is that liberals prize *liberty* or freedom. However, there are many ways in which it is possible to spell out that commitment to liberty. Liberals might emphasize free markets, the freedom of businesses to conduct their business without constraints, or they might emphasize the freedom of individuals to develop without interference from others. Some emphasize negative liberty – freedom from constraint – whereas others emphasize positive liberty – the freedom to do a variety of different things; to take control of one's life.

Classical liberals like Locke believe in a separation of powers (legislative, executive, judicial, federative), rights to life, liberty, and property, and in toleration[3]. Locke has, rightly, been credited with inspiring moves towards greater democracy but did not believe that women should have the vote or that there should be a universal male franchise. Some more recent (neo)liberals, such as Friedrich Hayek have also been (at the very least) ambivalent about democracy. For Hayek freedom to do business is paramount and other freedoms should be sacrificed in order to not interfere with that freedom. According to Hayek, "a liberal dictator" is to be preferred to "a democratic government lacking in liberalism"[4]. However, modern liberals in the tradition of J. S.

3 Although Locke argued for toleration in religious matters he nonetheless thought that atheists were excluded from being tolerated: "those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of a God" (*Letter Concerning Toleration*, J. Tully (ed.) Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983 [1689]) and nor are Catholics or Muslims to be tolerated (because they owe their allegiance to foreign powers).

4 Hayek said this in the course of defending the Chilean dictator, Pinochet, in an interview with the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* and he also gave encouragement to the Portuguese dictator António Salazar. He sent Salazar a copy of his book, *The Constitution of Liberty*, with a cover note saying that he hoped it would help Salazar "in his endeavour to design a constitution which is proof against the abuses of democracy" (see Robin, C. 'Nietzsche's Marginal Children: On Friedrich Hayek', in *The Nation*, May 7 2013.) Hayek said that

Mill, L. T. Hobhouse, and John Rawls tend to emphasize the freedom of individuals to develop in their 'manifold diversity', and this means that they tend towards supporting toleration of other people and their being able to express their diverse opinions. Most modern liberals think of their liberalism as being tied up with support for liberal democracy.

In thinking about where to situate Rorty and Mouffe in all of this we might wonder whether it is correct to call them liberals at all. Both Rorty and Mouffe claim inspiration from thinkers in the Marxist tradition. In a 1992 paper Rorty discussed growing up in a Trotskyist household[5] and claimed that his teenage ambition had been to "hold reality and justice in a single vision"[6]. His thoughts about what justice consisted in at the time were that it was "what Norman Thomas and Trotsky both stood for"[7]. In 1998 Rorty said that he found Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* inspiring and said that it was "the founding document of a movement that has done much for freedom and human equality"[8]. In the same article he said that he hoped for "full social justice… a classless society, a world in which 'the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'"[9]. Similarly, Chantal Mouffe

Salazar "attempted the right path" and argued that there was more personal liberty under Salazar than in many democracies (see Caldwell, B. and Montes, L. 'Friedrich Hayek and his visits to Chile', *The Review of Austrian Economics*, 28, 2015, pp. 261-309 – the article also contains the quote, just mentioned, from the *El Mercurio* interview).

5 One of the friends of the family was Carlo Tresca, a trade unionist who had been part of the Dewey Commission, which cleared Leon Trotsky of charges made during the Moscow trials. See 'Trotsky and the Wild Orchids', p. 6.

6 Ibid. p. 7 (Norman Thomas was the Socialist Party candidate for President for six consecutive elections, 1928 onwards, and his office was close to where Rorty's family lived).

7 Ibid. p. 8.

8 Rorty, R. 'Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes', pp. 202-3.

9 Ibid. p. 203. The goal of a classless society in which the "free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" is precisely that laid out in the *Communist Manifesto*. In the second chapter of the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels say that "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (available here: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm accessed 27/05/2020)

takes inspiration from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci[10], giving the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony'[11] a central role in her discussions and claiming to take her bearings in terms of understanding the nature of the state from Gramsci[12]. Mouffe also cites the Marxist writer David Harvey approvingly[13], and says that she looks to 'left populists' such as Bernie Sanders[14] and Jeremy Corbyn[15] for inspiration.

However, despite finding the *Communist Manifesto* inspirational, Rorty said that he had "given up on socialism"[16], that Marxist reassurances are not to be taken seriously[17], and that the *Manifesto* is historically inaccurate[18]. As an adult Rorty moved away from the Trotskyism of his youth and became a "decent, liberal humanitarian type"[19], a "typical left wing Democrat" and claimed not to see anything wrong with liberal individualism[20]. Born in 1931, he was in his 30s when the resistance to the Vietnam war reached a peak in the United States. However, Rorty was not in sympathy with the anti-Vietnam war protesters, despite seeing the war as unjust. He complained that the "increasingly manic student protesters" damaged the cause of the left by burning flags[21] and he has argued that it is a problem with the left more generally that it is unpatriotic[22].

10 Mouffe, C. *For a Left Populism*, pp. 2, 12, 34, 41, 61.

11 Ibid. pp. 76-7, 87. She edited a work on Gramsci and Marxist theory (*Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, London: Routledge, 1979) in the late 1970s and is perhaps most well-known for her work with Ernesto Laclau – *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

12 Ibid. p. 46-7.

13 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, p. 60.

14 Ibid. p. 81.

15 Ibid. p. 38.

16 Rorty, R. 'Trotsky and the Wild Orchids', p. 17.

17 Rorty, R. 'Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes', p. 202.

18 Ibid. p. 205.

19 Rorty, R. 'Trotsky and the Wild Orchids', p. 15.

20 Ibid. p. 17.

21 Rorty, R., 'Back to Class Politics', p. 260.

22 Rorty, R., 'The Unpatriotic Academy', p.252.

Similarly, Chantal Mouffe is clear that she rejects Marxism and that, unlike Gramsci, she does not want a revolution to overthrow liberal democracy. In fact, she is eager to preserve the framework of the liberal state: "the division of power, universal suffrage, multi-party systems, and civil rights"[23]. Modern liberal democracies are not fundamentally flawed in her view, what is needed is to put the "principles of 'liberty and equality for all'…into practice"[24]. Like Rorty, Mouffe is eager for the left to adhere to a form of patriotism. She says that there is a "strong libidinal investment at work in national – or regional – forms of identification" and that left populists should use "patriotic identification" to mobilise[25]. It is interesting that she is keen to stress contingency when it comes to matters of class, saying that Marxists and socialists have been wrong to attribute an *a priori* privileged role to class[26] but not in the area of patriotism. It is problematic for the left to identify particularly with the working class, according to Mouffe, but there are no similar problems with identifying with one's nation on her view (although she does see certain forms of nationalism as problematic).

So, both Rorty and Mouffe are patriotic defenders of liberal democracy, with a certain sympathy for socialist traditions – but can they be considered liberals? In Rorty's case it is absolutely clear that he can be. Rorty has been quite explicit, on many occasions, in describing himself as a liberal and has indicated that modern liberals such as John Stuart Mill, are major influences on his political philosophy. Rorty describes his utopian ideal as a "global cooperative commonwealth" which would be "regulated by John Stuart Mill's dictum that everybody gets to do what they like as long as long as it doesn't interfere with other people doing the same"[27]. That is not to say that Rorty's vision is precisely the same as Mill's one. We have learned lessons about colonialism, homophobia, and sexism since Mill's time that we should incorporate into our visions for the future. However, Rorty says that

23 Mouffe, C. *For a Left Populism*, p. 48.

24 Ibid. pp. 39-40.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid. p. 3, p. 49

27 Rorty, R. 'Globalization, the Politics of Identity and Social Hope', p. 235.

this does not mean supplanting Mill's vision with a new one but that we should revise the Millian vision[28].

Mouffe is clearly opposed to *neo*liberalism and a defender of democracy, and she is supportive of figures like Jeremy Corbyn who describe themselves as socialists, but she does not describe her own politics in the class terms associated with socialists. She describes her politics as 'democratic liberal', and explains that although she thinks of the democratic and liberal traditions as being in tension she does not think that the conflict between the two amounts to a "contradiction that must inevitably lead a pluralistic liberal democracy to self-destruction" instead she takes from the democratic tradition the idea that "it is necessary to define a demos and to subvert the tendency of liberal discourse to abstract universalism" and says that it should be articulated "with liberal logic"[29]. Where does this 'liberal logic' come from? Mouffe locates the origin of the 'matrix of a democratic imaginary' in the French revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man[30]. This certainly suggests a liberal vision, but Mouffe nonetheless sees her vision as being anticapitalist because she thinks political liberalism can be separated from capitalism as an economic system[31]. However, Mouffe does not think that the left should mobilize in the name of anti-capitalism[32]. Both Mouffe and Rorty aim at an equal society but the way to achieve that is by liberal reformist means, in both cases. Mouffe thinks that a society beyond division and power is impossible[33] and that "liberty and equality can never be perfectly reconciled"[34]. Rorty thinks that Laclau and Mouffe's vision is, in this respect, pessimistic. In 1996 Rorty said that a "turn away from narration and utopian dreams toward philosophy seems to me a gesture of despair. This impression is confirmed by the prevalence in recent political philosophy (particularly

28 Ibid. p. 236.

29 Mouffe, C. *For a Left Pluralism*, p. 15.

30 Ibid. p. 42.

31 Ibid. p. 48.

32 Ibid. p. 50.

33 Ibid. p. 88.

34 Ibid. p. 43

in the works of my friends Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau) of the word 'impossibility'"[35].

3. Rorty, Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and Politics

Rorty and Mouffe are both reformists who take inspiration from modern liberal politics and combine that with a certain respect for socialist and Marxist traditions. Both think that something like a socialist vision can come about through pursuing liberal ideals via the institutions of liberal democracy. Having located Rorty and Mouffe in relation to liberal politics I would now like to take a look at how Rorty and Mouffe's political visions connect up with their philosophical perspectives and in particular, how they take inspiration from Wittgenstein's philosophical work.

Rorty sees himself as following in the footsteps of American pragmatists and as being influenced by pragmatist elements in Wittgenstein's thought. He thinks about philosophical and political views in terms of their utility or inutility, their usefulness, or their point. He suggests that "criticism of other philosopher's distinctions and problematics should charge relative inutility rather than 'meaninglessness' or 'illusion' or 'incoherence'"[36]. Words, on Rorty's view, are *tools* for coping with our environment[37]. He contrasts his own view, with its stress on *solidarity* with the realist view that stresses *objectivity* and emphasizes notions like *truth* and *representation*. To advance towards the liberal utopia that he envisages Rorty thinks that we should develop a new *vocabulary* that draws people into recognising the relative utility of liberalism compared

35 Rorty, R. 'Globalization, the Politics of Identity and Social Hope', p. 232. In her recent work Mouffe has said that she follows Rorty in thinking that "allegiance to democracy and the belief in the value of institutions does not depend on giving democracy an intellectual foundation" (*For a Left Populism*, p. 75)

36 Rorty, R. 'Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace', in *Truth and Progress* (1998), p. 244.

37 In 'A World without Substances or Essences' Rorty says that we should see language "as providing tools for coping with objects rather than representations of objects, and as providing tools for different purposes", *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 65.

to other ways of thinking[38]. On Rorty's pragmatist view there is no clear distinction to be made between philosophy and other disciplines: "both scientists and philosophers help us learn to get around the world better. They do not employ distinct methods."[39]

Wittgenstein's influence can be seen in several aspects of Rorty's philosophical and political views. The talk of words as tools, just mentioned, is clearly influenced by Wittgenstein. In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein contrasted the 'Augustinian view', according to which words name objects and sentences combine names (§1), with his own account where words are compared to tools. Wittgenstein suggests that we "think of the tools in the toolbox: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screwdriver, a rule, a glue pot, glue, nails, and screws" and notes that "the functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects" (§11). Rorty also suggests that the Wittgensteinian maxim "Don't look for the meaning, look for the use" suggests a pragmatist reading of his work. It suggests to Rorty that "any utterance can be given significance by being batted around long enough in more or less predictable ways"[40] and so leads to Rorty's view that we can formulate more fruitful ways of talking, such as using a vocabulary that employs the term 'solidarity' rather than 'objectivity'. We can talk in ways that allow us to cope better and a kind of 'liberal ironist' vocabulary would allow us to do that, according to Rorty[41]. A further way in which Wittgenstein has influenced Rorty is in his talk of 'language games'. Rorty seems to see his talk of *vocabularies* as being similar to Wittgenstein's talk of language games and forms of life[42].

38 For example, he talks approvingly of Dewey hoping that "we would stop using the juridical vocabulary which Kant made fashionable among philosophers and start using metaphors drawn from town meetings rather than tribunals" (in 'Pragmatism and Law: A Response to David Luban', p. 111).

39 Rorty, R. 'Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn' in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, Vol. 4 *Philosophical Papers*, p. 166.

40 Ibid. p. 172.

41 It is worth briefly noting here that Wittgenstein never actually employed the slogan used by Rorty. It was first offered up by John Wisdom as epitomising Wittgenstein's view [Wisdom (1953), p. 117].

42 For example, he quotes Sabina Lovibond approvingly when she says that "an adherent of Wittgenstein's view of language should equate that goal with the establishment of a language game in which we could participate ingenuously, while retaining our awareness of it as a specific historical

However, despite Wittgenstein clearly influencing Rorty's philosophy and politics there are striking differences between the two. We have seen that Rorty's pragmatist understanding of philosophy means that he thinks that other philosopher's work should be evaluated in terms of utility or inutility and *not* in terms of meaningfulness or incoherence. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, often criticises philosophical 'theories' in terms of their meaningfulness or coherence. According to Wittgenstein, "the results of philosophy are the discovery of some piece of plain nonsense…"[43] Unlike Rorty, Wittgenstein does not think of his work as consisting in creating new vocabularies. Rorty thinks that we should give up on certain distinctions and ways of speaking associated with past philosophy and promote new, more useful, ways of speaking. He suggests that we set aside "the subject-object, scheme-content, and reality-appearance distinctions and [think]…of our relation to the rest of the universe in purely causal, as opposed to representationlist, terms"[44], that "we cannot employ the Kantian distinction between morality and prudence"[45] and that we should "stop using the distinctions between finding and making, discovery and invention, objective and subjective"[46]. Wittgenstein also has problems with distinctions made by traditional philosophers but he does not suggest jettisoning the old dichotomies. Instead he says that "what we do is bring words back from their metaphysical

formation. A community in which such a language game was played would be one… whose members understood their own form of life and yet were not embarrassed by it" (quoted in Rorty, R. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*: *Philosophical Papers* Vol. 1, p. 32, fn15. The passage is originally from Lovibond, S. *Realism and Imagination in Ethics*, p. 158) and presumably Rorty thinks that Lovibond's talk of establishing a language game parallels his own talk of shifting vocabularies.

43 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §119. Elsewhere he says that "to say that this proposition ['This is how things are'] agrees (or does not agree) with reality would be obvious nonsense" (§134). See also §§246, 252, 282, 464, 524.

44 Rorty, R. 'Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace' in *Truth and Progress*, p. 49.

45 Rorty, R. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. xvi.

46 Ibid. p. xviii.

to their everyday use"[47]. What that means is that we should marshall recollections of the ordinary use of the words in question[48] so that we can recognise that the way that past philosophers have used the words in question is nonsensical – "to pass from unobvious nonsense to obvious nonsense"[49]. The difference between Rorty's approach to philosophy and Wittgenstein's approach is summed up by one of James Conant's objections to Rorty. Wittgenstein famously said that his aim in philosophy was "to show the fly the way out of the fly bottle"[50] and I take it that this aim was synonymous with the aim mentioned above, of passing from unobvious to obvious nonsense. However, James Conant notes that "Rorty's recommendation appears to be that one should leave the fly in the fly bottle and get on with something more interesting"[51] and Rorty himself, in commenting on this assessment, said that "Conant here gets me exactly right"[52]. It follows from Wittgenstein's account of philosophy as involving uncovering nonsense that he would not want to affirm the negation of traditional philosophical 'theories', because the negation of nonsense is itself nonsense. However, as Alice Crary[53] and Hilary Putnam have observed, Rorty seems to want to do something like affirming the negation of traditional philosophical positions. Rorty objects to realism but responds to it by saying that we cannot describe reality in itself[54]. Whether or not Rorty's position is coherent, it is clearly not Wittgenstein's. Rorty and Wittgenstein also differ in their approach to the question of how philosophy relates to science. While Wittgenstein made a clear distinction between philosophy and science in both his

47 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §116.

48 Ibid. §127 ("The work of the philosopher consists in marshalling recollections for a particular purpose").

49 Ibid. §464.

50 Ibid. §309.

51 Conant, J. 'Introduction' to Putnam, H. *Realism with a Human Face*, p. iii.

52 Rorty, R. 'Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace", p. 47, fn. 17.

53 Crary, A. 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy in Relation to Political Thought', pp. 127-8.

54 Putnam, H. *Pragmatism*, p. 39. Putnam gives a fairly lengthy account of why Wittgenstein is not a pragmatist on pages 27-56 of the same book.

early and his later work[55], Rorty wants to say that "both scientists and philosophers help us to learn to get around the world better. They do not employ distinct methods"[56]. Rorty and Wittgenstein differ in terms of how they think about philosophy and science and they also differ in terms of how they think about meaning. Although both compare words to tools, Rorty presents a pragmatic theory of language which he says is "epitomized in the Wittgensteinian maxim 'Don't look for the meaning, look for the use'"[57]. However, according to Wittgenstein there can be no *theses* in philosophy and although Wittgenstein is credited with this maxim he never said such a thing. Wittgenstein did not recommend replacing talk of meaning with talk of use and he did not think that meaning could be explicated in terms of use in every instance. What Wittgenstein actually said was that "for a large class of cases of the employment of the word 'meaning' – though not for *all* – this word can be explained in this way: the meaning of a word is its use in the language"[58]. Rorty thinks that Wittgenstein's thought here suggests that "any utterance can be given significance by being batted around in more or less predictable ways"[59] but although Wittgenstein would have agreed that any utterance could be *given* a meaning, he would be wary of what Rorty has to say here. As we have already seen, Wittgenstein did not think that certain words used in traditional philosophical 'theories' were given a clear sense despite being used in 'more or less predictable ways'. As Daniel Whiting has noted, "there is a normative dimension to use…from the fact that, for example 'bachelor' means *eligible*, *unmarried*, *adult male*, it appears trivially to follow that it would be wrong or incorrect to apply 'bachelor' to a

55 For example, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein's early masterpiece, he said unequivocally that "philosophy is not one of the natural sciences" (4.111) and in the *Philosophical Investigations* he says that "our considerations [in philosophy] must not be scientific ones" (§109). Philosophy, unlike science, describes linguistic norms (§124).

56 Rorty, R. 'Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn', p. 166.

57 Ibid. p. 172.

58 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §43.

59 Rorty, R. 'Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn', p. 172.

married woman or to form the sentence 'my sister is a bachelor'[60]. If someone were to repeatedly say 'my sister is a bachelor' at ten o'clock every morning (i.e. 'bat the phrase about in 'more or less predictable ways') the phrase would not become any more meaningful.

These sharp differences between Wittgenstein's elucidatory philosophy and Rorty's pragmatist philosophy tell us that whatever the virtues of Rorty's pragmatist case for liberalism it is not a case that is strongly rooted in Wittgenstein's philosophy. It might be said to be inspired by Wittgenstein's philosophy but this inspiration consists in taking words and phrases from Wittgenstein's work and twisting them beyond recognition and so Rorty's case does very little to demonstrate that there is any kind of liberalism to be found in Wittgenstein's work. Wittgenstein's philosophical concerns are not political or ideological ones, although they do have at least some implications for political theory. Before briefly examining some of those let's take a look at how Chantal Mouffe connects her political philosophy to Wittgenstein's work.

4. Mouffe, Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and Politics

As we have already seen in section 2 above, Chantal Mouffe is opposed to the way in which neoliberal politicians strive for consensus in the 'centre' of politics. Mouffe opposes the ideology behind the Thatcherite slogan 'there is no alternative' and emphasizes the contingency of neoliberalism. However, as Richard Rorty noted[61], there is also a kind of pessimism, a limiting of options, in Mouffe's politics. Although she claims that there *is* an alternative to neoliberalism and that we should strive to radicalise democracy, she does not think that it is possible to attain a society without division and power. This is something she wants to rule out a priori: "the ever present possibility of antagonism…forecloses the possibility of a society beyond division and power"[62]. The vision of a society where people are free and equal is impossible to achieve, she thinks: "liberty

60 Whiting, D. *The Later Wittgenstein on Language*, p. 4.

61 See the end of section 2, above.

62 Mouffe, C. *For a Left Populism*, pp. 87-8.

and equality can never be perfectly reconciled and they are always in tension"[63]. The Thatcherite claim that there is no alternative to neoliberal capitalism becomes morphed into 'there is no alternative to liberal democracy' in Mouffe's work, and the liberal and democratic elements of liberal democracy are in "constitutive tension"[64].

The radical democratic pluralist society that she envisions would avoid striving for consensus and instead allow for the expression of a variety of conflicting viewpoints. Attempts to bring about a democratic consensus are misguided on Mouffe's view and she thinks that "this is something that Wittgenstein, with his insistence on the need to respect differences, brings to the fore in a very powerful way"[65]. Mouffe claims that she does not want to "extract a political theory from Wittgenstein, [or] to attempt elaborating one on the basis of his writings"[66] but she nonetheless thinks that Wittgenstein's remarks point to "a *new way of theorizing* about the political"[67] and thinks that Wittgenstein's remarks should incline us to be sympathetic to her vision of a radical and plural democracy. She cites two remarks from *On Certainty* that she thinks support her vision: (i) Wittgenstein's remark that "Giving grounds… justifying the evidence, comes to an end: - but the end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language game"[68]. This, she says "allows us to grasp the conditions of emergence of a democratic consensus"[69]. As she interprets Wittgenstein "agreement is established not on significations but on forms of life" and this, she says, distinguishes Wittgenstein's philosophy from Habermas's[70]. Mouffe

63 Ibid. p. 43.

64 Ibid. p. 15.

65 Mouffe, C. *The Democratic Paradox*, p. 77.

66 Ibid. p. 60.

67 Ibid. p. 61.

68 Wittgenstein, L. *On Certainty*, §204.

69 Mouffe, C. *The Democratic Paradox*, p. 70.

70 Ibid. Note: This fits with her claim in *For a Left Populism*, that "allegiance to democracy [is] not based on rationality but as participation in forms of life" (see footnote 35, above).

argues that the significance of this is that it reveals the limits of every consensus.. (ii) This is where she again cites Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*: his remark that "Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and a heretic[71]…I said I would 'combat' the other man, - but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*."[72]

Mouffe finds further remarks that she thinks favour her conception of democracy in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. There she picks up on a passage that chimes with her anti-essentialist politics. Wittgenstein famously noted in the *Phiilosophical Investigations* that there is not a single feature common to all and only games. We cannot give a definition of 'game' in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Instead what we find is "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and the small"[73]. Mouffe thinks that Wittgenstein's take on games suggests that "we should acknowledge and valorise the diversity of ways in which the 'democratic game' can be played, instead of trying to reduce this diversity to a uniform model of citizenship[74].

However, there are various problems with Mouffe's arguments. She claims that Wittgenstein insists "on the need to respect differences" but she does not provide a reference to Wittgenstein's work to clarify what she means by this. The *Philosophical Investigations* is not a very promising place to look. All of the references to differences in the *Philosophical Investigations* are categorial or conceptual differences and this fits with his conception of philosophy – where the problems are not empirical problems but problems which are "solved through an insight into the workings of our language"[75]. The differences he discusses are differences between concepts or between language games – *not* the kind of differences Mouffe presumably has in mind – differences between citizens in a

71 Wittgenstein, L. *On Certainty*, §611.

72 Ibid. §612.

73 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §66.

74 Mouffe, C. *The Democratic Paradox*, p. 73.

75 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §109.

democracy. Wittgenstein's attention to differences in the *Philosophical Investigations* has no clear bearing on, say, respecting people from other (different) countries, or respecting people regardless of their sexuality, or respecting people with different political affiliations. 'Democracy' is not a term that appears in the *Philosophical Investigations* at all and the book does not have citizenship or justice amongst its concerns. Mouffe follows Cavell in claiming that holding people responsible for their claims was a central concern of Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* but if this is so then it is odd that the word 'responsibility' does not appear in it at all, and nor do words like 'obligation' or 'duty'. Wittgenstein was concerned with rules, definitions, and language, and the various ways in which we might go wrong, make mistakes, and violate rules where language was concerned. Normativity was undoubtedly a central concern of Wittgenstein's but not in a way that obviously supports Mouffe's arguments. Wittgenstein's remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations* do not support Mouffe's suggestion that we should respect differences between citizens.

