

Interpretation from the Ground Up

Luigi Pareyson's Hermeneutics of Inexhaustibility
and its Implications for Moral Ontology

JUSTIN L. HARMON*

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I argue that Luigi Pareyson's hermeneutics, the mature form of which appears in *Verità e interpretazione* [1971], is at the same time a radical ontology with consequences for both moral and aesthetic theory. In contrast to the better known approaches of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, Pareyson's account of interpretation strives to respect the interpreted object — whether an everyday thing, a work of art, or a human other — as an inexhaustible plenum whose unitary meaning remains irreducible to any given interpretive framework or historical expression, but which requires a multiplicity of such frameworks and expressions. My argument proceeds via an analysis of the four major features of Pareyson's thought: (1) aesthetic form as *formativity*, (2) ontological personalism, (3) the ulteriority of truth, and (4) ethical tragedism. The view that emerges presents the sensible intuition of objects as essentially interpretive on the part of concretely existing persons, who in each case aim to reveal the truth of the object in their interpretive expression. But, owing to the inexhaustibility of being as such, every interpretive expression is doomed to fall short, thus establishing hermeneutic experience as an inescapable and infinite ethical task.

KEYWORDS: Luigi Pareyson, Hermeneutics, Ethics, Personalism, Ontology.

In his 1985 work *Poesia e ontologia*, Gianni Vattimo asks, “Is a hermeneutics possible. . . that would really place itself at the disposal of its object instead of reducing it completely to itself?” (Vattimo 2010: 114). In the following pages I answer affirmatively and try to articulate what a successful *object-oriented* hermeneutics calls for. I do so largely on the basis of a theoretical approach of which Vattimo himself claims to be a follower (Vattimo 2013: xii): that of his teacher, Luigi Pareyson. Pareyson's hermeneutics of inexhaustibility aims to put the object, the other, the focus of the interpretation, first, and this constitutes an essentially ethical task.

I will also show that Vattimo's notion of “weak thought” [*pensiero debole*] — according to which the ultimate task of philosophy is to *weaken* or *soften*

* Professor at Southern Oregon University (justin.lee.harmon@gmail.com).

the connection between *being* and *knowing* — is a fruitful development and elaboration of Pareyson’s work on interpretation and “tragic thought” [*pensiero tragico*], and, as a result, that Vattimo’s criticism of what he calls a “metaphysical residue” (Vattimo 2013: xii) in Pareyson is misplaced. By elevating the ontological to the center of hermeneutic experience, Pareyson’s account of interpretation makes room for the effectuality of *being*, place, and synchronicity in a domain of theory typically hyper-focused on *time*, history, and diachronicity. This is important: while the role of tradition in the handing down of sense and normativity — as Gadamer, Pareyson’s more famous counterpart, persuasively emphasizes — must not be understated, the myopic privileging of tradition facilitates an overly anthropocentric linguistic idealism. For Pareyson, genuine interpretation is at once *expressive* and *revelatory*: it is the former insofar as it does not forget *time* and the latter insofar as it does not forget *being* (Pareyson 2013: 16). The oblivion of being in the murky relativity of historicity is, on this view, the origin of ideology, i.e. the instrumentalization of reason and reduction of beings thus cut off from their being.

For Pareyson, the goal of an adequate hermeneutic theory is not a promise to dissolve all misunderstanding by way of an “angelic” view of communication that suppresses particularity and difference in favor of universal linguistic formulae and their translatability.¹ The difficulty, instead, is to *preserve* the difficulty of relationality, and this is precisely the unavoidable challenge of ethics, which, for Pareyson, “is at the same time the easiest and most difficult thing” (Pareyson 2009: 155). Ethics is the “easiest” thing because everyone is always already doing it (however poorly) and the most difficult because, like interpretation itself, it constitutes an infinite task. The aim of this paper is therefore threefold, the first being largely exegetical and the others more ambitious: (1) to give a fuller explication of Pareyson’s hermeneutics of inexhaustibility than is presently available in English; (2) to defend the metaphysical element in Pareyson’s theory of interpretation against Vattimo’s critique by underscoring its intimate ethical character; and (3) to present Pareyson’s hermeneutical ontology as an untapped resource for the ongoing debates surrounding speculative realism, new materialism, and object-oriented ontology.

1. Cf. Michel Serres (1995) for a contemporary example of the sort of “intellectualistic angelism” against which Pareyson argues in the “Destiny and Ideology” chapter of his 1971 opus, *Truth and Interpretation*.

1. Clearing the Terrain

Pareyson's notion of interpretive performance — which has at once an aesthetic and an ethical register — relies on the idea of a normative structure at the place of the object from which interpreters must draw cues or directives. The object as such “appropriates,” makes demands. The source of these cues, however, can never be revealed as a whole. In other words, “interpretation is infinitely various *not only* because of its subject, but also because of its object” (Bubbio 2009: 13). A succinct statement of this ontological pluralism is found in *Estetica. teoria della formatività* [1950], where Pareyson puts things and persons on equal footing: “The knowledge of things, as with the knowledge of persons, requires interrogation and dialogue. . . [T]hings also contain a singular openness and unpredictability in their definiteness due to their plastic nature, so that the interpretation required to know things is as difficult as that required to know persons” (Pareyson 2009: 95).

In 1986, one year after the publication of Vattimo's question mentioned above, Pareyson responded in an essay called “*Pensiero ermeneutico e pensiero tragico*” [“Hermeneutic Thought and Tragic Thought”]. Here, just five years before his death, Pareyson stipulates that precisely because interpretation is always interpretation of something (and not merely interpretation of other interpretations, as is the case, perhaps, for some hermeneutic thinkers such as Richard Rorty), “the interpretation which dissolves within itself what it is to interpret, and in so doing replaces it, ceases to be interpretation” (Pareyson 2009: 220). This means that, at the intersection of *interpretation* and *truth*, there is an irresolvable excess whose reduction results in ideology, whether “absolutist” (e.g. “mine is the *only* correct interpretation”) or “relativist” (e.g. “there is no *correct* interpretation”). The problem with Gadamer's approach is that, as Bubbio puts it, he “focuses on language as ‘total mediation’ of experience and world.” Thus, “Gadamer's hermeneutics tends to solve every problem in terms of language and its finiteness” (Bubbio 2009: 24), beyond which there is no *being* of which to speak at all.