Looking to *On Certainty* for support for Mouffe's views is more promising. In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein remarks on the possibility that '2 × 2 = 4' might have a *different* meaning or be nonsensical in Chinese[76]. He asks whether knowing that 'here is a hand' is *different* in kind from knowing the existence of the planet Saturn[77]. He compares differences in the meaning of words to differences in the functions of officials[78], talks about a king being brought to look at the world in a different way[79], and about the difference between 'us' and someone who says 'I don't know if I have ever been on the moon: I don't remember having been there'[80]. The kinds of differences discussed in *On Certainty* look more relevant to Mouffe's case because they clearly concern the kinds of differences in belief that we might want to think about in thinking about political discussion. We can learn from *On Certainty*

76 Wittgenstein, L. *On Certainty*, §10.

77 Ibid. §20.

78 Ibid. §64.

79 Ibid. §92.

80 Ibid. §§332-38.

that people do not just have disagreements of opinion, where each of the people in the conversation are speaking the same language, with the same kinds of evidential standards, and where people have been raised in the same practices. Sometimes people speaking to each other come from an entirely different background, have different concepts, and have learned their language through engaging in different kinds of practices. The fact that differently situated people – kings, officials, people from different countries – come into conflict in a variety of ways in *On Certainty* suggests that it is relevant to political discussions. Once we start thinking about these kinds of questions we might well have to revise our conceptions of rationality and conceptions of rationality are clearly relevant to constructing political visions.

In making her case, Mouffe cited passages from *On Certainty* which stress that we might not be able to justify our beliefs to one another and might have to resort to other means, such as persuasion, in order to change someone's mind. She is not wrong about the importance of these remarks for political philosophy. We should recognise that political disagreements might not just involve a straightforward disagreement over a matter of opinion where each side would accept the same things as counting as evidence that might settle the matter. We should acknowledge the role of the animal, the instinctual, and the arational in political disputes. To that extent, Mouffe is correct. If we want to gain an understanding of people unlike ourselves then we should recognize that their different practices might be tied up with different moral standards, different evidential standards, and different concepts. However, this does not imply that we should 'valorize' alternative ways of playing 'the democratic game' as Mouffe suggests. Wittgenstein's work does not imply that we should aim at democratic pluralism. His work, as he said, was descriptive and aimed at enhancing our understanding, not prescriptive. The understanding that we reach having taken Wittgenstein's insights on board might incline us towards a particular social arrangement but it is not obvious that it does. Recognizing that people might behave in different ways, have different evidential standards, and have different concepts does not imply that we should encourage people to behave in different ways, to have different evidential standards, and to have different concepts.

5. Wittgenstein, Justice, and Liberalism

The vision of a liberal utopia in Rorty's work and the campaign for a radical liberal democracy in Mouffe's work are not supported by Wittgenstein's remarks about rationality, difference and disagreement. However, their visions are not obviously in conflict with Wittgenstein's remarks. The kind of remarks that Mouffe picked up on in *On Certainty* are clearly of some relevance to politics. So, I would like to explore whether a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophical remarks might in fact undermine the kind of politics that Rorty and Mouffe have promoted. There is not space here to develop a full Wittgensteinian case against their kind of political vision but I think there are a few considerations from Wittgenstein's work that point to problems with their liberal politics.

There are hints, in Mouffe's work, of the kind of metaphysics that can be found in the traditional philosophy: the kind of philosophy that Wittgenstein argues is confused. For example, she describes her own position as being "in contradiction" with the "immanentist ontology" of Hardt and Negri, and suggests that a very different ontology underlies her own work[81]. There are echoes, in this talk of opposing ontologies, of the way in which Rorty sets himself against historical metaphysics but presents his own work as the negation of it rather than arguing that traditional metaphysics involves conceptual confusion in the way that Wittgenstein does. Wittgenstein does not present us with an ontology because he sees the philosophical quest to tell us what exists as muddled. He is critical of the whole project of ontology. What philosophers have presented as ontological claims are either grammatical statements posing as existential ones[82],

81 Mouffe says that: "In the case of Hardt and Negri, their refusal of representation and sovereignty proceeds from an immanentist ontology that is clearly in contradiction with the one that informs my conception of radical democracy" (*For A Left Populism*, p. 55).

82 See Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* §371 – *Essence* is expressed in grammar – and §373 Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar).

nonsense[83], or just confused ways of making ordinary empirical claims[84].

This affinity with traditional metaphysics is something that Alessandra Tanesini has perceptively noticed as being present in Mouffe's central claims. Traditional philosophers have presented our understanding of other people as being deeply problematic and raised philosophical questions about whether what we take to be other people might be zombies (creatures indistinguishable from human beings but lacking consciousness). They reason, mistakenly, that because people sometimes keep elements of their mental life private, or hidden, that we cannot know what is going on with other people: "only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it"[85]. Wittgenstein responded to worries like this by noting that other people very often know whether other people are in pain. They might *see* that another is in pain (see them clutching an injured body part and wincing and crying) or they might infer it. In my own case it makes no sense to say that I know I am in pain – so I cannot be said to know it with greater certainty than somebody else. I cannot doubt that I am in pain when I am in pain – but the logical exclusion of doubt means the logical exclusion of knowledge too – and "I cannot be said to learn of [my sensations]. I have them"[86]. Tanesini points out that this case – scepticism about other minds – runs parallel to something similar in Mouffe's work. Mouffe claims that it is *not possible* to have "a society beyond division and power"[87] and that it is *not possible* for liberty and

83 See *On Certainty* §35, where Wittgenstein notes that 'There are physical objects' is nonsense.

84 See *Zettel* §69 - "'The colour brown exists' means nothing at all; except that it exists here or there as the colouring of an object" – and *Philosophical Investigations* §58 – "In reality…we quite readily say that a particular colour exists, and that is as much to say that something exists that has that colour". Robert Arrington presents an excellent discussion of these passages in relation to Quine's ontologising in his paper 'Ontological Commitment' (in Arrington, R. and Glock, H-J. *Wittgenstein & Quine*, London: Routledge, 1996).

85 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §246.

86 Ibid.

87 Mouffe, C. *For a Left Populism*, p. 88.

equality to be reconciled[88]. This ruling-out-of-possibilities is the kind of modal language associated with metaphysics ('essence is expressed by grammar' as Wittgenstein said[89]). The argument that society is inevitably divided because antagonism is an ever present possibility (because it is always possible that groups in society will fail to understand one another or be able to meet on common ground) parallels the argument of the sceptic – that it may be that in every case I do not know what is going on in somebody's mind because I sometimes fail to know). In both cases, a strong modal claim about something being impossible (knowing others, achieving a society without division) is mistakenly inferred from particular instances of failures to understand or to know. As Tanesini says, Mouffe's 'paradox' is

> "tantamount to the claim that the conditions for the acknowledgement of some people are at the same time the conditions for impossibility of acknowledging other people …[but] why should it be true that if we acknowledge the claims that a person's suffering has on us, then it must always be the case that there could be other people whose suffering we fail to acknowledge? There are, of course, limitations on what one can do. But this simple consideration does not show that we cannot acknowledge all the claims made on us. I am not suggesting for a moment that we do acknowledge all of these claims. This fact is, however, an indication of our callousness, for which we should take responsibility. It is not a consequence of an inescapable paradox"[90].

Of course it is always possible (and likely) that people will disagree in such a way that they do not share the same evaluative standards (the kinds of cases raised by Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* that Mouffe raises in arguing her case) but this kind of disagreement is not inevitable and

88 Ibid. p. 43.

89 *Philosophical Investigations*, §371.

90 Tanesini, A. 'In search of community: Mouffe, Wittgenstein and Cavell' in *Radical Philosophy*, Issue 110, Series 1, 2001, p. 18.

does not provide an argument in favour of Mouffe's agonistic radical democracy.[91]

To deny Mouffe's claim that society is essentially divided is not to claim that she is wrong in opposing the 'consensus' politics of neoliberalism[92]. Mouffe rejects class politics and wants to replace it instead with a frontier between 'the people' and 'the oligarchy', which she describes as a "discursive strategy"[93]. There is a stress on 'discourse' in her work, which is reminiscent of Rorty's talk of 'vocabularies'. For example, she stresses that 'democracy' should be the 'hegemonic signifier' around which diverse struggles are articulated[94]. However, this way of redrawing the lines creates a major problem for Mouffe's vision. Whereas the Marxists that she challenged have an account of where the power will come from that can challenge the owners of the means of production (i.e. the collective power of the working class), Mouffe has no similar account of how the 'oligarchy' might be made to concede power and end capitalism (an aim she is eager to achieve through reform). It seems naïve to think that oligarchs had not previously conceded power because the wrong vocabulary was being used in challenging them: as if speaking of

91 Another way in which Wittgenstein's work can be used to criticise Mouffe that I will briefly mention here is that Mouffe draws on Spinoza in formulating her take on politics and thinks it makes sense to speak of the *conatus* as experiencing "affects that will move it to desire something and act accordingly" (p. 74, *For a Left Pluralism*). However, this fails to respect the grammatical rule according to which psychological predicates can only be applied to human beings and creatures that behave like them. As Wittgenstein observes "only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious" (*Philosophical Investigations* §281). In this instance, what Mouffe says does not make sense. However, this is a relatively minor point compared to the point highlighted by Tanesini, which challenges Mouffe's central philosophical prop.

92 The politics of 'consensus' has recently re-emerged in the United Kingdom after Jeremy Corbyn's departure as Labour leader. Keir Starmer, the new Labour leader, has repeatedly made calls for consensus between the government and his own party and has called on Labour supporters to have the "courage to support" the Conservative government. (See: https://labourlist.org/2020/05/starmer-if-we-are-to-complete-the-journey-safely-the-roadmap-needs-clear-directions/ accessed 9th June 2020)

93 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, p. 5.

94 Ibid. p. 51.

'democracy' rather than 'socialism' will suddenly lead to them handing over their wealth. How can the institutions of liberal democracy, which are currently dedicated to maintaining class rule, be repurposed to be used to end capitalism, as Mouffe wants? No clear answer is forthcoming from her. Rorty's work is similarly lacking in a clear answer to the question of how his liberal utopia would come about.

6. Conclusion

Rorty and Mouffe are two prominent thinkers who have taken inspiration from the work of Wittgenstein. However, in both cases their vision is not supported by Wittgenstein's philosophy and, moreover, Wittgenstein's work can be used in challenging their political visions. In presenting themselves as contradicting the metaphysical theories of other philosophers Rorty and Mouffe are 'held captive' by the kind of pictures that entrance those philosophers[95]. Pace Mouffe, the hope for a society in which people are free and equal remains alive[96].

95 Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §115 – "A picture held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably".

96 Incidentally, Wittgenstein was sympathetic to the vision of a classless society. He saw hope in Russia after the revolution there in 1917 and told Rush Rhees that "if anything could destroy my sympathy with the Russian regime, it would be the growth of class distinctions" (Rhees, R. 'Postscript' in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, edited by Rush Rhees, 1984, p.205.)

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Mythology as a Disease of Language

From Max Müller to Wittgenstein

Benedetta Zavatta

1.

"Experience is merely the name
men gave to their mistakes"
Oscar Wilde

Are words tools to describe reality or rather powerful devices that create it and sometimes dangerously escape our conscious control? Are words signs of things or, rather, are things signs of words?[1] Gottlob Frege (1892) devoted his main work, *Sinn und Bedeutung* [Sense and Reference] to analyzing the power names have of introducing false presuppositions about the existence of portions of reality, which are held to be their referents. This is particularly deceiving in the case of abstract names. Frege analyzes the noun phrase "Der Wille des Volkes [the will of the people]", which came later to be massively ideologically abused by the totalitarian regimes of the 20th Century. Such an abuse, Frege pointed out before the fact, was possible because the referent [*Bedeutung*] of this phrase does not really exist or, at least, cannot be univocally identified.

> The logic books contain warnings against logical mistakes arising from the ambiguity of expressions. I regard as no less pertinent a warning against apparent proper names having no reference [...] This lends itself to demagogic abuse as easily as ambiguity, perhaps more so. "The will of the people" can serve as an example, for it is easy to establish that there is, at any rate, no generally accepted reference for this expression.[2]

According to the Italian semiologist Umberto Eco, inasmuch as nouns are used in a communicative context the entities assumed as their referent

1 Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966, 359-79.

2 Gottlob Frege, *Über Sinn und Bedeutung, in: Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 100/1 (1892), 25-50, 56.

are included in the mental "encyclopedia" of the interlocutors. It does not matter whether such an "entity" corresponds to something real or not, just as an encyclopedia entry does not need to include an objective and exhaustive description of a portion of reality but need only provide "the common core of factual beliefs about the referents of a word". This "common core of beliefs" corresponds to "the actual cultural definition that a society conventionally accepts for a given content unit".[3]

Scholars interested in language as an "instrument of action and power"[4] have focused for a long time on the tremendous reifying power of words. Michael Foucault in his *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969) criticized the key notions of western historiography as ideologically loaded. He outlined, for instance, how the notion of "progress", gathering together scattered historical events and ordering them chronologically, led people to think of them as a chain of necessary and logical steps oriented towards a goal.

This phenomenon has been studied in linguistics under the name of "hypostatization" [*Hypostasierung*]. The German linguist Ernst Leisi was one of the first scholars to account for it. He observed that people, when using a word, normally know "the conditions which govern the use of said word [*die Bedingungen, die den Gebrauch des betreffenden Wortes regeln*]".[5] This information belongs to their semantic competence. However, most often they are not able to list them analytically, nor to give reasons for them. Naive speakers' incapacity to explicitly state the context of use of a word leads to the phenomenon that Leisi called "hypostatization [*Hypostasierung*]" (Leisi 1971, 25).

Mythology, Scholastic realism and the Platonic Theory of Ideas are the greatest examples of the tendency of language-communities to reify (in the most extreme cases to personify) every phenomenon of any kind whatever insofar as this latter can be designated by a word and to endow it thereby with an independent existence detached and separate from all other phenomena, or in other words to raise it to the status of a "substance without accidents". This raising of a thing to the status

3 Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics, Bloomington* 1979, 99.

4 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Harvard 1991, 37.

5 Erst Leisi, *Der Worhinhalt. Seine Struktur im Deutschen und Englischen*, Heidelberg 1971, 25.

of a "substance" we shall call, following the usage of the philosophers, "hypostatization" (Leisi 1971, 26).

Building on Leisi's approach, Leonhard Lipka included the phenomenon of "hypostatisation" or "reification" in the field of *Wortbildungslinguistik*, and defined it as follows:

> By "hypostatization through the word" I understand the phenomenon whereby the existence of a linguistic sign also suggests the existence of one singular thing which is denominated thereby. This suggestion, to which above all naïve speakers of a language tend to be susceptible, brings about a reification, a raising of a thing to the status of "substance".[6]

Lipka considered hypostatization as a side-effect of the naming function of word-formation. In basic terms, the introduction of a word into a communicative context leads the interlocutors automatically to assume the existence of a single corresponding 'thing' or a clearly and univocally delimited concept as a referent of this word.[7] Particularly remarkable is the fact that Lipka ascribes this "tendency toward reification" to naive speakers, who are more easily deceived inasmuch as they use language uncritically. But Lipka includes among these "naive speakers" also linguists, inasmuch as they often use abstract terms as though they had a univocal denotative meaning. Terms such as "presupposition", "speech act", "deep structure", etc. assume, however, a quite different meaning depending on the theory from the point of view of which they are considered.

In the discussion of recent years it has often been forgotten that, in the case of these terms, we are dealing with concepts which can be

6 Leonhard Lipka, „Lexikalisierung, Idiomatisierung und Hypostasierung als Probleme einer synchronischen Wortbildungslehre", in: *Perspektiven der Wortbildungsforschung*, edited by Herbert E. Brekle and Dieter Kastovsky, Bonn 1977, 155-164, 161.

7 In fictional context the "hypostatization effect" is intentionally used to create reality, see Peter Hohenhaus, *Ad-hoc Wortbildung - Terminologie. Typologie und Theorie kreativer Wortbildung im Englischen*. Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Bern, New York, 1996, 319.

defined, in basic principle, very differently within the respective contexts of different theories. Hypostatization, however, has resulted in these concepts often having been elevated to the status of unitary "substances", having been stripped of their real dependence on their contextualizing theories, and in certain definitions having been imbued with a claim to absolute validity.[8]

Moreover, names have also a special power to manipulate emotions. The way we define an object powerfully influences our response to it.[9] Words such as freedom, truth, etc. or, conversely, slavery, lies, etc. do not simply represent reality, but powerfully influence the way we regard it. Words are culturally and ideologically loaded. Therefore they can be used to unconsciously manipulate our emotions and influence our behavior. "Experience is merely the name men gave to their mistakes", wrote Oscar Wilde. By changing the names that define reality, we change, in an eyeblink, our point of view and thus also our emotive response thereto. In this case, by replacing 'error' with 'experience' our emotive reaction is turned from negative into positive. Experience is painful but useful, something we should regard as a treasure ("make a treasure of one's one experience"), whereas an error is a failure, something we should have avoided. Orwell, in his novel *1984*, gave extraordinary examples of the intentional, strategic use of the emotive power of names. The governing powers in this novel called "war" a "pacification campaign", "freedom" "slavery", and "ignorance" "strength", so as to bring people accept and even support otherwise unacceptable situations.[10] Such a policy is

8 Lipka, *Lexikalisierung*, 161.

9 Edward Schiappa, *Defining Reality. Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, Carbondale 2003, 113. See also Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, New York 1955, 122–123: "'What's in a name?' Anthony went on. 'The answer is, practically everything, if the name's a good one. Freedom's a marvelous name. That's why you're so anxious to make use of it. You think that, if you call imprisonment true freedom, people will be attracted to the prison. And the worst of it is you're quite right. The name counts more with most people than the thing. They'll follow the man who repeats it most often and in the loudest voice. And of course 'True Freedom' is actually a better name than freedom *tout court*. Truth – it's one of the magical words. Combine it with the magic of 'freedom' and the effect's terrific'".

10 George Orwell, *1984*, London 1949, 10, see also Fabrizio Macagno and Douglas Walton, *Emotive Language in Argumentation*, Cambridge 2014, 6.

not foreign to contemporary governments, which often conceal their intentions under positively loaded words such as "freedom,", "peace", "human rights", "democracy".

The strategic use of the emotive power of names is particularly effective in fields such as legal argumentation, where the lawyer aims ideally to describe facts in such a way that the jury, while reconstructing the situation, also unconsciously and implicitly assesses the people involved. The judgment will then be elaborated on the basis of both explicit premises and implicit assumptions, which will have been introduced by specific word uses. Famously, Quintilian in the *Institutio Oratoria* examines the case of a man who had stolen money from a temple. As a consequence of his action he was accused of sacrilege but he defended himself arguing that money is private property. The legal fate of the man depends on what the jury assumes to be the referent of sacrilege, i.e. whether sacrilege is "to steal anything from a sacred place", in which case the accused is guilty, or whether sacrilege is rather "to steal something sacred", in which case the accused is innocent (of the crime of sacrilege - but anyway guilty of theft).[11]

The power of names is very well known also by those working in the field of advertising. A specific area of marketing studies, called *branding*, has the specific task of finding persuasive names for new products. For instance, *She-pee* is the name for a tent hosting toilets for women at open-air events. The word was created taking inspiration both from *tepee*, i.e. the tent once used by American Indians and nowadays for camping, and the verb "pee" that means "to urinate". [12] In this case, the noun suggests how the object can be used. Much more often, the name of a product is chosen so as to elicit needs and desires. For instance, why should one keep an unfashionable, slow, and stupid mobile phone when can buy a "smartphone"?

11 Quintiliano, Institutio Oratoria VII, 3, 21-22, quoted in Macagno and Walton, *Emotive Language*, 10.

12 Hans-Jörg Schmid, *Aga saga, booze cruise und She-Pee: Wozu braucht das Englische immer mehr Wörter?* Antrittsvorlesung am 24.01.2007, Department für Anglistik und Amerikanistik und Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für kognitive Sprachforschung der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

2.

The claim for a purification of language from the errors engendered by its improper use has quite a long history. It dates back at least to Bacon who, in the *Novum Organum*, denounced the pernicious influence exerted by language on thought. He included in the *idola fori* those erroneous assumptions which, because of language, penetrated and settled in the human mind. Misunderstandings engendered by an incorrect use of language are *molestissima*, i.e. the most tenacious and dangerous ones, as one expects to be able to dominate them through the power of thinking while, conversely, thinking needs language to work. Words thus finally turn the power of intellect against itself.

Locke too, in Book III of the *Essay on Human Understanding*, deals with the relation between thinking and language and ascribes to the latter the function of a mere communication instrument. Language is the product of a convention through which signs are associated to ideas, so that the speaker can recall to the listener's mind simple ideas and their connections. Simple ideas correspond to individual entities, while universal notions are considered by Locke as mere *flatus vocis*. Both Bacon and Locke viewed thought as developing independently from language, which serves uniquely to convey ideas, and denounced the distortions and errors into which reasoning can fall when language is not used in a critical way.

The claim for a purification of language, quite widespread in 17th Century, was picked up again in 19th Century by a minority current of linguists, who interpreted the relation between language and thought under the new perspective that Kantian philosophy had made available to them.[13] In other words, they did not devote themselves to the collection, classification, and comparison of linguistic records but rather used the results of historical-comparative linguistics to emphasize the role of

13 Schmidt regards this minority current as an important link between the account of language proper to English empiricism and 20th Century philosophy of language. See Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Sprache und Denken als sprachphilosophisches Problem von Locke bis Wittgenstein*, Den Haag 1968. See also Hermann Cloeren and Sigfried J. Schmidt (eds.), *Philosophie als Sprachkritik im 19. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols., Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1971.

language in what Kant had called the transcendental synthesis. Their main concern was how to carry out a criticism of human knowledge through a criticism of language.[14] Anticipating the claims of 20th Century Logical Positivism, they considered the analysis of language as a tool for purifying philosophy from the errors engendered by an improper use of language, and claimed that many problems that philosophy had unsuccessfully been trying to solve since its very beginning are actually pseudo-problems, which should not be solved but dissolved.

The most interesting author among these scholars was undoubtedly Friedrich Max Müller, who believed that language could bring to light the backbone of human spirit, i.e. the matrix according to which all human creations are performed.[15] Exactly because he conceived of language and thought as inextricably linked, he underscored how an uncritical use of language can bring people to make false assumptions about reality, which then greatly influence their further thinking. He speaks of a real "mythology", which is evoked deceivingly by language even in its simplest, everyday use.

Müller distinguished between the religious mythology developed by primitive people on the basis of their language and the mythology unconsciously affecting the minds of supposedly secularized people. At a first stage of human history, religion originated spontaneously from language. By giving male or female names to things, primitive populations represented them unconsciously as living beings. It was

14 See Karl Otto Apel, *Wie ist Erkenntniskritik als Sprachkritik möglich, in: Sprache: Brücke und Hindernis, 23 Beiträge nach einer Sondereihe des "Studio Heidelberg"*, Süddeutscher Rundfunk, Münich, 1972, 9-22.

15 Max Müller, *Einleitung in die vergleichende Religionswissenschaft. Vier Vorlesungen im Jahre mdccclxx an der Royal Institution in London gehalten, nebst zwei Essays "Über falsche Analogien" und "Über Philosophie der Mythologie"*, Strassburg 1874, 49. Actually, Müller did not endorse the Enlightenment view that language exerts an influence on thought, as it relies on the presupposition that language is the mere communication tool of an independent thought. Rather Müller is arguing that "discursive thinking [*das discursive Denken*]" can be "realized [*verwirklicht*]" only through language (Max Müller, Über die Philosophie der Mythologie, 318). See also the following statement: "Considered from a higher point of view it is, of course, not language as such that dominates mind but rather thought and language are only different, mutually determining phenomena of the same spiritual or mental energy" (Max Müller, *Einleitung in die vergleichende Religionswissenschaft*, 50).

thus a spontaneous development of their naive image of the world to embody the most amazing or frightening natural phenomena in the anthropomorphic figures of the gods. Distinguishing between avoidable and unavoidable effects of linguistic use, Max Müller includes religious mythology in the first category. At an initial stage of mankind's evolution, the mind still had difficulties freeing itself from the concrete domain. Thus, primitive people represented the "*essentia generalis*" in the concrete figure of gods. Religious mythology, which is an intermediate step between concrete and abstract thinking, ought, however, to have been overcome with the further development of reason. On the contrary, though: Müller complains that nowadays there is as much mythology as at Homer's time; it is just that we do not notice it because we "live in its shadow".[16] In other words, abstract concepts, originally introduced as useful tools to speed up communication and facilitate the sharing of needs and objectives, came over time to be mistaken for names of really existing, though invisible, entities. Even scientific language, which is considered to be objective and reliable, can be deceiving when not critically used.

Even the natural sciences, which make great play of the exactitude of the language they use, are not free of words which, acribiously analyzed, would have to forfeit their substantiality as surely as would Nemesis or the Erinyes. Natural-scientific researchers are in the habit of speaking of "atoms", that is, of indivisible elementary substances, which are conceptions only of their own minds, as if they were speaking of real things.[17]

Concepts such as "atom", "ether", or "caloric substance", originally created as heuristic tools, over time insinuated into the mind the idea of existing substances as their referents. Differently from the religious mythology of ancient peoples, Müller considers this kind of mythology to be "a morbid state, an impotence of language",[18] which can and should be avoided. Philosophy has the task of unmasking misunderstandings engendered by an uncritical use of language.

16 Max Müller, *Über die Philosophie der Mythologie*, 316.

17 Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, vol.2, Leipzig 1866, 529.

18 *Ibidem*, 386.

However, most of time philosophy is affected by the same "mythological disturbance of language" which it claims to challenge.