Paul Ricoeur, Gadamer's French counterpart, also fails in his account of interpretation to sustain difference and ontological excess, since he explicitly identifies interpretation with “appropriation” [*Aneignung*], and not on the part of the object, as Pareyson argues, but of the subject: “. . . the aim of all hermeneutics is to struggle against cultural distance and historical alienation. Interpretation brings together, equalizes, renders contemporary and similar” (Ricoeur 1991: 119). On this view, the task of the interpreter is to achieve a clarity of understanding by assimilating the otherness of her object to a “common ground,” which, made possible by the linguistic infinity of the interpreting subject, is ultimately the *subjectum*. In the “Sixth Study” of *Oneself as Another* [1990], Ricoeur entertains objections to the notion

of “appropriation” in the context of interpreting literary texts — e.g. the equivocal nature of the author’s voice, the entanglement of life histories (so that it remains unclear just “who” is doing the appropriating), and the necessary incompleteness of life as lived — only to conclude briefly that “these [objections] are less to be refuted than to be incorporated in a more subtle, more dialectical comprehension of *appropriation*” (Ricoeur 1992: 161–162). In other words, all of the intransigent points and sources of difference in any interpretive encounter are merely elusive barbarian features to be more and more urbanized along the path of the *Aufhebung*, which always ends where it began: with itself (albeit, to be charitable, a self transformed).

Pareyson insists that genuine interpretation “implies the always new and different personality of its subject, and the unfathomable infinity of its object” (Pareyson 2013: 139). In contrast to Gadamer, as Vattimo makes clear, Pareyson’s notion of “[infinity] is not a peaceful openness to a destiny of limitless growth; rather, it is an indication of an ontology characterized by the feature of inexhaustibility, which is also deeply marked by a specifically tragic character” (Vattimo 2010: 80). At stake in this debate, I submit, is the fundamental nature of the ethical *as such*: do ethical (or protoethical) norms issue most originarily from “within,” i.e. as part of the necessary structure of (inter)subjectivity and natural language, or from “without,” i.e. as from an inexhaustible ontological excess with which we are called to engage interpretively? The former position, to my mind, is complicit in the modern “technologization” of ethics inasmuch as it identifies without remainder reality itself with the discourse with which we strive to navigate that reality. The upshot is a kind of residual Hegelianism according to which the possibility of a legitimate *shock*, of a genuine transformation or reorientation of one’s point of view in the face of disturbing phenomena, is sacrificed in favor of the possibility of simply deepening or expanding entrenched conceptual schemes.

It is in virtue of this Hegelianism that, according to Gadamer, the “being that can be understood is language” (Gadamer 2013: 490). As Vattimo suggests, this claim “announces a development of Heideggerian thought in the direction of a dissolution of Being into language — or, at the very least, its resolution into language” (Vattimo 1988: 131). As indicated above, such linguistic reductionism is incompatible with Pareyson’s view of interpretation to the extent that it neutralizes being *qua* difference. Jeff Malpas, bringing Jean–Luc Nancy’s argument in *Being Singular Plural* to bear explicitly on the ontological character of hermeneutic experience, writes: “To be given over, as we always essentially are, to the hermeneutic situation, and so to be given over to understanding (so that we cannot draw back from the attempt to understand), is thus always to find ourselves standing in a relation to

that which is outside of and other to us, and yet which, by virtue of its very relatedness, also calls unavoidably for a response from us” (Malpas 2010: 272). In Pareyson we find Nancy’s insistence on the inseparability of ontology and ethics — of *being* and, not *value*, but, *mattering*, *calling*, in short, *demanding* — articulated in a hermeneutic theory that “invites philosophy to re–appropriate its own speculative vocation, while at the same time remaining faithful to the concreteness of existence” (Bubbio 2009: 25).

There are four essential features of Pareyson’s thought that I shall emphasize in elaborating his hermeneutics: (1) aesthetic form as *formativity*, (2) ontological personalism, (3) truth as ulterior, and (4) ethical tragedism.

2. Sensible Intuition and Interpretation: Form as Formativity

From the perspective of contemporary philosophical hermeneutics, arguably opened up to its decisive trajectory in the early works of Martin Heidegger, even sense perception is interpretation. In *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* [1923], Heidegger grounds the pervasive necessity of interpretation in the everyday: “. . . interpretation begins in the ‘today,’ i.e., in the definite and average state of understanding from out of which and on the basis of which philosophy lives and *back* into which it *speaks*” (Heidegger 2008: 14). This is because, as Merleau–Ponty argued more explicitly throughout his career, conceptuality “is always parasitical on perceptual play, wherein an individual finds a world, and a world finds them” (Mootz 2010: 89). Perception, as pre–reflectively always unfolding, provides the substance with which conceptuality does its work.

How does this notion of the primacy of *perception* over conceptuality connect to the issue of *interpretation*? The claim that even sense perception has an interpretative ground seems to suggest that, since the material reality tracked by sensory engagement is never simply given in its brute immediacy, there is something right about the transcendental idealist’s case against naïve realism. Consequently, hermeneutic ontology and materialism (i.e. the view that reality is ultimately *material*, however variedly this latter term is understood) are taken to be mutually exclusive.² In the 1950s Pareyson was already pursuing this line of inquiry within the field of philosophical aesthetics.

2. The “fleshly” trend of contemporary phenomenology, best represented by the work of Merleau–Ponty and Alphonso Lingis, rejects this conclusion. For example, in *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility* (1996), Lingis asks rhetorically: “Is the theoretical objective, to represent the things we observe as objects and the field opened by our perception as an objective universe, itself motivated by the structure of things which command our perception? (Lingis 1996: x).”

Rejecting the neo-Hegelian system building of Benedetto Croce's expressivist aesthetic theory, Pareyson insists that the role and function of art in human life must be appraised on the terms of concrete, existing artworks themselves. The question that here seems to immediately arise, "How does one *know* what terms these are?," is, for Pareyson, not a very philosophical one. Answering it presupposes what, from Pareyson's perspective, is decidedly impossible: to compare an interpretation with the object interpreted. Since truth is only given in (necessarily multiple) interpretations, that is, in Pareyson's words, personal pathways to it, there is no space from which to freely evaluate the revelatory power of the artistic gesture (Pareyson 2013: 22). Hence, "truth is unobjectifiable above all in the sense that it is *inseparable* from the interpretation that it is given and *incomparable* with its formulation" (Pareyson 2013: 63). Even before a work of art is formed [*formata*], it *works* as "forming" [*formante*], but in the direction of a telos that cannot be formulized in advance.