As much "mythology" is to be found in the way in which we use the word "nothing" as in even the absurdest parts of the mythological phraseology of India, Greece and Rome and when we ascribe to the one a kind of "sickness of language" the causes of which we are able to explain, we need also to concede that in the case of the other language has sunk almost into a kind of delirium and has ceased to be that which it was intended to be: namely, the expression for the impressions we take into ourselves through the senses or for the concepts which come to be formed in a rational mind.[19]

In his popular book *Vorlesungen uber die Sprachwissenschaft*, Müller explains in detail the essential role that metaphor performs in the development of human thought, as it allows the passage from concrete to abstract thinking.[20] Through metaphors a basic repository of words, indicating concrete objects and phenomena, have been variously exploited in order to create abstract notions. Metaphor is thus recognized by Müller as a very important tool for the development of human culture. "It was an event in the history of man when the ideas of father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife were first conceived and first uttered. It was a new era when the numerals from one to ten had been framed, and when words like law, right, duty, virtue, generosity, love, had been added to the dictionary of man".[21] The possibility of naming abstract concepts allowed mankind to develop a more refined culture and institutions which nowadays the historian can retrieve by tracing back the evolution of meaning.

19 *Ibidem*, 328.

20 Müller distinguishes between two different kinds of metaphor: root metaphors and poetic metaphors. In the first case a word is borrowed to name a phenomenon which is still unnamed i.e. to fill a gap in the vocabulary. In the second case, a phenomenon is indicated by the name commonly associated with another for the purpose of achieving a particular effect (highlighting a similarity, underscoring certain features, etc.). For instance, through a poetic metaphor the rays of sunlight are defined as "fingers of the soul" (Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, vol. 2, 334). Müller focused his attention mainly on root metaphors, as they bring about new words.

21 Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, London 1885, vol. 2, 341.

However, Muller complains that, while metaphors were once recognized and used as such, nowadays we no longer pay attention to the metaphorical origin of many words and we use these latter uncritically. When a word that has a metaphorical origin is used without the awareness of the process that led to its creation, then mythology arises and language "gets sick".[22]

It was a certain similarity, a *tertium comparationis* between the shining bear and the shining stars overhead that enabled the ancient framers of language to justify their derivation of the two names from the same root. As soon, however, as the similarity in quality began falsely to be taken for an identity of substance, mythology became inevitable.[23]

3.

Max Müller's contribution to linguistics is nowadays scarcely considered, where it is not totally forgotten. Indeed, since the second half of the 19th Century linguists began to devote themselves to retrieving, collecting and comparing historical records, while intentionally avoiding philosophical discussions on the nature and aim of language in order to preserve the scientific approach of their field of study. Müller's anthropological account of language was considered already at his time as unfeasible and outdated. However, the fertility of his insights was noticed by Friedrich Nietzsche who considered philology to be not an end in itself but only a means.[24] Nietzsche began reading Müller already during his own time teaching in Basel. His personal library contains the second volume of Müller's *Essays* (1869), i.e. the *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Mythologie und Ethnologie*.[25] To the first volume of the work, the *Beiträge zur*

22 Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, vol.2, 338.

23 *Ibidem*, 354.

24 Benedetta Zavatta, "Nietzsche and Linguistics", in: Lisa Heller and Helmut Heit (eds.), *Handbuch Nietzsche und die Wissenschaften*, Berlin 2013, 265-289.

25 According to the catalogue of Nietzsche's library, some pages of this book had not been opened (49-96, 115-127, 141- 167, 258-264, 316-376. HAAB C 347), while others had been underlined and marked in the margins (226, 228, 230). See Giuliano Campioni, Paolo D'Iorio, Maria Cristina Fornari, Francesco Fronterotta, Andrea Orsucci, *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*, Berlin and New York 2002, 409.

vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft, Nietzsche refers several times in his notes of the years 1869-74[26], when he was preparing a series of notebooks devoted to different topics, one of which was precisely the history of religion. In November 1869 Nietzsche also borrowed from the Basel university library the popular *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache* (1863-1866) and, in October 1875, the *Einleitung in die vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* (1874), a cycle of four lectures published along with two other essays, *Über falsche Analogien* and *Über Philosophie der Mythologie*.[27]

A passage in Nietzsche's *Encyclopedie der klassischen Philologie* reveals that he was well aware of Müller's theory already from 1871 on: "Comparative research into mythology has recognized that the names of the gods were originally predicates [...] when the metaphors come to be forgotten, there occurs a great darkening and obscuring of the myths".[28] However, the actual effects on the evolution of Nietzsche's thought of his reading of Müller on the topic of that "mythology" which is unconsciously and insidiously evoked by language become visible only from the years of Nietzsche's writing *Human, All Too Human* onward – that is to say, once his so-called "Wagnerian" phase was over and done with. From 1876 on Nietzsche takes a stance strongly opposed to all metaphysics and observes the fact that this latter tends to be spontaneously generated out of the mere use of language. In aphorism 11 of *Human, All Too Human,* which is entitled *Language as a Putative Science,* Nietzsche too exposes the fact that, through the giving of names to things, concepts are created which then become erroneously reified. In this way there is created, says Nietzsche, "a separate world beside the other world". To this fictitious world, which nonetheless believes itself to be more originary and more important than the real world, Nietzsche gives, in *Zarathustra,* the name of

26 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe Werke* (*KSA*) Berlin 1980, Bd. 14, 534f.

27 Furthermore, it has to be considered that Müller's *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India*, published in 1878 and translated into German in 1880, had great resonance in Germany. See Andrea Orsucci, *Orient-Okzident. Nietzsches Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild*, Berlin 1996, 210.

28 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke* (*KGW*), Berlin 1967ff, II/2, 410, see also p. 412.

"hinterworld". Concepts, in the first instance, are clearly useful expedients in the process of reasoning; through them, we can classify reality, draw conclusions more rapidly, and even make predictions. Problems arise only when we forget that a concept is indeed our own creation and begin to take it to be something that really exists independently of us, that is to say, when the concept becomes "reified". It is also, Nietzsche says, when human beings begin to confuse concepts with true realities that they start to delude themselves that they possess an absolutely reliable knowledge of the things that make up the world. He writes:

> To the extent that man has for long ages believed in the concepts and names of things as *aeternae veritates* he has appropriated to himself that pride by which he raised himself above the animal: he really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world.... A great deal later – only now – it dawns on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a tremendous error. [29]

Nietzsche is clearly alluding here to the advent of comparative linguistics which, by throwing light for the first time upon the genesis of the words and names we use, had at the same time drawn attention to those monstrous misunderstandings to which an unreflecting, non-conscious use of language can give rise. Nietzsche returns to the same topic some years later in aphorism 11 of *The Wanderer and His Shadow,* which bears the title *Freedom of the Will and Isolation of Facts*. The fulcrum of this text is the critique of the concept of the freedom of the will, from which there clearly descend and depend the further concepts of responsibility and guilt. Nietzsche maintains that the concept of the freedom of the will "has in language its constant evangelist and advocate". And in fact it really is through the operation of naming – or rather, more correctly speaking, through the application of the categories of substance and causality to the data of the senses in the very moment in which these data are received by us – that the data in question are organized into "objects", which latter we then imagine to be acting substances. Nietzsche claims that:

29 MA 11, KSA 2, 30-31.

> Through words and concepts we are still continually misled into imaging things as being simpler than they are, separate from one another, indivisible, each existing in and for itself. A philosophical mythology lies concealed in language which breaks out again every moment, however careful one may be otherwise.[30]

Nietzsche's criticism of the "*Volks-metaphysik*" (FW 354) unconsciously conveyed through language was further developed in his works of the 1880s. In several fragments from 1885 Nietzsche stresses the fact that, to build a mental representation of reality, human beings need to assume a sort of immutable "substratum" as a bearer of the attributes of any given thing. [31] This process, which is performed mostly unconsciously, is very similar to the artistic creations of "ancient mythology [*alte Mythologie*]"[32] and is ultimately assimilated by Nietzsche, in *Twilight of the Idols,* to a "rough fetishism [*grobes Fetischwesen*]".[33] In the section of this latter book entitled *Reason in Philosophy* he states once again that, just as in mythology natural phenomena are personified and adored as gods or in fetishism anthropomorphic artefacts are believed to be simulacra of gods, similarly modern man - *because of language* - believes in material substances which act and produce effects on each other.[34] Indeed, Nietzsche states, the concepts of "thing", "causality", "intention" and even the concept of "self" are errors generated by the use of sentences formed according to the predicative structure ("p is q"). The concepts that we created to facilitate abstract reasoning, such as "unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, objectification, being", ultimately ended up escaping our conscious control and continuously deceive us.[35]

30 WS 11

31 NF 1885 2[84], KSA 12, 103.

32 NF 1885 2[139], KSA 12, 135.

33 GD, Vernunft 5, KSA 6, 77.

34 GD, Vernunft 5, KSA 6, 77. "Language began at a time when psychology was in its most rudimentary form: we enter into a crudely fetishist mind-set when we call into consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language – in the vernacular: the presuppositions of *reason*".

35 GD, Vernunft 5, KSA 6, 77.

Nietzsche claims that even science, whose propositions are assumed to be neutral and reliable, is infected by mythology. The notions of "atom" or "force" are actually as arbitrary as those of "freedom", "soul" or "God".[36] However, he believes that the science of historical-comparative linguistics can represent a turning-point for philosophy.

> What separates us most fundamentally from all Platonic and Leibnizian ways of thinking is this: that we believe in no eternal concepts, eternal values, eternal forms, or eternal souls; and philosophy, insofar as it is science and not legislation, means for us only the extension to the farthest point of the concept "history".[37]

Bringing to light the origin of designations on which the various moral systems hinge, etymology reveals that values are simply human creations, inevitably subjected to revision and to change. Comparative linguistics, in other words, finally makes available to us the tools we need for a thorough critique of language and thereby for a solid assault on metaphysics. For example, in *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche traces back the moral concept of spiritual "purity" to the physical experience of cleaning[38], or the abstract concept of guilt [*Schuld*] to the material one of debt [*Schulden*].[39] The "second sight [*zweites Gesicht*]"[40] that the genealogist possesses is the one that considers every phenomenon in the historical stratification of its meanings, and does not consider the last and most recent one of them as if it were the only, immutable and eternal one. Thanks to this "second sight", concepts can be clearly recognized as human creations intended simply to facilitate reasoning and need no longer be believed to be entities that exist in their own right.

36 GM II 13, KSA 5, 280.

37 NF 1885 38[14], KSA 11, 613.

38 GM I 6, KSA 5, 264.

39 GM II 4, KSA 5, 297; GM II 8, KSA 5, 305.

40 GM II 4, KSA 5, 297.

4.

In the 20th Century Logical Positivism took over from earlier British empiricism the aspiration toward a purification of language and made of this aspiration the fulcrum of its own philosophical project. The members of the Vienna Circle underscored that most philosophical problems are actually pseudo-problems, which have been generated through improper use of language.[41] Thus, they dreamt of a formalized language, shaped on the model of mathematics, which would be exempt from all errors. Wittgenstein, although he never shared the dream of a formalized language, nonetheless concentrated his attention on the linguistic misunderstandings which finally degenerated into philosophical pseudo-problems. In the theory of language which he developed in the *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*, the world is regarded as the totality of facts and language as the totality of statements which denominate facts. The only function of language is to denominate [*bezeichnen*] things. It follows that the only meaningful statements are descriptive ones, i.e. those composing the language of science. Wittgenstein argued that the greater part of philosophical questions are simply not to be answered, but rather to be eliminated because they deal with indescribable states of affairs. The last proposition of the *Tractatus* states: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." In other words, what exceeds the boundaries of language cannot be expressed properly. Speaking of such issues inevitably leads to errors and ambiguities. The task which the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* ascribes to philosophy is to clarify the meaning of linguistic statements and specify the boundaries of what can be spoken of.

In the second phase of his life, however, Wittgenstein moved from an account of meaning as representation to an account of meaning as use. His *Philosophical Investigations* focuses on everyday language and the multiplicity of social practices in which the different linguistic uses originate. Scientific language, for the later Wittgenstein, is just one of many possible "linguistic games", i.e. specific contexts of linguistic use, and has no higher degree of legitimacy than non-descriptive uses of languages,

41 See Rudof Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, Leipzig 1928.

through which human beings perform a multiplicity of functions (to sing, tell stories, imitate, etc.). The understanding of the meaning of a word is the understanding of its use, which can be different according to the different linguistic games in which it is inserted. In other words, the meaning of a word is "positional" and not "essential", i.e. it does not rely on theoretical assumptions but rather on practical ones. Even in the second phase of his work, however, Wittgenstein continues to ascribe to philosophy the task of purifying language from errors. "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence through our language".[42]

The word "bewitchment" actually suggests not real errors but more a kind of "magic". In the essay *On Certainty* Wittgenstein underscores the fact that each linguistic game has its rules, which cannot be broken or questioned. In other words, every kind of linguistic practice includes statements that cannot be doubted, unless one wants to come to be seen as being "unreasonable". Actually, "doubt itself rests only on what is beyond doubt"[43], i.e. on certain "basic certainties" on which our worldview is grounded. These statements build the framework of all further thinking and speaking, or form the test bench against which the correctness of empirical statements can be assessed. However, the "basic statements" building our picture of the world are not assumed to be such because people are convinced of their correctness but are rather uncritically inherited together with language rules. They represent "a kind of mythology" on which scientific discourse relies.

> It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid. The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself...And the bank of that river consists

42 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Oxford 1953, §109.

43 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, Oxford 1969, *§ 519, 680.*

> partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place, now in another, gets washed away, or deposited.[44]

5.

The word "mythology" with reference to language appears only twice in Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*.[45] It is to be found for the first time in his *Remarks on Frazer's "Golden Bough"* which, written in summer 1931, can be regarded as preparatory notes for the *Philosophical Investigations*. Thanks to his reading of Frazer's book, Wittgenstein realized that both magic and religious rituals are based on the evocative power of language. On his view, wizards' spells are linguistic acts, which are considered erroneously to be able to change reality when uttered.[46] Similarly, religious invocations, blessing or rituals do not describe anything, but rather change reality. Stimulated by Frazer's researches, Wittgenstein then takes into account linguistic phenomena such as "reification" and "personification". He observes how "uneducated people" use statements, such as "illness is moving from the head into the chest", to simplify processes they cannot understand in all their details.[47] Even though it is useful for communicative purposes, this use of language can be misleading, inasmuch as it engenders the belief that "illness behaves like a person". This belief is the very ground of magic rituals aimed at chasing illness away, as it were an unwanted guest. After examining these and other examples that Frazer had accounted

44 *Ibidem, § 94-99, 144.*

45 I thank Alois Pichler (Bergen University) and Nuno Venturinha (Universidade Nova, Lisboa) for the useful indications on this regard.

46 Searle underscored the difference between spells and performatives as follows: "I can't fix the roof by saying 'I fix the roof' and I can't fry an egg by saying 'I fry an egg', but I can promise to come and see you just by saying 'I promise to come and see you' and I can order you to leave the room just by saying 'I order you to leave the room.' Now why the one and not the other?" John Searle, "How Performatives Work", in: *Essays in Speech Act Theory*, Amsterdam 2002, 85.

47 Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Bemerkungen uber Frazers 'The Golden Bough'," *Synthese*. 17 (1967), 233-245.

for in his enquiry, Wittgenstein concludes: "An entire mythology is stored within our language [*In unserer Sprache ist eine ganze Mythologie niedergelegt*]".[48] However, in Frazer's book the phrase "mythology in language" never occurs, or at least not explicitly.

The phrase "mythology in language" occurs for the second (and last) time in Wittgenstein"s works in some annotations belonging to the so-called *Big Typescript*[49], which have been gathered and edited together under the title of *Philosophy*. In these annotations Wittgenstein accounts for different misunderstandings arising from an incorrect use of language, i.e. "misleading analogies"[50] and other traps.[51] One of the sections of this group of annotations is entitled "The mythology in the forms of our language (Paul Ernst)".[52] It includes further remarks concerning the reading of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, among which is the aforementioned statement: "An entire mythology is stored within our language [*In unserer Sprache ist eine ganze Mythologie niedergelegt*]".[53] But why does Wittgenstein associate the phrase "mythology in language" with the name of Paul Ernst? In another note from the *Big Typescript* Wittgenstein explains:

> If my book is ever published, some thought and mention should be given in its preface to Paul Ernst's preface to the *Fairy Tales* of the Brothers Grimm, which I should have already mentioned in the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* as the source of the expression "misunderstanding of the logic of language".[54]

48 *Ibidem*.

49 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Big Typescript: TS 213*, London, Wiley-Blackwell 2012, § 86-93.

50 *Ibidem*.

51 *Ibidem*.

52 *Ibidem*.

53 *Ibidem*.

54 "Wenn mein Buch je veröffentlicht wird so muß in seiner Vorrede der Vorrede Paul Ernst's zu den Grimmschen Märchen gedacht werden die ich schon in der Log. Phil. Abhandlung als Quelle des Ausdrucks 'Misverstehen der Sprachlogik hätte erwähnen müssen" (Hans Biesenbach, *Anspielungen und Zitate im Werk Ludwig Wittgensteins*, Sofia University Press, 2014, 99).

In actual fact, Ernst had written a postface, not a preface, to his edition of Grimm's *Fairy Tales*. But it is true that in this postface he referred to fetishism and totemism as typical phenomena of primitive cultures, where unanimated objects were regarded as material shells of spirits. Ernst takes the possibility into account that such a belief could have been engendered by a misleading use of language, although he prefers not to deal with this issue in detail.[55] Anyway, he never explicitly mentions "mythology" with reference to language. Ultimately, then, we should conclude that Wittgenstein's source in this regard is exclusively Nietzsche, of whom he was an avid reader. Most probably Wittgenstein read both Frazer and Ernst through the lens that Nietzsche provided him with. Once Wittgenstein embraced Nietzsche's notion of "mythology embedded in language", he could apply it to Frazer's anthropological enquiries and Paul's remarks on the deceiving power of language.

In the last analysis, then, we must recognize that Max Muller did indeed exert an influence on Wittgenstein, even if it was only an indirect one. However, we must also acknowledge that it was only the great similarity to one another of their respective accounts of semantics that made possible the migration of this term "mythology" from one author to the other.

6.

Semantics (*Semasiologie* or *Bedeutungslehre*) is a term which arose in Germany in the fourth decade of the 19th Century.[56] At a first stage in the development of this discipline meaning was regarded as a mental representation (*Vorstellung, Vorstellungsbild, Anschauungsbild, Bild*,

55 Ernst decides not to discuss "ob diese Vorstellung aus der Deutung einer mißverstandenen Tendenz der Sprache entsteht, oder ob aus dem Gedanken, daß die Seelen der verstorbenen Menschen in diese Gegenstände gezogen seien [whether this idea arises out of the interpretation of a misunderstood tendency of language or rather out of the thought that the souls of deceased persons have passed into these objects]". Max Ernst, *Nachwort zu* Kinder- und Hausmärchen". *Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*, vol 3., München & Leipzig 1910, vol. 3, 271-314, 273.

56 See Brigitte Nerlich, *Semantic Theories in Europe 1830-1930*, Amsterdam, Benjamins 1992.

etc.) associated with a sound or graphic sign, i.e. with the word.[57] Mental representations were considered as a sort of "pictures" populating the mind and directly referring to the reality which they depicted. Concepts, on the other hand, were considered as second-order representations, i.e. representations of representations, which referred to reality only indirectly and had no figurative character.[58] This psychologistic approach to semantics was overcome at the beginning of the 19th Century, when its psychological assumptions were experimentally tested and disproven.[59] It was proven rather that mental representations or *Erlebnisse* associated with a word, where these existed, had in fact no role in the understanding of its meaning. The meaning of a word could be retrieved uniquely by considering the function which it performs within a sentence, and the sentence within a discourse. In other words, meaning was thought of in relation to communicative purposes.

Müller, even though he, chronologically speaking, belonged to the first stage of the development of semantics, elaborated an extremely modern account of meaning that anticipated the turn from *Vorstellungsemantik* to communication-oriented semantics. He assumed that language originated from a relatively small number of verbal roots expressing everyday actions, such as digging, eating, grasping, etc. In an early stage of the development of language roots were used with holophrastic function. Later, names of objects were derived from roots. Quite interestingly, in Müller's account names are not meant to express any assumed "essence" of the objects to which they refer, but rather the type of interaction that Man can establish with them. For instance, "trees were particularly interesting to the primitive framers of language, because they could be split in two, cut, shaped into blocks and planks, shafts and boats. Hence from a root dar, to *tear*, they called trees dru or dâru, *lit*. what can be split or torn or cut to pieces".[60]

57 See Johann Knobloch, *Geschichte der psychologichen Sprachauffassung in Deutschland von 1850 bis 1920*, Max Nyemeryer Verlag, Tubingen, 1988, 240, 241, and Nerlich *Semantic Theories*, 7).

58 See Knobloch, *Geschichte*, 258.

59 See Karl Bühler, "Uber das Sprachverstandnis von Standpunkt der Normalpsychologie aus", in *Bericht über den 3. Kongress für experimentelle Psychologie in Frankfurt 22-25.4.1908*, Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1909, *94-130*.

60 Müller 1892, pp. 382-383.

Although Müller considered it to be necessary to exactly define words in order to avoid an improper use thereof, nonetheless he recognized that words do not have a univocal and stable meaning but rather circumscribe areas of meaning. These "areas" of meaning are obviously subjected to increase and decrease with the passing of time. While old uses decay, new ones continuously arise. The only possible definition of the meaning of a word is thus the history of its uses.[61]

In Müller's account etymology is not only a branch of linguistic studies but the only weapon we have to purge language of its errors and thus eliminate false problems from philosophy. Tracing back names to the concrete experiences on the bases of which they have been formed, the linguist can also question the ideological and emotive power of words, as in the case of the powerfully evocative word "truth".

> Truth (*Wahrheit*) has been explained by Horne Tooke as that which one trusts, or "troweth". But this in fact explains very little. "To trow" is only a derivative verb and signifies, precisely, nothing other than "to hold to be true". But what, then, is "true" (*treu*)? It is the Sanskrit *dhruva* and means *firm*, *reliable* and, generally speaking, something that can be maintained or held to, from *dhar*, "to hold".[62]

Tracing back the history of a word is the only way to correctly individuate its referents and this, in its turn, is the precondition for making a correct use of the word. Such an analysis will bring to light the fact that a word does not name any entity, but rather expresses a communicative goal, i.e. the intention to share the most relevant aspect of an observed phenomenon with one's fellow human beings. Relevance, in its turn, is determined on the basis of the specific needs of a certain linguistic community, living in a specific time and environment. Anticipating Wittgenstein's notion of "forms of life", Müller emphasized that language is strictly connected to the people speaking it. Different populations, which had been subjected to different

61 Hermann Cloeren, *Language and Thought. German Approaches to Analytic Philosophy in the 18. and 19. Centuries*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1988, 172.

62 Max Müller, *Vorlsesungen*, vol. 2, 325.

environmental stimulations, developed different social practices, which ultimately determined different uses of language and thus different worldviews.

Opposing Schleicher's position, dominant at that time, Müller considered it to be impossible to study language independently from culture, religion, and all others expression of the life of a people.[63] Schleicher's approach, which aspires to be scientific, fosters in fact, on the contrary, an uncritical approach to meaning. According to Müller, the only way to fight against the mythology that had been stored up in language is by bringing back the word into the sentence, the sentence into the context of utterance, and this latter, in its turn, into the historical, social, and cultural context as a whole.

In short, then, what I have attempted to point up with these remarks is the enormous richness of semantic ideas and insights developed during the 19th century. The philosophers of language of the following 20th century, however, have completely neglected this rich mass of ideas piled up by their immediate predecessors. These latter philosophers attempted, indeed, to respond to the very same problems but tended often to do so by proposing solutions – such as that of a formalized language exempt from the problems which afflict natural languages – which were fundamentally impractical and thus inferior to those solutions which had begun to be identified by their immediate 19th-century precursors.

63 Schleicher claimed that language was regulated by its own laws, independent of the history and culture of the people that spoke it. Linguistics should therefore be regarded as an autonomous discipline and included among the natural sciences rather than the historical ones (August Schleicher, *Compendium der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Weimar, Böhlau, 1861-1862, 1).

IV. Ancient Philosophy

The Consequences of Misology

Socrates' Apology of Discourse in the *Phaedo*

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§1. Introduction

Socrates' First Three Arguments and Simmias' and Cebes' Objections to Them. The Effect of Simmias' and Cebes' Objections upon the Audience. Immortality of the Soul and Meaningfulness of Life.