Openness to the demands of this telos is perhaps what separates authentic works of art from kitsch. Hermann Broch claims that the "essence of kitsch is the confusion of ethical and esthetic categories; kitsch wants to produce not the 'good' but the 'beautiful'" (Broch 2002: 33). In this case a particular, historically shaped aesthetic criterion, "the beautiful," is imposed on the creative act in the form of a dogmatic prescription, excluding *a priori* from its scheme any unpleasant, confusing, or otherwise undesirable element. Milan Kundera makes the same point more forcefully: "Kitsch is the absolute denial of shit, in both the literal and figurative senses of the word; kitsch excludes everything from its purview which is essentially unacceptable in human existence" (Kundera 1984: 248). For this reason "that which is past and proven appears over and over in kitsch; in other words. . . kitsch is always subject to the dogmatic influence of the past — it will never take its vocabulary of reality from the world directly, but will apply pre-used vocabularies, which in its hands rigidify into cliché. . ." (Broch 2002: 33–34). Thus, Thomas Kinkade, who, according to Salon co-founder Laura Miller, "was always the first to present his work as a form of ideology" (Miller 2012), is survived by a legacy of light without shadow, of a nauseatingly saccharine refashioning of the world, which, so interpreted, remains closed and inert. Kitsch is the product of aesthetic prescriptivism, in Pareyson's terminology, the dominance of "formed form" [*forma formata*] over "forming form" [*forma formante*], amounting to the perpetual recirculation of dead gestures. There is no determinate set of criteria that can be applied *a priori* for the differentiation of art from kitsch, since the drive to prescribe such formulae is itself built into the productive praxis of the latter.

Art, for Pareyson, manifests as "form," that is, "a structured object, uniting thought, feeling, and matter in an activity that aims at the harmonious

coordination of all three and proceeds according to the laws postulated and manifested by the work itself as it is being made” (Eco 1989: 159). “Form,” then, realizes itself in a productive process governed by a dynamic tension between stasis and action. Such a *poietic* conceptualization of form makes it impossible to distinguish it from any determinate *content*. The Crocean paradigm of form as the *internal* expressivity of subjective feeling is here rejected in favor of a concrete *formativity* — encompassing the relative stability of the object in its present state of formation, and the fluid originarity from which the object derives its impetus — that operates in the intercourse of real objects in the external environment. As Umberto Eco observes, “The Crocean illusion of an interior figuration, whose physical exteriorization is only a corollary event, deliberately ignored one of the richest and most fruitful areas of creativity” (Eco 1989: 160).³ In the productive act the artist takes her “cues” from *matter* in the world, presented as “a set of autonomous laws” which she “must be able to interpret and turn into artistic laws” (Eco 1989: 161).

The development of the work proceeds in accordance with this ongoing “interpretation,” wherein the resistant materiality of the selected objects makes certain demands on the artist with respect to how it “wants” to be treated. Such a productive interpretation, while relying on the sensuous *voice* of the matter for its direction, also requires the responsive *ear* of the artist, which is oriented from and toward a particular point of view: “Every voice must be respected in its unique physiognomy and no consensus or false authority can be imposed. One must interrogate, and not just by talking, one must listen too, and not only know how to listen” (Pareyson 2009: 62). Every artist’s material manipulation thus results in the empirical articulation of her personality in the form of choices, traces, retraces, decisions, and reconsiderations. This “articulation” always already commences at the level of sensible intuition: “Intuition, as that which includes sensation and sentiment, which is at the same time portrayal of things and figuration of passions, which presents itself simultaneously as sensory knowledge and expression of an emotion, is always discrimination, judgment, and choice: in a word, interpretation” (Pareyson 2009: 83).

Similarly, Deleuze claims that artistic production “is not a matter of

3. This way of characterizing the artistic process resonates well with contemporary practices in experimental music, for example, such as Einstürzende Neubauten’s program of soliciting sounds from non-traditional materials via contact microphones. Rather than recording the airborne acoustic transmissions of objects, these devices allow one to explore their inner depth, disclosing the hidden sonorous vibrancy of air-conditioner parts, automotive shock absorbers, shattering glass, and scraped hunks of discarded sheet metal. The artist “lets” the material “be,” but in a way that bypasses the distinction between “activity” and “passivity,” insofar as her singular interpretation, the creative act in its deployment, provides the time-space in which the material cues and directives manifest.

reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces” (Deleuze 2002: 48). In the domain of painting, the artist achieves this by populating a surface with invisible rhythms made visible, not as “representations,” but as presentations of sensuous vortices. The difficulty of this task is exacerbated by the fact that the artist, in responding to these affective forces, does not work on “a white and virgin surface. The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with” (Deleuze 2002: 12).

Whatever the particular theme or character of a work may be, the work’s “content,” broadly construed, consists partly in the sensuous constitution of the artist’s personality, which exhibits itself in the tactics it adopts to resist and transform the cliché, the dead gesture. The direction or trajectory of this constitution — what Pareyson calls the “natural intentionality” of the work — is delineated in the suggestive germs from which the formative act draws its impetus: the first line of a poem, a cursory brushstroke, the shadow cast by a downtown skyscraper. These “germs” or “cues” give a multitude of *senses* or directions that the artist must choose from and develop. The natural intentionality (i.e. arising from a place other than the artist’s self-conscious intentions) of which the artist’s intentionality is a part — insofar as the artist herself is part of nature — makes up what Pareyson calls the “forming form” (*forma formante*). The “forming form” of a work serves as the teleological guide of its own empirical realization; it is the dynamic, processual principle governing the formative development of a work from its germinal initiation (Pareyson 1960: 59). Once the work is shaped into a sufficiently autonomous, harmonious whole, it presents itself as a finished model, a “formed form” (*forma formata*), in short, the completed artwork. This “formed form” demands aesthetic evaluation in terms of how closely it *approximates* the ongoing “forming form” to which it owes its life: “. . . the work of art draws its value from being in line, not with something other, but with itself; the process of its formation consists in the completion of the forming form in a formed form” (Pareyson 1960: 61).

Pareyson’s intuitional view of interpretation as a responsiveness to sensuously disclosed directives in the lived environment parallels James Gibson’s ecological theory of perception developed in the 1970s. For Gibson, to perceive a material surface is at the same time to perceive what that surface “affords” the perceiving animal, what it makes possible for the animal in the navigation of its physical milieu. As he points out, “this is a radical hypothesis, for it implies that the ‘values’ and ‘meanings’ of things in the environment can be directly perceived. Moreover, it would explain the sense in which values and meanings are external to the perceiver” (Gibson 1979: 127). When a hiker perceives the upward sloping grade that discloses

a hill *qua* hill, she does not represent it as a Newtonian object, an inert aggregate of quantifiable properties, but instead catches on to the peculiar style of the hill by a total bodily orientation in which certain possibilities are revealed. The character of “meaningfulness,” while in each case relative to the perceiving organism, is not something conferred upon the surface by the perceiver, but is rather discovered as something already there.

“Forming form” is always already “out there” in the world, emerging from an environment of objects and actions coordinately with the artist’s own thinking. In the interpretation of a “formed form,” a finished work, one similarly engages with an “otherness,” but in this case the sensualized personality of the artist (again, in the form of choices, reconsiderations, etc.). One interprets precisely by “reading” the “formed form” in a critical retracing, a reactivation of the “forming form” through whose originary direction the artist brought the work to fruition. The artist gives herself as part of the “content” in the form of her production. That is, every work carries with it the trace of a peculiar style to which the interpreter “catches on.” Alphonso Lingis describes this process as that by which “our bodies perceive and move in a field” (Lingis 1998: 36). In “stylizing,” he goes on, our bodies’ “positions and initiations pick up the style of the field, catch on to its levels and follow its directives” (Lingis 1998: 36).

Two seemingly contradictory elements are necessary for an interpretation to successfully sustain the formativity of a work: freedom and faithfulness. Pareyson writes, “. . . the execution of an interpretation is always carried out by a single interpreter who wishes to render the work as it itself desires” (Pareyson 1960: 195). Freely adopting one point of view, one avenue of approach from among many, the interpreter addresses a “revelatory aspect” of the work in a manner appropriate to its mode of disclosure. In this way, Pareyson avoids the pitfalls of an extreme relativism on the one hand (*any* interpretation is a “right” interpretation), and an extreme dogmatism on the other (*only one* interpretation is the “right” interpretation). Every instance of genuine interpretation is simultaneously a *personal* execution *and* the work itself (Pareyson 1960: 195). The “subject” does not appropriate the work through a kind of “transcendental” mediation. Instead, the work *appropriates the person*, places a claim on her, demands to be attended to and respected in accordance with its irreducible difference.

In everyday conversation, one does not have to *translate* the other’s language into “one’s own.” That is, to invoke more overtly the spirit of Lévinas, one is not compelled — in the interest of genuine *understanding* — to assimilate “the other” into “the same.” Nor does one have to “represent” one’s interlocutor’s thoughts through an inscrutable internal mechanism of “symbol” processing, however “transparent” it may be. Rather, one is “presented” with the other’s thoughts *as other*. This does not mean that I

am incapable of understanding my interlocutor; on the contrary, it means that I am capable of understanding her as *not me* and as not assimilable to me. A reader of Yukio Mishima's *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* does not, in order to understand him, subjectively identify with, i.e., adopt the point of view of, Mizoguchi, the troubled acolyte at the center of the story, but instead catches on to the style in which his point of view is presented and engages with it as a source of guidance towards its unique intelligibility. Similarly, in the context of social life one does not subjectively "represent" the other's perspective in order to understand it, but instead engages with her self-presentation *as different*, that is, as a call from the outside that cannot be assimilated.

For Pareyson, the execution of an interpretation does not aim to *translate* the work of art as though it were an impoverished shell waiting to be filled with meaning, or an unfinished project requiring an interpreter to complete it in accordance with a relative point of view (Pareyson 1960: 201). The interpretive engagement must instead aim only to make the work live its own life. One's *appropriation* by the work — or by the other — is not some alien operation to which one passively falls prey. It is instead openness to revelation, attentiveness to the self-disclosive potentiality of form that transcends the simple active-receptive dichotomy: "In fact, the activity performed for the purpose of interpretation is the adoption of the rhythm of the object" (Pareyson 2009: 105). According to the idealism of neo-Hegelian aesthetics, in contrast, "the work does not exist in its determinateness and independence, but dissolves in an always new creative act, in which it is no longer possible to distinguish it from the interpretive execution itself" (Pareyson 1960: 205). Understood in this deficient way, every act of interpretation becomes a radical whitewashing of that which is, an implosion of difference into identity.

Pareyson writes:

In the work of art, completeness means infinity, and infinity means inexhaustibility. If the aspects of the work are innumerable, and if each interpretation shows one aspect, even though it grasps the whole work, it can be said that none of the innumerable interpretations of a work can exhaust or monopolize it, because it promotes, provokes and requires them all (Pareyson 1960: 238).

The aesthetic theory espoused here, as an account of sense-experience, is not confined to works of art as privileged entities, but fruitfully applies to the perception of objects in general. To insist that objects are "complete" means precisely that they endure as what they are without reliance on externally imposed "values" or "translations." But it is an "infinite" completeness, which gets at the epistemic inexhaustibility of the object's material excess. Pareyson's hermeneutic ontology goes farther than Gadamer's; while the

latter takes the interpreting subject to be existentially inexhaustible, the interpreted object is always of limited depth. For Pareyson, by contrast, “it is not only the world of interpretive subjects that is inexhaustible, but also that of the forms that are offered to interpretation” (Vattimo 2010: 89).

Phenomenal objects abide as real precisely in the manner of an always–open invitation to further engagement, which is in each case directed by the norms opened up at the place of the object itself. Norms, as conditions of adequacy that govern inter–object relations, reveal themselves in meaningful *forms* from which one derives directives for action. But in every event surviving the various instances of deformation to which things fall prey is the excess of materiality. The “formed forms” from which we derive clear practical meanings tend to withdraw into a recalcitrant and substantial materiality that conceals more than it reveals.

3. Existence *Qua* Singularity: Ontological Personalism

For Pareyson, “the best guarantee against the danger of subjectivism is offered by the concept of person, according to which, while affirming that everything with which the person comes into contact must become interior to her, at the same time asserts its irreducible independence” (Pareyson 1960: 194). Reflecting on the apparent contradiction between the *unity* of philosophy (as the pursuit of truth), and the *multiplicity* of philosophies, Pareyson claims that these “are thus reconciled and imply one another, for the unity of philosophy is but a *philosophizing–with* [*confilosofia*] of single philosophies” (Pareyson 1952: 69). As he goes on to stress, however, “this unity never hardens into a totality” (Pareyson 1952: 69). While the truth of something holds itself, however obscurely, in an ontological unicity, i.e. a selfsame plenum (contra relativism), it is always expressed or articulated by way of a non–totalizable multiplicity of singular sites, each exposed to the other in mutual subjection (contra absolutism). In other words, all truths about something are truths of the *same* thing and, conversely, this *one*, selfsame thing (the source of a truth’s “unicity”) is always expressed from a multiplicity of perspectives on it.