At the very moment when he is about to die, Socrates and his friends decide they will try to find out whether or not the human soul is immortal. There could hardly be a stronger connection between the main theme and the existential circumstances of the *Phaedo*[1]. However, the connection is still stronger than this. Because Socrates has been devoting his life to philosophy and understands philosophy as a way of learning to die in the present life (in the sense of preparing oneself for contemplating eternal truth in an immortal afterlife), the question whether or not the human soul is immortal amounts to whether or not Socrates' life (a philosopher's life) has any meaning and ultimate justification. In this sense, arguing for the immortality of the soul (which is what Socrates spends the entire *Phaedo* doing) corresponds to an apology for the philosophical life (for Socrates' own life – cf. 69e3-4)[2]. In other words, it corresponds to an

1 See D. Jacquette, «Socrates on the Moral Mischief of Misology», *Argumentation*, 28 (2014) 5: «It is likely part of the unspoken subtext of Plato's many-layered dialogue that Socrates chooses to address the threat of misology shortly before his death, since it would be not unreasonable to imagine his followers easily becoming misologues through resentment of the kind of argument that seems to have brought Socrates to his final tragic lethal punishment.» Although Jacquette seems to recognise that there is a connection between the main theme and the existential situation of the *Phaedo* (namely, through the topic of misology) we think he misunderstands what the grounds of such connection are. As we shall see more clearly, the main theme and the existential situation of the *Phaedo* are strongly connected not so much because Socrates' imminent death could cause his companions to become μισόλογοι, as because the fact that Socrates is about to die leads him and his followers to the question of whether their lives have been making any sense. Contrary to what Jacquette states in the passage quoted, misology does not arise out of resentment at the condemnation of Socrates, but rather out of the fact that the validity of Socrates' first three arguments in favour of the immortality of the human soul is threatened by Simmias' and Cebes' objections.

2 For a similar view, see J. Dalfen, «Philologia und Vertrauen (Über Platons eigenartigen Dialog Phaidon)», *Grazer Beiträge*, 20 (1994) 41, 50; S. Špinka, «*Katharsis katharseôs*: Philosophie als "Flucht in die *logoi*" und als "Reinigung"», in A. Havlíček (ed.), *Plato's Phaedo*, Oikoymenh, Prague 2001, p. 287.

account of the ultimate reason why dedicating one's life to philosophy is not absurd and might constitute a worthy enterprise (in fact, the only worthy enterprise in human life).

In the following paper we will be examining the *Phaedo* section on misology (89d1-91c6). In this section Socrates tries to identify the nature and origin of μισολογία, as well as its ruinous consequences for the philosophical life. According to Socrates in the *Phaedo*, μισολογία has a disastrous effect on philosophical life, because it consists in hatred of argument and therefore bears the power to undermine the confidence in λόγοι which is the very basis of life devoted to philosophy. In other words, since philosophy is based upon confidence in λόγοι and could consequently be termed a kind of φιλολογία, hatred of argument or μισολογία can be equated with hatred of philosophy[3]. In the *Phaedo* Socrates endeavours to protect philosophy against the dangers of μισολογία. He does this by showing that confidence in λόγοι is the only way to conduct a meaningful life (the philosophical life). In other words, in the *Phaedo* Socrates performs an apology for λόγοι, which is an apology for philosophy and a fortiori for his own life (the life of a true φιλόλογος)[4].

Up until the section on μισολογία Socrates presents a few arguments for the immortality of the human soul:

3 See JACQUETTE, «The Moral Mischief of Misology», art. cit., p. 2: «Misology, as Socrates explains, by analogy with misanthropy as the hatred of humanity, is the hatred of *logos*, of words, in one sense, but more relevantly of discussion, logical reasoning, and argument.» Jacquette is right in his account of the meaning of λόγος in the composition of the term μισολογία. However, a full account of the term μισολογία requires attention to be given to the fact that μισολογία is the opposite of φιλοσοφία. For philosophy is tantamount to a form of life devoted to λόγοι. Hatred of argument should, therefore, be equated with hatred of a form of life devoted to arguments.

4 On the importance of the section on misology for the *Phaedo* as a whole, see DALFEN, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., pp. 35, 37: «In der Verunsicherung und der Enttäuschung, in welche die Zuhörer durch die Einwände des Simmias und Kebes geraten sind, sieht Sokrates die große Gefahr, daß sie das Vertrauen in die Tragfähigkeit der *logoi* verlieren und sich in ihrem künftigen Leben nicht mehr an ihnen orientieren. Der ganze Dialog Phaidon ist eine Demonstration, wie Sokrates diese Gefahr aus dem Weg räumen will: im Intermezzo läßt Platon die Personen seines Textes explizit darüber sprechen, was er implizit den ganzen Dialog hindurch darstellt.» On the singularity of this *intermezzo* of the *Phaedo* in comparison with those of other Platonic dialogues, see D. FREDE, *Platons «Phaidon»: Der Traum von der Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1999, p. 85.

1) The cyclical argument (70c4-72d10), according to which the dead come from the living and vice versa;
2) The recollection argument (72e1-77a5), according to which the human soul, because it possesses a kind of innate knowledge, must have existed elsewhere before coming to this life;
3) The affinity argument (78b2-80b8), according to which the human soul, due to a greater affinity between it and the realm of intelligible forms, shares the latter's indestructibility.

However, both Simmias and Cebes have doubts about these arguments or, rather, about the survival of the human soul after death, which Socrates' first three arguments were supposed to be able to prove. Each of them, therefore, raises an objection to Socrates' arguments:

a) Simmias presents the soul-harmony theory (85b10-86e5), according to which the human soul consists in the harmony of the bodily parts the soul's existence depends upon[5].
b) Cebes objects to Socrates' arguments by presenting a theory of the body as the human soul's garment (86e6-88b8); according to Cebes, the fact that the human soul outlives a great number of garments does not necessarily entail that the soul will outlast all of its garments[6].

The details of both Simmias' and Cebes' objections should not concern us here.

However, to be aware of the exchange of arguments between Socrates and his two companions is absolutely decisive for understanding

5 R. Burger, *The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1984, p. 247 n. 2, points out that Simmias' soul-harmony theory originally derived from the Pythagorean Philolaus.

6 K. Dorter, *Plato's Phaedo: An Interpretation*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1982, p. 87, points to the fact that Simmias' and Cebes' arguments are, more often than not, treated by Socrates as one single argument. Cfr. 89a4, a8, c3-4, 91b7-8 (where both arguments are referred to in the singular).

why Socrates' reflections on the consequences of μισολογία and his apology for λόγοι take place. For Simmias' and Cebes' objections to Socrates' arguments have a tremendous impact upon the validity of the latter from the audience's perspective and could give rise to hatred of argument in the souls of the listeners of the conversation[7]. Indeed, up to this point Socrates arguments are convincing for at least the majority of those who are with him during his last moments. Socrates' friends (with the exception of Simmias and Cebes) are persuaded by Socrates' arguments that the human soul is immortal and will survive bodily death. However, Simmias' and Cebes' objections come to shake their confidence in Socrates' arguments, that is, in the human soul's survival after death. Socrates' companions (as well as Echechrates) now become persuaded or convinced of the strength and validity of both Simmias' and Cebes' objections. In other terms, all listeners and readers of the exchange of arguments between Socrates and his two friends are thrown back and forth between opposite arguments about the immortality of the soul. At one moment they are persuaded that the soul is immortal. At another moment they are persuaded that the soul might not be immortal. The back-and-forth movement between opposite arguments (or between the opposite theses such arguments speak in favour of) is confusing for those who are listening to the conversation between Socrates and his two dialogue partners[8]. What is more, this back-and-forth movement causes deep uncertainty in the minds of the listeners of the conversation – not only about which series of arguments is true (whether Socrates' or Simmias' and Cebes' arguments), but also and more fundamentally about the validity of arguments as such and the very intelligibility of reality.

The extension of the suspicion about the validity of arguments and the intelligibility of reality from the immediate audience of the conversation to its narrators and the whole universe of readers of the *Phaedo* becomes

7 For a more detailed summary of Socrates' first three arguments and Simmias' and Cebes' objections to them, see D. Sedley and A. Long (eds.), *Plato: Meno and Phaedo*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, pp. xxiv-xxv, xxvi-xxxi.

8 Špinka, «*Katharsis katharseôs*», art. cit., pp. 297-300, maintains that a relationship exists between this experience of instability in the realm of λόγοι and the instability one experiences in the realm of the body.

plain in 88c1-7, where Phaedo suddenly and unexpectedly interrupts the narration to tell of the feeling of discomfort, trouble and unbelief generated by Simmias' and Cebes' objections to Socrates[9]:

> Now when we all heard them say this our mood took an unpleasant turn, as we later told each other, because we had been firmly persuaded by the earlier argument, but then they seemed to have disturbed us all over again and sent us plummeting into doubt, not just about the arguments given before, but also about what would be said later. We were worried that we might be worthless as judges, or even that the very facts of the matter might merit doubt[10].

The sense of loss and oscillation between arguments in favour of and against the immortality of the soul is also experienced by Echechrates in 88c8-d3 (right after Phaedo's words quoted above):

> Heavens, Phaedo, I quite sympathize with you. Now that I too have heard you, it makes me too say something like this to myself: «What argument will we still trust now? How utterly persuasive the argument was that Socrates was giving, yet now it has been plunged into doubt[11]!»

9 The fact that the suspicion about the validity of Socrates' arguments extends from the immediate audience to the narrators of the *Phaedo*, is widely accepted by Plato scholars – see e.g. DALFEN, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 44; DORTER, *Plato's Phaedo*, op. cit., p. 87; T. EBERT (trans.), *Platon: Phaidon*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2004, p. 301; FREDE, *Platons «Phaidon»*, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

10 Πάντες οὖν ἀκούσαντες εἰπόντων αὐτῶν ἀηδῶς διετέθημεν, ὡς ὕστερον ἐλέγομεν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔμπροσθεν λόγου σφόδρα πεπεισμένους ἡμᾶς πάλιν ἐδόκουν ἀναταράξαι καὶ εἰς ἀπιστίαν καταβαλεῖν οὐ μόνον τοῖς προειρημένοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὰ ὕστερον μέλλοντα ῥηθήσεσθαι, μὴ οὐδενὸς ἄξιοι εἶμεν κριταὶ ἢ καὶ τὰ πράγματα αὐτὰ ἄπιστα ᾖ. The Greek text is quoted from E. A. Duke (ed.), *Platonis opera*, 1, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1995. We use the English translation in SEDLEY and LONG, *Meno and Phaedo*, op. cit.

11 Νὴ τοὺς θεούς, ὦ Φαίδων, συγγνώμην γε ἔχω ὑμῖν· καὶ γὰρ αὐτόν με νῦν ἀκούσαντά σου τοιοῦτόν τι λέγειν πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἐπέρχεται· «Τίνι οὖν ἔτι πιστεύσομεν λόγῳ; ὡς γὰρ σφόδρα πιθανὸς ὤν, ὃν ὁ Σωκράτης ἔλεγε λόγον, νῦν εἰς ἀπιστίαν καταπέπτωκεν.»

The passages quoted above are saturated with terms from the semantic field of πίστις and πειθώ[12]. What is more, the passages in question point to the unpleasant, troubled situation in which the listeners of the conversation are left after becoming aware that Socrates' arguments might not be true. In other words, the passages in 88c1-7 and 88c8-d3 show that a close connection exists between, on the one hand, absence of belief and conviction and, on the other hand, agony or distress felt towards the very situation absence of belief and conviction has brought one into. The reason why this connection exists is that it has to do with the destiny of the human soul after death. Indeed, one of the core constituents of our untroubled relationship to ourselves and to the world we live in consists in the fact that we possess certainty about the destiny of the human soul after bodily death. In the *Phaedo* we can find references to Greek religious beliefs about the soul's destiny in the afterlife, cultural disbelief in the immortality of the soul and Socrates' philosophical attitude, which consists in trying to rationally prove that the soul is immortal. In none of these references is there an indication that some sort of agony or anxiety is likely to arise due to any one of the aforementioned kinds of certainty about the soul's survival after death. The possession of any kind of certainty in this connection (regardless of what the particular content of the certainty is and the specific way in which the certainty was achieved) is, therefore, apparently enough for us to establish and to maintain a peaceful, untroubled relationship to ourselves and to the world. The question whether the content of the aforementioned certainty is important in establishing an unworried, safe relationship to our existential situation should not concern us in detail here. Nevertheless, as the *Phaedo* progresses – as we progressively become aware that upon

12 On the important role played in the *Phaedo* by the notions of πίστις, πειθώ and δόξα, see Dalfen, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., pp. 38, 46; Dorter, *Plato's Phaedo*, op. cit., p. 94. However, we do not think – as Dalfen and Dorter do – that the use of the vocabulary of belief, persuasion and conviction is responsible for the introduction of a subjective-emotional and non-disinterested (non-philosophical) dimension into Socrates' argumentation strategy. For given the limitations of human knowledge – given that human knowledge is not capable of achieving a full grasp of truth (at least in the present life) – any objective-rational and disinterested (philosophical) enquiry must necessarily involve persuasion of (oneself and) others and result in a state of belief and conviction about the thesis one has been persuaded of.

the immortality of the human soul depends not only the meaningfulness of philosophical life but also the meaningfulness of human life as such (insofar as every form of human life possesses a philosophical nature or an inherent relationship to truth) – it turns out that the content of the certainty about the human soul's survival after death is not at all unimportant. If the meaningfulness of philosophical life depends upon the truth that the human soul is immortal, and if every form of human life has a philosophical nature, then the meaningfulness of every form of human life must stand or fall with the truth that the human soul is immortal[13]. To put it another way, the fact or even the possibility that the human soul is not immortal is likely to cause worry and anxiety in the minds of the listeners of Socrates' discussion with his two interlocutors[14]. Indeed, such a fact or such a possibility can profoundly disturb our peaceful (unreflective) relationship to ourselves and to the world. Once we become aware of even the possibility that our soul may not be immortal, our relationship to ourselves and to the world will remain disturbed until it has been proved that the soul is immortal. The confusion and uneasiness felt by the entire audience to Socrates' conversation with Simmias and

13 We should like to argue against the view maintained by R. Woolf, «Misology and Truth», *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 23 (2007) 7: «(…) the dialogue presents what it takes to be a highly attractive picture of immortal souls in communion with everlasting Forms; and that this picture is so vigorously defended, at least in part, because it is such an attractive one.» The immortality of the human soul is not merely an attractive possibility, but rather that upon which the whole meaningfulness of human life is grounded. J. Wood too, in his reply to Woolf, seems to totally miss the point at stake in the *Phaedo*: «(…) Socrates (or Plato) is not advocating an otherworldly escapism in this dialogue, but a certain way of living in the light of exalting and ennobling possibility (…).» (Ibid., pp. 22-23) In fact, the question of the human soul's immortality is fundamentally not that of which form of life is more exalting and ennobling – but that of the truth of the only single fact that can give meaning to human life.

14 Woolf, «Misology and Truth», art. cit., p. 12, recognises that despair might arise should the demonstration(s) of the human soul's immortality be refuted: «It is psychologically plausible that despair about the possibility of having good grounds to believe at all should arise from the undermining not of anything about which we happen to have been persuaded argumentatively, but of the category of conclusions we have found especially attractive or uplifting.» In our view, however, the despair (worry or anxiety) does not arise out of the fact that what is refuted is an attractive or uplifting thesis, but out of the circumstance in which the only single thesis that can make human life meaningful is refuted.

Cebes is caused by the fact that uncertainty about the immortality of the soul amounts to the possibility that the soul is not immortal – and such a possibility is enough to cause one's relationship to oneself and to the world to fall into uneasiness. To put it a bit differently, the confusion and uneasiness felt by the audience of the conversation is produced by the fact that the course of the dialogue changes from a situation in which the immortality of the soul is considered proved into a situation in which uncertainty as to the immortality of the soul prevails. In the *Phaedo* the power of λόγοι to reach truth is assessed in terms of its capacity to prove that the human soul is immortal (and not merely in terms of its ability to determine whether or not the soul is immortal)[15]. If the λόγοι of the *Phaedo* were able to demonstrate that the soul is not immortal, one's trouble and anxiety about one's existential situation would not go away. In the *Phaedo* μισολογία is hatred of argument insofar as hatred of argument is caused by the (at least momentary) inability of λόγοι to indisputably demonstrate that the soul is immortal.

The central role played in human life by one's conviction that one's soul is immortal can be seen through Echechrates' curiosity about how Socrates handled his two companions' arguments and whether he did this in an adequate fashion:

> So for heaven's sake tell me how Socrates pursued the argument. Was he too at all noticeably upset, as you say the rest of you were, or did he instead come calmly to the argument's rescue? And was his help sufficient, or inadequate? Please go through everything for us as accurately as you can[16].

Echechrates' curiosity is not a disinterested one. Echechrates is seeking to find out how Socrates dealt with a couple of objections which shook the

15 We agree with Woolf («Misology and Truth», art. cit., pp. 5-6, 9) that Socrates' position is ideological – however, in the sense that in the *Phaedo* Socrates does not intend to rescue all arguments from the dangers of misology, but only those in favour of human soul's immortality.

16 88d8-e4: λέγε οὖν πρὸς Διὸς πῇ ὁ Σωκράτης μετῆλθε τὸν λόγον; καὶ πότερον κἀκεῖνος, ὥσπερ ὑμᾶς φῄς, ἔνδηλός τι ἐγένετο ἀχθόμενος ἢ οὔ, ἀλλὰ πρᾴως ἐβοήθει τῷ λόγῳ; καὶ ἱκανῶς ἐβοήθησεν ἢ ἐνδεῶς; πάντα ἡμῖν δίελθε ὡς δύνασαι ἀκριβέστατα.

conviction that the soul is immortal – that is, a conviction upon which Echechrates' untroubled relationship to his own existential situation depends. The passage quoted makes clear that the question at issue is so decisive for how one is existentially situated that Echechrates is not at all interested in a demonstration of the human soul's immortality regardless of the truth of such a demonstration. Echechrates is interested in knowing not only whether or not a demonstration of the human soul's immortality has been achieved, but also whether or not it has been achieved by means of an adequate procedure. We can extend Echechrates' interest in Socrates' response to his friends' objections in exactly the same terms to all listeners of their exchange of arguments.

§2. The Peculiarity of Socrates' Stance

On What Should Be Mourned. The Transindividuality of λόγοι. The Perfectibility of λόγοι.

Of course, Socrates too is interested in the outcome of the whole discussion on the immortality of the human soul. This issue is as fundamental for Socrates as it is for all the listeners of the debate in course. However, Socrates is in a peculiar situation. Socrates' untroubled relationship to his existential situation depends upon the outcome of a «journey» in which he acts as the main guide. To put it in other words, to the extent that in the *Phaedo* (as in the majority of the Platonic dialogues) it is Socrates who leads the discussion, Socrates is responsible for the untroubledness not only of his relationship to his existential situation but also of that of the listeners of the conversation. Therefore, Socrates should be at least as confused and troubled as the rest of the audience. Nevertheless, Socrates is depicted as calmly reacting to the uneasiness of the situation. Socrates' state of mind before the difficulties his first arguments in favour of the immortality of the human soul fall into, is beautifully expressed in Phaedo's answer to Echechrates' question:

> Well, Echecrates, I'd often admired Socrates, but I never respected him more than when I was with him then. Now

> perhaps there is nothing surprising in his having something to say. But I particularly admired in him first how pleasantly, genially and respectfully he took in the young men's argument, then how discerningly he noticed the effect the arguments had had on us, and next how well he cured us and rallied us when we'd taken to our heels in defeat, so to speak, and spurred us on to follow at his side and consider the argument with him[17].

Phaedo is completely amazed at Socrates' attitude towards such a worrying situation. Phaedo is more amazed with Socrates than he has ever been amazed with him before. In the passage quoted Phaedo lets us know exactly what the causes of his perplexity towards Socrates are. Phaedo is astonished by

i) Socrates' serenity in such a stressful situation;
ii) Socrates' perspicacity in understanding how confused and troubled his companions are after his first three arguments are put in jeopardy;
iii) Socrates' respectful attitude towards his friends' state of mind;
iv) Socrates' ability to adequately respond to the challenge of curing his friends from a dangerous disease later called μισολογία.

Phaedo's astonishment towards Socrates' reaction is not difficult to understand. How can Socrates be so calm and lucid in the face of such a tremendous possibility: that the immortality of the human soul is not rationally verifiable and consequently every form of human life might be simply meaningless? However, Socrates' calmness and lucidity are not due to the fact that he is already in possession of a rationally

17 88e5-89a8: Καὶ μήν, ὦ Ἐχέκρατες, πολλάκις θαυμάσας Σωκράτη οὐ πώποτε μᾶλλον ἠγάσθην ἢ τότε παραγενόμενος. τὸ μὲν οὖν ἔχειν ὅτι λέγοι ἐκεῖνος ἴσως οὐδὲν ἄτοπον· ἀλλὰ ἔγωγε μάλιστα ἐθαύμασα αὐτοῦ πρῶτον μὲν τοῦτο, ὡς ἡδέως καὶ εὐμενῶς καὶ ἀγαμένως τῶν νεανίσκων τὸν λόγον ἀπεδέξατο, ἔπειτα ἡμῶν ὡς ὀξέως ᾔσθετο ὃ ᾽πεπόνθεμεν ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων, ἔπειτα ὡς εὖ ἡμᾶς ἰάσατο καὶ ὥσπερ πεφευγότας καὶ ἡττημένους ἀνεκαλέσατο καὶ προύτρεψεν πρὸς τὸ παρέπεσθαί τε καὶ συσκοπεῖν τὸν λόγον.

valid demonstration of the human soul's immortality which he has not yet presented. In fact, Socrates is in a similar situation to that of his listeners. The possibility that the human soul is immortal and human life is meaningless has had an enormous impact on Socrates' relationship to his existential situation, too. In truth, Socrates' situation is even more stressful than that of his companions. Socrates will not live much longer, and the meaningfulness of his whole life depends on finding a rationally valid demonstration of the human soul's immortality. In spite of the fact that his first three arguments are put into question, Socrates remains calm and lucid, because he maintains his confidence in the capacity of rational argumentation to reach the truth about the human soul's immortality, that is, to demonstrate that the human soul is immortal. Phaedo's depiction of Socrates' attitude towards the present uncertainty about what the destiny of the human soul after death is intends to present Socrates as the φιλόλογος κατ' ἐξοχήν – as one who above all others remains confident in the power of λόγοι as the single means by which every form of human life might not have been conducted in vain. Phaedo's words quoted above draw a picture of what the right stance towards the danger of μισολογία is, even before we have become acquainted with Socrates' explanation of the nature and causes of this perilous disease.

After having drawn this sort of romantic picture of Socrates, Phaedo refers to Socrates' affectionate gesture towards him (89a10-b4). At the time when Socrates' conversation with his friends took place, Phaedo had grown long hair. After giving Phaedo's head a stroke and squeezing the hair on Phaedo's neck (89b2-3), Socrates addressed him with a few, significant words. Through Socrates' address to Phaedo, we understand that Phaedo has decided to cut his hair the following day as a sign of mourning for Socrates' imminent death[18]. Socrates says to Phaedo that he should not wait for the next day to cut his hair. Should he and Phaedo not be able to bring the λόγοι in favour of the immortality of the human soul back to life, they should rather both cut their hair today:

> «So tomorrow, Phaedo, I expect you'll cut off these beautiful locks.» «I suppose so, Socrates», I said. «You won't, if you

18 On this topic, see FREDE, *Platons «Phaidon»*, op. cit., p. 86.

> follow my advice.» «What then?» «I'll cut off my locks», he said, «and you'll cut off these ones today – if our argument dies and we can't revive it[19].»

According to this passage, Phaedo's mourning should be directed not towards Socrates' imminent death but rather towards the λόγοι in favour of human soul's immortality being dead. In the passage quoted Socrates suggests that the λόγοι in question are much more important than himself in terms of rationally proving that the human soul is immortal and human life is therefore meaningful. The lack of power to rationally prove the immortality of the human soul and the meaningfulness of human life as such is what really deserves to be mourned (not Socrates as an individual person). What is more, mourning for the death of the λόγοι at issue is much more urgent than mourning for Socrates' imminent death, for these λόγοι (or rather, the confidence Socrates' companions have in them) are already dying. What really matters now is to bring these λόγοι (or rather, the confidence Socrates' companions have in them) to life again.

However, the power of arguments to attain a rational demonstration of the immortality of the human soul should not be considered a value in itself. Such arguments (in fact, all arguments) should not be deemed worthy of being searched for, if they are to remain detached from a desirable impact on the course of human life[20]. Socrates' address to Phaedo

19 89b4-c1: (...) Αὔριον δή, ἔφη, ἴσως, ὦ Φαίδων, τὰς καλὰς ταύτας κόμας ἀποκερῇ. Ἔοικεν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Σώκρατες. Οὔκ, ἄν γε ἐμοὶ πείθῃ. Ἀλλὰ τί; ἦν δ' ἐγώ. Τήμερον, ἔφη, κἀγὼ τὰς ἐμὰς καὶ σὺ ταύτας, ἐάνπερ γε ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τελευτήσῃ καὶ μὴ δυνώμεθα αὐτὸν ἀναβιώσασθαι.

20 In this light, Dalfen's («Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 39) distinction between the pragmatic and the dramatic level of the *Phaedo* is too sharp: «Der Dialog hat eine pragmatische und eine dramatische Ebene. Auf der pragmatischen liegt die Sache, die von den Personen gesprochen wird, auf der dramatischen das Verhalten der Personen der Sache und den Gesprächspartnern gegenüber, ihre Aktionen und Interaktionen.» From our point of view, there would not have been any discussion on the immortality of the human soul in the *Phaedo*, if there had not in the first place been a personal relationship of the interlocutors in the dialogue to the subject of human soul's immortality. Woolf («Misology and Truth», art. cit., p. 10) rightly points out that enquiry into truth must have a motivational basis in order to take place: «Truth as a merely formal end seems too thin (from a psychological point of view) to get enquiry going. Aristotle tells us that we all desire to know. But he would be happy to admit that most of us have no desire to know (for example) the exact number of hairs

in 89b4-c1 implies that saving the power of arguments to rationally prove the immortality of the human soul is more fundamental to human life as such than love for (and the reputation of) each individual person – even if that person is Socrates. Nevertheless, this does not mean that rational arguments for the immortality of the human soul should be saved for their own sake. Instead, it means that such rational arguments are more important than any given individual person, because they should serve the lives of all currently existing human beings as well as the lives of all human beings who might exist in the near or distant future. To state it very briefly, the value of such arguments transcends the value of the life of every individual person; it is, so to speak, transindividual. What is more, such arguments should be true; that is to say, they should be developed according to the rules of rational argumentation[21]. Therefore, the transindividuality of the arguments at issue also has to do with the fact that they should be true arguments. In other words, one should not adopt the thesis about the question of the human soul's immortality which best suits one's individual selfish interest, regardless of the truth value of that thesis and of whether that thesis is the outcome of a rigorous rational procedure[22].

on one's head. Such cases suffice to indicate that "truth for its own sake" is, in itself, a dubious motivation and may not be all there is to Socrates' conception of being philosophical. To care simply that one reaches truth, whatever it may be, is to be disinterested as to outcome. But what motivates is something about the putative object of enquiry – some aspect (or perceived aspect) that strikes us as fascinating, mysterious or noble. After all, in other parts of the *Phaedo,* not to mention the *Republic* and elsewhere, being a philosopher is intimately connected with having and pursuing a certain definite and purportedly inspiring, vision of reality.» However, Woolf's conception of the kind of truth one is motivated to search for is weak. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates and his companions are not in search of a fascinating, mysterious or noble truth. Instead, they are looking for a meaning-giving truth (and therefore a reassuring one). A few sentences later, Woolf (ibid., pp. 10-11) maintains that «The truths one is motivated to seek for their own sake need not be ones whose discovery one expects to welcome, but they must at minimum be ones whose content or subject-matter one has some concern with.» However, he leaves the nature of that concern indeterminate. The problem is that the identification of the nature of such concern is crucial to understanding what is fundamentally at stake in the *Phaedo*.

21 For a summary of the rules rational argumentation should follow see JACQUETTE, «The Moral Mischief of Misology», art. cit., p. 2.

22 On falseness and illusion as possible consequences of enquiries into truth which are motivated by one's individual selfish interest, see DALFEN, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 38; FREDE, *Platons «Phaidon»*, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

Near the end of the section on μισολογία (91b7-c6), Socrates insists on this same idea of transindividuality, but in much more precise terms:

> This then, Simmias and Cebes, is the baggage I bring with me when approaching the argument. But as for you, if you take my advice, you'll give little thought to Socrates and much more to the truth: if you think I say something true, agree with me, and if not, use every argument to resist me, making sure that my eagerness doesn't make me deceive myself and you simultaneously, and that I don't leave my sting in you, like a bee, before I depart[23].

In this passage Socrates explicitly says that ἀλήθεια is what one should really give thought to. Furthermore, Socrates refers to the procedure that should be followed in order for one not to deceive oneself and others as to the truth of the arguments for the human soul's immortality. According to Socrates, the right procedure to be applied to the discussion of the arguments for the immortality of the human soul, assuring the rationality of this discussion, consists in

i) the exposition of arguments for the immortality of the human soul,
ii) agreement with these arguments on the part of the interlocutors, if they find the arguments at issue true,
or iii) resistance to these arguments on the part of the interlocutors, if they find the arguments in question false.

The dialogical preconditions for rationality and truth now expounded, which should be complied with in order for the immortality of the human soul to be adequately proved, constitute the preconditions for the rationality and truth of Socrates' arguments against μισολογία, too.

23 παρεσκευασμένος δή, ἔφη, ὦ Σιμμία τε καὶ Κέβης, οὑτωσὶ ἔρχομαι ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον· ὑμεῖς μέντοι, ἂν ἐμοὶ πείθησθε, σμικρὸν φροντίσαντες Σωκράτους, τῆς δὲ ἀληθείας πολὺ μᾶλλον, ἐὰν μέν τι ὑμῖν δοκῶ ἀληθὲς λέγειν, συνομολογήσατε, εἰ δὲ μή, παντὶ λόγῳ ἀντιτείνετε, εὐλαβούμενοι ὅπως μὴ ἐγὼ ὑπὸ προθυμίας ἅμα ἐμαυτόν τε καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσας, ὥσπερ μέλιττα τὸ κέντρον ἐγκαταλιπὼν οἰχήσομαι.

As we have seen above, Socrates is in a peculiar situation. By arguing in favour of the immortality of the human soul, Socrates is trying to make sense of philosophy (his lifelong activity). However, to the extent that Socrates is a sort of mentor for his companions, he feels himself responsible for them. Socrates wishes his friends' confidence in rational argumentation for the human soul's immortality does not die in their hearts. To understand in more precise terms how Socrates conceives of his responsibility towards his friends is decisive for our purpose here. For the way in which Socrates sees himself as responsible for the meaningfulness of his friends' lives will reveal what the status of Socrates' statements against μισολογία towards the λόγοι for the immortality of the human soul is and how Socrates' friends should hear these statements. The relevant passage in this respect is 91a3-b3:

> For when they [sc. those who are fond of victory] are at odds about something, they also do not care about the facts of the matter they are arguing about, but strive to make what they themselves have proposed seem true to those who are present. And I think that now I will differ from them only to this extent: I won't strive to make what I say seem true to those who are present, except as a by product, but instead to make it seem so as much as possible to myself. For I reckon, my dear friend – see how ambitious I'm being – that if what I'm saying is actually true, then it's quite right to be convinced (…)[24].

Socrates' words in this passage are quite odd. For Socrates' position here seems to contradict what we said above about Socrates' responsibility for the meaningfulness of his companions' lives. Socrates says, namely, that he is worried only about convincing himself of the truth of his own statements. Of course, it may happen that in the process of convincing

24 καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι [sc. οἱ φιλόνικοι] ὅταν περί του ἀμφισβητῶσιν, ὅπῃ μὲν ἔχει περὶ ὧν ἂν ὁ λόγος ᾖ οὐ φροντίζουσιν, ὅπως δὲ ἃ αὐτοὶ ἔθεντο ταῦτα δόξει τοῖς παροῦσιν, τοῦτο προθυμοῦνται. καὶ ἐγώ μοι δοκῶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι τοσοῦτον μόνον ἐκείνων διοίσειν· οὐ γὰρ ὅπως τοῖς παροῦσιν ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω δόξει ἀληθῆ εἶναι προθυμήσομαι, εἰ μὴ εἴη πάρεργον, ἀλλ' ὅπως αὐτῷ ἐμοὶ ὅτι μάλιστα δόξει οὕτως ἔχειν· λογίζομαι γάρ, ὦ φίλε ἑταῖρε – θέασαι ὡς πλεονεκτικῶς – εἰ μὲν τυγχάνει ἀληθῆ ὄντα ἃ λέγω, καλῶς δὴ ἔχει τὸ πεισθῆναι (…).

himself Socrates also convinces his friends that what he is saying is true – but, as Socrates himself indicates, this would be merely a by-product of his convincing himself about the truth of his own statements. However, we should not take Socrates' position at face value. First, as readers of Plato's dialogues, we should be well aware that Socrates is most conscious of the limitations of direct communication. Therefore, we should not expect Socrates to assume the responsibility for the meaningfulness of his companions' lives by directly communicating to them perfect demonstrations of the immortality of the human soul and objective rules of conduct against μισολογία. Secondly, we should bear in mind that Socrates is responsible for the meaningfulness of his own life too – that is to say, for demonstrating to himself that the human soul is immortal and μισολογία is dangerous when it comes to conducting a meaningful human life. In this connection, Socrates does not experience a problem of communication – but rather of internal clarification of his own λόγοι for the immortality of the human soul. If, on the one hand, direct communication to others with respect to the immortality of the human soul and the dangers of μισολογία is not possible, on the other hand, internal clarification of one's own λόγοι for the immortality of the human soul and against μισολογία is difficult and complex – but in principle possible. Therefore, there seems to be only one way for Socrates to assume responsibility for both the meaningfulness of his own life and the meaningfulness of his companions' lives – namely, to devote himself to the task of achieving internal clarification of his own λόγοι for the immortality of the soul and against μισολογία, and to share the outcome of this internal clarification with his companions by discussing the truth value of its outcome with them. Socrates' friends should in turn open themselves up to Socrates' argumentation and try to find out for themselves whether or not Socrates' argumentation is true. For the only way for one to achieve rational clarity in one's own life and in one's own existential situation is through either an individual search for such clarity or the clarifying effect of a joint discussion about one's own personal life. In sum, Socrates assumes responsibility for the meaningfulness of the lives of his companions by sharing and discussing with them his arguments for the immortality of the human soul and against μισολογία. Socrates' friends will in turn have the possibility of making sense of their lives and

protecting themselves against μισολογία, should they open themselves critically to Socrates' discussion of his arguments with them. In the end, according to Socrates (or at least, according to Plato in the *Phaedo*) to prove the immortality of the human soul and to fight against μισολογία (in short, to make sense of one's life) is always an individual enterprise.

The passage in 91a3-b3 is important in yet another respect. Socrates uses the notion of δοκεῖν or δόξα in it in two different senses:

i) δοκεῖν or δόξα in the sense of «illusion» («appearance of something being true, when in fact it is not»);
ii) δοκεῖν or δόξα in the sense of «truth insofar as it appears to one» («truth as a mode of being of what appears to one»)[25].

The two different uses of δοκεῖν or δόξα should not concern us here in detail. We should like to point to one single aspect of δοκεῖν or δόξα in the second sense referred to above – namely, the fact that δοκεῖν or δόξα defines the peculiarity of the human condition with respect to access to truth. The notion of δοκεῖν or δόξα in the second sense (and to the extent that it defines the human condition in terms of knowledge capacity) indicates that human access to truth is always limited and partial – and therefore always perfectible. As we shall see more clearly below, the notion of δοκεῖν or δόξα in the second sense plays a central role in terms of understanding the particular lack of τέχνη concerning the very status of λόγοι for the immortality of the human soul, which Socrates deems the real cause of μισολογία. Furthermore, the notion of δοκεῖν or δόξα in the second sense characterises the knowledge limitations (the knowledge partiality) both Socrates and his friends are suffering from when they are discussing the immortality of the human soul and the dangers of μισολογία. To state it very briefly, Socrates' and his friends' λόγοι about the question of the immortality of the human soul and the perils of μισολογία are not the final word on the matter. In sum, their λόγοι are perfectible – both in the sense that they are able to achieve greater clarity on the matters at issue, and in the sense that they are capable of better defending themselves against objections which may call them into question in the future.

25 On the positive sense of δοκεῖν or δόξα in the *Phaedo*, see DALFEN, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 50.

§3. The Analogy between μισολογία and μισανθρωπία

The Cause of μισανθρωπία. The Experience Involved in Both μισολογία and μισανθρωπία. The Difference between μισολογία and μισανθρωπία: The Cause of μισολογία.

In 89c11-89e3 Socrates draws an analogy between μισολογία and μισανθρωπία («hatred of argument» and «hatred of man»):

> «But first let's make sure that a certain thing doesn't happen to us.» «What sort of thing?» I asked. «Becoming haters of arguments», he said, «like those who come to hate people. Because there's no greater evil that could happen to one than hating arguments. Hating arguments and hating people come about in the same way. For misanthropy sets in as a result of putting all one's trust in someone and doing so without expertise, and taking the person to be entirely truthful, sound and trustworthy, and then a little later finding him to be wicked and untrustworthy – and then again with someone else. When this happens to someone many times, particularly with those whom he would take to be his very closest friends, and he has been falling out with people again and again, he ends up hating everyone and thinking that there is nothing sound in anyone at all[26].»

According to Socrates, μισολογία and μισανθρωπία are born in the same way. Socrates establishes an analogy between μισολογία and μισανθρωπία

26 ἀλλὰ πρῶτον εὐλαβηθῶμέν τι πάθος μὴ πάθωμεν· Τὸ ποῖον; ἦν δ' ἐγώ· Μὴ γενώμεθα, ἦ δ' ὅς, μισόλογοι, ὥσπερ οἱ μισάνθρωποι γιγνόμενοι· ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν, ἔφη, ὅτι ἄν τις μεῖζον τούτου κακὸν πάθοι ἢ λόγους μισήσας· γίγνεται δὲ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τρόπου μισολογία τε καὶ μισανθρωπία· ἥ τε γὰρ μισανθρωπία ἐνδύεται ἐκ τοῦ σφόδρα τινὶ πιστεῦσαι ἄνευ τέχνης, καὶ ἡγήσασθαι παντάπασί γε ἀληθῆ εἶναι καὶ ὑγιῆ καὶ πιστὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἔπειτα ὀλίγον ὕστερον εὑρεῖν τοῦτον πονηρόν τε καὶ ἄπιστον, καὶ αὖθις ἕτερον· καὶ ὅταν τοῦτο πολλάκις πάθῃ τις καὶ ὑπὸ τούτων μάλιστα οὓς ἂν ἡγήσαιτο οἰκειοτάτους τε καὶ ἑταιροτάτους, τελευτῶν δὴ θαμὰ προσκρούων μισεῖ τε πάντας καὶ ἡγεῖται οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς εἶναι τὸ παράπαν·

in terms of their γένεσις («generation» or «coming-to-be»). First of all, Socrates tries to give an account of how μισανθρωπία arises. Μισανθρωπία – Socrates says – arises out of

i) an exaggerated, inexperienced belief in someone's truthfulness and trustworthiness;
ii) a subsequent revelation that it is in fact the exact opposite which is true – that the person whose truthfulness and trustworthiness one believed in is in fact a wicked and unworthy person;
iii) the frequency with which the belief in someone's truthfulness and trustworthiness changes into its exact opposite – into disbelief in such person's truthfulness and trustworthiness;
iv) the fact that this also happens with one's closest friends;
v) a sort of induction – the result of which is that one ends up hating everyone else for their supposedly false truthfulness and trustworthiness (for their supposedly unsound nature and character).

Next, Socrates focuses on what he takes to be the real cause of μισανθρωπία – the αἰτία that unleashes the whole process constituting misanthropy referred to above:

> «Now this is deplorable«, he said, «and obviously someone like that was trying to deal with people without having expertise in human qualities, wasn't he? For surely if he had been doing so with expertise he'd have viewed matters as they really are: he would have recognized that both the very good and the very wicked are few in number, and that those in between are the most numerous[27].»

27 89e6-90a2: Οὐκοῦν, ἦ δ' ὅς, αἰσχρόν, καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ἄνευ τέχνης τῆς περὶ τἀνθρώπεια ὁ τοιοῦτος χρῆσθαι ἐπεχείρει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; εἰ γάρ που μετὰ τέχνης ἐχρῆτο, ὥσπερ ἔχει οὕτως ἂν ἡγήσατο, τοὺς μὲν χρηστοὺς καὶ πονηροὺς σφόδρα ὀλίγους εἶναι ἑκατέρους, τοὺς δὲ μεταξὺ πλείστους.

According to Socrates in this passage, the real cause of μισανθρωπία consists in a lack of τέχνη on the part of the μισάνθρωποι – namely, a τέχνη concerning τὰνθρώπεια («human qualities» or «human affairs»)[28]. What kind of skill concerning human qualities or affairs is at stake here? Socrates indicates that the lack of τέχνη at issue here corresponds to a lack of insight into the nature and character of human beings – into how human qualities are distributed among human beings. Men are liable to become μισάνθρωποι when they are unable to see the difference between the nature and character of the great majority of human beings, on the one hand, and the nature and character of a very little minority of human beings, on the other. According to Socrates, only very few men can be adequately labelled either very good or very wicked. The majority of men are – as Socrates states – situated in between the very good and the very bad. Socrates' words suggest that the majority of men are both good and bad – that they have a mixed nature or character. The misanthropist's lack of τέχνη («skill» or «insight») has to do with his mixing up what is a feature of only a very few men – namely, extreme goodness – with the nature and character of mankind as such. Men can become misanthropists because they attribute to all human beings what is a characteristic of only a few – because all human beings appear to them to be extremely good (when in fact they are not). To put it slightly differently, men can become misanthropists because their perspective or point of view is usually dominated by δοκεῖν or δόξα in the first sense (in the sense of «illusion» or «appearance of something being true when in fact it is not») as to what human nature or character as such is.

In 90b4-9, Socrates completes his analogy between μισολογία and μισανθρωπία:

> «All the same, arguments do not resemble people in that way (I was following your lead just now), but in the following way: when someone without expertise in arguments trusts an argument to be true, and then a little later thinks that it is false, sometimes when it is, sometimes when it isn't,

28 On the subject of lack of τέχνη in the misology section of the *Phaedo*, see Dorter, *Plato's Phaedo*, op. cit., p. 92; Ebert, *Platon: Phaidon*, op. cit., pp. 302-303; Woolf, «Misology and Truth», art. cit., p. 3.

> and when he does the same again with one argument after another[29].»

In the passage quoted Socrates begins by pointing to the fact that a difference exists between misology and misanthropy. Only after this does Socrates finish his analogy between misology and misanthropy, which he begins in 89d1. However, for the sake of convenience, we will proceed in the reverse order. First of all, we will call attention to the similarities between the process constituting μισολογία and that constituting μισανθρωπία. Thereafter, we will focus on the difference between the two phenomena, which Socrates refers to at the beginning of 90b4-9.

Socrates' account of the process constituting μισολογία in the context of the aforementioned analogy is not difficult to pin down in the light of what we have already pointed out above with respect to the process constituting μισανθρωπία. According to Socrates in 90b4-9, μισολογία arises out of

i) a lack of τέχνη with respect to λόγοι;
ii) a switch from the belief that a given argument is true to the belief that it is in fact false – due to the aforementioned lack of τέχνη;
iii) the fact that such a switch is sometimes justified and sometimes not;
iv) the frequency with which such a switch occurs – and on the basis of which μισόλογοι form the conviction that no argument is trustful.

The several stages in the process constituting misology, which Socrates points out in 90b4-9, are very similar to those which he already indicated in 89c11-e3 with respect to misanthropy. The only significant difference between the two accounts is that in the case of the process constituting misology the disbelief in the truth of the argument under scrutiny is only

29 ἀλλὰ ταύτῃ μὲν οὐχ ὅμοιοι οἱ λόγοι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ σοῦ νυνδὴ προάγοντος ἐγὼ ἐφεσπόμην, ἀλλ' ἐκείνῃ, ᾗ, ἐπειδάν τις πιστεύσῃ λόγῳ τινὶ ἀληθεῖ εἶναι ἄνευ τῆς περὶ τοὺς λόγους τέχνης, κἄπειτα ὀλίγον ὕστερον αὐτῷ δόξῃ ψευδὴς εἶναι, ἐνίοτε μὲν ὤν, ἐνίοτε δ' οὐκ ὤν, καὶ αὖθις ἕτερος καὶ ἕτερος (...).

sometimes justified. However, the existence of this difference between the two accounts does not mean that they are essentially different insofar as they are accounts of the similarity between the experience of misanthropy and that of misology. In both cases a transition occurs from a positive experience, which is that of the truthfulness of a given person or the truth of a given argument, to a negative experience, which is that of the untruthfulness of that same person or the untruth of that same argument. In other words, both in the case of misanthropy and in the case of misology, disbelief and disappointment arise in one's mind.

Now let us see what the difference between the two constituting processes is. In the beginning of 90b4-9, Socrates stated that arguments are not like people in a certain respect. According to Socrates, arguments do not have a mixed nature or character. In other terms, they are not true and false at the same time. Instead, they are either true or false[30]. Socrates' statement implies that the transition referred to above (that is, the transition from the positive experience of belief in the truth of an argument to the negative experience of disbelief in the truth of that same argument) is caused not by the argument itself – for the argument is either always true or always false (not true and false at the same time) – but by the very person who examines the truth or falseness of the argument.

In 90b4-9 Socrates merely states that arguments differ from people – although already suggesting that arguments are different from people because they do not possess a mixed nature or character. Nevertheless, we have to wait for the passage in 90c8-d7 in order to have access to Socrates' full account of the αἰτία of μισολογία:

> «Now, Phaedo«, he said, «it would be a lamentable fate if there really were some true and firm argument that could be understood, and yet from associating with arguments of another sort – the very same ones seeming true at some times but not at others – someone were to blame not himself or his own lack of expertise, but instead because of his agitation were to end up gratefully transferring the blame from himself to the arguments, and from that point

30 The difference has already been pointed out by *Phaedo* scholars – see Ebert, *Platon: Phaidon*, op. cit., p. 301; Frede, *Platons «Phaidon»*, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

> to spend the rest of his life hating and belittling arguments, deprived of both truth and knowledge about things[31].»

In this passage Socrates describes the experience of transition illustrated above, in quite the same terms as Phaedo and Echechrates in 88c1-7 and 88c8-d3 – namely, as an experience of hesitation, oscillation, confusion or loss as to what the truth value of a given argument is. According to 90c8-d7, the experience due to which one might become a misologist is the experience both of a transition from the belief in the truth of a given argument to the disbelief in the truth of that same argument and of a transition from the disbelief in the truth of a given argument to the belief in the truth of that same argument. In short, it is the experience of a back-and-forth movement of perspective as to what the truth value of a given argument is. Therefore, the experience because of which one might become a misologist is not the experience of the universal falseness of arguments. Instead, it is the experience of the instability of the way in which the truth value of arguments appears to one. As we can see, the experience out of which μισολογία might arise has to do with the fact that a human perspective is usually dominated by δοκεῖν or δόξα – that is to say, by the fact that a human assessment of the truth value of arguments is

i) always dependent upon how the truth value of arguments appears to the human subject and
ii) always determined by the limitations or partiality of that appearance in terms of adequate and full knowledge of the truth value of the arguments which appear to a human subject.

Socrates' account of the experience of the instability of the truth value of arguments by means of the notion of δοκεῖν or δόξα makes clear that

31 Οὐκοῦν, ὦ Φαίδων, ἔφη, οἰκτρὸν ἂν εἴη τὸ πάθος, εἰ ὄντος δή τινος ἀληθοῦς καὶ βεβαίου λόγου καὶ δυνατοῦ κατανοῆσαι, ἔπειτα διὰ τὸ παραγίγνεσθαι τοιούτοις τισὶ λόγοις, τοῖς αὐτοῖς τοτὲ μὲν δοκοῦσιν ἀληθέσιν εἶναι, τοτὲ δὲ μή, μὴ ἑαυτόν τις αἰτιῷτο μηδὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀτεχνίαν, ἀλλὰ τελευτῶν διὰ τὸ ἀλγεῖν ἄσμενος ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν ἀπώσαιτο καὶ ἤδη τὸν λοιπὸν βίον μισῶντε καὶ λοιδορῶν τοὺς λόγους διατελοῖ, τῶν δὲ ὄντων τῆς ἀληθείας τε καὶ ἐπιστήμης στερηθείη.

the two different senses of δοκεῖν or δόξα can be combined in a unified and coherent explanation of the terms. For the experience of truth as appearance (that is, as a limited and partial access to truth) may turn out to be the experience of an illusion (that is, of the appearance of a given argument as true, when in fact it is false – or vice versa).

According to Socrates in 90c8-d7, the real cause of μισολογία has to do with the fact that a μισόλογος blames arguments – not himself – for the instability of the way in which the truth value of arguments appears to him. However, Socrates says that at the very heart of the coming-to-be of μισολογία lies an error on the part of the μισόλογος. A μισόλογος should blame himself – not arguments – for the instability of how the truth value of arguments appears to him. Socrates adds that a μισόλογος makes this mistake because he lacks τέχνη with respect to the nature and character of arguments. A μισόλογος would know that arguments do not suffer from instability as regards their real truth value, if he were a τεχνίτης with respect to the nature and character of arguments. In 90c8-d7 Socrates suggests that a μισόλογος also lacks τέχνη with respect to the nature and character of human knowledge. Socrates' words in 90c8-d7 imply that if a μισόλογος were a τεχνίτης with respect to the nature and character of human knowledge, he would be aware of the fact that it is human knowledge (to the extent that it is usually impregnated with δοκεῖν or δόξα) which is in fact unstable. Socrates' advice is that human beings should strive to know not only the nature and character of arguments, but also the nature and character of their own knowledge capacity, in order to not become μισόλογοι. Given the intrinsic correlation between the truth value of arguments and the human subject to which the truth value of arguments appears, human beings cannot become real τεχνίται as regards the nature and character of arguments, without at the same time becoming τεχνίται as regards the nature and character of human knowledge, and vice versa.