For this reason, Pareyson designates the “person” as the site where the unicity of a truth is revealed, but revealed precisely in the expression of one viewpoint among many others — a *multiplicity* that cannot be overcome by appeal to some hypostasized organic unity, because it is a necessary condition for revelation. *To exist* is to stand forth as the non–privileged *place* at which truth is exposed towards other openings, which, as “infinite” (in the sense explored above), withdraw from total appropriation: “The reason why the person becomes the *organ of truth’s revelation* is above all so as to be

able to be the *site of its coming*" (Pareyson 2009: 72). Thus, every existence is simultaneously a truth and a philosophy, i.e. expression of truth (Pareyson 2009: 49).

There are, for Pareyson, roughly two ways in which interpretation fails: *assimilation* and *alienation*. *Assimilation* occurs when the would-be interpretation has no "*respect* for the object that has to be interpreted, [when] it is not a grasping of something which is received and looked upon, a surveying of something which allows itself to be seen and known" (Pareyson 2009: 104). In other words, the problem here is ultimately that of the artificial shrinking of distance between interpreter and interpreted, a case of one "overlap[ping] [oneself] with what [one] must interpret," thereby undercutting the "possibility to grasp the inner nature of the object" (Pareyson 2009: 105).

On the other hand, *alienation* occurs "if something imposes itself on me to the point where I submit to it, or better, if I fix the thing in front of me, in an imposition which is no longer a proposal, in an exteriority which is no longer an appeal, in an opposition which makes it impenetrable to me. . . ." (Pareyson 2009: 105). Alienation from objects is the result, not of *exteriorizing* them from oneself or of thematizing their otherness, but of silencing their self-presentation *qua* specific proposals or appeals.

Ontological personalism means above all that the individual interpreter, as a concrete existence, i.e. a place for the exposure of truth, cannot be understood as an abstract and anonymous transcendental category (like the *subject*). Yet, as Francesco Tomatis points out, "personalism cannot limit itself to the finite expression of the person and the person's needs and desires. In fact, it cannot understand and express the person except in taking it in its fundamental and existential opening of itself to the being that originates and transcends it" (Tomatis 2011: 131). Because the interpreter and the interpreted stand together on equal ontological footing, the relation between *person* and interpreted *thing* cannot be identified with the subject-object relation, which always privileges the subject as unilaterally determinative. "A thing is susceptible to interpretation," Pareyson tells us, "only because it is unrepeatable and singular; the subject of interpretation is necessarily an unrepeatable and singular person" (Pareyson 2009: 110).

Two primary conditions, then, guide a person's successful interpretation of a given form: *interest* and *respect*. The former allows the interpreter to *question*, while the latter enables her to *listen*. When interest — in the ego-independent demands of objects — is lacking, forms are rendered silent. If the condition of respect — for the excess of objects — is not met, the person errs by burying the form under a pile of her own discursive expression. In both cases, the form, that is, the self-presentation of objects to be interpreted, is concealed, neutralized, in a word, *spectralized*. As

self-presentation, in fact, “the form appears as such only in a judgment directed by interest and guided by respect, not in the sense that interest and respect constitute the form, but in the sense that without them there can be no *vision of forms*” (Pareyson 2009: 99).⁴

The person is the site of truth, then, not because the specificity of her expression somehow makes the truth what it is, but because *as* a person she is *ipso facto* at once (1) exposed to the self-revelation of the other, and (2) the interpretive expression of this exposure:

Interpretation is always characterized by the inseparability of expression and revelation, that is, on the one side, by the personality of its subject who expresses herself in the act of becoming the organ of revelation, and on the other side, by the inexhaustibility of its object, which reveals itself in the very act of affirming its own unobjectifiability, as inseparable from the interpretation that is given of it and yet always ulterior to the interpretation that it engenders (Pareyson 2013: 89).

The inseparability of *expression* and *revelation* constitutes the heart of Pareyson’s theory of interpretation. Tied up with this inseparability is the inextricable chiasm of *time* and *being* at the very place where each interpretation unfolds. The guiding *telos* of every personal expression is truth, i.e. revelation, but since there is no ultimate *ur-revelation*, no *kosmotheoros* from which to recover a unified Being that has been splintered across countless horizons, mirroring the mythic aftermath of Babel, the tragically irreconcilable multiplicity of expressions is not something that can be overcome: “. . . the revelatory aspect cannot do without the expressive and historical aspect because there is no objective manifestation of truth; rather, one must grasp it always with a historical perspective, that is, within a personal interpretation” (Pareyson 2013: 16). Time — of the living person — is in this way “both access and residence, entrance and dwelling, figure and exercise” (Pareyson 2013: 136) of the truth of beings in their being. But in this capacity time neither exhausts the truth, nor grounds it, neither completes the truth, nor authors it. Historicity and temporality, as conditions of personal expression, form instead the necessary pathway to an ulteriority whose fulfillment is always deferred.

4. Truth as Ulterior

It is a mistake to lament the inescapably personal character of the articulation of truth as some unfortunate mask behind which resides the “actual truth” — if only we were favored enough by providence to attain it. The

4. Emphasis added.

“depersonalization” sought in an authentically faithful interpretation “is nothing more than a way to keep historicity and personality from gaining the upper hand, and thus becoming ends in themselves rather than pathways to truth, and concealing truth rather than opening access to it” (Pareyson 2013: 51). In fact, it is not enough to recognize the compatibility of the unicity of truth and the multiplicity of its expression; they are, much more than this, *co-essential* (Pareyson 2013: 53). To put the point differently, the transcendence of truth (*vis-à-vis* the particular perspective of this or that interpreter) is in no way compromised by its necessarily plural expression at the sites of historical persons. On the contrary, it is precisely the nature of truth as such — understood as the originary revelation of the being of beings — to show itself by way of innumerable voices, each irreconcilable with the other: “Interpretation is neither a *part* of the truth nor a *partial* truth, but is *the* truth itself as personally possessed. As such, interpretation not only has no need for integration, but also will not even tolerate it, and in fact, dismisses it, already having all that it can and must have” (Pareyson 2013: 66). To *integrate* or reconcile different interpretations would be to dissolve the multiplicity without which the peculiar unicity of truth cannot be revealed.

Yet, owing to its unicity, it seems that we can and do characterize truth as a kind of *whole*. What is the specific character of this “unicity” [*unicità*]? For Pareyson, it is not the *unity* of a substance and its quantifiable properties, but a *plenum* housing an inexhaustible source of self-presentations, to which every interpreter appeals, however differently his or her interpretation might proceed. It is the “thing” about which everyone involved in the conversation discourses, however varied the specific discourses turn out to be. What we must avoid is the temptation to conceive of this plenum as a *possession*, potential or actual. While the *whole* truth, understood as a plenum, is never possessed, it is always already *present*, and in a quite distinctive way: “. . . the whole truth does not offer itself to human being in the form of a possession achieved and definitely conquered. It is rather present as *exigency* and *norm*; as exigency exciting man to search for the truth, as norm acting as judge of the truths such inquiry attains” (Pareyson 1952: 65). The holism of truth is therefore a consequence of its essential status as normative. Truth is present as *exigency* because, as Socrates argued — apparently unpersuasively — at his *apologia*, it is not available as an unadulterated *whole*, but rather demands ceaseless inquiry. Truth is present as *norm* because there is no measure of what trajectory this inquiry should take beyond what is exposed in this or that interpretation.