§4. The Nature of Socrates' Advice

The Meaning of ἀνδρεία in the Context of Socrates' Advice. Λόγοι As the οὗ ἕνεκα of Life. Conclusion: The Possibility of ἄνοια

Now that we have illustrated Socrates' account of what the real cause of μισολογία is, we should take a closer look into the nature of Socrates' advice to his friends against μισολογία. In 90d9-91a1 Socrates gives his companions the following instructions:

> «So first let's make sure we avoid this«, he said, «and let's not allow into our soul the notion that there's probably nothing sound in arguments. It will be much better to assume that we are not sound yet, but must make a manly effort to be sound. You and the others should do this for the sake of your whole life to come, but I for the sake of my death considered in its own right (…)[32].»

Socrates' advice to his friends in this passage contains both a reference to the content of the advice and a reference to the way in which Socrates' friends should open themselves to his advice and follow it. As to the content of Socrates' advice, the passage quoted reminds us of

i) the need to avoid giving way to μισολογία (that is, to the conviction that there is nothing sound in arguments);
ii) the need to recognise that we (not the arguments) are the ones to blame for the very arising of μισολογία – in other terms, that we and our knowledge capacity (not the arguments themselves) are unsound;
iii) the fact that the meaning and purpose of one's life and death depend upon the recognition of the two previous points.

32 Πρῶτον μὲν τοίνυν, ἔφη, τοῦτο εὐλαβηθῶμεν, καὶ μὴ παρίωμεν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ὡς τῶν λόγων κινδυνεύει οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς εἶναι, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὔπω ὑγιῶς ἔχομεν, ἀλλὰ ἀνδριστέον καὶ προθυμητέον ὑγιῶς ἔχειν, σοὶ μὲν οὖν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ τοῦ ἔπειτα βίου παντὸς ἕνεκα, ἐμοὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα τοῦ θανάτου (…).

As to how Socrates' companions should open themselves to his advice and follow it, the passage in 90d10-91a1 calls our attention to two significant points, which we have not dealt with here yet. First, it raises the question of the right attitude to adopt against μισολογία in terms of soundness of mind. Secondly, it equates such an attitude with a courageous or manly effort to achieve soundness of mind with respect to arguments. The fact that Socrates is now presenting the question in this way means that he conceives of the need to acquire τέχνη with respect to the nature and character of arguments and human knowledge in terms of the preservation of one's safeness in life (and death). For the notion of ὑγίεια or ὑγιής involves both the idea of soundness (in the sense that something is functioning well) and that of safeness (in the sense of the state or condition in which one is free from the danger of becoming at a loss or falling into despair). A close connection exists between the two ideas involved in the notion of ὑγίεια or ὑγιής – at least as far as the *Phaedo* (in particular, the section on μισολογία) is concerned. To state it briefly, the soundness of a man's soul is that which is capable of preserving that man's safeness in life (and death). To state it in more precise terms, in 90d10-91a1 Socrates is pointing to the fact that to be aware of the nature of arguments and human knowledge, and to strive to overcome the limitations of human knowledge as regards the truth value of arguments – that is, to become a τεχνίτης (one who possesses a sound mind) in this respect – is what is really capable of preserving life (and the soul's afterlife) from despair. According to Socrates in 90d10-91a1, such soundness of mind and safeness in life is what one should strive for in a courageous or manly fashion.

How should we understand Socrates' reference to the notion of ἀνδρεία (cf. 90e3: ἀνδριστέον)? What does ἀνδρεία mean in 90d10-91a1? If one's belief in arguments – especially, in Socrates' arguments in favour of the immortality of the soul and against μισολογία – depends upon ἀνδρεία («courage» or «manliness»), then it seems that one's belief in these arguments can only be restored by means of a sort of emotional response against μισολογία (not by means of rational argumentation). In this case, the acceptance of Socrates' entire argumentation in the *Phaedo* (and a fortiori in the section on μισολογία) is dependent upon his

companions' emotional response to his emotional incentive[33]. In short, it is all fundamentally a matter of non-rational persuasion (on Socrates' part) and non-rational choice (on the part of Socrates' companions)[34].

Of course, this is one way of trying to answer the question about what makes Socrates' persuasion of his companions possible. However, a problem arises out of this conception, which in the final analysis depends upon a sort of impossible communication between an emotional and a rational dimension of man's being. How can man's emotional dimension communicate with his rational dimension, if these two different dimensions are entirely independent from one another in terms of their nature? There must be an essential link between ἀνδρεία and λόγος for Socrates' persuasion to be possible. To put it a bit differently, the very constitution of ἀνδρεία must involve a λόγος-component – so that by means of an emotional incentive Socrates is able to reach the very core of his companions' rationality. By means of an emotional incentive – of an appeal to his friends' courage or manliness – Socrates touches the logical dimension of the purposefulness of life (of both his life and the lives of his friends). Because human life has a logically constituted purposefulness and ἀνδρεία involves a λόγος-component, Socrates' appeal to courage or manliness might succeed in persuading his friends of the need for an internal clarification of the logically constituted purposefulness of human life, and of the need for a rational examination of the grounds of such purposefulness. In sum, in spite of the fact that Socrates appeals to ἀνδρεία, his persuasion depends on an internal transformation of λόγος («reason») – on an entirely logical περιαγωγή (an entirely rational «revolution» of the mind)[35].

33 For the thesis that in the *Phaedo* Socrates behaves in a subjective-emotional manner, see DALFEN, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 37.

34 DALFEN, ibid., pp. 51-53, makes a fairly comprehensive survey of the vocabulary of emotional persuasion in the *Phaedo*.

35 JACQUETTE, «The Moral Mischief of Misology», art. cit., p. 7, raises the question inaccurately: «If we have already dissociated argument from truth, however, why should we care whether or not it would be consistent to consider an argument to show that arguments generally are irrelevant to the discovery of truth? Socrates might regard any argument against the knowledge amplifying power of inference as self-defeating, if it is supposed to result in a truth about the nature and limits of argument. Such a stance would at once make misology entirely a matter of emotion or the passions, rather than reason.» We think

The explanation given above of the possibility of Socrates' persuasion of his companions implies that the human perspective must be conceived of as a pervasively rational totality, which possesses a life of its own and is capable of carrying out a complex process of internal self-clarification[36]. Indeed, the entire *Phaedo* (in particular, the whole section on μισολογία) – α) Socrates' first three arguments for the immortality of the human soul, β) Simmias' and Cebes' objections to Socrates' first arguments, γ) Socrates' account of the nature and cause of μισολογία, δ) Socrates' advice to his friends against the dangers of μισολογία, ε) Socrates' appeal to ἀνδρεία, ζ) the very idea of the perfectibility of all the previous points (to the extent that they correspond to λόγοι) – consists in a series of steps which reflect a particular putting into practice of the above-mentioned process of self-clarification. In a word, it consists in a particular staging of a drama, which is the internal life of reason.

At the end of 90d10-91a1 Socrates says that one should make an effort – a manly effort – not to give in to μισολογία, and to keep oneself confident in the power of λόγοι. Furthermore, Socrates says that this effort should be made for the sake of one's life and of one's death. The difference between making such an effort for the sake of one's life and making it for the sake of one's death is not significant for our purpose here. In fact, it merely reflects the difference between Socrates' situation and that of his friends. However, in the *Phaedo* death is conceived of as a continuation of life, as the moment when life reaches perfection. What matters in Socrates' words at the end of 90d10-91a1 is his indication of the reason why confidence in λόγοι should be preserved for the sake of life and death. Confidence in λόγοι should be preserved because the οὗ ἕνεκα of life and death has a rational nature. Therefore, according to Socrates, loss of confidence in λόγοι amounts to loss of confidence in the οὗ ἕνεκα itself of life and death. The most dangerous consequence of

there is no real dissociation between argument and truth in the experience of μισολογία. For μισολογία involves a thesis about λόγοι which is taken to be true – namely, that λόγοι cannot be demonstrated to be true or false. Μισολογία is, therefore, totally a matter of reason. Indeed, it can be overcome only by means of a περιαγωγή within the realm of λόγοι.

36 On the internal self-clarification of λόγοι, see Dorter, *Plato's Phaedo*, op. cit., p. 97; Špinka, «*Katharsis katharseôs*», art. cit., p. 299; Woolf, «Misology and Truth», art. cit., p. 20.

μισολογία (the fundamental motivation of Socrates' apology for discourse in the *Phaedo*) is the fact that hatred of λόγοι is identical with hatred of the very notion of a purposefulness of life and death.

However, Socrates seems to be well aware of the fact that, although the human perspective consists in a pervasively rational totality, it may well be suffering from a peculiar kind of madness, insofar as its οὗ ἕνεκα – the purposefulness of the entire domain human perspective amounts to – may not be real. In 91b3-7, Socrates explicitly refers to the possibility that the human perspective as a whole may suffer from ἄνοια («madness» or «folly»):

> «(…) if, on the other hand, there is nothing in store for one who has died, at least in this period before I die I will be less of a mournful burden to those who are with me, and this folly won't stay with me – that would have been an evil – but will perish shortly[37].»

According to this passage, the human perspective as a whole seems liable to suffer from a sense of its own madness or folly, for it may become aware of the possibility of its own absurdity – of the possibility of its internal incoherence[38] or a divergence between its perception of itself and its actual being. In the passage quoted, Socrates' persuasion strategy is to emphasise the search for a valid argument in favour of the soul's immortality in terms of its immediate effects on his life and the lives of his companions. Socrates maintains that the search for a rational demonstration of the immortality of the soul keeps the soul safe from falling into despair – from the burden of the conviction that life is absurd. In 91b3-7 Socrates clearly suggests that the absurdity of life cannot be confirmed and must remain a possibility. For life after death is what makes such a confirmation possible. If the soul has no afterlife, then no confirmation of the absurdity of life is possible, since no one will be there

37 (…) εἰ δὲ μηδέν ἐστι τελευτήσαντι, ἀλλ' οὖν τοῦτόν γε τὸν χρόνον αὐτὸν τὸν πρὸ τοῦ θανάτου ἧττον τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀηδὴς ἔσομαι ὀδυρόμενος, ἡ δὲ ἄνοιά μοι αὕτη οὐ συνδιατελεῖ – κακὸν γὰρ ἂν ἦν – ἀλλ' ὀλίγον ὕστερον ἀπολεῖται.

38 On the question of incoherence, see Dalfen, «Philologia und Vertrauen», art. cit., p. 51; Špinka, «*Katharsis katharseôs*», art. cit., p. 301.

to confirm such an absurdity. Life after death is the confirmation that the purposefulness of life is founded on solid ground, for the confirmation of the existence of an afterlife is the confirmation of the existence of the very οὗ ἕνεκα of life, of the fact that the moment in which life achieves its perfection is real. In 91b3-7 Socrates tries to make sense of the search for a demonstration of the immortality of the soul by maintaining that such a search keeps the human perspective in contact with the possibility of the existence of a solid foundation for the purposefulness of life. According to Socrates, such a contact is in itself productive of soundness of mind and keeps the human perspective safe from giving in to the illusory conviction that life is actually meaningless. However, it is also true that life may be meaningless or absurd (though this cannot be confirmed or verified). The problem is, therefore, that the simple possibility of the absurdity or meaninglessness of life affects life in such a way that life is always on the verge of being thrown into a maddening territory – into the very territory of madness.

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Plato's Philosophical Mimesis: On the Pedagogical and Protreptic Value of Imperfection

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In a sense, mimesis seems to be the complete opposite of philosophy and wholly incompatible with it. To do what others do, think what others think and say what others say is the epitome of an unphilosophical attitude. Philosophers are supposed to be free and autonomous thinkers who live according to what they themselves think. This seems to be Plato's own view, given how his dialogues emphasize rational self-examination and criticize mimesis (especially in the form of dramatic mimesis) as a defective presentation of reality that can have serious deleterious effects on the human soul.

In light of this conflict between philosophy and mimesis, it is astonishing that Plato's writings have a mimetic character and imitate or represent different people engaging in philosophical inquiry or examination. The astonishment increases if one considers that Plato does not simply use mimesis to present philosophical inquiry, but uses a form of mimesis that is full of gaps, involves many logical shortcomings and is unclear about what we could call its tone – i.e., whether it is meant as a more or less straightforward form of communication or serves any other purpose. Platonic mimesis is thus defective from a quantitative, qualitative, and tonal standpoint and, as such, it seriously distorts its object and lacks the correctness or accuracy (ὀρθότης) that would make up for a good mimesis (at least according to *Lg.* II, 667b-671a).

This could be disregarded as concerning the mere form in which philosophical views or arguments appear, but since Schleiermacher it has often been shown that the form and content of the dialogues are intertwined in many meaningful ways. It is therefore important to see how the mimetic form influences the reading and understanding of Plato's writings. To do so, I will consider these writings in light of the views on mimesis, knowledge and human psychology that they themselves introduce (especially the partition of the soul). Based on these views, I will argue that Plato's philosophical mimesis serves an important pedagogic and a protreptic function, since it teaches (despite its constitutive defects as mimesis) how one can perform philosophical inquiry and helps to recognize its importance for one's life. Moreover, I will argue that the

defects added do not limit, but rather enhance this mimesis' pedagogic and protreptic effectiveness, insofar as they produce astonishment and prompt one to examine more intensely what is being examined in Plato's philosophical mimesis.

In arguing this, I do not intend to enter into the discussion of whether Plato had definite views and whether they are expressed in the dialogues. My point is compatible with sceptic or ironical, unitarian and developmentalist readings of Plato's dialogues, since I only claim that, regardless of the author's intentions and the status of the dialogues, the latter have (in virtue of their mimetic character) the pedagogic and protreptic dimensions just mentioned and that by taking this into account we can better understand the views on mimesis, pedagogy and protreptics that are expressed in the dialogues. By this, I do not mean that mimesis constitutes the main pedagogic or protreptic component of the dialogues, or that it works separately from the other components. I will only try to show that the other more studied components are accompanied and enhanced by this one, which I will consider as far as possible in isolation, in order to better show its structure.[1]

1 This complements the many studies of mimesis in Plato, which are mostly confined to artistic mimesis (discussing its negative appraisal and some positive aspects of it). It has some affinity to Voula Tsouna's attempt to contrast Plato's philosophical mimesis with artistic mimesis (especially insofar as she also mentions how Plato's mimesis uses a defect or apparent defect – concealment – to produce a philosophical effect, though she does not go into much detail – see 2013, 24-25). My approach also expands studies of Platonic pedagogy and protreptics. Many of the works on education (including recent ones such as Scott 2000, Saracco 2017, Magrini 2018, Mintz 2018) focus on Socratic teaching, which has some points in common with what we will consider. Others consider theories of education in the *Republic*, the *Laws* or other dialogues. In some cases, the theories of education are brought into a direct relationship with other theories of Plato (cp. e.g. Scolnicov 1988). But, in general, they do not consider the role of mimesis within the dialogues or how the mimetic character of the dialogues has itself a pedagogic value. Instead, they tend to only mention that learning cannot be a simple imitation (cp. e.g. Scott, 2000, 176-177, 181-182, and Magrini, 2018, 26-27). As for the studies of protreptics, there is a tendency to focus on the kind of arguments used to convince (either directly or indirectly) others to philosophise (see Slings 1999 and Collins 2015) or the strategies used in discussion to undermine the beliefs of others (see Cain 2007 and Marshall 2021). Some consider how the texts themselves affect the readers (see Miller 1986, 4-9, and Gallagher 2004), but do not establish a clear relation with mimesis and the Platonic understanding of it. There are, however, a few notable exceptions to this general neglect of the pedagogic and protreptic value

As a preparation for my argument, I will start by briefly reviewing the Platonic understanding of mimesis and determining the senses in which the dialogues are mimetic.[2] Based on this, I will then discuss the pedagogic and protreptic potential of Plato's philosophical mimesis – first without taking into account the above-mentioned defects, and then by considering how these defects can affect the pedagogic and protreptic potential of Plato's writings.

1. The Platonic notion of mimesis

First, it is important to bear in mind that, even though the term μίμησις is often translated as imitation (thereby suggesting that it corresponds to the act of consciously copying a real being), this "imitation" is not necessarily

of Plato's mimesis. Harvey Yunis mentions this and offers a brief illustration of how it applies to the *Republic* (see 2007, 18-23). Ruby Blondell, in turn, discusses not only Plato's use of a form of mimetic pedagogy as a way of transforming one's character, but also how this mimetic pedagogy includes imperfections to prevent what she calls a slavish or unreflective imitation (see 2002, 80-112). Gill Gordon (1999) is another important example of this approach. She speaks of literary elements as turning us toward philosophy by engaging us and inducing us to play a role or philosophise with the characters. Although she ends up focusing more on the use of images to portray philosophical life and not so much on the practice of philosophical inquiry as such, she nevertheless considers the image of philosophical life and how it allows us to shape ourselves. Her interpretation of irony as a way of distancing us from the characters also comes close to my idea of using mimetic imperfections to further teach us and turn us to philosophical inquiry. Building on these two works, I intend to offer a more exhaustive account of the imperfections of Platonic dialogues and a more detailed explanation (mostly inspired by the tripartite psychology of the *Republic*) of how they transform one's character.

2 In so doing, I will focus on general aspects and avoid going into precise discussions such as those about how all passages on mimesis fit together. Many scholars stress the differences between books III and X of the *Republic*, and between the *Republic* and *the Laws*. Even within book X, some focus more on intellectual aspects, while others discuss psychological or ethical components. I will try to bring it all together in its broadest lines, to prepare the analysis to follow– and especially the analysis of the specific way in which I take the dialogues to be mimetic. Indeed, I will strive to show that they are not just a mimesis of persons and their acts and words (which would also happen to be philosophical), but they are a mimesis of a practice (philosophy) and the psychological profiles that render it possible and, as such, they are an intrinsically philosophical mimesis or a mimesis of philosophy in action.

something one does consciously and, more importantly, it does not require following a real being. As Stephen Halliwell argued, rendering the term as "imitation" impoverishes the sense of the word by reducing it to a mere reflection and failing to account for its creative aspects. For this reason, Halliwell recommends translating μίμησις as "representation", in the sense of letting something appear or expressing something, which does not require strict likeness or even that the thing represented be real (see 2002, 13-24).

It is likewise important to remember that Plato employs the term μίμησις both in a strict sense (referring to different practical components of life, such as acts, behaviours, customs, practices, handicrafts, personal traits, virtue or vice, ways of life, laws, political regimes, etc.) and in a broader sense, as a key concept in discussions about art theory, linguistics, cosmology and ontology. In general, it designates the way in which a certain being somehow hides its own autonomous identity and renders another being (the model or pattern, παράδειγμα) visible or lets it appear. In this sense, it comes close to the notion of image or simulacrum (εἴδωλον), insofar as the latter is "something that's made similar to a true thing and is another thing that's like it" (*Sph*. 240a7-8).[3]

The stricter sense of mimesis is, in turn, defined in *Republic* 393c as "to make oneself like someone else in voice or bearing (σχῆμα)." This is, therefore, a type of mimesis that is performed by human beings and referred (at least primarily) to other human beings or, more specifically, to what they say and do. One comes to resemble, embody or channel others, which can be done as a momentary impersonation or a regular practice, may or may not involve pretence, and may or may not permanently transform one's way of being (cp. Woodruff 2015). The latter transformation is possible because mimesis is always more than a mere temporary conversion of oneself into another. As the Platonic dialogues point out, performing a mimesis affects one's character or personality in a smaller or greater degree (especially in the case of children, who are more impressionable).[4] Consequently, mimesis can be used as an educational

3 Here and in what follows I use (with some changes) the translations in Cooper, 1997.

4 As Socrates says in the *Republic* (395c-d), "from enjoying the imitation, they [children] come to enjoy the reality", and "imitations practiced from youth become part of nature and settle into habits of gesture, voice, and thought".

tool, in order to transmit skills, attitudes, and even characters or ways of life. In fact, according to the Platonic dialogues, culture involves (at least at a basic level) a complex system of models to emulate and the constant practice of imitations, and for this reason the discussions of ideal regimes consider in detail how different forms of artistic mimesis can be used to improve the city (cp. *Rep*. III, 392c-403c, and *Lg*. VII, 813e-817e). In addition, there are also references to education as an imitation of divine patterns (*Phdr.* 252d and 253b), which is closely related to the idea of becoming like God (*Tht*. 176a-b).

Within this broad spectrum, Plato pays special attention to dramatic mimesis and discusses the way it affects individual and social life. Dramatic mimesis is quite complex, for it involves a chain of imitators and imitations: authors perform the original imitation or representation in their mind, actors enact it on stage, and spectators themselves experience the imitation in their souls (especially through empathy – cp. *Republic* X, 605d3-4) and can further imitate it in their lives. Moreover, dramatic mimesis does not simply imitate words or deeds, but as Socrates says in X, 603c4-7, it "imitates human beings acting voluntarily or under compulsion, who believe that, as a result of these actions, they are doing either well or badly and who experience either pleasure or pain in all this." However, this mimesis does not only concern actions, their quality and the affections that accompany them. It also involves views on all that is relevant for these actions, including – according to Socrates – a supposed knowledge of "all crafts, all human affairs concerned with virtue and vice, and all about the gods as well" (cp. X, 598d8-e2) – i.e., specialized forms of action, the most perfect and imperfect ways of acting or being, and metaphysical questions.

It is precisely this highly elaborate form of mimesis that Socrates discusses and criticizes in *Republic* X, both regarding its epistemological value or cognitive content and its psychological value (i.e., how it affects individual souls).

Concerning its epistemological status, Socrates stresses that dramatic mimesis does not provide true knowledge. On the ontological scale, its objective content is the third counting from the truth (X, 602c2), after the forms and the concrete beings that instantiate them. Using the example of painting, Socrates stresses that mimesis presents things as they

appear (i.e., superficially and unilaterally) and not as they are (X, 598a5-b5). It "touches only a smart part of each thing" (X, 598b7-8), which makes it easy to reproduce everything, as if one were simply holding a mirror to things (cp. X, 596c-e). The same applies to good actions or virtue: mimesis presents only apparent virtue and hence it cannot impart true ethical knowledge (cp. Moss 2007). This constitutive defect does not exclude that a particular mimesis may be correct or incorrect. As the Athenian admits in the *Laws*, it may imitate an object in an accurate manner – reproducing all its parts, their disposition, their colours and shapes – or it may seriously distort it (cp. II, 668d-669b). However, what is argued in *Republic X* is that mimesis is always incorrect or inaccurate, at least to a certain extent. It always distorts its object and never shows beings as they are, and much less the forms they refer to.

Besides his constitutive defect, Socrates considers an additional kind of epistemological defect. One can imitate something without having knowledge of what is being imitated and, if others are likewise ignorant, pass off bad imitations for good. Socrates explains this by referring to utensils and distinguishing between the knowledge of the user, the knowledge of the producer and the knowledge of the imitator – the user being the one that knows something best and guides the knowledge of the producer, whereas the imitator only represents something without needing to know how it is used or produced. This is particularly relevant in the case of dramatic or poetic mimesis, given its knowledge claims regarding technical, ethical and even theological matters. Poets as imitators do not have knowledge of the crafts and much less of virtue – otherwise, according to Socrates, they would use it and would engage in technical and virtuous action, and not just imitate it (cp. X, 599a-600e). They are charlatans that only present bad images of virtue (as a sort of scene-painting that creates illusions) and deceive those that are ignorant of what is being represented. Mimesis therefore tends to increase one's ignorance by producing conceit of knowledge (the "double ignorance" mentioned in *Lg*. IX, 863c) regarding matters of virtue, crafts and anything else being imitated.

In psychological terms, the problem concerns the way mimesis affects or transforms the soul's parts and their respective desires. The analysis in *Republic* X seems to presuppose important aspects of the

partition of the soul discussed in books IV, VIII and IX, although the partition presented here is much simplified. Socrates simply divides the soul into an irrational part, which is sensitive to (and deceived by) appearances and prone to give in to feelings, and a rational part, which uses measuring, calculation or weighing to correct appearances, and also uses reason and law to control emotions (cp. 602c-603b and 604b-d).[5] Socrates thus stresses the way each part relates to cognition and to emotions, and according to him dramatic mimesis affects both things. On the one hand, it feeds the irrational part, together with our proneness to accept appearances, and does not stimulate rational activity (X, 605a-c). On the other hand, it nurtures one's base emotions (or, more precisely, it nurtures the desire for lamentation by causing one to pity others in tragic situations and the desire for pleasure by making us laugh of ridiculous situations in comedy). This, in turn, changes one's relation to similar situations in one's own life, making it harder to follow reason and rational law (X, 606a-d). However, the change is not limited to our views, emotions and behaviour in particular cases. Socrates' arguments also show that by rendering the irrational part stronger, dramatic mimesis promotes a bad (i.e., unjust and unphilosophical) balance or regime of the soul (605b7-8), and it has a similar effect at the level of the polis.

The epistemological and psychological appraisals thus show how defective and dangerous dramatic mimesis is. However, they also raise the question of whether these defects and their pernicious effects are characteristic of mimesis as such or whether there can be forms of mimesis that minimize or even avoid all of this. Plato's dialogues seem to consider that the latter is the case. In *Republic* III, Socrates allows for poetic imitations of good men and good actions (395b-d and 396b-e)

5 The relation between the different formulations of the soul's partition in the *Republic* has been the subject of much discussion. The fact that in book X Socrates sees both parts as related to forms of knowledge has led some to regard the partition in book X as radically different from previous presentations. However, I agree with Rachel Barney (2016, 57-59) and others when they say that it renders explicit an important aspect of the soul's partition: namely, that the lower or irrational parts possess a particular kind of knowledge (an idea that is already present in books VIII and IX, when we see irrational parts using reason to rule – cp. 553c-d and 560b-561a). Consequently, I will assume in what follows that there is at least some partial overlap between the partition in book X and the tripartition in previous books.