This is the case because, as we know from Husserlian phenomenology, sense and intelligibility issue only from meaningful wholes; as Heidegger showed in *Being and Time*, we never hear only abstract, *partial*, disembodied noises, but, in the first place, concrete *things* (Heidegger 1962: 207). Although

phenomenality only ever manifests for perceivers in provisionally obscure adumbrations (since there is no “view from nowhere”), each profile, as given, manifests the personality of the whole, and it is the self–presentation of this “whole” that directs and orders the interpreter’s response. However, Pareyson’s treatment of the multiplicity of truthful expressions ought not to be understood as a kind of perspectivism according to which each view constitutes a fractured piece of a puzzle, which, if successfully joined with the others, would give us the “whole picture.” “Every philosophy is always. . . *lateral* (literally, *sided*). . . But this does not mean that every philosophy is *uni-lateral* (*one-sided*), i.e. open to integration in a systematic whole, as if it snatched only one part of truth, and then demanded fulfillment in the other partial visions in the system of total knowledge (Pareyson 1952: 63).”

The unicity of truth is “none other than an infinity that stimulates and feeds all such perspectives without letting itself be exhausted by any of the formulations and without privileging any one formulation” (Pareyson 2013: 16). We can see from this that the infinity that constitutes the unicity and that underwrites the multiplicity of truth is both quantitative and qualitative: truth is infinite in the number of its expressions and in the depth of each individual expression. In short, for Pareyson, “the only way to grasp the *whole* truth [i.e. as a plenum] is to possess it *as* inexhaustible” (Pareyson 2013: 66). To so “possess” a truth is to adopt a particular attitude towards it, an attitude that recognizes it as an infinite task and not a prize to be won. In one luminous passage from *Truth and Interpretation* [1971], Pareyson writes:

Inexhaustibility is that thanks to which, instead of presenting itself under the false appearance of concealment, absence, or obscurity, ulteriority shows its true origin, that is richness, fullness, and excess, through its inexhaustibility: not nothingness but Being; not *steresis* [lack], but *hyperoche* [pre–eminence]; not *Abgrund* [abyss], but *Ungrund* [ungrounded ground]; not the *mustikos gnophos tes agnosias* [mystical darkness of the lack of knowledge], but the *anexichmiaston ploutos* [unsearchable richness]: not the mysticism of the ineffable, but the ontology of the inexhaustible (Pareyson 2013: 24).

Revelatory thought, without which all claims to knowledge amount to ideological mystification, opens one to a *plenum* that is a singularity and not a totality, an ulteriority whose depth means not impenetrable silence, but infinite noise.

5. Ethical Tragedism

From the foregoing I have established that, in Pareyson's hermeneutic theory, truth appears as an "infinite gathered in a definiteness" (Pareyson 2009: 115), that is, in the self-presentation of an object. In the language of the philosopher's aesthetics of formativity, infinity operates as "forming form" while the definiteness at play shows up in static schemata as "formed form." While one interpretation (of a work of art, of a fact, of a social phenomenon, etc.) leaves out certain aspects of its object, these aspects remain — under the infiniteness of the whole — not in a merely negative way, but positively as an appeal for further engagement and ongoing self-correction. The insuperable metaphysical dynamic of forming and formed form makes interpretation, whether in the domain of ethics or aesthetics, an infinite task, a kind of Sisyphean tragedy.

"The essence of tragedy," according to Schelling, is "an actual and objective conflict between the freedom of the subject on the one hand, and necessity on the other, a conflict that does not end such that one or the other succumbs, but rather such that both are manifested in perfect indifference as simultaneously victorious and vanquished" (Schelling 1989: 251). This is the nature of the ethical relation among entities in the world: subjectivity emerges as the space of difference between objects, interpellated but underdetermined by the other's demands, and unrelentingly disposed towards their exposure. It is a "tragic" condition because no matter the degree of competence attained by those saddled with it it can never be overcome. That the most consistently moral of moral agents incur rather than abrogate increasingly demanding tasks is surely, in these terms, a tragic state of affairs.⁵

In his foreword to the recent English-language translation of Pareyson's *Verità e interpretazione*, Vattimo criticizes what he calls a "metaphysical residue" in his mentor's work, the result of his "still thinking of truth as 'substance,' that is, in the end as a permanent 'being,' somewhat like the 'existing' God of Christian dogmatics" (Vattimo 2013: xii). By the lights of Vattimo's avowed nihilism (as developed, for example, in *La fine della modernità* [1985], which is significantly informed by Nietzsche's account of the death of God) with the self-devaluation of humanity's need for "ultimate causes" also collapses any "meaning of an imperative demand for truth" (Vattimo 1988: 24). Heidegger's concept of the *Abgrund* is also central to this nihilistic weakening of the real, insofar as, for Vattimo, it "calls us to

5. Rousseau, in a 1754 letter to D'Alembert, famously defends what he sees as "something sacred in the origin" of tragic theater, because of which "at first its actors were regarded as priests rather than buffoons" (Rousseau 2004: 308).

a fictionalized [i.e. “aestheticized”] experience of reality which is also our only possibility for freedom” (Vattimo 1988: 29). What is most salient in Nietzsche and Heidegger for Vattimo’s own anti–metaphysical project of “weak thought” [*pensiero debole*] is the “non–identification of Being and foundation” (Vattimo 1988: 118), where “foundation” is taken to suggest an ahistorical metaphysical permanence.

Vattimo misunderstands his teacher’s project. As I have tried to make evident in this paper, one of the principal contributions of Pareyson’s hermeneutics is the decoupling of the real normativity of truth (of beings in their being) from any kind of metaphysical foundationalism that would serve to undermine difference. Truth is normative because it opens up as an appeal to its affirmation, transcending every formulation of it, but at the same time “guiding” them all. The transcendence at play in Pareyson’s ontology is like that found in Jean–Luc Nancy: transcendence in multiple immanence, which amounts to the weakening of the transcendent in a state of unflagging diffusion.