– in contrast with *Republic* X, where he admits only of "hymns to the gods and eulogies to good people" (607a4-5), which do not seem to be mimetic or are so only in a broader sense of the word. In the *Laws*, the Athenian defines forms of musical mimesis and the criteria for appraising them (like the above-mentioned correctness and moral goodness – see II, 667b-671a). In both cases, these forms of good mimesis correspond to austere forms of art that promote simple and quiet characters, who are virtuous examples and stimulate a good balance of the soul. Nevertheless, these kinds of mimesis have a limited intervention in one's life and are insufficient to perfect the individual soul and the polis. To do so, more elaborate forms of education are required. The question, then, is whether these can also be in some way mimetic.

One instance of a more elaborate mimesis is the activity of the legislator and the political thinker, which is described as a mimesis of the forms (*Republic* VI, 500b-501c) or the best life (*Laws* VII, 817b3-4). In fact, this kind of mimesis of the forms seems to apply to all philosophical communication of truth and to all implementation of truth in practical reality. However, all these things are mimetic only in a broader sense of the term and one wonders whether there is also a form of dramatic mimesis that is constitutively philosophical and can have a deep positive impact on one's life. My claim is that not just the *Republic* or the *Laws*, but the whole Platonic corpus can be revealed as being such a mimesis. But in what way are the Platonic dialogues such a mimesis, how is this philosophical mimesis to be understood and how does it relate to the above-mentioned criticisms?

2. The mimetic character of Plato's writings

Plato's writings are mimetic or involve mimesis in several different ways. For one, they use mimesis in the broadest sense of the word, insofar as they are full of images and myths (cp. e.g. Gonzalez 1998, 129). His writings are also a sort of dramatic mimesis, and they are so in a way that goes beyond the distinction between mimesis and narration in *Republic* III (392d-394c), because even the narrative parts are mimetic. Indeed, whether one particular character describes a dialogue that happened in

the past or different characters speak with one another, the author never speaks in his own voice. He adopts the voices and attitudes of many different people, and produces an extremely vivid and realistic mimesis, in which readers almost see the characters moving and interacting in front of them.

The many scholars who have studied both this instance of mimesis and the characters involved in it have highlighted several important aspects.[6] For instance, the characters are a relatively diverse group. Even though they are almost all male and Greek, they have different ages, occupations, social standings and even belong to different cities. Moreover, they represent the main political agents. These characters are defined by what they say about themselves, the views they put forward, what others say of them, how they behave, how they react to the conversation, etc. – and in all this they show different beliefs, degrees of intelligence, personalities and ways of living. Likewise important for their characterization is the fact that most of them were public figures from the Athenian recent past and some even played an important role in the Peloponnesian War. Readers knew what these figures did and how they ended up, and the dialogues show them on the way to their demise and to causing the demise of the polis.

Among the characters, the one that stands out the most is Socrates. He participates in all the dialogues except the *Laws* and often guides the discussion (either inquiring about the views of others or presenting his own). We see him in many different situations and in different periods of his life, from when he was young until the moment of his death. In addition, he sometimes reflects about his own life (as in the *Apology* or *Phaedo* 96a-100a) and some characters also try to define him (cp. *Laches* 187e-188c and *Symposium* 215a-222b). The characterizations are somewhat discordant, but to a great degree compatible, and the resulting portrait is very rich. He is generous and courteous, brave, passionate, attentive, dutiful, in some respects almost superhuman (for instance, in his endurance and the calm way in which he faces death), mysterious (especially because he seems to withhold much and often it is not clear whether he is being serious or playing the fool) and full of

6 Most analyses tend to focus on a particular character or dialogue, but there are also more systematic ones, such as Blondell 2002, 53ff., which develops in greater detail many of the points I mention hereafter.

contradictions (the most notorious being the fact that he often presents himself as knowing nothing, but seems to know a lot, and although he confesses not being able to define the virtues, he seems to be their perfect embodiment). In general, his behaviour and way of being seem strange or outlandish (to use Alcibiades' expression in *Symposium* 215a), and as such cause much perplexity in interlocutors and readers alike.

Socrates serves as the embodiment of philosophy, but he is sometimes replaced in this role (and in the direction of the conversation) by other lead figures, such as Parmenides, Zeno, Timaeus, Critias, Diotima, the Stranger of Elea or the Athenian. These other figures have less defined traits, but they resemble Socrates in some important respects – for instance, they are also courteous, attentive and, in general, far from being fully transparent.

Besides these full-fledged philosophers, there are many other characters. Some of them are philosophers or intellectuals in a broad sense (sophists, tragic and comic poets, rhapsodes, mathematicians, etc.), while others are or will be more concerned with political and military affairs (such as Laches, Nicias, Alcibiades, Charmides, etc.). They have more or less active roles in the conversation and reveal different intellectual abilities and different concerns (including pleasure, money, victory, honour, and, to a limited extent, even knowledge). As a result, they deal with Socrates or the other lead figures, with philosophical inquiries and even with life in general very differently. Moreover, they represent different human possibilities or different ways of life, and their combined portrait constitutes a complex typology of human life.

Plato usually imitates all these characters in a very particular kind of situation: namely, in moments of leisure, where they have intellectual conversations (asking and answering questions in turn) or make speeches (which in general also respond to each other or to what is being talked about). The conversations may be more or less intimate, more or less symmetrical, and more or less antagonistic. In many cases, there is a clash between different views and ways of being. In general, philosophy and its representatives tend to be triumphant, and this triumph may help transform the non-philosophers, but many of them are not entirely (or at all) convinced and resist the conclusions, retaining their views and way of life.

This mimesis of real people and concrete situations raises the questions of what exactly is being imitated or represented and of how correct this mimesis is. Regarding the first question, one could be tempted to think that at least some dialogues are, if not a mere transcription of Socratic conversations Plato may have witnessed or heard about, at least sufficiently faithful to such conversations to give us an impression of "what it felt like to be there with Socrates", to use Elinor West's formulation (2000, 107). Other dialogues seem to be more inspired by Plato's later experiences and even the philosophical practices at the Academy. However, many components seem to be fictive and lack a corresponding reality – or at best correspond to general traits of human beings.[7]

It is important to add that the Platonic dialogues are not only a mimesis of characters in a particular situation, but they also imitate other literary styles, in the sense that they appropriate certain traits of them, as has been extensively shown by Andrea Nightingale (1995) and others. It is not difficult to see that the characters' interactions involve many tragic elements (for instance, because they are often solemn and even ominous, as when there are references to Socrates' trial or later episodes of Athenian history), and also comic elements (indeed, characters and situations are frequently portrayed as being more or less ridiculous and, as in comedy, they are real people and not mythological figures). As for the language, even though it is not poetic, it often imitates not only everyday language, but also the style of rhetoric, history or mythological narratives (cp. Thesleff 2009, 51-64).

Plato's mimesis includes all these mimetic layers and they all have their own psychological and cognitive effects on the soul. However, the question at hand concerns not only mimesis in general, but rather philosophical mimesis as such. It is therefore necessary to consider more closely in what way Plato's mimesis imitates or represents philosophy.

7 Indeed, the dialogues seem to represent human life or, more precisely, the tragedies and comedies of life mentioned in *Phlb.* 50b.

3. Plato's philosophical mimesis as a mimesis of philosophical inquiry

As is often pointed out, Plato's own form of philosophical writing and the philosophical mimesis he employs are anchored in a particular understanding not only of philosophical communication, but also of philosophy in general. Whether or not he has his own views, arguments or doctrines, and whether or not he changed his mind during the course of his intellectual career, he does not report it directly as when one writes a treatise. The philosophical content of his writings is conveyed by the characters in a certain context and this gives a personal character to all this philosophical content, instead of presenting it as something abstract and neutral.[8]

However, this is an insufficient characterization, because Plato does not simply represent characters reporting their views and arguing for them. There has been, to be sure, a tendency to see the dialogues in this way, as a mimesis of philosophical argument (Kosman 1992, 84), the practice of argumentation (Frede 1992, 207-208) or of people "in so far as they engage in argument" (Tsouna, 2013), thereby placing the emphasis on the cognitive content or the method of rational discussion of particular views. This approach corresponds to a common way of dealing with Plato's text, which is mostly concerned with identifying and extracting views and discussing their validity, and it is based on a common conception of philosophy as having solely (or at least mainly) to do with claims, arguments and logical processes (which, in turn, leads to a conception of education and protreptics that is mostly focused on the arguments they use and the arguments they impart to us).[9] In contrast, I argue that even though the presentation and discussion of arguments is an undeniable dimension of the Platonic corpus, this actually takes

8 As Michael Frede says (1992, 216): "By their artful characterization of the dramatic context of the arguments the dialogues show in an unsurpassable way how philosophy is tied to real life, to forms of life, to character and behaviour."

9 Regarding education, this means that interpreters often focus on the structure of elenctic arguments or on the connection between views on education and views on psychology, ethics, politics or ontology; as for protreptics, the discussions focus mostly on protreptic arguments and argumentative strategies, as mentioned in footnote 1 above.

place within a broader context, and it is important not to lose sight of this. Plato's imitation is primarily an imitation of the act or practice of philosophical inquiry or examination, i.e., of the search for the truth by examining different views and arguments.[10] In this sense, the core of what is being imitated or represented is this act or practice as such, and not particular arguments or the practice of argumentation in general.[11]

Focusing on the act or practice of searching for the truth is also important because there is no simple or uniform philosophical method one can apply to the various topics. Throughout the corpus, philosophical inquiry or examination assumes many different and often complementary forms (elenchus, analogies, hypothetical methods, dichotomies, etc.), and philosophical inquiry or examination is precisely the unitary project or enterprise to which all these methods belong. This unitary project is what human life usually lacks (hence its characterization as unexamined life in *Apology*, 38a5). It is a very complex practice, which requires special commitment and ability, and although it resembles other cultural practices (both more ordinary forms of inquiry, such as cross-examinations in courts, giving account of one's activity while in office, etc., and more refined or erudite cognitive practices, like those of medicine, oratory, history, natural science, etc.), it has its own specificity and requires special learning.

The practical component of philosophy and its psychological presuppositions are thus at the centre of Plato's philosophical mimesis. This can be seen, for instance, in Plato's detailed portrayal of the kind of situations in which a philosophical inquiry begins. He represents many different beginnings of philosophical examination and shows how one can pass from everyday situations or situations of extreme tension to an inquiring attitude, how anything can prompt this transition, how some characters (especially Socrates) do it more naturally, and so on. Moreover,

10 This is clearly the case in the so-called Socratic dialogues (they all have something inquisitive, τὸ ζητητικόν, as Aristotle pointed out in *Politics* II, 1265a10-12), but it also applies to the Platonic corpus as a whole.

11 This is relevant because (as will be shown below) by placing the emphasis on the practice (as a rational practice) rather than on the rational content, the dimension of training becomes more evident – and not just the training of a technique, but also of one's cognitive profile or intellectual character (and its relationship with one's psychological profile or character in general). This has a clear connection with character education and its epistemic consequences, but we will not be able to explore this connection here.

he represents the intricate or erratic development of philosophical inquiry – how it is full of aporias or dead ends, new beginnings and suspicions (thereby stressing the difficulty of this practice and the need to be insistent and fully engaged). Finally, he also represents different ways in which it may come to an end. Characters break off the inquiry because they cannot handle it, grow tired, are otherwise engaged, are interrupted by others, etc., and all this renders manifest how precarious this practice is. In all this, Plato does not simply imitate the beginning, vicissitudes and end of a rational process, but also the many emotions that accompany this inquiry, such as perplexity, insatiable curiosity, the frustration and despair of aporia, the satisfaction of an apparent solution, the fear one might be wrong, the surprise of being refuted, and so on.

The mimetic nature of the Platonic corpus thus shows how philosophical inquiry is not an abstract process or a general and uniform experience that everybody goes through in the same way. Philosophical inquiry is always performed by someone – either in isolation (by making a speech or simply requiring assent from others) or as a more or less cooperative effort (in which one person plays the role of the examiner and another plays the role of the examinee). This personal component of philosophical inquiry has the further implication that this inquiry is determined not only by the circumstances, but also by the character (and the corresponding way of life) of those performing it. The psychological profile of the examiners deeply influences the process or the direction of inquiry, what is accepted and rejected, the arguments or views put forward, etc. Some of the people performing the inquiry are of course more suited to do so because of their cognitive state and their character (or, according to the tripartition of the soul in the *Republic*, because of the arrangement of the soul's parts and their intrinsic desires), and the correct (or at least the best) performance of philosophical inquiry is intrinsically associated with the kind of character (or way of life) that is ruled by reason and love of knowledge or wisdom (φιλοσοφία).[12]

12 The personal character of philosophy in the Platonic corpus is often pointed out, but I submit that this can be taken even further and be read in light of the tripartition of the soul as presented in *Republic* IV, VIII and IX (and especially in the two latter books).

This philosophical character is mostly represented by Socrates, who is the perfect embodiment of a philosophical attitude or a life marked by philosophy inquiry or examination. He is the model inquirer and in the *Apology* he even says that he was made an example by Apollo because he understood his wisdom was worthless (23b), which entailed not only being aware of his ignorance, but also searching for wisdom, neglecting everything else, and trying to communicate this attitude to others. Similarly relevant is the already mentioned fact that Plato imitates different stages of Socrates' life (including stages in which he is still young, hesitant and stumbling, as in his conversation with Diotima in the *Symposium* or the beginning of *Parmenides*), thereby showing how this way of being is not something innate, but rather something that must be developed and, as such, can also be attained by others.

Socrates, however, is not the only relevant character for determining philosophical inquiry. The other characters have different intellectual abilities and, more importantly, have their own non-philosophical – or at any rate less philosophical – ways of being, which according to the *Republic* correspond to a psychological regime ruled or greatly influenced by the appetitive part and its love of gain (i.e., of pleasure and possessions) or the spirited part and its love of victory and honour. As a result, they represent other possible relations to philosophical inquiry – i.e., other ways of performing it, integrating it into one's life and reacting to the way it unfolds. Indeed, many characters become frustrated and even angry at Socrates and philosophical inquiry (especially if they regard their being refuted as being Socrates' fault, for playing tricks on them), while others become fascinated by Socrates and imitate him, even if only superficially. It all seems to depend on one's ability to question oneself and on how strong or demanding one's love of knowledge is or becomes.

Based on all this, Plato's mimesis of philosophical inquiry shows a kind of practice that may include different methods, is intrinsically related to views or arguments (those held by the interlocutors and other ones), and is always performed by people that have a particular character or way of life (which can be marked by a greater or lesser degree of love of knowledge). Any particular view or argument and any particular instance of inquiry must be understood within this general framework, which is what Plato is primarily representing or imitating.

Philosophical inquiry and the soul's relation to it is not just something the characters sometimes discuss, but it is at the centre of Plato's mimetic writings, and this is certainly one of the main differences between the Platonic dialogues and most of the attempts to imitate them throughout the centuries.

4. The didactic and protreptic value of Plato's philosophical mimesis

After considering the Platonic understanding of mimesis, the senses in which Plato's writings are mimetic and the proper sense of Plato's philosophical mimesis, we can now better appraise the value of Plato's philosophical mimesis in light of Platonic psychology, i.e., we can see how the mimesis of philosophical examination can affect readers and whether its effects are similar to those of other forms of mimesis or instead specific to this kind.

One could think that philosophical mimesis is a mere embellishment of the texts that renders the discussion of arguments more enjoyable or at least more palatable. In this case, it would not by itself teach anything or turn anyone to a different life. At best, it would render pedagogic and protreptic arguments more appealing. However, philosophical mimesis can also be regarded as having an intrinsic pedagogic and protreptic value. On the one hand, it illustrates how philosophical inquiry is to be performed and, as such, clarifies the methods that are to be employed and is better able to impart them. On the other hand, this mimesis can affect how one lives, insofar as it illustrates the commitment to philosophy of certain characters, especially Socrates, whose words, behaviour and way of life can serve as an example and influence readers. But besides these more direct and evident pedagogic and protreptic effects, I submit that the mimetic form of the texts can have a stronger effect on readers and transform them – or, to be more precise, it can transform their relation to philosophical inquiry (as well as all that depends on it) in a more profound manner.

This deeper effect can be more properly understood if we consider that Plato's writings, as a form of mimesis, give a taste of philosophical

inquiry or make us enjoy it.[13] With their help, we can not only visualize and follow it, but also momentarily experience it or experience the performance of it. This identification with what is being performed is increased by the vivid representation of different characters, with different relations to philosophical inquiry, which means that one can easily find someone one identifies with, or even identify with different characters at different times. In fact, one can experience philosophical inquiry from different angles, both as an examiner (insofar as one can identify with Socrates or any other lead figure) and as an examinee. Thus, one experiences more directly the advances and the difficulties of philosophical inquiry – as well as the corresponding curiosity, perplexity, joy, frustration, hope and despair. Whether or not one is already familiarized with this practice (and especially with the forms it assumes in the Platonic corpus), one's intense contact with it through mimesis provides a temporary (even if only apparent) exit from the unexamined life – i.e., from a passive cognitive attitude that is complacently satisfied with the usual, unphilosophical way of seeing or understanding things.

This temporary tasting of philosophical examination strongly increases the didactic potential of the Platonic corpus since, instead of simply conveying doctrines and methodological principles, it teaches in a concrete and impressive manner how to perform philosophical inquiry. It not only provides elaborate examples as footsteps we may follow, but makes us follow in these footsteps. This is similar to what happens in the dramatic world of the dialogues, where characters (usually Socrates) ask others to imitate them and do as they do, as a way of teaching a specific technique of inquiry (see e.g. *Alcibiades I,* 108b, and *Phaedo*, 105b). Other times, someone automatically imitates others, as we see in *Euthydemus* when, after witnessing the eristic technique of the eponymous character and his brother applied several times, Ctesippus is able to use it (see 298b-300d and 303e-304b). According to Socrates, the same happened to the young who saw him refuting people and then went on to do the same (cp. *Apology* 23c). Similarly, readers – by means of identification with characters – have a vivid experience of philosophical

13 For enjoyment as a feature of mimesis, see *Rep*. III, 395d1, and X, 606d6.

inquiry and this works as a form of training or exercising that in time develops their skill and produces habituation.

This kind of mimetic pedagogy applies both to relatively simple or more mechanical operations of inquiry and to more complex and refined forms. In general, it enables one to better learn the technique of philosophical inquiry or the art of dialectics (including its more advanced form: the examination of the eidetic domain). With this Plato reveals a great sensitivity to the fact that philosophy is not just something people automatically learn from hearing or reading presentations of philosophical views, arguments and methodologies. One's learning is improved by watching others and imitating them. Hence, the context in which one first encounters philosophy, the practical examples one receives and how one follows them (both in one's mind and in one's interaction with others) are decisive for developing one's philosophical skills. This in no way means that the communication of views, arguments and methodologies is not important, but such a communication should be supplemented by this mimetic and practical component in order to render people better able to perform philosophical inquiry. One learns also by practising or performing inquiry (as characters in dialogues, when they are required to imitate).[14]

This is one effect that the mimesis of philosophical examination can bring about. But Plato's mimetic dialogues do not just develop one's practical skills as something one can have regardless of one's character. These dialogues also have a profound psychological effect and help shape who one is and how one lives one's life. In the framework of the *Republic*, and particularly of the soul's tripartition, this means philosophical mimesis can help to change the inner regime of one's soul. More precisely, imitating philosophical inquiry in one's mind or in one's interactions with others stimulates or strengthens the rational part and its constitutive desire (love of knowledge or wisdom, φιλοσοφία), and at the same time it weakens the spirited and the desiderative parts, along with their respective desires (or, using the division from *Republic* X, it weakens the part that is sensitive to appearances). This is in clear contrast with the psychological effects of dramatic mimesis. Reading Plato's

14 This highlights the performative character of philosophy: it is not simply a form of knowledge, but something one must do.

dialogues helps one visualize and follow the practice of philosophical inquiry, allows one to taste it and perform it, and this not only awakens one's reason and its love of wisdom, rendering them more able to inquire and find better views, but it also starts to change one's character, the way one sees things and acts, and ultimately one's whole way of life. In this sense, it has protreptic effects and helps one to turn away from an unphilosophical life and towards a philosophical life. By provoking readers and prompting them to inquire or examine, it does (or at least can do) more than stimulating them to perform a single act of inquiry or to inquire for a while. It can lead to a conversion to philosophy – i.e., to a life that is fully devoted to understanding things, recognizes its cognitive limitations, strives as much as possible to overcome them and, accordingly, devotes itself to philosophical inquiry.

The dialogues promote such a life in different ways. One of the most important devices is the use of either explicit protreptic arguments (see in particular *Euthydemus* 275a-b, 278c-282e, 288d-293a) or arguments that are implicitly or indirectly protreptic (insofar as they tacitly imply that one should philosophize, as pointed out in Slings 1999, 61-62).[15] The kind of discussions portrayed also affect readers in different ways, especially insofar as they identify with the characters (see Miller 1986, 4-9, or Gallagher, 2004). Philosophical mimesis, in turn, adds to the arguments by letting one perform philosophical inquiry and be affected by this performance. It can, therefore, be described as a sort of performative protreptics.[16]

15 These protreptic arguments, studied by Gaiser (1959), Slings (1999) and more recently Collins (2015), are developed in the text, but also apply to readers. They often involve specific strategies, as the refutation of accepted opinions (cp. Cain 2007), or refined manipulation, as studied by Marshall (2021).

16 As a performance that not only improves our technical ability, but transforms the regime of the soul, philosophical mimesis is connected with the theme of character education and introduces it as an important factor in the sphere of protreptics. Philosophical mimesis does not just invite and exhort to philosophize, but also leads one to start philosophizing and thereby start transforming oneself and becoming more philosophical (or even converting to philosophy). This partly corresponds to Yunis' notion of disguised protreptics, which he characterizes in the following terms: "disarmed by the naturalness of the conversation and intrigued by its unfolding drama, the reader is tricked into following closely the very argument that may ultimately change his values" (2007, 14).

The protreptic potential of Plato's mimesis of the act or process of philosophical inquiry is further enhanced by the above noted fact that he also represents different characters and different lives performing this act and relating to it in different ways. These appear in a more negative or more positive light, and philosophical lives stand out – especially the life of Socrates, who is portrayed as being in many respects admirable and even heroic. This not only lets one visualize and somehow experience the possibility he represents, but it also leads one to emulate his words, behaviour and even his life (trying to develop oneself as he did). Furthermore, the contrast between characters and lives has its own apotreptic effects, insofar as it shows certain characters (with whom one may identify to a greater or lesser degree) that lead an unexamined life and, as a result, tend to have weak and easily refutable views, behave reprehensibly, neglect or harm others (or argue one should do so), and in some cases are on their way to contributing to the downfall of the polis and meeting their demise.[17]

These different sides of Plato's philosophical mimesis greatly increase its protreptic potential, and this is especially important because the practice of philosophical inquiry always takes place within a soul with a certain psychological makeup – i.e., an arrangement of its parts and their motivations that translates into a certain way of life. One's psychological makeup affects the way one learns and performs philosophical inquiry, and in order to correctly learn and perform philosophical examination, one must as far as possible have a philosophical soul and lead a philosophical life. In this sense, the pedagogical component depends on the protreptic component. However, the transformation of one's psyche also depends on the learning process and the performance of philosophical inquiry. It is by inquiring that one's character and life become more philosophical. Thus, the pedagogical and protreptic components of Plato's philosophical mimesis are essentially interconnected.

This is, of course, a generic description, and the didactic and protreptic effects of Plato's writings can very well vary in intensity not

17 This has often been discussed, but generally in more intellectualistic terms, insofar as these persons embodied certain views that are revealed as problematic in their tragic consequences. However, we can also regard it in light of the tripartition, as an illustration of bad internal regimes.

only from dialogue to dialogue, but also (and more importantly) from reader to reader, according both to one's psychological makeup and to how one deals with the texts. In principle, however, the dedicated study of the whole corpus greatly increases one's inquiring skills and the propensity to inquire, thereby bringing one closer to Socrates (as the model offered by Plato) and turning oneself into a model for others.

5. The constitutive imperfection of philosophical mimesis

In the previous section, the discussion was focused on the ideal effects of Plato's philosophical mimesis. This type of mimesis seems to be partly immune to the epistemological and psychological criticisms of mimesis in *Republic* X, since it leads the reader beyond appearances, constantly raises the question of what things really are, and greatly stimulates the rational part of the soul (cp. Tsouna 2013, 23-26).

However, the mimesis of philosophical examination may easily fail to do so or do so imperfectly, and it can even have negative effects. In order for this to happen, it is not necessary for such a mimesis to seriously distort philosophical inquiry. Even if the mimesis is correct, it can produce results other than the ones mentioned, largely because of the constitutive imperfection or defectiveness of mimesis discussed above. As a form of mimesis, philosophical mimesis still produces appearances, it shows only some sides of philosophical inquiry or shows it as seen from the outside, and the same applies to the representation of philosophical lives. Hence, philosophical mimesis cannot guarantee a proper teaching of philosophical examination and the life devoted to it. On the other hand, the fact that this mimesis of philosophical practice and philosophical life involves appearance (and a pleasant or beautiful one, on account of its diversity and vividness) may nevertheless stimulate the soul's love of appearance and affections. In the framework of the tripartition, this means that philosophical mimesis can still strengthen one's love of gain or pleasure (in which case one can also try to learn it in order to have fun or to profit from it) or one's love of honour and victory (leading one to pursue the admiration of others or the joy of defeating

them in intellectual contests), and if these other desires are nurtured and strengthened, the learning and transformative process will be corrupted and lead to improper results.

In light of this, there seems to be no guarantee that philosophical mimesis will affect the soul in the proper way and render it truly philosophical. As in the case of the written word (see *Phaedrus* 274c-277a and *Letter VII* 341b-344e) and oral communication (see *Symposium* 175d-e), it all seems to depend on the receptor. More precisely, philosophical mimesis depends on the way readers represent or imitate the philosophical dialogue in their minds. This second-order mimesis performed by readers can be incorrect, superficial or merely passive, like the mimesis performed by Apollodorus in the *Symposium* (173c-e) or by the young, mentioned by Socrates in the *Apology* (23c and 33b-c), who examine and refute others for fun. In these cases, one's mimesis replicates some traits of philosophical inquiry, but not the proper technique, the seriousness and especially the psychological makeup or the kind of life in which it should take place. As a result, philosophical mimesis can have several detrimental effects (as the dialogues themselves warn us), such as increased conceit of knowledge, frustration and anger (as often happens to Socrates' interlocutors), misology (cp. *Phaedo* 89b-90e), scepticism and relativism (see *Republic* VII, 538d-539c), etc. According to the dialogues, all these bad results stem from misunderstanding and incorrectly performing philosophical inquiry. It is, therefore, very important not only to have access to a correct imitation, but also to be aware that it is only a mimesis (i.e., a partial or superficial representation) and to imitate it properly (which seems to require philosophical talent, a philosophical temperament and even maturity – cp. *Republic* VII, 539c-d).

These prerequisites (the awareness of the mimetic status of the inquiry presented in the texts and the correctness of one's own imitation) are not directly ensured by the Platonic dialogues. However, I argue that the dialogues have certain features that indirectly contribute to such an awareness and such a correctness, thereby enhancing their pedagogical and protreptic potential. Surprisingly, these features correspond to different kinds of imperfection or defectiveness that get added to mimesis' constitutive imperfection or defectiveness. The question, then, is how can imperfection help to perfect philosophical mimesis?

6. The added imperfections of Plato's philosophical mimesis

The new layer of imperfection just mentioned seems to be directly at odds with what should be expected of what is being imitated or represented. As a rational pursuit of truth, philosophical inquiry should be as complete as possible, as logically sound as possible, and as straightforward as possible about its status and what is being done or achieved in it. However, this is far from being the case. Plato's philosophical mimesis is not only defective in the way any mimesis is defective, but includes special quantitative, qualitative and tonal defects. Moreover, these defects are not inconspicuous. They stand out and, in this sense, Plato's mimesis is a sort of caricature of philosophical inquiry. However, this is not necessarily a weakness, as has often been pointed out. These defects can be construed as serving a positive function. In order to understand what this positive function might be (or what it might include), it is important to first consider the exact extent of these three kinds of defects or imperfections.

6.1. Quantitative defects of Plato's philosophical mimesis

One of the added imperfections of Plato's mimesis of philosophical inquiry (and the one that is less discussed) concerns the fact that the dialogues are full of salient gaps and present only a small part of the inquiry they allude to. More specifically, even if we assume the dialogues to be entirely fictional, they are full of references to philosophical inquiries or parts of inquiries that are not represented in the texts. These references to a vaster dramatic world include not only parts of dialogues or dialogues that are missing (such as the ending of *Critias* or the much-discussed *Philosopher*), but also allusions to inquiries that are supposed to have occurred before or after the conversations depicted in Plato's writings.

These allusions are of various types. Some dialogues start *medias in res*, with the conversation already underway, and we do not know

how it got to a certain point (as in *Meno*) or have only a vague idea about it (as in *Philebus*). In addition, there are express references to (or brief summaries of) some character's past conversations (cp. e.g. *Theaetetus* 147c-148b) or past perplexities (see *Phaedo* 96a-100a and *Philebus* 36e). Sometimes, the course of the inquiry even alludes to someone's whole background (their teachers, the inquiries they performed, how they came to certain answers, whether they have already been examined by Socrates or got acquainted with him, etc.). This is especially true in the case of the character Socrates and his philosophical development, of which we catch only a few glimpses.

On the other hand, the ending of the text is often not the end of the conversation. Many dialogues simply fade out and we do not know whether the conversation continued or not, whereas in other cases it clearly continued (for instance, in *Philebus*). There are also conversations that are abruptly interrupted because someone must (or wants to) leave, although there are still things to be discussed and Socrates is ready to start a new line of inquiry (see *Lysis* and *Euthyphro*). In other cases, the dialogue simply closes with a more or less express appeal to the need to examine the matter further (see the endings of *Charmides* and *Theaetetus*). Moreover, there are also more or less explicit references to future conversations in those cases where dialogues are being narrated at a later date (either the next day, as in *Republic*, or many years later, as in the *Symposium, Theaetetus* and *Parmenides*), and this literary device includes a more or less vague allusion to the conversations that took place in between the two points in time. Indeed, many more things could be said and examined, and in the *Apology* Socrates even presents the idea of spending the entire afterlife examining people (41b-c), which illustrates how much examination is still to be done.

The written dialogues are thus just interstices or intermediate stations. However, there are many more gaps, because numerous inquiries in the middle of these dialogues are also missing. In some cases, the narrator simply omits them (cp. *Protagoras* 314c and *Symposium* 180c1-3). At other times, the characters decide not to examine a particular question, postponing it for another time (cp. *Republic* 400b-c). These examinations may be resumed later (such as the question at the end of *Philebus*) or on another day, but often they seem to be simply ignored

or forgotten. We can also include here inquiries that are presented in an abbreviated fashion, such as when Socrates presents only a shorter road (see *Phaedrus* 246a, *Republic* 435c-d and 506d-e) – assuming a longer one was available or possible. Furthermore, the inquiries portrayed by Plato bring up many questions that are simply left aside without mention (or whose neglect is mentioned only later – see e.g. *Republic* 449a-c). Some of these might be examined elsewhere in the Platonic corpus, but others are altogether absent. Finally, there are moments where characters examine something in silence (like Socrates in *Symposium* 175a-d).

In this respect, it is also important to bear in mind that Plato's mimesis of philosophical examination not only refers to the dramatic world itself, but also to inquiries that lie beyond this world: namely, those performed by the historical characters themselves (whether Plato was present or not) and those performed by Plato after the death of Socrates (in his travels, in the Academy, etc.). These may have been more or less similar to the ones represented in the texts, and at any rate exerted influence over what we can read and somehow echo through it.

It may not be immediately clear how these gaps (especially those internal to the dramatic world of the dialogues) are a meaningful defect. One can argue that Plato's writings are just samples of philosophical inquiry and there is no need to think about what is missing. However, these writings often stress the importance of being exhaustive and even outline – either as the essence of philosophy or as a training regime – the project of a full and complete examination (see *Republic* 533b-534c, where Socrates adds the idea of reaching the ultimate foundation of knowledge, and *Parmenides* 135e-136c). Indeed, philosophical inquiry does not seem to be just a mechanical operation that can be applied to different topics. It is a process that must go through everything that is relevant, and each question is connected with or presupposes many others. Consequently, by leaving many questions undecided or unexamined, any solution presented becomes questionable. Some new aspect could refute everything or change the meaning of what is said. In this sense, the quantitative defect is also qualitative. Regardless of whether a full inquiry could ever be depicted or even performed, an incomplete inquiry is still defective, and Plato's dialogues could at any rate have gone much further. However, they do not do so, and they emphatically stress this fact.

6.2. Qualitative defects of Plato's philosophical mimesis

Another respect in which Plato's mimesis of philosophical inquiry is far from perfect concerns the much-discussed logical soundness of the inquiries or the arguments presented therein. Many of the arguments are accepted as valid, rejected as invalid or at least taken as clear, without being so. Indeed, inquiries in the Platonic corpus are often logically faulty. They lack in clarity, rigour, exactness and validity. In this sense, Plato's philosophical mimesis is a mimesis of an incorrect kind of inquiry, which has a defective methodology and often produces bad or questionable results.

The factors that contribute to this qualitative imperfection of Plato's philosophical mimesis are of different kinds. The use of images in the broad sense of the word (including allegories and myths) to communicate, explain and confirm views, the use of different language registers (colloquial, poetical, scientific, philosophical) and the imitation of different literary styles (tragedy, comedy, etc.) introduce a great deal of imprecision. The imprecision is enhanced by the lack of clear definitions of the terms or even a fixed terminology (the same words being used with different meanings and words with different meanings being sometimes used as equivalent).

Another problem concerns the fact that arguments are often cryptic, unclear or unexplained. Many argumentative steps are too quick, several arguments are presented only in a shorter version, and characters tend to promptly accept or refuse arguments without sufficient examination. Moreover, these arguments often rest on questionable bases, such as analogies, inductions, common sense, the beliefs of an interlocutor, some authority (often a poet), sudden strokes of inspiration and prophecy, or even mere wordplay.

As a result of all this, there are numerous fallacious arguments in the Platonic corpus.[18] This can be more or less clear to the readers, but in many cases it is pretty evident. Moreover, even when there is no glaring

18 For more exhaustive discussions of the fallacies in the Platonic corpus, see e.g. Sprague 1962 and Klosko 1983.

fallacy, the argument is not necessarily sound. One must be cautious and suspect everything, for any argument may well be fallacious or depend on a fallacy. On the other hand, it can also happen that the characters are presenting intrinsically valid arguments in a suspicious or invalid manner.[19]

Plato thus imitates or represents a defective philosophical inquiry, which is sometimes recognized or suspected as such by the characters, but in many cases passes off as good and satisfactory. In any case, this is a serious defect or imperfection. Philosophical inquiry requires a correct methodology, and this is clearly not what is seen in many passages of the corpus – to the point that one can wonder whether there is any proper inquiry in the Platonic corpus at all.

6.3. The tonal defect of Plato's philosophical mimesis

The third kind of defect in Plato's mimesis of philosophical inquiry concerns the tone of his mimesis. By this I mean the fact that the dialogues are unclear about their status – i.e., as we read the dialogues, it is often (if not always) difficult to determine whether each inquiry is meant as a serious and committed search for the truth (i.e., as the best that could be done by the characters and author), or if it is something else and has a different goal.

At the dramatic level, this difficulty is closely associated with the much discussed "Socratic irony". Socrates often seems to hold back, dissemble or play the fool, and this makes it difficult to know what is on his mind (which also applies, at least in part, to other lead characters, such as the Stranger of Elea, Parmenides or the Athenian). Furthermore, even when Socrates is more straightforward, his claims are problematic. He affirms views and strips them of authority (as being provisional, something he heard, dreamt, a stroke of inspiration, etc.) and many involve apparent contradictions (for instance, he claims that he knows nothing or very little, and yet seems to have strong convictions).

19 On these different possibilities, cp. Ausland 1997, 376.

Something similar notoriously applies to the texts themselves. The author not only speaks through characters, but he himself uses different kinds of disclaimers that introduce distance between him or the characters and readers. One of these devices is the use of potentially unreliable narrators (as in *Lysis, Charmides, Euthydemus, Protagoras, Phaedo, Symposium, Republic, Theaetetus* and *Parmenides*), who in some cases were not even present in the episode they are narrating (e.g. *Symposium*). These narrators may introduce involuntary distortions (due to forgetfulness or ignorance) or even intentional ones. Likewise, Plato is an unreliable author or imitator, and one naturally wonders whether (or to what degree) he is distorting real people, real conversations or even what a philosophical conversation should be.

There is also the much-discussed problem of what exactly are Plato's views. It is impossible to say what the definite results of philosophical inquiry in the corpus are, not only because many dialogues are aporetic, but also because the views of the more positive dialogues tend to differ and even contradict or refute each other (and it is not clear whether this implies a change of mind or serves some other purpose).[20] The contradictions may be more or less apparent, but they render most (if not all) of the arguments in the corpus problematic. Moreover, even if one can draw some conclusions from the dialogues, one still has to deal with the criticism of the written word both by Socrates (*Phaedrus*, 274c-277a) and Plato (*Letter VII*, 341b-344e, assuming it was written by him). Plato seems to denounce directly and indirectly that these are not his views or his real inquiries, because the latter cannot be communicated in writing. Writing is mere child's play (or, at best, something that can serve as a reminder of what someone already knows or provide some hints to those able to inquire by themselves). If this is the case, one must then wonder about the value of this play, but also about the value of the very criticism of the written word, since it seems to apply even to itself, thereby making Plato's dialogues an instance of the liar paradox.

20 This includes different views on a particular topic – such as whether the soul can shed its non-rational parts (cp. e.g. *Phaedrus* 246a-b and *Republic* 611b-612a) or whether one needs to obey the law (see *Apology*, 29c-d, and *Crito*, 50a-54c), etc. – and also performative contradictions (e.g., the fact that the dialogues criticise mimesis or images while constantly using them).

In virtue of all this, it is impossible to determine not only Plato's views, but what the intentions behind the dialogues are.[21] The dialogues may be trying to express a philosophical attitude, they may have a merely propaedeutic character, or they may be trying to communicate in some way doctrines and even a system. But if they are communicating something, it is not clear whether this communication expresses a sceptic or a dogmatic stance (or both things at different stages). The texts themselves seem to admit very different interpretations and, as a result, every word in them is indeterminate. There is nothing we can appeal to in order to determine the value of the philosophical inquiry they portray, and this is a type of imperfection, because the process of philosophical inquiry should ideally be transparent about what is being done, where it is going and what is being achieved. One should understand this process, and not just be mysteriously guided by someone else without knowing what is happening.

7. The enhanced didactic and protreptic effects of Plato's defective philosophical mimesis

At first sight, these three kinds of defect or imperfection appear to threaten the pedagogical and protreptic potential of Plato's philosophical mimesis. One would be learning a kind of philosophical inquiry that is insufficient, wrong in many respects and unclear about its status. As a result, one's reason, character and life would not be properly transformed and would not become properly philosophical. Moreover, the fact that the above-mentioned defects are often salient could very well limit not only the confidence readers have in the dialogues, but also their mimetic identification with the characters and what they are doing.

However, if we take into account the ideas presented in the Platonic corpus, these defects should rather be understood as ways of enhancing the didactical and protreptic effects of philosophical mimesis. They prevent a more passive reading of the texts by causing astonishment and making readers think beyond what is explicitly discussed. In the case

21 One may resort to external sources, such as Aristotle's testimony, but even this is problematic and far from conclusive.

of the quantitative defects, they raise the question of what else could be said and whether what is missing is important or not. The qualitative defects, in turn, invite readers not only to think about how the fallacious arguments should be corrected (if they are simply wrong or if better versions of the same arguments could be provided), but also to revise everything that is being said in order to determine whether everything that is relevant is being considered and whether there are any other inaccuracies or errors. As for the tonal defect, it raises the question of the status of everything that is being affirmed – whether the characters and the author are withholding something or not, whether it is all meant as a game, a set of hints or an actual communication (however problematic) of views, arguments and inquiring practices.

The different defects or imperfections of the philosophical inquiry imitated by Plato thus increase the pressure on the reader, working as a sort of Socratic gadfly. Rather than telling us that examination needs to be complete, logically perfect and have a transparent status, they make us see and feel (in the form of astonishment, frustration and curiosity) how it falls short of that ideal. As a result, they contribute to bringing about a more engaged and active reading. Instead of simply memorizing, parroting or mindlessly imitating what is said in the dialogues, one is required to put in a strenuous effort of revising and rewriting the dialogues. One becomes a participant in the conversation or, as Voula Tsouna says, Plato "entices his audience to join in the action" (2013, 26).[22]

Based on this, it is possible to reconsider the effects that such a provocative form of mimesis has on readers. Regarding its didactic value, this mimesis does not lead them to passively follow perfect philosophical inquiries, but it provokes them and brings about (or at least stimulates) a more active and creative kind of imitation. By calling for readers to confront the philosophical mimesis as such, to decide its value and how

22 In this I agree with Susanna Saracco's notion of a higher order pedagogy, according to which the dialogues call for collaboration from the readers (cp. 2017, 13ff.). Saracco, however, speaks of adding or criticising views, and also mentions the intellectual challenge posed by the dialogues (as others do – e.g., Cain 2007, 36). In contrast, what I am trying to show is that the dialogues do not just stimulate us to add or criticise views, or to answer an intellectual challenge. They create in us (or are designed in a way that easily creates in us) the need to correct inquiries that are insufficient or incorrectly done, thereby avoiding a slavish kind of mimesis, as Blondell puts it (see 2002, 102-103).

they should relate to it, it helps them to go beyond the texts (or at least beyond superficial imitation of these texts). This is an enhanced form of pedagogy and resembles the form of Socratic education presented in the dialogues themselves. It places a great emphasis on the performative dimension of philosophical inquiry, with the goal of making one able to inquire as completely, perfectly and transparently as possible.

As for the protreptic effect of the dialogues, Plato's philosophical mimesis does more than stimulate the rational part of readers' souls by making them follow philosophical inquiries. The defects of Platonic mimesis make readers feel more intensely the lack of inquiry and its importance, thereby generating more intense and conscious forms of inquiry. At the same time, these defects better prevent readers from interacting with the dialogues in a way that is simply aiming at pleasure, profit, victory or honour. One is more absorbed by philosophical inquiry and, as a result, Plato's philosophical mimesis stimulates one's rational part and one's love of wisdom more intensely, thereby producing a deeper change in the inner regime of one's soul. Consequently, one can more easily adopt a philosophical life and more easily understand what it involves, instead of simply trying to imitate Socrates and other philosophical characters without having a true understanding of what their lives involve.[23]

Despite all this, one may still wonder exactly how effective the dialogues can be and what else is required for them to be truly effective. For instance, how much must one know beforehand and what kind of character or predisposition must one have? How attentive and engaged must one's reading be? How much time should it involve? How often must one read the dialogues? And can the effects be increased (or accelerated) if one has an explicit awareness of all these devices?

It is not easy to give an adequate answer to these questions, but in any case it seems clear that the effects above discussed are not automatic or guaranteed. In fact, the defects considered can still generate

23 My argument has some affinity with Mitchell Miller's notion of mimetic irony (1986, 4-9). Miller points out the provocative value of the characters' failure in examination during the dialogues (especially insofar as readers may identify with them). In my view, this is certainly an important aspect, but more than the characters' personal failure, it is the defectiveness of the philosophical inquiry represented in the texts that can deeply transform readers.

misunderstandings. Readers might think that all that is missing is irrelevant, might accept arguments at face value or suspect all of them (and even suspect reason's ability to settle any question), and might simply accept the texts as a more or less direct communication of Plato's own beliefs. Together with the constitutive defects of mimesis, which might lead to superficial imitation and a wrong stimulation of the soul, the added defects involve a significant risk of deviating readers from the proper way of inquiring and a properly philosophical life (either because one gets a wrong idea of what is involved, or because one grows disillusioned with the practice of philosophical inquiry). Nevertheless, these defects can also counteract the intrinsic risks of mimesis. They are not simply negative; they can produce positive effects and help one to truly philosophize. This renders Plato's philosophical mimesis better than the kind of dramatic mimesis he discusses in *Republic* X and also better than the good forms of mimesis he introduces in his ideal polis as forms of helping to raise children and citizens. Plato's philosophical mimesis is an extraordinary form of mimesis, with an extraordinary pedagogical and protreptic potential.[24]

Conclusion

I have argued that, regardless of whether Plato had definite doctrines and tried to communicate them, it is possible to see the Platonic dialogues as a philosophical form of mimesis or, to be more precise, a mimesis of philosophical inquiry and of the kind of character or life that is better able to perform it. This approach helps us to better understand important aspects about the practice of philosophy in general and the practice of philosophical writing and reading. Philosophy in general is something that must be learned and, even if this learning does not exclude more theoretical pedagogical means, it can be improved by the use of vivid examples students can follow. Moreover, to be properly

24 In light of this, one could wonder whether art does not – or could not – share some of the features of Plato's philosophical mimesis, which would give it a greater philosophical value and allow it to be more positively appraised in a Platonic framework.

performed, philosophy requires a conversion to a certain kind of life in which the love of wisdom and reason are greatly strengthened, and this can be more easily done if one is provided with examples of how to inquire and how to live philosophically. The form of the dialogues thus shows that good didactics and good protreptics are not just about arguments and doctrines, but also about offering good models to emulate. Model philosophers render one conscious of what philosophical inquiry is or should be, and they help one change one's being, making it more rational and philosophical. There is, of course, the risk of performing only a superficial imitation and never attaining the ideal form of this practice and of the life that enables it. However, the refined form of mimesis developed by Plato, which makes a philosophical use of different kinds of imperfection (i.e., presents imperfect models that make us feel the need for a more perfect kind of examination), can counteract the tendency to focus on superficial aspects of the dialogues and better promote mimetic identification with the practice of philosophical inquiry, thereby increasing the pedagogic and protreptic effect of the dialogues. In this sense, imperfection is a major strength of Platonic mimesis.

The awareness of the imperfection of the Platonic corpus and its positive value is not without consequences for the way one should read and interpret the dialogues. Taking everything that has been said into consideration, one could invest in ways of interpreting the texts that focus not so much on what doctrines (if any) are being conveyed or on who the characters are (what they think, do and feel), but rather on how the mimesis of the practice of philosophical inquiry (as well as its more or less evident shortcomings) might itself be instructive and transform the soul of interlocutors and readers (i.e., what they can do and how they live). At the same time, one could explore how this performative dimension and its defects affect the understanding of the views or arguments put forward in the texts (and especially their express pedagogy and protreptics) and, more importantly, one could accept these limitations or imperfections and use them as starting points for new philosophical inquiries. All this will render one's interpretation less passive and more philosophical. In this way, it will become more of a dialogue with Plato's dialogues and also more faithful to the nature of these mimetic texts.

I am, of course, not suggesting that this should be the only way or even that it is the best way to read Plato's dialogues. I only suggest that we can develop this way of looking at the dialogues to complement other readings, that it can be useful to think about education and protreptics in particular (complementing other studies), and that it can help us be more deeply transformed by the reading and the interpretation of the dialogues (assuming that this is desirable and that philosophy should be more than a purely intellectual enterprise).

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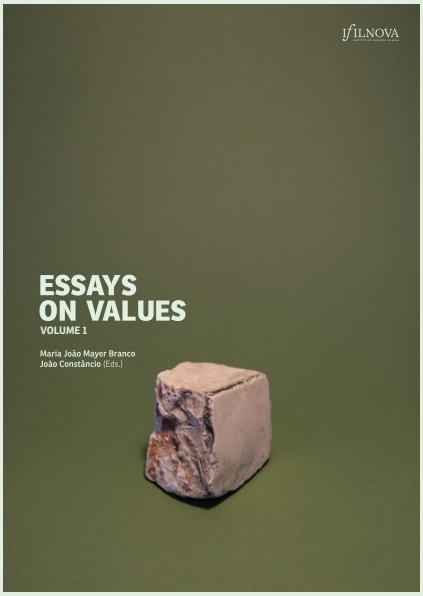

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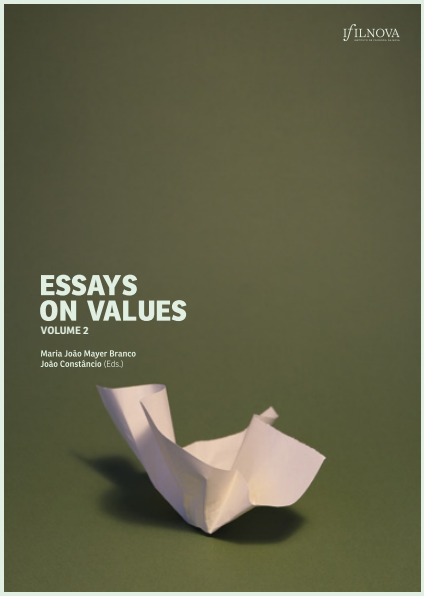

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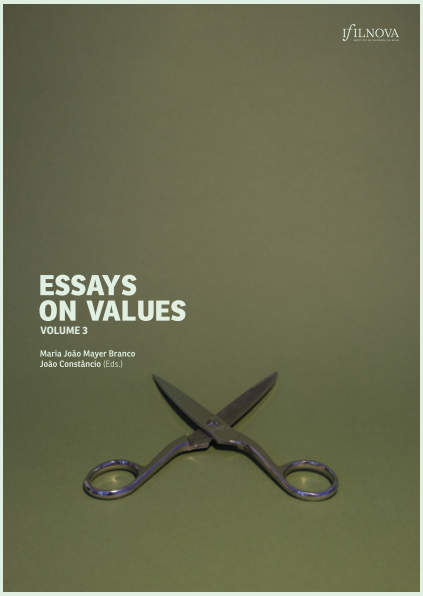

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