Apparently anticipating Vattimo’s critique, Pareyson clarifies the sense of “meta–historicity” at work in his theory of interpretation: “In short, what follows is that the meta–historicity of reality appears less from its power to transcend its own historical forms, than from its power to be embodied in ever newer historical forms” (Pareyson 2013: 145). At stake here is the metaphysical possibility of “Being,” understood now in terms of “forming form,” to outstrip self–presentations circumscribed by this or that determinate historical moment. In this sense, owing to the originary excess of being, what Pareyson calls the “meta–cultural” is “gradually embodied in diverse historical forms without ever identifying itself with them” (Pareyson 2013: 145). Nonetheless, and here is where Vattimo’s critique goes astray, the transcendence intimated by this notion of the “meta–cultural” and “meta–historical” turns out to be radically immanent, “since it has no other life than those very forms in which it is embodied and resides time after time” (Pareyson 2013: 145). In a word, the *imperative* that issues from the truth of beings in their being is a feature, not of a super–historical foundation which cannot in principle be fully embodied anywhere, but of the essential multiplication of that truth which is embodied everywhere, but as ulterior — having more to give — and, in each case, different.

Precisely *because* Pareyson considers interpretation to be an originary ontological opening, i.e. tied up inextricably with the self–showing of reality, it is also at the same time responsibility and fidelity to being. This is why, as Bubbio remarks, “Pareyson’s hermeneutics also implies a fundamental ethical dimension” (Bubbio 2009: 14). But, in contrast with the approaches of other thinkers in the continental tradition such as Scheler, Sartre, and Marcuse, for example, this normative dimension does not, for Pareyson,

necessitate conceiving of *value* as an ideal order that transcends the real, however “objective” (as in the case of Scheler) it is purported to be. The concept of “value” fails to do the job here because, as Pareyson points out, “in history there would exist on the one hand values that lack permanence, and on the other hand constant characteristics that do not suffice as values” (Pareyson 2013: 33). The naïve idea — against which Vattimo has consistently argued, albeit not explicitly — that “history is the temporal realization of supra-temporal values” rests on the unchecked assumption of a distinction “between permanent insofar as supra-historical *values* and historical and thus temporal *facts*” (Pareyson 2013: 33).⁶ Such a distinction lacks legitimacy, on Pareyson’s view, since the ontological character of interpretation — i.e. its being bound up with a reality at once historical and ulterior — makes it impossible to distinguish “its temporal and transient aspect from an immutable and permanent nucleus because *everything* there is *equally* and *simultaneously* historical *and* revelatory, personal *and* ontological” (Pareyson 2013: 49).

For similar reasons it is also impossible to distinguish, in any meaningfully clear way, between *theory* and *practice*. In *Kierkegaard e Pascal* [1971], Pareyson argues that because “the ethical implies an *existential commitment* [*impegno esistenziale*],” we should not understand it in terms of a “‘moral science,’ based on the observation of human beings in their comportments and behavior” (Pareyson 1998: 155). He then turns to Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* for clarification of this negative prescription: “But the ethical is not merely a knowing; it is also a doing that is related to a knowing, and a doing such that the repetition may in more than one way become more difficult than the first doing” (Kierkegaard 1992: 143).⁷ Thought and action, as possibilities for persons conceived as sites of truth’s unfolding, are co-inhabitants of truth, each, in their own way, bearing an *interpretive* function. When, as stated above, thought is divorced from truth (thereby becoming *merely* expressive-historical), it yields ideology; when, on the other hand, action is cut off from truth, it is relegated to mere *technics* (Pareyson 2013: 85). Ideologically driven *ethics*, in either its absolutist or relativist forms, becomes the “technologization” of the practical sphere, in the sense discussed above. Schopenhauer’s critique of Kantian ethics is relevant here, insofar as he accuses Kant of dressing up the absolutist moralism of the Great Decalogue in the language of a theory that gives reason — as the seat of freedom — a uniquely positive vocation. From a Marxian perspective, Kantian ethics is ideological to the extent that it claims to be ultimately disinterested, that is, “universal,” while at the same time aiding

6. Emphasis added.

7. Quoted in Pareyson (*Ibid.*).

in the sustainment of the *status quo*, bourgeois form of social organization.

Because truth, the singular self-showing of beings in their being, is ontologically originary, it transcends the ontic separation of theory and practice in a way that indicates the “primordial unity of the two terms that alone is capable of explaining and directing their derived distinction and their genuine reciprocal relation at every level” (Pareyson 2013: 89). Thought always expresses and reveals, albeit rarely directly or overtly, practical consequences, and conversely, every action expresses and reveals the thought that would explain, endorse, or repudiate it. It is the primary ontological relation — i.e. radical exposure to the other — that in offering “truth both to theory and to praxis, completely overcomes the distinction between them, being instead its root and originary norm” (Pareyson 2013: 89).

One’s engagement with truth, understood in these terms, does not permit one “to know,” even in the sense of Gadamer’s proposed revision of the latter as “recognition,” that is, “pick[ing] something out of the stream of images flowing past us as identical” (Gadamer 1976: 14). Instead, truth, as always ulterior, makes demands and confronts one with the responsibility of *personally* formulating it (in theory and praxis) without ever succumbing to the totalizing power of ideology. The problem with “knowledge” — and, correlatively, the history of modern “epistemology” — is its grounding in the Cartesian plexus of certainty–control, a grounding which does not appear to be displaceable.

Philosophy, as revelatory thought, does not have the role of either generating or uncovering norms that should then be applied, via praxis, to the “real world.” Farther still from the truth is the idea that philosophy, as a guarantor of quietism, serves to critically neutralize action, which would then have to remobilize itself more thoughtfully. Rather, properly understood, philosophy *itself* constitutes a kind of action, namely, action as reticent flexibility in the face of dynamic phenomena. The often–lauded figure of the political “man of action” seems to suggest, on the assumption of the “thought/ action” dichotomy, that thought somehow stands in the way of or tends to bewilder action. But the only sort of “contemplation” that praxis tends to bewilder or mortify is solipsistic and narcissistic thought, divorced as it is from “the memory of truth, realizable not only in speculative thought, but in every human activity” (Pareyson 2013: 156). When “reason” is touted as the sole and originary locus of normativity and, thus, as that which must be imposed on this or that practice, it “becomes a norm only through the pitiless face of rigorism, the inflexible severity of moralism, and the squalid ferocity of fanaticism” (Pareyson 2013: 159). An ethics that promulgates the task of reason as this — and it is hard to avoid seeing the specter of Kant in the following quote — “becomes the surrogate for religion and absolutizes autonomous and sufficient human reason, with the

result that human reason, proud of its own absolute nature, ends up either with the suspension of guilt and thus with universal justification, or with the establishment of an abstract moralism that is uselessly intransigent and constricted” (Pareyson 2013: 169).

Jeff Malpas echoes the Pareysonian insight that theory and practice are ontologically indissoluble with respect to *place*. He argues that the failure to adequately think this indissolubility is most problematic in the domain of contemporary ethics, “in which the very idea of ‘applied ethics’ is suggestive of a divorce of ethical theorizing from ethical practice — in which priorly articulated principles or ‘ethical theories,’ often of a highly abstract nature, are employed to resolve ‘practical’ ethical problems” (Malpas 2010: 271). The chiasm of theory and practice at the place of truth demands that we look for truth at the place where we find ourselves — and this calls for “a responsiveness to the demands of the place itself and of that which appears within that place” (Malpas 2010: 271). Tying together explicitly the concepts of *truth* and *place*, Malpas concludes that the former “names that demand that is placed on us beyond our own interests, preferences, or opinions — the demand that comes from the reality of our inevitable and concrete placedness [what Pareyson has called *embodiment*] in a world, as ourselves, and among others” (Malpas 2010: 273).

This final prescription amounts to a tragic commitment to the ongoing subordination of political teleology and expediency to the moral imperative that is truthfully exposed, without hierarchy or completion, in every engagement with the other. Ethics and ontology can be decoupled only at the risk of releasing political commitment from its proper dwelling within moral commitment, whereupon the direct relation of praxis to ontology — forming an “originary unity–distinction of theory and practice” (Pareyson 2013: 151) — is ruptured and forgotten. To think an imperative whose validity and heterogeneous voice — expressed by each being in its being — cannot help *but* survive the most far-reaching and decisive of catastrophes, whose non-totalizable and irreconcilable demands must continue to proliferate even after the “death of God,” is to recognize the “unfathomable and deep tragedy which is implied in reality itself” (Pareyson 2009: 219), at the heart of which reside, inexorably, “duplicity and contrast,” in a word: *difference*.

A theory of interpretation *from the ground up*, as I have developed it, means that every interpretation draws its impetus from the concrete place where the interpreter finds herself, and that interpretation is itself part of this “ground,” inextricably wrapped up with it. There is no total and self-same Being onto which an interpreter can latch by way of accurate representations or propositions. Truth, then, is not a matter of mimetic *correspondence*. Instead, truth has to do with mimetic *engagement with* — always concomitant with historical *expression* — objects in their being.

Objects *present themselves*, in these terms, precisely *as demand*, that is, as an imperative to adequacy, whether theoretical or praxical (which are unified ontologically). Alphonso Lingis has this point in mind when he observes that “what really is, what is given, is not just a pattern hovering before our eyes, and which may be a will-o’-the-wisp, an image, a memory, or a dream. What is given crowds in on us, imposes itself on us, weighs on us” (Lingis 1996: 23).

6. Bibliographical References

- BROCH, H., 2002, *Geist and Zeitgeist: The spirit in an unspiritual age: Six essays*, New York, Counterpoint.
- BUBBIO, P.D., 2009, “Introduction,” In *Existence, interpretation, freedom: Selected writings*, Aurora, Davies Group.
- DELEUZE, G., 2002, *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- ECO, U., 1989, *The open work*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- GADAMER, H-G., 1976, *Philosophical hermeneutics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- GADAMER, H-G., 1960, *Warheit und Methode*, Tübingen; English Translation by Joel Weinsheimer and
- DONALD G. MARSHALL, *Truth and Method*, New York, Continuum, 2013.
- GIBSON, J.J., 1979, *The ecological approach to visual perception*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin.
- HEIDEGGER, M., 1988, *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*, Frankfurt, Vittorio Klostermann; Translated to English by John Van Buren, *Ontology: Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2008.
- HEIDEGGER, M., 1927, *Sein und Zeit, Being and time*, Frankfurt, Vittorio Klostermann; English Translation by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, *Being and Time*, New York, Harper Collins, 1962.
- KIERKEGAARD, S., 1992, *Concluding unscientific postscript [1846]*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- KUNDERA, M., 1984, *The unbearable lightness of being*. New York, Harper & Row.
- LINGIS, A., 1998, *The imperative*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- 1996, *Sensation: Intelligibility in sensibility*, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press.
- MALPAS, J., 2010, “The origin of understanding: Event, place, truth,” *Consequences of hermeneutics: Fifty years after Gadamer’s Truth and method*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press.

- MILLER, L., 2012, "Thomas Kinkade: The George W. Bush of Art," *Salon*, http://www.salon.com/2012/04/09/thomas_kinkade_the_george_w_bush_of_art/
- MOOTZ, F.J., 2010, *Law, hermeneutics and rhetoric*, Farnham, Ashgate.
- NANCY, J-L., 1996, *Être singulier pluriel*, Paris, Éditions Galilée; Translated to English by Robert D.
- RICHARDSON, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000.
- PARAYSON, L., 1960, *Eстетica: Teoria della formatività* Bologna, Zanichelli.
- 2009, *Existence, interpretation, freedom: Selected writings*. Aurora, Davies Group.
- 1998, *Kierkegaard e Pascal* [1971], Milano, Mursia.
- 1971, *Verità e interpretazione*, Milano, Mursia; English Translation by Robert Valgenti, *Truth and Interpretation*, New York, SUNY Press, 2013.
- 1952, *Unità della filosofia: Prolusione al Corso di storia della filosofia, letta nell'Università di Pavia il 23 novembre 1951*. Torino: Edizioni di filosofia.
- RICŒUR, P., 1991, *From text to action*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press.
- 1992, *Oneself as another* [1990], Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- ROUSSEAU, J., 2004, *Letter to d'Alembert ; and Writings for the theater* (A. D. Bloom, Trans.), Hanover, University Press of New England.
- SCHELLING, F. W., 1859, *Die Philosophie der Kunst*, Stuttgart, Cotta; English Translation by Douglas W.
- STOTT, *The philosophy of art*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- SERRES, M., 1995, *Angels, a modern myth*, Paris, Flammarion.
- TOMATIS, F., 2011, "Luigi Pareyson: Good, evil, freedom," *Annali d'Italianistica: Italian critical theory* (Vol. 29), Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Press.
- VATTIMO, G., 1985, *La fine della modernità*, Milano, Garzanti; English Translation by Jon R. Snyder, *The end of modernity: Nihilism and hermeneutics in postmodern culture*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- 2013, "Introduction," *Truth and Interpretation*, New York, SUNY Press.
- 1985, *Poesia e ontologia*, Milano, Mursia; English Translation by Luca D'I-santo, *Art's Claim to Truth*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2010.